



# Analyse socioéconomique du “phénomène de don en retour” : les footballeurs africains en Europe et l’aide à leurs communautés d’origine

Ernest Yeboah Acheampong

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**THÈSE**

Pour obtenir le grade de

**DOCTEUR DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ UNIVERSITÉ  
GRENOBLE ALPES**

Spécialité: CIA-Ingénierie de la Cognition, de l'interaction, de l'Apprentissage et de la création.

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préparée au sein du **Laboratoire Sport et Environnement Social** dans l'**École Doctorale Ingénierie pour la Santé, la Cognition et l'Environnement**.

**Analyse socioéconomique du «phénomène de don en retour»: Les footballeurs africains en Europe et l'aide à leurs communautés d'origine.**

Thèse soutenue publiquement le **2 Juin 2017**,  
devant le jury composé de:

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# UNIVERSITÉ GRENOBLE ALPES

## THESIS

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Presented by

**Ernest Yeboah ACHEAMPONG**

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## **Socioeconomic analysis of ‘Give Back Phenomenon’: African footballers in Europe and their assistance to the communities of origin.**

Thesis defended publicly on **2nd June 2017**,  
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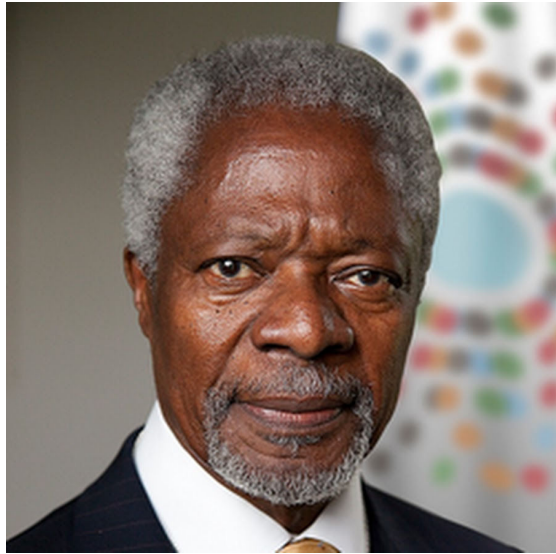
I also apologise if I forgot to mention any person who helped me during the course of my work.

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*Dated, 2nd June 2017.*  
**Ernest Yeboah ACHEAMPONG**

## My favourite quote

*“To live is to choose.  
But to choose well,  
You must know who you are  
And what you stand for,  
Where you want to go and  
Why you want to get there”*



Kofi Annan (born in 1938)  
(Former UN Secretary General), Nobel Peace Prize in 2001;  
Confucius Peace Prize award in 2012.

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African boys enjoying what they like doing best with the ball



## Résumé

L'accroissement du déplacement des footballeurs professionnels de l'Afrique vers les ligues européennes, observé dès les années 1990, a transformé la migration du travail du football. En retour, cela a aussi eu un impact sur les revenus des footballeurs africains, leur statut social et leur relation avec leurs communautés d'origine en termes de soutien socioéconomique. Cette recherche se focalise sur ce sujet en s'appuyant sur la compréhension de l'évolution du football professionnel africain, des itinéraires de migration des joueurs, afin d'expliquer le «phénomène de don en retour» (PDR) lié à la relation entretenue avec leurs communautés d'origine. Elle examine le rôle des facteurs économiques et non économiques qui orientent la manière dont les footballeurs africains donnent en retour à leurs familles, leurs proches et leurs communautés. Celui-ci peut être déterminé dans le but d'un retour sur investissement, par l'influence des valeurs communautaires, des normes, par l'intégration à des réseaux sociaux ou des réseaux institutionnalisés relatifs à l'émigration des footballeurs. En d'autres termes, l'analyse de leur don en retour doit être basée sur la combinaison de facteurs sociaux, culturels et économiques. Aussi, cette recherche mobilise une approche interdisciplinaire à partir du modèle théorique d'analyse de la socio-économie. La méthodologie de Weber contribue à le faire, par l'analyse de l'action de don en retour des footballeurs. Celui-ci est généralement considéré comme la contribution sociale des joueurs, et leurs communautés attendent de recevoir quelque chose de la part des joueurs professionnels africains émigrés ayant réussi financièrement. L'étude est basée sur une enquête qualitative auprès de trente-deux footballeurs professionnels africains incluant aussi des biographies et autobiographies d'autres footballeurs africains. Les résultats montrent que les comportements des footballeurs africains migrants, en termes de don en retour, dépendent de leurs justifications qui sont basées sur des logiques d'intérêt économique, social et culturel.

La recherche révèle trois résultats majeurs:

1) Une évolution spécifique du football africain et de la perception du football professionnel par les communautés. On identifie une périodisation en trois phases, montrant l'évolution des familles, des structures du football et des stratégies de migration: a) une vision controversée du football (années 1980): football vs scolarisation; b) une vision partagée du football (années 1990) passage progressif d'une activité sociale à une activité professionnelle; et 3) le football professionnel comme opportunité (années 2000).

2) Trois types d'itinéraires migratoires de joueurs qui sont liés à leurs stratégies, aux réseaux mobilisés, et aux ressources disponibles: a) ressources collectives, b) réseaux formels, et c) les ressources individuelles.

3) Une typologie du «phénomène de don en retour» (PDR) du footballeur africain migrant concernant les comportements socio-économiques a) familial hybride, b) familial croisé proche, c) familial partagé, d) familial de l'ombre, qui influencent leurs types d'investissements dans les communautés. D'autre part, certains projets de joueurs tendent à soutenir le développement régional et national de leurs communautés. Toutefois, les joueurs migrants africains doivent gérer et protéger leur réputation et leurs ressources sportives en les utilisant intelligemment et en effectuant de bonnes actions pour leurs communautés, amis et autres au-delà du continent.

En conclusion, les itinéraires des joueurs montrent le rôle joué par leurs communautés dans leurs projets de migration. D'autre part, l'évolution du football africain met en évidence comment les stratégies des joueurs ont changé avec la structuration du football africain et l'attractivité du marché du football européen. La codétermination de facteurs économiques et non-économiques relatifs au «phénomène de don en retour», justifie le recours aux théories de la sociologie économique. Cette recherche montre que le «phénomène de don en retour» n'est pas seulement basé sur l'intérêt économique des joueurs mais plutôt sur une combinaison d'éléments sociaux, culturels et économiques.

**Mots-clés:** Footballeurs professionnels africains - Aide financière - Phénomène de don en retour (PDR) - Communautés locales - Itinéraires migratoires - Socio-économie.

## **Abstract**

The increase in movement of professional footballers from Africa to the European leagues as observed since the 1990', has transformed the labour football migration. In return, this also impacted African footballers' incomes, social status, and their relation to the communities of origin in terms of socio-economic support. This research focuses on this subject by drawing on the understanding of the evolution of African professional football, players migration itineraries, as to explain the 'give back phenomenon' (GBP) related to their relationship with the communities of origin. It examines the role of the economic and non-economic factors that orient African footballers' ways of giving back to their families, relatives, and the communities. Their give back may be determined by the aim of return on investments, by the influence of communities' values, norms, or by embeddedness in social networks or by the institutionalised networks related to footballers' migration. In other words, the analysis of their giving back may be based on the combination of social, cultural and economic factors. Thus, this research mobilised multidisciplinary approach through the socio-economic theoretical model of analysis. Weber methodology helps to do so, in the analysis of footballers' 'give back' action. This is generally considered as the players' social contribution and their communities expect to receive something from financially successful professional African migrant players. The study's qualitative survey was based on thirty-two interviews of professional players from Africa including, biographies and autobiographies. The results show that African migrant players' behaviours in term of giving back depend on their justifications, which are based on economic interest, social or cultural logics.

The research revealed three major outcomes:

- 1) specific evolution of African football and communities' perception of professional football. This identified one periodization, with three phases, showing families, football structures and migration strategies evolution: a) the controversial vision of football (the 1980s): football vs. school b) the shared vision of football (the 1990s): gradual shift from social activity to a professional activity, and c) football professionalism as an opportunity (the 2000s)
- 2) three types of players' migration itineraries which are linked to their strategies, networks mobilised, and the resources available to them: a) collective resource-based, b) formal networks-based, and c) individual resource-based.
- 3) typology of 'GBP' based on African migrant players' socio-economic behaviours was a) hybrid family, b) cross-closed family, c) shared family, and d) shadow family that influenced

their type of investments in the communities. On another hand, some projects of players tend to support regional and national development in the communities. However, African player migrants have to manage and protect the fame, and sporting resources by using them intelligently to do good things for their communities, friends and others beyond the continent. In conclusion, the itineraries of players' show the role of the communities in their migration projects. On another hand, the evolution of African football displays how players' strategies changed with the structuration of African football and the attractiveness of the European football market. The co-determining of economic and non-economic factors relating to the 'GBP' justifies the use of economic sociology theories. This research demonstrates that 'GBP' is not only based on the players' economic interest but also the combination of social, cultural and economic elements.

**Keywords:** African professional footballers, financial support, give back phenomenon, local communities, migration itineraries, socioeconomics

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### i) Background

#### *Interaction with some African professional footballers-‘giving back’*

This thesis was born out of an experiential experience with former and current Ghanaian professional footballers. I had always wanted to understand how these African footballers manage their football resources during and after their professional career. In 2009, I met Anthony Baffoe, a former Ghanaian international and now, the Secretary General of Professional footballers Association of Ghana (PFAG) through my international networks. Anthony introduced his idea of forming this PFAG and realised that with my sports background from the FIFA MASTER programme, and as a former semi-professional player, I can be of good support to this project. Based on his extensive briefing, I opted to support as a volunteer and got appointed as the General Administrator/ coordinator of the players union which was inaugurated in December 2009. My reasons for supporting the union were to;

- a) contribute towards achieving the member status of FIFpro and
- b) have answers to my curiosity on how the professional footballers manage their football resources.

During my two years stay at the PFAG, I met a lot of other African professional footballers through the various meetings and events of the union established contacts with some of them. Through my interaction with them, I conceived the idea of why not put together some documents which can help the young talents to learn from their experiences and the same time, finding answers to my mind boring questions. At the same time, their experiences can prepare the youths sufficiently for a better future transition, after professional football career abroad.

Many of the professional footballers, I had discussions with mentioned the word 'giving back' in their own small ways to support the cause of the society. Since I wanted to know more about their usage of football resources, I took a decision to pursue further, and that served as an incentive for this research.

However, in my childhood days, football used to be played among social groups as a social practice. It was a matter of boys and men from different social groups converging in the streets to have leisure and fun with the ball. I was a part of this process though my father (a teacher by profession) did not want me to play football because he didn't believe in football career at that time and, I wanted to be a medical doctor in the future.

When I was child, we used to play football in the streets and other open places that provided us space to have fun and leisure with the material like wrapped as a ball among our social groups. This improvised ball was indeed creative but could not last for long. It was made of stuff from waste polythene, pieces of clothing, which were packed and designed in a shape of a ball. It was reinforced by wrapping long strings or thread around to secure the stuff materials from coming out as an improvised football. This was what used to exist among the social groups' youths in Africa communities. Aside from the practice of football promoting our social integration, it taught us the value of sharing, as we had meals together within the group members in the locales. This is how football for the boys began in many African communities until the sudden transformation of the sport. What happens then?

Through my football practice in Africa, I was not able to pursue the sport to the higher level but with an opportunity to study in Europe, helped in building my international networks, during my pioneer schooling abroad. With my international network through the FIFA MASTER Alumni, I was able to get in touch with a professor in Sociology of sport from the Laboratoire



Sport et Environment Social (SENS) at the Université Grenoble Alpes, who coincidentally has worked on football in Africa aside from his interest in the sport. Professor Michel Raspaud also discussed with Dr Malek Bouhauoala with a background in economic sociology to scrutinise my research proposal on African professional footballers. Their response was positive and encouraging as they found my research proposal innovative and interesting.

All along, I had wanted to still be in the football industry despite my inability to play football to the higher level. My reason was to do something in football because of the passion and the same time, send a message to African youths, who are obsessed with achieving only a professional status in football. Thus, to make them understand that if they are unsuccessfully professionally, they can still have a chance to work in the football industry as an administrator, marketer, scout, coach, etc. as a branch of the sport. This is indeed what I have been able to achieve through migrating from Africa with my sports background in fulfilment of a dream come true. Yet, I could not accomplish my parent's medical doctor profession but here am I, preparing to defend a doctor degree in football research in Europe. All the same, it pushed me to look for an answer to my curiosity through this thesis.

However, with a clue from their giving something back to the society which is simple and inconclusive to satisfy my curiosity and understanding. I advanced further researching on the subject by exploiting on the 'Give Back Phenomenon' (GBP).

## ii) **The Give Back Phenomenon (GBP)**

As mentioned, many African footballers have identified limited opportunities at home as one of the barriers to their professional dreams and therefore migrating abroad can provide an avenue for them to achieve a professional footballer status. Not only achieving that but also provides them with substantial economic incomes which some can be remitted to support activities of the families, community and the society at large in their countries of origin. Darby (2014) argues that optimists view the migration of African footballers to elite leagues abroad as an opportunity to provide them with a sort of exposure and earnings that not only contribute to the development of football but also allow the individuals to escape poverty and act transnationally in ways that potentially facilitate '*development*' at home.

Others may disagree but this study moves beyond to identify African players' economic actions for supporting families and households with their earnings in the communities of origin by giving something back in return for their contributions towards their professional football career.

A typical example of the 'GBP' is examined from the perspective of one the best football academy in Africa. Right To Dream (RTD) Academy is situated in the West of Africa, specifically, Ghana, and as part of their programmes in contributing to the community development instituted a scheme dubbed 'giving back'<sup>1</sup> to Africa. This is a compulsory but non-enforceable contract which details how trainees and graduates will give back at the community and societal level in Ghana (Darby, 2013: 50). According to (Darby, 2013) the giving back scheme operates on 'credit' accumulation from football and educational activities and also for involvement in community projects, foundations, and entrepreneurial activities in the African context, long-term employment in an African company and elected representation of politics.

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<sup>1</sup> The scheme was introduced in 2011(See Darby,2013)

The scheme is built around the principle that each recruit will pay back a set number of ‘credits’ in return for their place at the academy. These credits are earned through personal achievements in education and football (Darby, 2013).

However, the intent of trainees’ action cannot be easily understood if they are indirectly paying back the return on investment or otherwise. The RTD Academy notion on the give back action through the ‘credits’ system could be an imposition on the trainees’ because it is an inbuilt model into their entire programme. On another hand, it becomes unclear based on what informs the decisions on the part of trainees’ to accept and contribute to that ‘credits’ system. Mostly, the recruited talents are from the low-income communities who see that as an opportunity let alone, interrogate its processes. So, it makes that difficult for their parents, families, relatives, and the community to ask questions about the principle of the ‘giving back scheme’ in the academy. Also, this is a formal rational strategy that presents a give back as impersonal and formal desires. Their approach doesn’t work or fit with social and cultural norms of communities. This may be dicey to understand the underlying rationality behind the RTD concept. Or is it an ‘*innovative exploitation*’ but not adapted to African communities, even if this scheme targeted at the low-income communities and vulnerable in the society. Based on this logic, there is the need to figure out what best explains the ‘GBP’ related models or compatible socioeconomic models?

### **iii) Objectives**

The goal of the research is to analyse the evolution of African football, how it explains the migration process of African footballers to Europe and the ‘give back phenomenon’ (GBP). In other words, the main goal is to demonstrate how the GBP is consubstantial to the African footballers’ migration processes. This is important because it helps to understand these African players in one way or the other side has had supports from their families, relatives and others in the community prior to their migration processes abroad. In addition, the community shared values and norms are embedded in the larger society of which they are a part. This provides a tool to understand how they invest their financial, cultural and sporting capital and other resources in the communities after they experienced a turnaround in their professional career abroad. To achieve this, the following objectives were set out to identify the motives behind African professional footballers’ GBP through their economic behaviour.

Further, the research focuses on the evolution of African football and the itineraries of African professional footballers to understand the strategies associated with their migration processes abroad. While in leagues abroad, the players’ earnings considerably increased and therefore some are remitted to the family members and others back home. Some of these remittances generated through football activities can have an impact on the households that African migrant players have come from (Darby, 2014). This will contribute to identifying the rationalities behind their economic and non-economic actions to supporting and investing in the local communities of origin. With the players’ decision to invest, donate, etc. provides a mechanism, which can aid to construct typologies of their behaviours in relation to the GBP.

In the understanding of African professional footballers’ GBP, the following section

examines some theories and models derived from the body of literature that may allow us to explain the rationalities behind their behaviours.

#### **iv) Research questions**

The literature illustrates how some African players have been transferring remittances to families, relatives and friends with others engaging in charity foundation activities. However, it is unclear whether some of their activities impact on the local communities. The study of Darby (2014) argues that some African migrant players' remittance flow from overseas can support and sustain households particularly those with limited opportunities to become economically productive. This raises the question of diversity of remittance and above all, the reasons and rationalities behind the remittance of African players towards the communities.

In other words, what informs the African players' decision to support and assist their communities with the social or economic justification? This research concerns the players' football-related remittance and other resources to unravel the rationalities and the 'Give Back Phenomenon'.

This is essential in the sense that, the research aims to provide readers with an understanding of individuals' motives behind their giving back to their communities in Africa. However, is this GBP based on several types of rationalities? Are these derivatives determined by their social embeddedness, economic interest, the cultural norms and the integration of the institutionalised networks? In short, is the GBP driven by economic rationality or/and also the sociological factors and cultural norms?

To achieve that, the research questions aim to contribute to the understanding of how African individual (professional players) makes decisions regarding giving back to their

countries of origin. That is;

i) What are the roles of the economic and non-economic factors in determining the 'give back' phenomenon?

ii) Are their rationalities determined by;

-the return on investments (ROI)?

- the shared values and norms?

- the social embeddedness?

- the integration of the institutionalised networks?

- or simply by the economic intention of investing their monies in Africa?

iii) What is the connection between African football evolution, migration itineraries and GBP?

**v) Organisation of the thesis manuscript**

The chapters of the research are organised as follows; *chapter 1*: the general context gives information about African football and professional footballers as well as the European football labour market. These aspects contribute to understanding the migration itineraries of African footballers and their strategies to Europe. It also broadens our perspectives on the evolution of African football, and how they impact on their GBP to their countries of origin. This will again assist us to unravel other itineraries of African football talents since they are from different communities, so, they would have migrated through different ways and means getting to their destination abroad.

This next section again extracts from the various theories and models to assist with the theoretical framework development. With the contribution of Weberian methodology, it provides the indicators or variables to construct the interviews structure in getting appropriate data and

information. The theories and models further our understanding of how they can affect the rationalities of African footballers' 'GBP' in terms of their economic and non-economic activities to the countries of origin.

In *chapter 2*, the research draws on the contributions of theoretical models to analysing the sociological factors could influence African professional players' decision making in terms of the 'give back phenomenon' to their communities of origin. The identified theories and models can contribute to understanding individuals' rationality from economic sociology perspectives since it assists to explain the complexity of people's economic actions.

To enhance the analysis of the research and understanding the rationalities behind African professional players' behaviour, *chapter 3* seeks to use the quantitative and qualitative technique to solicit the views of former and current professional from Africa. This will be complemented by some biographies and autobiographies of African professional footballers. With the gathered information and database, *chapter 4* discusses the results with statistics to develop and expose theories and models. This section again adds new theories and models to the existing ones on the subject.

*Chapter 5* showcases the construction of typologies of African professional players' 'GBP' with some revelation on the topic. To conclude, the study will provide produce a new concept of the social behaviours of African professional players with regard to their social and economic investments to the families, communities, and society and grassroots clubs.

The findings and recommendations expose some concerns, problems, and prospects for the future research.

## CHAPTER 1: GENERAL CONTEXT

This section gives a general view on the various literature reviews in an attempt to develop and design a framework in understanding the rationalities behind African professional footballers' decision making concerning the '*give back*' phenomenon (GBP) to their countries of origin. The 'Give Back Phenomenon' may represent an art to supporting others in the society. It can also demonstrate an appreciation in return for the individual contributions to one's progress in life. The literature provides insight into identifying different theories and models that can assist to explain the motives behind the individual African professional player's socioeconomic behaviours. The behaviours of African players' in social terms reflect the virtue of their subjective meaning they attached to their action by considering the behaviour of others, which may influence their courses insofar as they make decisions (Weber, 1922, 1978).

It looks at the social and economic implications underlying players' specific economic action. Yet, some studies have explained macro-sociological descriptions with a little focus on micro level analysis that tends to create lapses concerning individual's actor main participation in the decision making process. This makes the study to explore further by assessing the meso level analysis with the use of Weberian methodology and economic sociology approaches to integrate both the individual and societal explanations. The literature gathered provides a tool to analyse and explain the evolution of football, African football development, and other factors that facilitate migratory itinerary of African professional players to the European leagues. Since African footballers' destination of play is not only a final of their migration project but also as a means to better their lives and that of their families, relatives and the community back home.

Beyond the theories and models identified, a thorough examination of other relevant documents was used to develop an extensive database of African professional players abroad.



The literature reviews produced some important indicators, which aided to develop the analysis grid or a table with specific characteristics to trace career trajectories of African professional players and how they are able to sustain a relationship with their left-behinds in the country of origin and Diasporas. Importantly, it gives a clear insight into the itineraries of African professional players abroad, which also guided in the selection of appropriate theories and models to fit into the research context. The reviews can help to understand the importance of African professional players' economic actions in term of their social behaviour to their local communities.

Furthermore, the literature supports the discussions and interpretations on how the theories and models identified can contribute to comprehending the rationalities behind African professional players' '*Give Back Phenomenon*' to their communities of origin. In sum, detailed explanations from the theories and models provided a clue to firm on the theoretical framework connected directly to the research goal. In the review of the literature, various studies undertaken on the subject matter up-to-date was considered by identifying its significance to the research.

It covers the aspects of the football industry particularly on the European football as a specific labour market, situation and evolution of African football, general views on the concept of migration, African migration and its description and analysis, transnationalism and mobility and the new football market in Europe, definitions of footballers migration, African footballers' migration in general and wages in European leagues, migration of African football talents to Europe and the typologies of football migrants, and conclusion to formulate definition for the research analysis of the '*Give Back Phenomenon*'.

## **1.1 THE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL IS A SPECIFIC LABOUR MARKET: Incentives and Dynamics**

Football in Europe tends to dominate the football worldwide. This is due to the convergence of many structural factors (economic, sociological and footballistical). Indeed, in the European context is very attractive in terms of economic, quality of life and political stability, and marketability. In comparison with African context, there is a big gap concerning the game's increasing popularity, quality of international talents, and attractiveness of leagues, economic, level of play, mediatisation as well as commercialisation aspects. These factors according to some scholars can facilitate movement of other international talents to their leagues which may provide a one-directional perspective of athletics mobility (Agergaard and Tiesler, 2014). While others defined them as the push or pull factors that support mobility of football players to Europe (Lanfranchi and Talyor, 2001). The evolution of European football has really positioned itself ahead of many places and competitions because of the leagues' ability to absorb nationals from all the other continents.

The European football competitions and leagues have become a product that makes it more important in keeping the uncertainty of the game's outcome (see Markus Lang, 2013). This shows the uniqueness of European football market in the sport industry. Beyond that, football, as a professional sport provides a, means to understand the behaviours of the labour market in Europe. Sloane (1971) distinguished the European model of sport from the North American model and further challenged that the league rather than individual clubs is the relevant 'firm' (decision making unit). For instance, the management of the English premiership has structured and positioned their leagues in a manner that it has attracted foreign investors to become owners and/or shareholders of some clubs. Demonstrating huge capital investments in their leagues as

well as appealing to global viewership, which can make their leagues, to be seen as one of the best in the world.

European leagues and competitions can serve as a marketing strategy for clubs and federations to attract foreign supporters and sponsors globally. It again provides a two-way benefit for the donor and host countries when migrated talents become successful. On another side, it can have negative effects for both donor and host countries as well (Maguire et al, 2002:37). Since 1995 the major five European championships (English, Spanish, German, Italian and French) have dominated as the host to the majority of the international players (Poli et al, 2016). This is nothing new as their leagues are structured, competitive together with its professionalism status, and other social and economic potentials. By that makes the percentage of migrant football players' in teams too often increase each year (Poli, Ravenel and Besson, 2016). To the extent that some clubs within the distance of 100km along borders or regions recruit talented minors to recoup returns on investment after resale of their playing rights in future transfers. However, the section interest is to understand the European football labour market and how it has benefitted individual African footballer and clubs in their transactions.

The evolution of football dated far back in the 1950s with the debates on the subject. Football, contemporary is the one number global sport concerning its audiences and commercialisation across all the continents. This has made European football to gain popularity together with its associated economic earnings and quality of international players plying their trade in the leagues. Additionally, sport, in general, has metamorphosed particularly football into a different level of its own. In the early 1990s saw the total improvement in the game when FIFA together with its confederations strategised to establish a strong relationship with media industry as partners. Sudgen and Tomlinson (1998) argue the prominent role of FIFA and UEFA

in the marketing of the sport with their tournaments such as the FIFA World Cup and the UEFA Champions league that attract global viewership not only because of its quality but also the blend of international players.

These international players tend to migrate to European countries but are more attracted to the top five leagues in Spain, England, Germany, Italy and France. It is not surprising that countries are the most attractive in Europe regarding their socioeconomic level of life and stability to develop. Again those leagues seem to have the highest economic level due to the broadcasting rights and sponsorships amount that tend to increase in value upon subsequent renewals (Sudgen and Tomlinson, 1998). That has led to making those leagues becoming more attractive to international talented players as a result of its professionalism to entice other corporate and multinational sponsors. Football undoubtedly, is the most famous sport in the world, as well as the valuable of all sport, and this was revealed in the Deloitte (2008) reports as a big business (Giulianotti, 2005; Kunene, 2006).

For instance, the Deloitte edition of 2008, outlined the Football Money League, with the top twenty (20) richest clubs in Europe, revenue increased by 11%, €3.8 billion during the 2006/2007 playing season. This makes the ‘big five’ European leagues in Germany, England, France, Spain and Italy, hosting the most popular football leagues of the world, and accounted for the highest amount of revenue €8.4 billion and wage costs of €5.5 billion)<sup>2</sup>-(see Poli, Rossi and Besson, 2012). The same European leagues according to report of the UEFA in 2011 had most revenues and the highest players transfer turnover in the football labour market. The huge media coverage and worldwide viewership of the European football may have contributed to the game’s growth as well. The game’s popularity, broadcasting rights and the sponsors have also facilitated the transformation of the European football, as professional players, particularly the

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<sup>2</sup> Deloitte (2011), Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, 20th edition.

stars continue to bask in a pool of wealth. An article published on 29th October 2015 by Matt Hamilton with 200 Best Paid People in Football Today<sup>3</sup> “In Football/The Business of Sport” showed the weekly earnings or wages of players and their respective clubs. The below table shows the first 20 footballers list out of the 200 survey conducted.

Table 1. Displays of first 20 richest international footballers’ wages for 2015 in perspective

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Weekly Wages (£)</b>	<b>Club</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	Lionel Messi	313,461	Barcelona	Argentina	Latin America
2	Crisiano Ronaldo	288,000	Real Madrid	Portugal	Europe
3	Wayne Rooney	285,000	Manchester United	England	Europe
4	Zlatan Ibrahimovic	275,000	PSG	Sweden	Europe
5	Gareth Bale	256,000	Real Madrid	Wales	Europe
6	<b>Asamoah Gyan</b>	<b>226,923</b>	<b>Shanghai SIPG</b>	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Africa</b>
7	<b>Yaya Toure</b>	<b>220,000</b>	<b>Manchester City</b>	<b>Coté D’Ivoire</b>	<b>Africa</b>
8	Sergio Agüero	220,000	Manchester City	Argentina	Latin America
9	David de Gea	200,000	Manchester United	Spain	Europe
10	Bastian Schweinsteiger	200,000	Manchester United	Germany	Europe
11	Eden Hazard	200,000	Chelsea FC	Belgium	Europe
12	Luis Suárez	200,000	Barcelona	Uruguay	Latin America
13	Diego Costa	185,000	Chelsea FC	Spain	Europe
14	Thiago Silva	185,000	PSG	Brazil	South America
15	Rahim Sterling	180,000	Manchester City	England	Europe
16	Fernando Torres	180,000	Atletico Madrid	Spain	Europe
17	Blaise Matuidi	166,154	PSG	France	Europe
18	David Silva	160,000	Manchester City	Spain	Europe

<sup>3</sup> <http://thekingmaker.me/200-best-paid-footballers-in-the-world-today/> (Accessed on 10 January 2016)

19	Cesc Fàbregas	156,000	Chelsea FC	Spain	Europe
20	Toni Kroos	156,000	Real Madrid	Germany	Europe

This explains clubs budget increase on expenditure and therefore, it is important they expand their business models if they want to survive in the football market arena. That is, able to meet the huge wage demands of their best professional players in the football market. Beyond that, puts much stress on clubs to find extra finances to be able to maintain them, and also sign on best talents to help guarantee their stay in the football business. Among the top twenty international players with high wages include two African professional players with the majority coming from European territories. That makes the European players get more benefits than those foreigners in terms of highest wages, which confirms the migration general framework. It shows how the European football market attracts best international players from all over the world to their clubs and leagues. On the part of African professional players, the wages are very high comparing with what they were earning back in Africa clubs and leagues before moving abroad.

Owing to the game's development, its economic potentials, and other stakeholder contributions, the sport has significantly “exploded” in relation to its global penetration. This demonstrates how the game has evolved to bring in more finances and its associated benefits for players and leagues in Europe. Thanks to the role of the new market of football that continues to provide clubs with the opportunity to meet their expenditures and improving their revenue streams. Thus, becoming business oriented and with the players having authority to manage and control their contractual rights and movements in the leagues. The European laws and rules of the EU commission and their application in the football market persistently play a significant role in the movement of international players' cross-borders, nations, and continents to their leagues.

The football labour market has not only evolved in the industry but also other sporting disciplines as well, improving their commercialisation perspectives. For example, with football, players have their commercial roles which are being used by companies, organisations and other institutions to market their products. For instance, the world Pele from Brazil shared his experience as:

“Companies have wanted to associate themselves with me since I was a teenager. The first time I was approached to give my name to a product was when I had just started at Santos”  
(Pele born in 1940)<sup>4</sup>.

The above statement explains how the game of football appeals to many companies as a way to promote and market their products. To the extent of using players for a commercial purpose signifies the growth of the football industry that can incite other talents to strive and achieve such a goal.

This economy of football has been the driving force behind changes in the international football labour market and continues to intensify mobility of players’ worldwide. Apart from this, football has become truly globalised to support movement and migration of international players. It provides an understanding of specific behaviours in the football labour market that may influence football players’ choice to leagues in Europe. The economy of football also creates a means for international players to have alternatives to their career decisions as they pursue a professional career abroad.

This can make the motives of international footballers’ migration to leagues in Europe based on economic rewards (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001), yet there are other individuals with

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<sup>4</sup> Pele (Edson Arantes do Nascimento), former Brazilian player. He received numerous prestigious honours and decorations including Brazil's Gold Medal, Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire and Lifetime Achievement Award from BBC. (<http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/edison-arantes-do-nascimento-2544.php#deQI6firjuSMfDvCx.99>)-(accessed on 30/09/2015)

ambitious drive than the latter. The European football labour market helps to understand the evolution of professional players' wages and clubs' revenue streams. Beyond that, the economy of football has also brought benefits to the stakeholders of the game particularly the players, who have become more mobile in the international transfer market or the labour market of football. The projection of the European leagues has become visible in almost every corner of the Africa continent. This tends to entice many African talents, who are eager to move to their leagues as they see better future from, hence strive to get an opportunity to play there particularly Europe.

Consequently, best African talents who are able to join those prestigious leagues and rich clubs in Europe have their earnings increased which can support their families or households back home (Darby, 2014). This presents an opportunity for many talents from Africa to explore ways that will enable them to get to leagues abroad. In their bid to achieve a reputation as a professional footballer, they see migrating to leagues in Europe as the *only means* to realise that dream (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). This is because European football is economically important as well as sociological while African football is socially and politically indispensable.

However, football development and economic conditions in Africa rarely empower sporting talents or players to achieve a professional football career to suit their project dreams. Aside from the dynamics of the football labour market, the research discusses some obstacles affecting the development of African football leading to the exodus of its best talents abroad.

## **1.2 SITUATION AND EVOLUTION OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL**

Competitions and other related football activities are organised and managed by the Confederation of African football (CAF) <sup>5</sup>. It has 54 member associations zoned into six (6)

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<sup>5</sup> Plus sport (football) to promote peace, health, education issues, etc (see Coalter, 2010).



geopolitical regions that are Northern zone, West zone A and B, Central zone, Eastern zone, and Southern zone (CAF, 2014)<sup>6</sup>. Football has become part and parcel of many African countries ever since it was introduced in colonial times (Alegi, 2010). African countries seem to have achieved some equality on the football pitch despite their overall struggles in national and international development. Countries from CAF have chalked most successes in the FIFA U-17 World Cup tournaments since its inception in 1985 to present than the other five confederations<sup>7</sup> with 8 trophies out of the 18 competitions held so far. Other achievements include winning Gold and bronze medals at the International Olympic Games<sup>8</sup>. Africa football has seen a little progress in its organisation of AFCON competitions as a big event on the continent. For example, the AFCON 2012 competition was beamed to a wider global audience thereby attracting viewership figures of 6.6 billion as a historic event for CAF.

CAF's new introduction of the Championship of African Nations (CHAN) to offer opportunities for domestic leagues talents is a novelty on the part of the organisers. Competitions of CAF, on the other hand, may have contributed a little to the level of football in Africa, yet much more needs to be done on its development. Evidence can be observed in the standard of play, improved displays of individual qualities and potentials that attract foreign media attention, scouts, football agents and foreign clubs during such tournaments. In addition, African national teams with a high ratio of foreign-based players improve the level of play for those countries (Darby, 2014:78) in various competitions both domestic and international.

The trend has continued since the beginning of the 21st century with more participation

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cafonline.com/en-us/caf/cafzones.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> FIFA U-17 World Cup. <http://www.fifa.com/u17worldcup/index.html>. (Accessed on 20/10/2016)

<sup>8</sup> Football, Gold medalist (Nigeria-1996) and Bronze medal (Ghana-1992)

of foreign-based players than the home-based players<sup>9</sup>. Despite European clubs benefiting directly from the best pool of African talents exported, it has gone a long way to improving their level of skills, quality of play and mental attitude that are brought to bear on AFCON competitions. At the same time, AFCON and other international competitions continue to provide opportunities for both foreign-based and home-based players getting offers abroad and to other leagues in Africa.<sup>10</sup> This supports statement from a CAF technical study committee member that “revolution in the level of play, technical development, top foreign coaches to observe the game, with a lot of reforms in the coaching aspects and preparations by national teams has contributed to the beauty of AFCON competitions presently. Foreign-based players have made the AFCON tournaments gain more recognition as it attracts a lot of foreign scouts and viewerships globally. It has also played a role in the continuous player migration with financial benefits, yet players should not forget to give some back to their countries in return” (Oti-Akenteng, 2013)<sup>11</sup>. It shows that this competition has also contributed to facilitate players’ mobility to leagues abroad.

However, at the senior world cup competitions, an African country is yet to reach the semi-final stage, with the farthest a country has advanced was the quarter-final stage, credits to Cameroon (1990), Nigeria (1994) and Ghana (2010). This feat is not encouraging for a continent with abundant raw talents and that can explain some challenges facing its football development. The ‘tortoise’ approach of Africa football growth is a setback in the modern times, intensifying its talents mobility to other continents. Several scholars have engaged in discussions on African football talents migrations. For instance, Bale (2004) discussed the patterns, problems, and

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<sup>9</sup> Presentation on the “Influence of African professional players on AFCON tournaments” at the ACAPS congress in 2013, Grenoble, France by Ernest, Malek and Michel.

<sup>10</sup> Interviews with 32 African professional players confirmed that after their participation in AFCON and other international competitions (interviews from 2013-2016) by Ernest.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with CAF technical study committee member/ Technical director of Ghana Football Association, FIFA/CAF grassroots coach instructor by Ernest, 08/10/2013.

postcoloniality of African footballer migrations; Poli (2008, 2010b) explained the presence of African footballers in Europe and Asia; Büdel (2013) advocated moving beyond the categorizations of African migrations; and Darby (2014) highlighted on extension of European clubs recruitment of highly skilled talents from Africa and Latin American to obtain value for money.

Contextually, we cannot ignore the attractiveness and exodus of African players which is due to the economy of European football market. This really intensified after the decision on Bosman ruling (1995) as well as bilateral trade agreements between EU and non-EU countries<sup>12</sup>, which also support the processes of international players' migration to leagues abroad. Indeed, the persistent hardship of the economic conditions in Africa hardly creates the needed opportunities for young people and therefore do not see any future for their lives. Particularly those African talents, who may have the ambition to pursue a profession in football, cannot compromise with unstructured leagues and the neglect of players' welfare. Some of these situations may inform the decision of individuals to find options that can assist them to achieve their dream of becoming a professional footballer.

AFCON tournaments have seen some changes, particularly with many professional players participation<sup>13</sup> but insufficient to convince the world of its football growth due to the frequent migration of best talents to leagues in Europe. The regular participation of more foreign-based players in AFCON competitions tends to enhance the quality and standard of the continent's game. Also, FIFA's continuous scanty supports in finances and technical aspects to member associations in Africa have done a little to accelerate football development on the

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<sup>12</sup> [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/december/tradoc\\_111588.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/december/tradoc_111588.pdf) (Accessed on 07/10/2015)

<sup>13</sup> Presentation on the "Influence of African professional players on AFCON tournaments" at the ACAPS congress in 2013, Grenoble, France by Ernest, Malek and Michel. We observed consistent increase in migration of Africa players to leagues abroad since 1996 to 2015. This supports our findings on the subject.

continent. All these supports from FIFA tend not to reflect significantly on football development in Africa, making the future unclear for its talents who are forced to redirect their energies to leagues abroad.

However, national football associations and local football clubs are sometimes soaked in social canker, mostly symptoms to those found in the African governments such as corrupt leaders, insufficient training facilities, lack of funding, disputes between ethnic football clubs, and bias refereeing (Augustus Cooper, 2011) that tend to retard the progress of the game and its economy. Despite these challenges, Africa was able to host successfully the FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa for the first time in its history where FIFA made economic gains from the competition. Aside from that, much has not been done to help improve on the continent's football from the way it is struggling to meet the modern trend of the game management. This makes CAF have many more years ahead of its football development if they really want to catch up with the standard achieved by UEFA.

Another area that needs much attention by CAF is their ability to minimise African talents exodus to leagues overseas, and how they can also prevent exploitation by those unscrupulous agents (Darby, 2007) in order to protect its best talents from falling prey to them. Thorough analysis from the way African football is organised, managed and promoted provides the integral actors (players) with little hope and limited opportunities at home to develop and become true professionals. Thus, the *only way* for the players to *make it* is to embrace the migration opportunity towards the new market of football that enables them to play abroad. This new market offers them alternatives to their mobility project as they pursue a profession in football abroad.

Few signs of progress made in African football from the organisational level to

international competitions do not reflect on its professionalism status in the wider context of its structural football development. This could become a disincentive for many African football talents who dreamt of a reputation as a professional footballer and therefore seek alternatives to their situations. Therefore, find ways and means to move out of their countries to play in leagues abroad especially Europe, where they can be assured of a professional footballer status that may support their dreams. All the issues elaborated together with other unfavourable conditions for talents development, provide the basis to analyse how they are able to migrate to Europe. That is the next topic to be explained in order to understand the processes involved as they seek professional football career outside their continent.

### **1.3 GENERAL VIEWS ON THE CONCEPT OF MIGRATION**

Migration have different interpretations according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)<sup>14</sup>, a body established by inter-governmental organisation in the field of migration that also works closely with governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners to manage human migration issues. IOM has a challenge to even provide a general definition for the concept of migration. This is because it is more operational at the national level and not necessarily on an international level. It provides a situation that makes it uneasy to have universally accepted explanations since diverse scholars employ different theoretical frame. Indeed, a lot of the terms are ambiguous, contested and controversial if not contrary. These situations make it difficult to settle on a single definition of 'migration' that can be applicable to all context (IOM, 2010).

The concept of migration can be traced from history in the trading of goods and services

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.iom.int/about-iom>(accessed on 30/09/2015)

which were also typical in the rural and urban sectors as well as in different communities. This can link migration to labour absorption between different locales, and not just about jobs in the cities. Since territories cannot receive their own labour all the time-whether into paid work or into any other activity that provides household support- tend to become sending locales (Lipton, 1995). In other words, they represent donor locales and those receiving the labour forces as host locales. International migration can take place over long or short distances (depending on the closeness of borders). But in all cases, it requires a person to have appropriate resources including sometimes networks to facilitate their movement. It can also take a form of rural to rural (internal) migration or rural to urban (external migration) but the former may be less demanding.

With migration, information resources play critical roles, mostly focusing on the social network or contacts, which provide donor territories access to develop translocal networks relationships with the outside world. This provides a useful cardinal for individual migrants with a potential to forge translocal networks, cross-cutting, and connecting innovative locales or territories (Bunnell and Coe, 2001: 581-2). This approach is seen as a critical in maintaining links with left-behinds and Diasporas. The established networks relationships need to be coordinated and controlled, so as to manage that relational network alongside their migratory trajectories. The generated potential networks can also serve as transmission channels (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) that can help facilitate individual's subsequent migration.

On the contrary, there are times migrants have to deal with constraints (institutionalised measures) that may hinder their journey. This suggests that having translocal networks or contacts can support one's migration because the generated networks are embedded in both relational and institutionalised contexts. Apart from that, it can also increase both temporary and

permanent migration if local conditions promote this pattern (IOM, 2010). In the African context, migration activity must not only consider the economic factors (push and pull elements) but also social factors that individuals are embedded in. This helps to determine the kind of resources and contacts that are available to families before one can finally begin the migration process (De Haas, 2010).

Even beyond that, families with limited resources can go the extra mile to borrow money for their young person to travel abroad after assessing their network relations both home and abroad. There are times individuals make their own financial arrangements to secure loans that can facilitate their migration process abroad. These entire risk mobilizations are to support their people to move abroad since it can enhance family's social image and reputation in the locales. Since migrating abroad is seen as a potential economic break-through for the individual and his households. Apart from the economic and social benefits, political and climate factors can also play major changes from migrants to their countries of origin. Thus, some migrants' affiliation with political parties tends to mobilise finances and other resources to support and promote their activities back home. These are part of other impacts of the migration process in addition to social remittances that can also facilitate projects in their communities.

In effect, migration can be viewed as an optional decision on the part of an individual to move from one place to another (Khondker, 2013) with the exception of those exiled migrants who are forced to engage in external migration. The external migrations can simply be termed as moving outside a person's internal location. To conceptualise migration, the study moves beyond to identify migration within African countries against migration in the continent before connecting to international trend outside Africa borders. With the main focus on African footballers or talents manoeuvring their way through from the locales to leagues abroad.

Generally, international footballers' migration can take various forms like those within domestic leagues (Roderick, 2013). While, other studies have also argued about foreign footballers' migration within the continents (Poli et al, 2015) but this can be extended to clubs within the same level and division of leagues. For the purpose of this research, the concept of migration draws on the movement of African footballers from their communities to the European community as their final destination in achieving their professional careers ambition. The concept of migration in the context of this study is the movement of African talents from their communities of origin to Europe as their temporary host country. To further our understanding of the notion of migration, the research analyses African migration in general that will contribute to the development of the theoretical framework.

#### **1.4 AFRICAN MIGRATION: Description and Analysis**

Studies on African migration have made significant progress from the strict focus on labour migration towards a more holistic approach to the local, national and global levels (Mafukidze, 2006:103). Mafukidze argues that contemporary, migration activity in Africa is internally focused but not mainly to other continents. This may represent the opposite because many African migrants have a strong belief that moving outside their continent can guarantee them better lives for their future. Since their countries poor economic conditions and weak structural measures can impede their empowerment in the localities, and therefore recognise a journey overseas as solution to their problems. This is supported with a statement from an African migrant that "c'est un fait,émigrer vers l'europe est le rêve de beaucoup d'Africains. Mais les barriers entre notre enfer et votre paradis s'élèvent à présent jusqu'au ciel (Bassong



2006)<sup>15</sup>.

The comment suggests that many Africans dream of a successful life can be achieved by migrating to Europe which has a tendency to support their aspirations and ambitions. This illustrates how classical African migrants accept the challenges to forge ahead and migrate abroad. With this, it makes African migrants employ various strategies and means of dealing with pressures and restrictions in their bid to gain financial independence and individual freedom, and to seek new opportunities, security and a future as they overcome perilous routes while others are able to travel safely to Europe (König and de Regt, 2010:13). By seeing migration abroad as something that can only support them to achieve their dream of those enumerated reasons connected with their actions.

Even though many migrants can testify that they migrated abroad to better the living conditions of their families back home, it has increasingly been identified that this is not the only reason that individuals migrate (König and de Regt (2010:6). For instance, there are situations where some of them like women seek their fortune in moving away from patriarchal family systems and try to realise their dreams to experience individual freedom (De Regt, 2010). Aside from that, the pressure from family demands, unstable socio-political environment, and personal desires targeted at luxurious lifestyles can influence their migration abroad. Beyond that, those Africans bet on migrating tend to use available means to get to their final destinations. Even some African migrants go to the extent of contracting loans to facilitate their movement overseas.

With others crossing the Mediterranean Sea at different points and enter Europe long before the formation of European Union. However, things became tightened when the Schengen

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<sup>15</sup> Translation: It is a fact, migrants to Europe is a dream of many Africans. But the barriers between our hell and your paradise are presently rising to the sky.

Agreements was finally enacted allowing the borders between countries part of the European Union opened to encourage free movement of capitals, goods and people (König and de Regt, 2010). But the borders between Europe and other continents, in particular Africa, were reinforced (König and de Regt, 2010) that made migration more complicated. This makes a movement to Europe increasingly difficult for Africans with certain restrictions including getting a visa, reuniting with family, and others becoming more complicated and almost impossible.

In all these, African migrants attempt to use options like crossing over to the Sahara desert and engage in other dangerous trips by boat to islands in the Mediterranean Sea and in the Atlantic Ocean (König and de Regt, 2010). Despite this, Africans presence and influence in Europe is undeniable (Segal, 1995; Akyeampong, 2000; Grillo and Mazzucato, 2008). In effect, there have been African traders, scholars, and professionals in Europe and their experiences have not always been connected to racism and discrimination (Blakely, 1993). For the past two decades, Africans travelling to Europe continue to increase, yet their size is smaller proportion compared to other groups after the World War II (unavailability of reliable statistics to support that but is observable in relative terms).

But, today more Africans are eager to migrate abroad than ever before in modern history, particularly the young men and women driven by dreams, imaginations, aspirations and demands from families, relatives and friends to make it abroad. Since the kind of work, migrants do affect their family's relations at home and abroad, their future projects and the future of their children, as well as the elderly in the communities, are affected by their migration (Reinhilde and De Regt, 2010). Sometimes, what makes their migration special are the ways in which these migrants are forced to travel, often under perilous circumstances, and the 'resilience migrants' show to deal with unforeseen situations, tensions, and conflicts (König and de Regt, 2010).

Yet, the majority of African migrants are relatively well educated and come from moderate socioeconomic backgrounds, not from the lowest economic strata (De Haas, 2006). Those with financial constraints most often contact loans or provide surety or collateral to enable them secure funds to facilitate their migration abroad. It is amazing to see some families selling their properties or inheritance to support the migration of a family member, who wants to travel abroad. This clearly demonstrates that migration to Europe involves considerable costs component which sometimes and in many cases could be footed from contributions of 'extended' family or friends or others from the community.

Apart from that, migrants have to be in good health and they need to be embedded in viable transnational or other social networks in order to mobilise resources and energy in their migratory processes (König and de Regt, 2010). In all these circumstances, some migrants may face the challenge of danger, particularly those who opt to cross the Sahara and Mediterranean, which are not often known by the public. The photos of Alfredo Bini displays the harsh realities of the desert crossing and highlight the dangerous journey of African migrants en route to North Africa and Europe as evidence (see R.S.König and M.de Regt, 2010). All these do not even prevent them, yet are resilient to move overseas.

This makes the journey fearful and uncompromising tracing from the ordeals of events migrants have to deal with or may be confronted with along their trajectories. As a result of economic hardships, the collapse of educational systems, unstable socio-political environment, persistence poverty, high unemployment rates, the presence of repressive governments, agricultural reforms with disastrous consequences for rural areas and sometimes famines, natural disasters and others (König and de Regt, 2010). All these confirm the existence of weak structural factors that rarely empower the young Africans, who are desperate for survival

consciousness. Some of these issues really go a long way to influence many Africans' decision to migrate abroad where they can see a bright future from.

A peculiar characteristic of African migration is the strong feeling towards immediate family and the responsibility associated, as diasporic Africans maintain ties with their home countries, peers, and families; these relationships (whether political, economic, social or cultural) are often experienced as uneven since both sides (migrants and those who have stayed *home*) differ from their perceptions of reality out there in Europe (Akyeampong, 2000). High expectations from family members' play a special role in the diaspora and for one to flee from their kin can be a key motive for one's to migrate. Since for many Africans: "Going 'abroad' ... has been extended from the original conception of 'overseas' to going outside one's homeland and country (Akyeampong, 2000:186).

Also, migrants from Africa have been likened to the notion of going to 'hustle' or seek one's fortune preferably in a country where one's efforts are not witnessed or supervised by one's kin (Akyeampong, 2000). Thus, it puts a kind of social pressure on one's kin to explore the ways and means to succeed in the chosen overseas country. This is because, in many African societies, families and relatives recognise their support as an investment in the human capital of their kin and therefore tend to expect returns in the future from them. Such approach accordingly, may help to strengthen the family bonding as well as maintain the intergenerational traits (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014) while it is the opposite in many Western countries. But in African societies, families become recognised as a homogeneous body of which the individual members share the same concept in their dream even when they migrate abroad.

That demonstrates a sense of recognition, feelings and belongingness to family members and consequently, expects individuals not to turn their back on them or ignore them when they

become financially successful in their migration projects. Their support as little as it may be can help the cause of families or relatives or the community. In a way, it has become something like an obligatory as forming part of their culture. Since one's refusal to support their family or relatives or the community can be seen as an ungrateful act. This is because, they think that they have also invested in development to get them to that level.

Many instances, African migrants that return successfully are able to leave a legacy in their communities and get decorated with special awards or recognition from the chiefs or/and local and national authorities. The reward gesture can incite other migrants to do something in support of their local communities. This is why some migrants create hometown associations to support the cause of the larger society with their remittances and other financial assistances. African migrants' embeddedness is also demonstrated via the formation of school/community associations abroad and often organise financial remittances, and other resources to facilitate construction of projects like schools, hospitals, roads and creation of other support organisations like charity foundations (Ozkul, 2012).

The notion of hometown associations by classical migrants is a unique way for them to contribute their resources, efforts and remittance to support the local community development. This is also something that the research will further assess if it is a common among African professional players and how they get themselves involved or are members of different associations. But in African settings, the concept of living abroad is often attributed to success and wealth creation and hence it puts a considerable pressure on the individual migrants to force and succeed. This is something that is perceived by most families or relatives or others in the communities particularly those left-behinds at back home in Africa. Because they recognise Europe as a place for the individual to improve their life prospects hence, the strong desire for

people to migrate abroad continues unabated.

Apart from other things, this can be one of the reasons why immediate family and family members take active role in the decision-making processes at home ('should one leave or not'), on the road ('who to turn to in times of despair?'), and in the country of migration ('does one stay in touch, get other members of the family over, or disappear from the family radar?'), (König and M.de Regt, 2010). A clear indication of how relevant social relations and networks support the migration activities of their people. Some of the above difficulties are mostly encountered by classical African migrants in their journey abroad.

However, there are times migrants also develop and maintain multiple relations- with organisations, religious, and political bodies-that span borders. For instance, in Senegal, a membership of a religious group (Mouridiyya brotherhood) facilitates women's access to networks and gives them moral support (König and M.de Regt, 2010) in their migratory paths. Beyond that, migrants take action, make decisions and feel concerns within a field of social relations that link together their countries of origin and their countries of settlement (Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1992:9). This ensures that their networks of migration include the establishment of routes through transit, then to settle, and move on to their final destinations.

On another hand, the families, relatives, and the community people high expectations from their migrants are in return for their contributions toward their migration processes. Their expectations do not consider whether migrant has a job or not or what kind of work they do, but at the end, they are supposed to remit something back home. It is presumed that remitting something to families, relatives, and other people in the communities to sustain relationships back home. Aside from that, some African countries like Senegal, migrant women often give back to the society which in their cultural settings is appreciated and engendered their reputation

and image in the locality. Those women gain a new place in Senegalese society abroad (they spend their money and gain respect) and at home as well (König and M.de Regt, 2010).

The Senegalese women actions demonstrate whether they are social entrepreneurs, able to indulge themselves, their children and their extended family with gifts; erasing an impression that they are often considered as domestic workers in many African communities. This shows their willingness to support and assist the people by giving back to the communities where they are embedded. Contrary, those migrants unable to give something back to the people at home, are seen as ungrateful being and that can create frictions and tensions among parents, immediate families, extended family and others in their communities. This can be interpreted as a breach of obligations, trust and reciprocity in relation to the latter expectations. Since, migrants have surrendered their greater part of involvement and interest in the societies of origin, which has been identified by social sciences to comprehend migration as a reciprocal process (Colic-Peisker, 2002:32).

In the broader context, African migrants abroad include professional football players who also ply their trade there particularly in Europe. As to whether they face some of these difficulties in their migration processes will be explored. This is because they seem to have a specific process connected to their migration project, yet they may have some similarities with typical African migrants. For example, in the studies of Adepoju (2006) and Mafukidze (2006) and that of IOM (2005a) on the contemporary migration of Southern Africa, is terminally complex and unclear about what defines the specific patterns or processes of migrants to the country. Owing to the inconsistency in general concept for migration, which makes the patterns of the migration process they observed more complex to actually conclude on a definition concerning their studies.

Their concept of migration applies to both football migrants and classical migrants at the same time but their processes of migration may differ. This also makes it difficult to sometimes pinpoint any common characteristics applicable to all. For instance, football migrants as well as classical migrants often transfer remittances to families, relatives and the community in their countries of origin. But the reason for their actions may differ. For Adepoju and Mafukidze example, migrants to South Africa are attracted by assertive economic and relative political stability, including other resources that constitute the pull and push factors to that country, which can be the same for football migrants.

However, the biggest difference is seen in the bureaucratic process of migration for both football migrants and classical migrants. This is because the ordinary migrants rarely get any assistance particularly in acquiring the necessary permits but football migrants get all the necessary documentation from their prospective employers (clubs) in the course of their migration processes to that country. That can reflect the value a football player may possess, which makes him more valuable and attractive, and also the internationalisation of the sport as well. A credit must be given to the world football governing body, FIFA for their role by introducing various institutional measures to streamline the football labour market.

Adepoju and Mafukidze argued that the notion of football migrants getting access to work permits is easier in the course of their professional career to that country. This is because the host country stands to benefits from frequent taxes of professional players and other indirect expenses than ordinary migrants. Also, professional players are easy to control and monitor since they have permanent work with the employer clubs. On another hand, job opportunities favour football migrants as they are mostly assured of their work permit on arrival.

The analysis of the general migration on African migrants' pinpoints the role of



networks, families and the expectations of their interests. This is due to their resources invested in their family members' journey abroad. The various families' resources are gathered from all sources to facilitate a member migration processes. As a result of investing in their human capital development, they expect to receive a return on investments in the form of giving back. Therefore, both families and migrant persons tend to maintain regular contact in order to strengthen their established relationships. The established connection with their families' back home spans beyond the countries of origin while on the move abroad, which the study explains as transnationalism. The next section illustrates further on the concept of transnationalism in the context of African migrants abroad.

#### **1.4.1 Transnationalism: General views and definitions**

A brief mentioning of transnationalism concept earlier on is explained in details here. Much as migration has intensified, credit is given to globalisation and new technologies that have also contributed greatly to help migrants maintain contacts with their families, relatives, and others. This subsequently, facilitates participation in their affairs back home in the country of origin. In a broader sense, the evolution of theories on transnationalism and the inception of a transnational structure has become an important aspect of the migratory practice. Since transnationalism has persisted in the last decade in many studies on international migration. This has helped to ease the flow of movement from one place to another, benefiting migrants that keep contact with their left-behinds both at their home country and abroad.

The modern social sciences define 'transnationalism' as the processes by which migrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (see Lazăr, 2011). This process is transnationalism in the sense that, many migrants

presently develop social fields which cut across geographic, cultural, and political borders (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc, 1994). Migrants' ability to develop such connections along with their migratory trajectories tends not only to expand their networks and social relations but also benefits them in their future endeavours.

In another context, transnationalism highlights how migrants construct and reconstitute their lives as simultaneously embedded in more than one society (Çaglar, 2001). For instance, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, migrants from Russia, Poland, and Italy maintained links with their countries of origin, sending back money, investing in the business and visiting kin (Portes, 2001:183; Colic-Peisker, 2002). This transformation has gone a long way to enabling migrants also contribute to economic, political, cultural and social activities of their communities in various forms via remittance and other resources. How can this apply to the specific case of African professional players abroad since it is presumed that they remit football-related monies to people in their communities? Therefore, what is the reason behind their action?

Transnationalism also encompasses the sustained ties of persons, networks, and organisations across the borders, across multiple nation states, ranging from simple to highly institutionalised forms (Faist, 2000:189). Yet, some theories have advocated for the development of a network society, considering the technological advancements giving way to new patterns of social relations or at least strongly reinforcing the pre-existing tendencies (Remennick, 2003:371). In other words, it was developed to trace people's cross-border activities and experiences of belonging that occur as economic, political and social transactions across borders intensify (Portes et al., 1999).

Besides, the attention of scholars was shifted to how migrants sustain a connection with people, organisations, and institutions outside their borders after relocation in their migratory

processes. The term *simultaneous embeddedness* then became one of the key ways in which, to explore how migrants settle into a new locale and same time maintaining various social relationships that extend to other nation states (Schiller, 2003; Itzigsohn, 2000; Levitt and Schiller, 2004). This permitted the analysis to move beyond conceptualizations of migrants as being *uprooted*, in favour of a perspective in which migrants ‘travel along routes, back and forth across international borders, negotiating cultures and social systems (Abdelhady, 2006; Fouron and Schiller, 2001; Kearney, 2004: 217–274) and Carter, 2011a: 25).

Beyond that, sports labour migration considers analysis on how sports athlete migrants establish and maintain relationship and connection in multiple places along their migratory paths with the use of new technologies and social media. Thus, it is actually through transnational and multiple deep connections that sports migrants can achieve and sustain their own mobilities (Engh and Agergaard, 2013). Since migration within the same country can depict diversity rather than a unitary group of people having distinct personal and social endowments (Roccio, 2001:589). This shows how football migrant players’ differ in characteristics no matter their socio-cultural backgrounds and therefore cannot be expected to act in the same manner since they are unique individuals with different behaviours.

There are times that migrant may not necessarily have to be physically present at their home or host country, yet can still communicate with their left-behinds. For instance, it is only possible [for a migrant] to be integrated to the degree that the integrationist hosts culture allows (Robins and Aksoy, 2001b). But considering the case of African migrant players, their integration approach needs further investigation since many of them find it difficult to adapt to their new environment. Normally, migrant or a group is expected to be able to integrate well in all aspects like the language skills and with an opportunity to explore their environments.

However, their transnational priorities will be very different especially those marginalised migrants or group (see Sampson, 2003). In that instances, migrants may not be well integrated, hence, a transnationalism which is predominantly cultural in character can emerge (Robins and Aksoy, 2001b; Carsten, 2003; Hall, 1990; Moorti, 2003).

This can lead to the production and promulgation of cultural products and mindsets to produce transnational imageries capable of creating and sustaining new forms of transnational publics (Carsten, 2003). In the past, researchers and politicians hardly consider the inclusion of migrants as part of the nation-state process but rather only emigrants that keep links with the home country and possibly other places or destinations lived or visited. Beyond that, other scholarships on transnational have expressed multiple embeddedness of migrants in various context and societies (Schiller, Basch and Szanton, 1992). Studies on transnational migration have shown multiple embeddedness of migrant prospects that do not interfere with integration in the host society, nor limit their loyalty nor hinder their social mobility, nor interaction with the local surroundings (Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec, 2003; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). Yet, many African players abroad experience reintegration difficulties in their new environment.

But with the opportunities and movement abroad, professional players still maintain connections with their countries of origins and with the settled country (Agergaard and Ryba, 2014). This creates a kind of data bank for migrants as they get information from various countries sources ranging from politics, culture, economic and social that can assist them to make appropriate decisions on their future. In many African communities, it shows the deep connections migrants have with their community members prior to their departure abroad and this brings to mind the concept of *embeddedness*. This concept illustrates economic relations between individuals situated within existing social relations. They are thus, structured by these

relations and the greater social structures of which those relations are a part (Granovetter, 1985).

Here, the individual player is considered as an embedded actor that exists in a set of relationships with others within his local surroundings whose choices may affect his own choices as well. This means that the choices of African players are not wholly determined by facts internal to their individual concepts and values but actions may be influenced by the observed and expected behaviours of others. Thus, African professional players in their migratory processes and mobility abroad have had interactions with several people including colleagues, team staff and management, and others with different backgrounds, and can impact their behaviours as individuals.

Since African professional players are individual actors who have their economic interests that they attach importance to their actions (Weber, 1922; 1978) and are also embedded in concrete and on-going systems of social relations. Therefore, the probability of players' economic interest being influenced by significant others could be expected in their migration and mobility abroad. This is because players tend to keep their relationship with their left-behinds in their countries of origin as well as their place of work. These transnational approaches provide an understanding of the active role of individual migrants' ability to convert their migration dynamics of social embeddedness in several locations and cross borders to their advantages. To better our understanding of transnationalism, analysis from various scholars provide some opportunities and challenges which have been outlined by IOM<sup>16</sup> concerning migrants. These are:

Transnational migrants' contacts or networks developed along their paths can become vehicles for social and cultural exchanges between societies through, for example, the enrichment of arts, music, films, entertainment and cuisine, promotion of tourism, diffusion of

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<sup>16</sup> IOM-International Organisation for Migration (2010).

alternative medicine, or exchanges at the level of education and research. Transnational exchanges can be in a form of economic, including remittances as well as investment and trade in specialised goods and services sought by migrants in countries of destination from countries of origin, for instance.

Transnational migrants also manifest themselves in the transfer of ideas in the so-called *social remittances*<sup>17</sup>. Migrants can engage in social or political activism to raise awareness about their countries of origin in their host country, and they may advocate for the improved protection of human rights, or raise funds to support communities in home countries. These contributions are of particular relevance in post-conflict reconstruction or following natural disasters, as is also the case with financial remittances. Migrants can also influence predominant ideas in the home and host societies in more subtle ways, for instance, by spreading different views about social and political norms and practices in their countries of origin, or by creating a better understanding of different cultures in their societies of destination.

Migrants and their families may experience their transnational existence as a source of personal enrichment and development. Generally, educational, professional and lifestyle opportunities and language abilities can be enhanced. Conceptually, widening their horizons and the ability to tolerate and accept different cultures can be very rewarding for migrants. But different contexts need to be considered in tailoring migration policies to enhance the positive aspects of transnationalism for migrants, their families and societies of origin and destination. This can be a difficult something to do, yet an alternative measures should in place to help solve some of these issues in the future so as to minimise illegal migration globally. Beyond that, it would not be out of place for the authorities to reconsider enacting policy that can support their

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<sup>17</sup> The subject of social remittances at the second Intersessional workshop, *Societies and Identities: The Multifaceted Impact of Migration*, on 19-20 July 2010.

integration processes particularly with African professional players before, during and after their football career in those host countries. However, the challenges are at the individual and family level where several threats arise.

Firstly, family disruption due to the migration of the breadwinner or primary caregiver can be particularly acute. Separation of parents and children may give rise to psychosocial challenges and increase the vulnerability of those left behind in countries of origin. Often, the elderly are left with additional care responsibilities yet may themselves be in need of care. Family disruption can have wider social repercussions -with impacts felt differently by men and women and in many instances, women bear the brunt of the burden. In all these circumstances, it should also be recognised that family members frequently find new and creative ways to maintain and develop relationships across borders.

Secondly, migrants' access to pensions and health insurance can be limited or even denied because they are unable to transfer their accumulated benefits and entitlements when they move, despite having made contributions to these schemes.

Thirdly, transnational experience may also result in loss of identity and belongingness for some individuals that are easily swayed off or become embedded in their new social environment. Issues may also arise within families, for instance when children feel an attachment to a different country than their parents. At a societal level, while migrants bring new ideas to their host countries, some migrant communities may also hold on to lifestyles they associate with their places of origin. On occasion, they may do so even if the traditions in those places have since changed. This has raised concern in some destination countries about incompatible social or cultural practices, for example in terms of gender roles. In such cases, strong transnational ties may be seen as detrimental, representing an inability or unwillingness to integrate into the new

society.

In other instances, migrants' transnational links are interpreted as split loyalties. As a result, migrants and the intentions of their transnational activities may be regarded with suspicion in both home and host countries, sometimes even raising national security concerns.

In sum, various explanations and contributions to transnationalism provide a platform to understand how migrants may choose to maintain connections with their left-behinds in the home country. That is, applicable to conventional migrants like football migrants who may tend to keep contact with their families, friends, and others in the community. Thus, the latter is seen to play a significant role in their migration processes. Aside from that, they have invested in their migrants' development and journey abroad and therefore, there is the need for them to keep in constant touch to cement their relationships back home. All these assist in analysing how African migrant players' behaviour may differ from that of African classical migrants toward their communities since their migration processes are different. This contributes to ascertain how it can shape and reshape their relationships with their left-behinds back home in their countries of origin.

Since in many African countries, family members, relatives and others have the responsibility to invest their time, efforts, and resources into the migration process of their migrants abroad. When this happens, migrants have no option other than to maintain regular contact with them. This development may have significance influence considering migrants' decisions to invest or not in their countries of origin. The trend may be the same for African football migrants who also ply their trade as labour forces in Europe. With this notion, the next topic provides an illustration of the mobility project and the new football market in Europe. This contributes to the understanding of the mobility in the football market that provides talents



movement opportunities with the commensurate economic earnings abroad.

#### **1.4.2 Mobility and the new market of football in Europe**

The new market of football has been a stimulus for mobility of international players towards their careers abroad. This is due to the opportunities abound in the new market of football that may influence players mobility decisions to leagues abroad. The dynamics of the game continue to provide professional footballers with an opportunity making them more mobile than in the past. Based on this, literature and knowledge on mobility tend to structure the movement of different sets of social objects (Elliot and Urry, 2010; Urry, 2007). Out of those experiences, football players from Africa manoeuvre through the system by relying on certain factors towards the new market of football to facilitate their mobility project abroad.

Mobility is a life, where possible, one is only alive, if one can be mobile, make social life of people free from human incidents and cultural constraints that can impede one's progress (Urry,2010). From Urry's mobility concept, the mobility of African players abroad should look beyond colonial and neocolonial ties (Darby, 2007) because they have their independence to make choices for themselves. This makes the agency of African players pivotal in their mobility choices to pursue a football career abroad.

The concept of mobility has been theorised in a different context to the mobilities model alluded to in scholarships of sports labour migration. But, the study considers the mobility of African players towards the new market of football in Europe. It further uses Urry's mobility concept to understand the agency of African players' mobility project to their destinations of play in Europe, if they are pushed to choose from the opportunities towards the new market of football. To settle on mobility opportunity, the football players must consider *where to move*,

*how to move, and how to get there, and why that choice* so that, it reduces their uncertainty and avoid wrong decisions.

In the new market of football, mobility phenomenon shape and reshapes the destination of play for international footballers' relocation activities in their spin (Rial, 2008; Roderick, 2012) patterns and lived experiences (Agergaard and Tiesler, 2014). Footballers' mobility can be either upward or downward depending on their situations (Roderick, 2012). Upward mobility permits players in a relatively trouble-free manner as "just happening" as a result of their skills and performance. While de-selection and downward mobility are not so easily explained by players, as here players often point to factors like the relation with the manager, teammates, and decisions of club officials to hire or fire managers (Roderick, 2012).

Roderick argues that the majority of mobility events in football players' careers are actually downward and driven by de-selection from their team rather than upward mobility and the free choices of players. This makes the mobility project of African footballers likely driven towards the new market of football by helping them with their free choices to experience upward mobility abroad. In leagues abroad, some African players may experience downward mobility along with their career paths. The agency of African players may influence their logic of actions towards their mobility project abroad. In the sense that, mobility is something consciously produced and not a result of mechanistic systems (Carter, 2014:167). It presents football players with the free will and power to make their own choices. Since the importance of networks of power that place the individual as interdependent with other individuals and groups in a structured network (Maguire, 2012) cannot constrain the independence of the players' choice. Also, the institutionalised networks can play a role to support the mobility decision of footballers.

On one hand, African female players rely greatly on agents and intermediaries in producing transnational mobility abroad (Agergaard and Ryba, 2014). This situation may prevail in the male African players but their impacts can be minimal as they have control in managing their movements. In sum, mobility draws on conditions that provide one's authority to produce movement of choice and therefore the agency factor is a key here. African players' mobility project may depend on the opportunity for them to be mobile towards the new market of football than anything else.

The new market of football offers players certain conditions that can push them to achieve their football profession abroad. At the same time, provide them with the opportunity to become self-sufficient as well as boost their social upward mobility in their communities (Esson, 2013) when they are successful, and what happens when they are not successful? Some consequences for those unsuccessful can be found in the studies of Büdel (2013), where some ambitious African migrant players became unemployed in Turkey.

Much as the new market of football may have its own challenges, FIFA continues to reinforce regulations on player's status and transfers. That has brought a sort of sanity and at the same time, improves the stability of players' mobility towards the new market of football in Europe. Not only mobility projects can be linked to colonial and neocolonial ties but also other elements that play a role in players' mobility abroad to be explained further with the developed database.

The concept of mobility offers football players' choice in the broader context of their career profession. Based on this logic, the research examines the general views on footballers' migration.

## **1.5 DEFINITIONS OF FOOTBALLERS MIGRATION**

From the IOM, it is difficult to settle on a specific definition of the conception of migration. This made the study to examine various views and definitions from the perspectives of other scholars in the field of migration studies. The concept of migration continues to attract attention due to its importance to the economies of the world. It tends to direct the dynamics of development through the mobility of workforces, technologies, innovations and researchers across the globe. Geographically, mobility has become a crucial part of a career development (Vertovec, 2001, 2002). Mobility can either be temporary or permanent depending on the individual chosen career paths to the new environments (places) or societies in pursuit of their ambitions.

Agergaard and Tiesler (2014) explained that footballers migration can be related to long-term movements from one place to another place, while their mobility focuses on temporary and circular forms of movements- that is going back and forth or moving between various places with short time intervals (Bell and Ward, 2000). From the literature, footballers' migration is the movement from their communities to the European community irrespective of the destination of play.

In moving forward on the subject, Roderick (2013) advocated for scholars to shift attention to the internal or 'domestic' migration of professional players. Based on that, Roderick focused on the case of English footballers within the country as they relocate, find new clubs and adapt to the new environment. Roderick suggests that this internal migration should be part of the broader sport athletes' migration concept since it plays a significant role in the mobility and circulation of international players within the leagues in England. This makes the player's relocation activity often associated with their migration processes. The study also suggests that

the migration processes can take a form of trans-country's movement and/or trans-leagues movement. These processes of trans-country's movement and trans-leagues movement can provide the basis for the dynamic migration of international football players in Europe.

Also, many of the football migrants movements are framed on sometimes modes of informal networks operation that become the point of itinerary-(some can lead to most of them being left on the road or are not able to return home due to undocumented or lack financial support), (König and de Regt,2010). Some of these situations can inform families to take deliberate, rational decisions with the aim to improve the income or educational standards of its members. This approach in the long term can support family members that want to migrate abroad with limited problems.

The perspective on footballers' migration suggests that it has been occurring throughout history, beginning with the movements of sport athletes across borders and nations worldwide. Some of these movements can occur between continents (intercontinental), between countries on a given continent (intracontinental), and within countries (interregional level)<sup>18</sup>. Above all, the most common migration trends have been football players moving from the rural (countryside) to urban (cities/regional capitals) in search of work opportunities. This explains the framework under which football player migration is considered to have undergone in the recent years. Since, football migrants' movement seemed to have been transformed by economic, political, socio-cultural and technological advancements.

In sum, definitions of football players' migration emphasise their movement from African communities' to host communities in Europe to achieving their ultimate goal. In many African communities, this presents the exact situation where talents put their entire survival on moving overseas as the only way to succeed in life. That is, migration outside the borders of

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<sup>18</sup> National Geographic: Society (2005) definition on varieties of migrations.

Africa can provide those football talents hope towards their dreams and that of the families.

Beyond that, analysis of African football migrants to overseas provides a better understanding of the rationalities behind their migration process to Europe, which is relevant to the research.

## **1.6 MIGRATION OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL PLAYERS TO EUROPE**

The migration of football players to attractive leagues and clubs is a continuation of a trend that began in the 1870's when English clubs employed the talented Scottish footballers (Goldblatt, 2006:47). Migration has become dynamic and extremely complex, owing to increasingly trend such as the feminisation of migration (female footballers: see William, 2011; Agergaard and Tiesler, 2014; Booth and Liston, 2014). It includes the distinct of migration destinations and the transformation of labour flows into international transfer market of football. The various concepts of migration have been outlined, but the focus is on the migration of African players, as part of the broader international footballers in the transfer market. Migration emanated from the historical perspectives that have since played a crucial role and cannot be disregarded drawing on football migrations (Taylor, 2007). This creates a means for talents to cross borders, nations, and continents to fulfill their dreams.

More African football talents are eager to migrate abroad than ever before in modern history. This is due to global major changes (such as migration of economic, technology, societies, politics, etc) and the persistent increase of poverty, high unemployment rates, presence of repressive governments, collapse of educational systems, agricultural reforms with disastrous consequences for rural communities and sometimes famines, natural disasters, and political instability have contributed to their migrations abroad (De Haas, 2008). These structural issues

and poor economic management by the African leaders continue to intensify the migration of its talents to leagues in Europe.

Since getting to leagues abroad come with its own opportunities and difficulties but those talents may feel relieved as they have access to many things that can also improve their lives. Leading to the migration of best football talents from Africa to European leagues, which is nothing new (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001; Darby, 2014). The best players from Africa migrate abroad in exchange for their talents and potentials in order to achieve their career ambitions as a professional footballer. These players are not only seeking professional football opportunities outside African borders but also weak structures and lack of professionalism in African football rarely empower them rather influence their migration abroad.

According to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001), the main motive for international footballers to leagues and clubs abroad is influenced by economic potentials in anticipation for their services. It is one of the reasons that also facilitate the migration of African football talents to those leagues in Europe. The next section provides some details on the earnings of African footballers in their host leagues abroad.

## **1.7 AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS WAGES IN EUROPEAN LEAGUES**

Aside from the setbacks in African football development, African talents and prospects ply their trade in top European leagues and tend to attract clubs as they are always being sought for a season after season. Their stay in the leagues abroad tends to increase greatly their wages/salaries compared to what they used to receive back home in the domestic leagues or in other sectors of activities. For example, on the average, many African migrant players in the top flight leagues can earn between €15,000 and 100,000 or more as wages/salaries. Those

professional players in leagues one, two and three respectively can also earn around €10,000-50,000; €5,000-20,000, and €2,000-10,000<sup>19</sup>. All their earnings are calculated on monthly basis aside from the bonuses and other incentives players are entitled to.

Also, there are some in the top elite European leagues that earn more than €150,000 as weekly wages, who are termed as high profile players from Africa. Interestingly, comparing the monthly salaries of some highly skilled Africa migrants like engineers, professors, medical doctors, etc. who may also earn on average an amount between €7,000-20,000. Even with those African migrant menial workers, it is quite insignificant or negligible to that of high profile African players. The earnings of African professional players tend to place them high among their communities members which make some to be recognised as part of the ‘millionaires’ in their countries of origin.

Apart from the players’ embeddedness, the community people expect to see the growth of that relationship despite changes in a person’s situation or condition. This is because, they are always seen as part of the larger society where they come from. That goes a long way to strengthen and cement their social bonding with the people in the communities. In the sense that, they may have played a role to facilitate their migration abroad as players seek new opportunities there. Thus, prior to a player’s migration, there are interplays of various roles from families, relatives, friends and others who provide support in diverse ways to enhance a person’s smooth departure abroad. This demonstrates the way talents and prospects are supported right from their beginning in the communities to assist them achieve their dream of professional football abroad.

With their migration processes abroad, multiple embeddedness of migrants’ prospect is anticipated, and what it does to them, is another thing that can be investigated. Since it may

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<sup>19</sup> It was arrived at using minimum and maximum wages/salaries of players in leagues of Spain, France, Germany, England, Italy and Switzerland.



provide researchers explanation into how African migrant players' multiple embeddedness can influence their behaviour changes as they reconnect to their local communities after attaining professional footballer status abroad.

Beyond some of the factors that facilitate African players' migration to European leagues, are also the international football market trends, which underpin the current systems and networks of the footballers' migration (Taylor, 2007). That is, it has affected where the players choose to go and where clubs scout for players, due to the long-established colonial, cultural, linguistic, social and personal connections (Taylor, 2007). On the contrary, this pattern seems not to be the case with the dynamics of the football industry since clubs have become business-oriented and with football players, and their families, relatives and agents deciding on the best opportunities for them. Since players have become their cash cows.

For instance, the database developed for African professional players beginning leagues abroad skewed from the neocolonial perspectives to the role of the new market dynamics in the football transfer market. This is because, African professional players' have choices to control and manage their contractual rights, courtesy of the new market of football that provides them freedom to do so. Besides, it provides them mobility opportunities in their football circulation and movement to clubs and leagues abroad.

Studies by Poli, Ravenel and Besson (2015) revealed a total of 18,660 foreign players from 194 origins in the 458 leagues from 183 countries situated in the existing confederations: Europe (UEFA), Asia (AFC), Africa (CAF), South America (CONMEBOL), North and Central America (CONCACAF) and Oceania (OFC). From their data analysis, there are 4,322 African players exported to foreign countries leagues in world football representing 23.24%. This confirms the rise of African professional players' migration to the international leagues overseas.

Beyond that, the football labour market has shifted to Europe because of its financial resources and structural status (Poli, 2007), together with the quality of play and other sociological facilitators (such as strong mediatisation, quality of life, social recognition, social status, etc.).

This continues to attract football talents from Africa to leagues in Europe, which featured as a focal point of international football migration (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001) with the number of African migrant players represents the second highest after UEFA footballers (Poli et al, 2015). Yet, professional players' migration has been tied to general migratory patterns, and that various countries both in Europe and Africa have been involved in different ways. For example, countries like France, Belgium or Italy have assumed the roles of the recipient (hosts) of African migrant players from Senegal, Cameroun, or Ghana as the suppliers (donors) of talents.

These professional footballers from Africa migrating to leagues in Europe can be based on certain factors that facilitate their movements there. In the wider spectrum of the sports industry, what actually inform the decisions of sport athletes' movement to a county may have different interpretations. This opens another page to identify the motive behind the migration of sports athletes and for that matter, the case of African football players to specific leagues and/or countries in Europe.

## **1.8 TYPOLOGIES OF FOOTBALL MIGRANTS**

Globalisation, media, and technological advancements had made migration far more possible for migrant groups and migrant profiles extended beyond the classically identified categories of immigrants, refugees and guest workers. That makes a movement towards different parts of the world become easily accessible, much quicker and easier. Not only the movement to

other parts of the globe but also the *sportisation* of the body to acquire characteristics and abilities to promote sporting performance (Dostie, 1988: 225). The migration of football players is gaining more grounds with respect to the sport where the participants sometimes have to cross borders, nations and continents to compete or undertake pre-season training. This activity also creates a platform to market clubs internationally.

It makes players become more mobile in the course of their football profession. Beyond that, it is not only football players who experience such mobility but also professional athletes from boxing, Golf, tennis, athletics, etc., who have to move and compete in their various fields of sports. In migration research, Bailey (2001) identifies three basic distinctions that form the profiles of migrant types: short-distance versus long-distance moves, forced (political) migration versus voluntary (economic) migration, and short-term migration (as sojourners) versus long-term migration (settlers). However, the research looks at the types of sports labour migration with similarities to those outlined by Bailey.

Literature on various typologies for sport athletes have been recommended based on scientific research of male athletes migrating mainly into Anglo-American societies (Maguire, 1999; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001; Magee and Sugden, 2002; Takahashi and Home, 2004) and with the specific case of African football players moving to leagues of Europe and Asia (Poli, 2010b). The studies of Maguire (1996) outlined five typologies of sport migrants as follows:

- 1) *pioneers*-those motivated by an almost evangelical zeal for the expansion of their sports;
- 2) *settlers*-those interested in subsequently staying in the host country;
- 3) *mercenaries*-those motivated by short-term gains;
- 4) *nomadic cosmopolitans*-those who wants to experience other cultures and cities; and

5) *returnees*-those who aims to return home, example to finish their career.

Analysis from various sports disciplines conducted by Maguire helped him to conclude on the above typologies for sports migrants in general. This may apply to some of the African football talents in their search for a professional career abroad.

Other scholars followed up on the Maguire's study with an exact focus on the case of football or soccer players to develop or respond to his work. Among them are Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001), who presented a detailed historical survey and settled on three key types of football migrants that are:

1) *the settlers*,

2) *the mercenary*, and

3) *the itinerant*- excluding therefore 'pioneers' and 'returnees' as proposed by Maguire. They supported their argument on the basis of structural and institutional factors that played a role to influence the move of players by citing three main purposes: the economic crisis and national financial weakness, the offer of only semi-professional or unpaid amateur opportunities, and the attraction of unavoidable lucrative contracts. Thus, they confirmed '*the motives of football migrants have mainly been economic*' (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). Their conclusion can illustrate the motive behind some African football players' migrating to leagues abroad.

Furthermore, Magee and Sugden (2002) developed on the Maguire's typology, outlining six types of migration observed in the English football league. That includes:

1) *the mercenary*,

2) *the settler*,

3) *the nomadic cosmopolitans*-same as outlined by Maguire,

4) *the exiled*-those who move owing to political reasons, opted to leave his country and managed to keep his professional career abroad;

5) *the expelled*, applied to players who, due to a combination of behavioural problems and media exposure, are, in effect, forced to migrate to another country in order to play professionally; and 6) *the ambitionists*-that is further divided into three possible sub-types. Firstly, there is the player who simply wants to have professional football careers (anywhere). Secondly, there is the player who moves to a specific country or club because he has a high preference for playing there, rather than somewhere else. Thirdly, the ambitionists can also be someone who wants to improve his career by moving to the league with the highest possible sporting level.

The scholars' concepts focused on the broader context of migrant types in the sports industry. However, there are some ambitionists who move as a result of better sporting facilities, and at the same time become visible to national team's handlers or managers. There are ambitionists, who simply want to have improved life in the future to support households, extended families, friends and the community. These are some of the motives why migrant players from Africa move to play football abroad.

Despite the economic and sporting ambitions influencing some football players' motive to relocate, particularly with male footballers, Agergaard, Botelho and Tiesler (2014) identified some challenges in the typologies of sport labour migrants: firstly, existing typologies have failed to consider the identified motivations of athletes lived experience while playing abroad nor the future prospects/outcomes of migration in a more encompassing description of migrant types; and secondly, lack of more detailed analysis of the various ways in which athletic migrants accommodate to their new setting and keep connection with their countries of origin (transnational migration).

They suggest the inclusion of *integration* with reference to settler's type that shows the potential of football, providing a form of integration. The concept of integration particularly for

African migrant players is a pressing issue because the majority finds it difficult in adapting to their new environment. Beyond that, the existing studies failed to identify how a football player can cope with life outside football, particularly changing clubs, family adaptation, relocation and others as part of their work hazards they have to deal with. For instance, there are some difficulties professional footballers have to grapple with, on the relocation of families, integration and adaptation (Roderick, 2013).

A collection of football biographies plus media interviews of migrant players like Didier Drogba from Ivory Coast (McShane, 2008), Andriy Shevchenko from Ukraine (Shevchenko, 2012), Eric Cantona from France (Auclair, 2009), Ze Roberto from Brazil (Colonisio and Duque, 2006), and Marta, female player from Brazil (Graciano, 2009) provided a different dimension to the subject. Analysis report of the lived experience of players overseas compiled by Rial revealed the *circular* international movement of players (moving from one club or country to another), which the players call *the spin*, many limit their social experience within the boundaries of the club with little interest and/or opportunity to interact with outside groups (Rial, 2008).

International mobility of male football players in a way is limited to the macro level analysis emphasising the gains and losses for countries and clubs involved in the international market of football migration (Alvito, 2007; Poli and Ravanel, 2005). The economic, social, and political difficulties or hardships in the so-called underdeveloped parts of the world are identified as push components that influence individuals to migrate as opposed to the more advantageous pull elements in the so-called developed parts of the world (Maguire et al, 2002).

Studies from scholars on typologies of migrations also failed to consider origins or localities of people particularly those from the underdeveloped and developing countries since

some lack certain basic facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, they may have different ambitionists' perspective in migrating abroad. From the typologies of migration, African players' may exhibit different behaviours at each stage of their mobility trajectories in leagues abroad. Considering the football migrants lived experiences and motives, it becomes difficult to understand how this may influence their social behaviour to support the local community via investing their intellects, cultural and sporting capitals, and other resources to the benefits of their countries of origin in Africa.

The typologies of sports migrants provide a frame that may assist to explain the motives behind African professional players' migration in order to ascertain how it can also influence their behaviours. This concept of football migrants' types provides understanding to the various movements of their migration process abroad.

It contributes to the comprehension of migratory itineraries of African footballers', by employing different strategies to facilitate their migration project. Their migration project cannot be simply defined since it involves different actors and networks within the social environment. To find a solution to this, the study articulates the various actors using economic sociology approaches to understanding their roles in the process. The next section delves deeper into the application of economic sociology approaches that can provide a generic solution to African footballers' migration project abroad.

## **Conclusion**

The migration of people has been part and parcel of the changing dynamics in the world. This has taken different perspectives, making it difficult to settle on a general definition of the migration process. In the context of this research, migration of African footballers is explained as

the movement from the communities of origin to Europe. Yet, the research recognises the intervention role of intermediaries that facilitate their migration process. The subject further settles on mobility as how African footballers move within their host countries in Europe.

Based on their relocation abroad, the players' keep constant interaction with the families, clan, and society back home in the communities of origin. That is supposed to strengthen and maintain their relationships as they stay far apart. This migration dialogue with them will be referred to as transnationalism of African footballers abroad. All these conceptualisations will contribute to better our understanding of the research through discussions and analysis pertaining to the 'Give Back Phenomenon' of African professional footballers to their local communities of origin.



## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL MODEL**

### **2.1 A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY**

Looking at the complexity of the research, it is appropriate to adapt multidisciplinary approaches that can capture various theories and models to explain the rationality of African migrant players 'Give Back Phenomenon'. The research settled on economic sociology perspectives since it provides a room to assess the social behaviours of the players' from a broader context. Both economic and non-economic actions.

Economic sociology is inseparable from general sociology since the characteristic trait of modern society moves beyond economic society so that the reflection on the relationship between economic and social dimension can feature as the central task of social sciences (see foreword in Swedberg, 1994: 9). This makes it imperative to disregard its usefulness in the social cause and the effect on various economic actions of individuals. It is so because, economic sociology is intended to reflect the principal facts identified by economics, to apply a perspective radically different and quite unique type of institutional analysis (quoted by Parsons in Swedberg, 1994:65). Because sociologists believe that every economic action is refracted in a social component. This makes sociologists assume that the social world is present in every economic action (Bourdieu, 2000a) and there is no restricted border line between the general sociology of the economy and economic sociology. Due to its relevancy, it is broadly divided into classical and contemporary economic sociology.

The classical economic sociology stresses particularly on the role of economic structures and social institutions within the society. It further affects how the society views the nature of economic structures and institutions while the contemporary economic sociology dwells particularly on the social consequences of economic exchanges, the social meanings they involve

and the social interactions they facilitate or obstruct (Swedberg, 1994). In short, economic sociology can be defined as all theories that seek to explain economic phenomena from elements of sociology (Swedberg, 1994) or as a subject capable of thinking sociologically in the context of economic facts (Gislain and Steiner, 1995). Thus, economic sociology shows multiple forms of coordination to cover the market and hierarchy as well as the state, organisations, networks and communities.

For the purpose of this research, contemporary economic sociology is given preference over the classical economic sociology since it is framed on the concepts of '*embeddedness*' and '*the social construction of the economy*' (ACTA SOCIOLOGICA, 1997). In addition, it is either flexibility or has the ability to coexist with a number of different approaches in sociology. It is also termed as the new economic sociology which was reinforced by Granovetter's (1985) studies on "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness". His studies focused on the notion of *embeddedness* that illustrates economic relations between individuals or firms situated within existing social relations (and are thus structured by these relations as well as the greater social structures of which those relations are a part), (Granovetter, 1985).

The literature from broader perspectives on the economic sociology provides a roadmap to identifying various theories and models that can assist in answering the research questions based on decision making of African professional players in relation to their economic action for the benefits of their community of origins. Beyond extending our understanding of the various social and economic behaviours, the study will identify the economic and non-economic motives of African professional players' to supporting the local communities in their countries of origin. The subject of economic sociology provides a heuristic tool to analyse the rationalities behind

African migrant players' action towards their local communities where they come from. To do that, the research draws inspiration from some studies, including Bouhaouala's (1999; 2002; 2007) work on micro-mentalities of small and very small enterprises in the sports tourism sector. Bouhaouala concluded that the individual decision making is affected by the importance of values or conceptions or interests a person attaches to the usefulness of their economic action. The following elaborates on the social rationality of the individual as they make the decision to reflect their behaviour.

### **2.1.1 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL RATIONALITY IN ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY**

The social action theory of Weber (1922; 1978) looks at the micro perspectives where views of the individual are examined within the society. Thus, it is orientated towards estimated importance of usefulness a person attaches to their economic action (Weber 1978:68). This concept helps to understand the real meaning behind actions of individuals in a society. In effect, any decision conceived by an individual does not exist in a vacuum but has an intended purpose of achieving a desire result. Apparently, African professional player's decisions to offer support in terms of the 'Give Back Phenomenon' to the local communities have a meaning underlying their behaviour. For instance, African professional players' choices to invest in the specific project can be based on their personal values or conceptions or interest that they attach so much importance to such an action (Bouhaouala, 1999; 2002; 2007). Beyond that, their actions can take various forms of which may represent individuals' subjective meaning in relation to their actions.

In a broader context, the notion of social rationality provides a tool to appreciate when an action is deemed rational or goal-oriented, value-oriented, traditional, and affective or emotional considering the importance a person attaches to such an action. That means social action cannot

be isolated. This provides a lens to analyse the complexity of African professional players' social and economic behaviours to support and assist their community of origins through the 'Give Back Phenomenon'. In sum, Weber's classification assists to understand the different rationalities of African players' economic and non-economic behaviours. By acknowledging the uncertainty and subjectivity that provide the individual with an opportunity to take into account the best options which can match their economic interest or action. The following section focuses on developing the theoretical model for the research analysis with a background from the literature.

## **2.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THEORETICAL MODELS**

The literature contributes to building the theoretical analysis model for this research. That includes the theories and models of Becker (1993; 1994), Bouhaouala (1999; 2000; 2007), Granovetter (1985) Zukin and DiMaggio (1990), North (1990; 1991), Swedberg and Smelser (1995; 2005), Polanyi (1977), Swedberg (2007), Bourdieu (1986; 2000) and Weber (1922;1978). Some theories and models were chosen to complement others because of their direct connections and contributions to the study at the level of concepts and/or methodology. This is, not to say that the rest are less relevant but also those identified theoretical models provide sufficient information to help understand African professional players' decision- making process to the local communities. By drawing from these scientific models and theories to support the analysis and discussions in relation to the types of 'give back' actions of African professional players' have undertaken towards their communities.

At best, not only for the determinant of their social and economic behaviours but also provide an opportunity to develop new theoretical knowledge that can explain individuals subjective meaning that is attached to their real economic actions regarding others in the

localities. In short, the various theories and models have provided a frame to better our understanding of the economic and non-economic actions of African professional players' to offer support or assistance to their communities of origin and identify reasons for doing those projects. The chosen theories and models are interesting as it offers the opportunity to also determine different social rationalities behind professional players' specific choice of action in understanding the importance they attach to them.

Above all, this section provides convenient explanations of the steps and reasons related to the theoretical choices, and methodologies supporting the adapted model of analysis in the Weberian economic sociology. The research cannot conclude its findings without a thorough analysis of some of the theories and models connected to the subject matter. It explores the various theories and models that can contribute to providing insight and understanding to individuals' rationality from economic sociology perspectives by assisting to explaining the complexity of people's economic actions.

The contribution of theoretical models also give a guide to analysing the individual choices of action by identifying other sociological factors that can influence African professional players' decision making in terms of the 'give back phenomenon' to their communities. This allows us to clearly explain how we take into account, on one hand, their values, conceptions, objectives and interests, and on another hand, their social and economic projects undertaken in the communities. Hence, the application of economic sociology can provide a hub to fix all the parts connected to this research issue.

### **2.2.1 APPLICATION OF ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY**

Economic sociology has gone through an evolution from the various scholars with sociological backgrounds. They considered the mainstream of economic perspectives with

reference to societal dimensions to finally settle on some important definitions for economic sociology. Smelser and Swedberg (2005) defined economic sociology as the application of sociology perspective to economic phenomena drawing on Weber and Durkheim concepts. By extension implied that social structure, social control, social networks, gender and cultural contexts have become essential in the new economic sociology (example, Granovetter, 1974, 1985a, 1995; Zelizer, 1988). These studies present variables or indicators to focus on the sociological understanding of African professional players concerning their economic actions or interests to the communities.

Further, a follow-up to examine the notion of individuals' action to the local communities, which according to Weber must take into account the signification given, thereby oriented towards their course of actions (1922, 1978). The interest here is to analyse the 'Give Back Phenomenon' of African professional players to their countries of origin, not only as an economic based decision but also as a social action. Moreover, economic sociology betters our understanding of the role of groups, institutions and social networks as important factors as the individual economic interests in which economists are more concerned. This makes the research draws on individuals' action of African professional players and assesses how their decision can be affected significantly by non-economic factors. The next section provides a tool to understand the players' economic action or interest in the context as a social rationality.

## **2.2.2 ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR AS A SOCIAL ACTION**

In economic theory, individual behaviour constitutes economically rational action as they are presumed to have a set of preferences to choose from that alternative line of action to maximise their economic interest. But sociologist engages in several possible types of economic

action which according to Weber's illustration can be rational, traditional, value-oriented and/or affection/emotion (1978). Economic sociologists accept rationality as a variable not an assumption as economists ascribed to. To illustrate economist view, Akerlof (1990) argues that action of some individuals or groups may be more rational than others. This supposes that someone who acts in reference to his values is not rational regarding the economy model.

It is the opposite of the economic sociology and sociology model as they acknowledge rationality as a phenomenon to be explained, not assumed. For instance, Asamoah Gyan (Ghana international player) and Adebayor Emmanuel (Togo international player) commissioned a refurbished children wards financed by both two captains in Pampaso Hospital in Kumasi, Ghana<sup>20</sup>. This is exactly what sociologist seeks to find out the exact motives of Asamoah and Adebayor's action in terms of the rationalities for providing assistance to the hospital in the community, and not to presume things as economists may do. Moreover, Weber committed much of his economic sociology to identifying the social conditions under which formal rationality is possible while Parsons (1940; 1954) claims economic rationality as a system of norms (not a psychologically) universal but can be associated with specific developmental processes in the Global North.

The major subject of difference between economists and Weberian economic sociologists is the *meaning* behind an economic action. Indeed, economists tend to regard the meaning of economic action as obtained from the relation between given tastes, on one hand, and the prices and quantities of goods and services, on another hand (Smelser and Swedberg, 2010). Weber argues that the meanings of economic action in sociology are historically developed and must be investigated empirically, and not simply based on assumptions and external situations (1922;

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<sup>20</sup> <http://ghanasoccernet.com/entertainment-celebrities-beat-professional-ghanaian-stars-charity-match-after-gyan-and-adebayor-open-up-refurbished-ward-of-childrens-hospital/> (Accessed 22/06/2015).

1978). According to Smelser and Swedberg, sociologists tend to give a wider perspective and importance to the dimension of the power of control and disposal in the concept of economic action.

Others also think that every member of a society is to act as an individual only in entire independence of all other persons (Knight, 1921; 1985). That makes sociologists take such influence directly into consideration in the analysis of economic action. In Knight's assertion, other actors play a role in facilitating, deflect, and constrain individuals' action in the market. Yet, there are instances, where cultural meaning applied that otherwise affects the choices which can be regarded as *rational*. In addition, a person's status in the social structure can shape or reshape his or her economic choices and activity. Stinchcombe (1965; 1975) suggested the principle that structural constraints influence career decisions in ways that run counter to considerations of economic payoff. For example, for a person who grows up in a high-crime neighbourhood, the choice between making a career stealing and getting a job has often less to do with the comparative utility of these two alternatives than with the structure of peer groups and gangs in the neighbourhood. This contributes to understanding the theoretical model of the thesis, by drawing from some studies that applied economic sociology approaches to solving such complex situations in small enterprises.

### **2.2.3 THE VARIOUS STUDIES ON ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY APPLIED TO BUSINESSES AND SMALL ENTERPRISES IN SPORTS ARE ANALYSED BELOW**



In the study of ‘micro mentalities and the logics of action of entrepreneurs in the small enterprises’, for instance, the author employed economic sociology approach to understanding the behaviours of small entrepreneurs.

(i) *Micromentalités et logiques d’action des entrepreneurs dirigeants de petites entreprises*

The study of Bouhaouala presents an explanatory approach based on the concept of micro-mentalities of the leading entrepreneurs who have helped to understand the world of sports tourism sector (Bouhaouala, 1999). By considering the logics of action and the behaviours that result from them were analysed. Here, from the point of view of the relative determinant in the sense that, their subjective visions of the economic and professional world are not isolated from the social and economic environment of the enterprise. The conceptualisation of micro-mentalities makes it possible to replace them in sets of meanings relating to small groups of leading entrepreneurs sharing the same level of micro-mentalities. The explanation of the management models of small enterprise and very small enterprise (PE-TPEs) would no longer be monocausal, that is to say, based solely on market parameters and consistent with the abstract of the economic rationality.

The explanation is based on multiple causalities that allow taking into an account the complexity of the reality of the PE-TPE and the practical and contradictory logics of action with respect to the homo-economics model (Bouhaouala, 2007). The study used various models and theories to form the theoretical framework which helped to develop an interactive model to represent the typologies of the given objectives of those entrepreneurs in the area of sport tourism sectors (Bouhaouala, 2007). The application of economic sociology was employed due to the complexity of the subject and as a strategy that encompasses both social and economic

approaches to understanding the economic rationality of participants' action.

The below study also drew from the choices of ethnic entrepreneurs by identifying the various structural and cultural approaches to facilitate immigrants objective and interest of establishing small enterprises in the host countries.

### ***ii) Ethnic entrepreneurship: A theoretical framework***

The study of Thierry (2007) focused on the ethnic entrepreneurship to developing a framework for understanding dimensions for the establishment of small businesses in a new environment. This is as a result of first, massive immigration from former colonies, southern Europe and North Africa has led to a considerable migration flow. Secondly, three decades of economic restructuring have led to a fundamental transformation of the labour market and a general shift away from employment in large firms to self-employment in small ones. This trend has hit certain immigrant groups much harder than indigenous populations, which is reflected by the higher unemployment rates among immigrants (Barret et al., 1996). Thirdly, the opportunity structure for ethnic business has become more favourable as Europe's changing industrial structure has led to a resurgence of small and medium-sized enterprises (Blaschke et al., 1990).

Thierry developed an enhanced model from the theoretical framework that was integrated to illustrate the study's phenomenon. From the study, certain factors were identified as complex to influencing the setting up of ethnic enterprises which include education, generation, the local population, the economic situation, job opportunities, location, cultural and religious differences, and the origin. These factors serve as a prerequisite for ethnic migrants to making a decision concerning the management of small enterprises outside their countries of origin. Despite some of these difficulties, the alternative for some migrants was to consider the choice of such

business entry as a central part of entrepreneurial behaviour which is certainly based on the object of interest.

The immigrants' interest to enter into such small enterprises is based on influence from the same cultural ethnic group in the host country. But cultural or structural factors influence the business entry decision and therefore are responsible for the rise of ethnic entrepreneurship (Thierry, 2007). Beyond this, immigrants made decisions by linking up with the specific location of ethnic networks that are embedded in their local ethnic community. Within this frame, immigrants acquired resources from those networks that play a crucial role in their ethnic enterprise establishment. Based on the supporters of the 'culturalist' approach believe that immigrant groups have culturally determined features leading to a propensity to favour self-employment (Masurel et al., 2004). This explains how ethnic entrepreneurship has become an important aspect of modern urban life and fulfils a key economic and social role for ethnic communities (Thierry, 2007).

Analysis from the studies of Thierry (2007) revealed that immigrants setting up small enterprises outside their countries of origin must consider the opportunity structure and resources from cultural traditions and ethnic social networks before taking that decision. Thierry (2007) adopted an economic sociology approaches to explain this complex phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship among the ethnic community. Here, consideration was given to the objective and interest of the individual immigrant as he/she makes the decision by taking into account the influence of cultural and structural approaches.

### **Inspiration from other studies**

Both studies may have their challenges, but of importance to this research, is how they applied economic sociology approaches to solving their complex issues. They both applied the

logics of action in their various situations to understanding the behaviours of participants in solving their issues, for instance, in sports, small businesses and social settings to their studies. These studies inspired the researcher by considering some of their economic sociology approaches to help explain the complexity behind the rationalities of African professional players 'Give Back Phenomenon'. A thorough analysis of both Bouhaouala (2007) and Thierry (2007) provides a clue to applying economic sociology approaches to illustrate and better our understanding of the thesis.

## **2.3 EXPLANATION OF THE THEORETICAL MODELS**

The schema (figure 2) below represents contributions of theoretical models to analyse individuals' rationality that could affect decisions or choices of African professional footballer in their 'Give Back Phenomenon'. This model consists of human capital, social embeddedness plus culture and institutionalised networks that may play a role in shaping and reshaping the individual development and interconnectedness within the communities of players. These theoretical models permit and facilitate our understanding concerning the possible influence of non-economic parameters on the decisions of African professional players regarding the 'give back phenomenon'. Further details on the various theoretical models identified are explained in the subsequent sections.

### **2.3.1 ECONOMIC APPROACH: Human capital theory**

Human capital theory explains the importance of skills, abilities, and knowledge acquired through education and training that influences the future income earnings of the investment made

in an individual (Becker, 1993). This aspect of the theory does not take place in a vacuum since financial and other resources are needed to make it functional towards the individual development. By that, it shifts the main responsibility of individuals unto the parents, family members or households or guardian right from early childhood to adolescent and finally adulthood. From the definition, investment in human capital goes with costs in the near term, and with the expectation that one would have the accrued benefits in future. The costs of adding to the individual human capital can be classified into three primarily levels as outlined by Becker (1993);

1. *Out-of-pocket or direct expenses* to include tuition costs and expenditures on books and other supplies. For example, with football talents, direct and indirect expenses are made in their education and training including kits, etc. which involve costs. For families, relatives and the community getting their talented kids into juvenile teams or football academies, they have to pay some fees to enrol them. Apart from this, some even go to the extent of borrowing money to finance their children football practice in established academies. This has become a common thing in many African countries. That is, in the past playing colts' teams were perceived as leisure and recreational activity but, now pursued as part of the speculative strategy in the hope of making a profit (Esson, 2015). This is because, local clubs and football academies in both the amateur and semi-professional leagues are now geared toward the development of football talents in order to transfer players to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia (Esson, 2016). That also enables families including, the extended family and others in the community assumed, the responsibility of providing proper care for their talents to benefit from such opportunities

of playing abroad. By investing in their human capital through football training to make them more productive for the future.

2. *Foregone earnings* are another source of cost because, during the investment period, it is usually impossible to work at least not a full-time all year. It shows that parents, families or relatives may have to take some time off their work to spend time with their children at football training as well as providing social needs where necessary.
3. *Psychic losses* are a third of cost incurred because learning is often difficult and tedious. For instance, parents making losses after unable to achieve their projected target which makes it not reliable.

Like workers, the investment in education and training are expected to yield the returns in the form of higher future earnings, increased job satisfaction over one's lifetime, and a greater appreciation of non-market activities and interests. In line with workers goal, families, relatives, and the community investment in the talent of an individual through direct or out-of-pocket expenses that is earmarked towards their development. Ultimately, this prepares a person for a lifetime with the accrued benefits supposed to be enjoyed by all parties concerned. Apart from everything, it is expected that the individual develops well enough to become useful and better person in the community. Thus, the family or households are supposed to cater for their developmental and other social needs that facilitate their growth in the future. Their development also goes beyond the provision of education. From the onset, families and others have accepted education as the only means for their wards to be successful in life at the neglect of their sporting talents that must be developed.

However, in African communities, every child is supposed to have access to formal education but, this is not always the case. This is because investment in a child's education

provides a solid foundation for his lifetime in the future.

At the same time, children have talents that must be identified and developed, yet sometimes it is ignored. On another hand, the society obliged parents, relatives or households to take charge of their children upbringing which is their core mandate to producing better individuals for the benefit of the community. This means that families or households and the community have a huge responsibility to invest in the individual's capabilities through direct or indirect expenses by providing them education and training for their future. Beyond that, these investments support the individual's appropriate development in their locality.

In the context of African countries, this scenario is very common whereby the sole responsibility of families (to include extended family, relatives and the society at large) are to ensure proper upkeep of an individual through training and education in the local community. But, by convention, parents, families or households are to ensure that their child or children have access to formal education though some communities may lack certain basic amenities. Yet, it is expected that children must have a sort of education or training to better their lives in the future. At the same time, it is their fundamental human right as stipulated in the UNESCO mission on Education<sup>21</sup>. Apart from some of the villages where children rarely have access to good educational facilities, they may also lack qualified teachers or personnel to support their progress academically.

All these means of support must come from the direct expenses or out-of- pocket expenses to be incurred by their parents, families or households, or relatives. However, in most cases, they may skip work to attend to their children's upkeep, thereby forgoing earnings for that period of work. Thus, they sacrifice for their child's development through various ways either by

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<sup>21</sup> Education for the 21st Century. <http://en.unesco.org/themes/education-21st-century>.

indirect investment or direct support to better their children's' future. For example, there are instances that parents or family members or relatives have stop work in order to provide extra tuition for them or undertake additional jobs in order to raise sufficient funds for their child's care and development. Sometimes, others have to request for extra working hours (that could fetch them additional earnings, etc) as well as make quality time and effort for their child's nurturing and development. Also, those investments from the family, relatives, and the community of the individual must consider other economic and social factors that are deemed appropriate to impact positively on a person's development.

This is why, it may be necessary for a successful African professional footballer to consider improving the living conditions of their families, relatives and the community in return for the support they enjoyed during their upbringing irrespective of the quantum that might represent. Indirectly, family's benefits may be recognised as the return on their investments in the individual (player) development right from his childhood to adulthood. Even though African football players in their migratory process maintain links with their families, relatives and other people in the communities as a way of strengthening their relationship and social bonding. It further substantiates the knowledge and skills provided (at childhood experiences) as an investment to have gone a long way to increase one's lifetime earnings in the child's (player) career after making it abroad.

Though the investment in a football player may take different forms from different parents, families, relatives and the communities due to their status, class, ethnic and race, yet expected returns may definitely vary accordingly but should be assumed to have a positive effects on them. The direct expenses or out-of-pocket money (include tuition/training costs, expenditure on books and other suppliers), foregone earnings (because it is usually impossible to



work throughout your lifetime-take excuses duties, forfeiting additional work hours among others), and psychic losses (which often makes learning difficult and tedious). All these constitute a specific cost of investment in the individual (professional player) to have accelerated his professional status to reach that height in his career paths. For instance, Darby (2014) noted that an African professional player, who is able to obtain and sustain a career in Europe can achieve considerable financial rewards though a small proportion, their earnings power not only facilitates luxuriant lifestyles both during and after their careers but also allows them to support extended families in their country of origin.

Moreover, there is also intergenerational reciprocity often at the centre of the process as some families, parents, relatives strongly support their talented sibling quest to develop into a professional player (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014). This presents a significance reason why some family members, relatives or households as well as the family as a key unit may attach a strong dimension to the development of their child's sporting talent pending the expected returns in the future. It is not novel to see families or households or relatives making decisions for their children's career especially in the African settings.

This can be linked to the past, where parents or families and relatives accepted *only* education as means for a person to be successful in life and therefore all resources were committed to producing academicians. Thus, most African parents consider education as a privilege that they view as important for becoming 'somebody', defined as a person of status and respect, somebody who is responsible, matured, independent, knowledgeable and capable of taking care of others in the future (Langevang,2008). In many African communities, strong social values about education are indispensable (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014), that is why parents, family members, and the community always support the education of children albeit

financial constraints. For instance, in Ghana, they have a series of state policies post-independence linked education directly to the development and this saw education becoming considered crucial in terms of social mobility in the minds of parents and other older family members (Esson, 2013a). That is, why for example, some family members and relatives frown on children taking to football than education. Contemporary, this perception still exists though some may prefer their children to combine both education and football.

On another hand, their parents or families and relatives have not understood something called ‘sporting talent’, which is natural and when properly nurtured and developed can better a person’s lifetime. This talent needs to be managed particularly with football so that it can benefit the individual. Since the game of football has become truly globalised not to mention its economic potentials and social status for best talents should one able to make it abroad. However, it is essential that families or parents can ascribed to both football and education because the two may complement each other, as one stands to gain if successful in football or can switch to education should the football career fails so that the child necessarily can’t lose anything but may still have something to rely on in the future.

In addition, individual’s ability to have a professional career in football overseas benefits from the new environment as they acquire skills, knowledge and technical acumen (tactics) through the training and education offered them to impact on their performance. This can also lead to increase their economic value and future earnings with their clubs. All due to their parents or families upbringing and support from the childhood to adolescent and adulthood creating that opportunity for them to ply their trade overseas.

In African context, the family pattern is large and further explanation will be provided in chapter four, as professional players explain their role in the process of their migration abroad.

Follow up to analyse how they affect their decisions making in the ‘give back phenomenon’. Parents or families or relatives support for their children comprise of tangible and intangible elements that provide individuals the needed tools to better their lives in the future. Thus, if the individual is properly catered for can prevent risk of child abuse and neglect through improving parents’ skills (though social support theory is seen as somewhat ‘abstract’ in nature<sup>22</sup>), but parenting skills or knowledge of children’s development is pivotal in a child’s upbringing. It is also important for social support at the individual development phases as they need to be cared for, receive help from other people and supportive resources (emotional, tangible, intangible, informational or companionship) which can come from many sources within their local communities.

Such things can often influence people’s behaviour when they become successful professionally and financially in life. In sum, human capital development provided by parents, families, relatives and the community play a pivotal role in the individuals’ upbringing in the locales. This contributes to support their investment processes in preparing them for a lifetime along with their growth. That is, during their developmental processes, the investment in their children represents an economic approach. Considering the investment made in their children human capital, it behoves on them to reciprocate their actions per the African culture when they become successful in the future. At this stage, children also learn norms and cultural values in the communities after passing through the adolescent stage of their life. This made them embedded in their communities. The next section illustrates how their social embeddedness can guarantee them some opportunities in the locales.

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<sup>22</sup> Social Support Measurement Study Task 1.2 Final Reports prepared by Harder+ company for First 5 LA (6th January 2012). [http://www.first5la.org/files/08059\\_1%203Report\\_Final\\_01062012.pdf](http://www.first5la.org/files/08059_1%203Report_Final_01062012.pdf) (accessed 02/12/2015)

### 2.3.2 SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH: Social embeddedness theory

The concept of social embeddedness according to Granovetter (1985:1990) influences the economic action of an actor which is situated in the networks of interpersonal relations as well as the (the 'relational' aspect of embeddedness) structure of the overall network of relations (or claims economic rationality as 'embedded' within social relationships' (Granovetter, 2005). Simply, it expresses the notion that social actors exist within the relational, institutional and cultural context and therefore cannot be seen as atomised decision-makers maximising their own interests. That is to say, that actors, by all means have to consider significant others in respect to their choice of actions, yet their prime interest may supplant others personal interest. For example, in the premarket societies, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and historians reaffirmed the place of economic behaviour as completely embedded in the social relations. Thus, social embeddedness has a role to impact on others decision making with regard to their social environment of abode.

Granovetter (1985) argues that economic action takes into account the individual choice which is importantly refracted by social relations within their environment. Social embeddedness according to Granovetter also refers to networks of social interaction in which an action takes place. Here, Granovetter identified as a large distinction between rational actor models of the social world, where the actor makes a choice within a thin set of context-independent decision rules and the social actor models highlight how the actor is largely driven by a context-defined set of scripts as he/she makes a choice from.

The economists, on one hand, interpret *social influences* as a process that actors acquire customs, habits or norms which are followed mechanically and automatically, irrespective of their bearing on a rational choice. Beyond that, Granovetter framed a more fluid and relational

conception of the actor. Aside from that, the pragmatist theories of the actor (Abbott, 1993; Gross, 2009; Joas, 1997) argue that actor's choices emerge from a flow of interactions and shifting relations with others. The actor is not an atomised agent, but rather a participant in a flow of actions and interactions. Granovetter claims that this does not deprive the importance and agency of the actor because the actor still reacts and responds to their social relations surrounding him or her but actions are established and refracted through the consciousness, beliefs, and purposes of the individual.

This explains the imperative role of social relations that individual actors can rarely ignore within the environment they function. Beyond that, makes the idea of an embedded different from the idea of an atomised actor as the individual's choices and actions are generated, in part anyway, by the actions and expected behaviour of other actors (Granovetter, 1985). This is a relational concept the embedded actor exists in a set of relationships with other actors whose choices affect his or her own choices as well. It further illustrates that the choices actors make are not wholly determined by facts internal to their spheres of individual deliberation and beliefs, instead actions are importantly influenced by the observed and expected behaviour of others. Thus, the importance an individual attaches to his or her actions is instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations that he/she may be part of.

The concept of social embeddedness also extends to the role of concrete personal relations and structures (or networks) of such relations in building trust and avoiding malfeasance (Granovetter 1985:490). To Granovetter, *trust* is an important component to building social relations and social networks as one progress in life. The notion of trust and the theory of the actor play a significant role in facilitating our understanding of the social behaviour in a broader context. At best, the individual's choice of an action may take into account the likely

choices of others that explain how concrete social relations are critical to their actions. This shows that African players' integration, social relation, and networks in the community can influence their social rationality in terms of the 'give back phenomenon'. Not forgetting their embeddedness in social networks of African football including the community, scouts, clubs, academies, football administrators and the local managers.

On another hand, Polanyi (1982) argues that a society should decide the economic interests rather than being embedded in the social relationships. Both theories present an interesting argument, however, Granovetter's (1985) own provides a broad perspective that fits into the context of this study in order to understand the decisions making of African professional players to support and assist their communities regarding their various social and economic projects. Indeed, it may be interesting to determine how the individual actors (African players) try to incorporate the needs of society into their values, conceptions and interests rather than supplant their decisions on the communities. Since the birthplace of African players and their embeddedness may go a long way to strengthen their social relationships and be able to maintain it even when they migrate abroad.

Their relationships are often observed through the transfer of remittances, sporting capital, and other resources to families, relatives and others as they keep contacts or links in their migratory processes. It will be interesting to see how the interplay of these elements of integration, social relations and social networks of African players can influence their rationality in relation to the 'Give Back Phenomenon'.

Considering the past two decades, the notion of embeddedness has provided an essential component often used by economic sociologists to mark a distinctive approach to the understanding of economic behaviours (Granovetter 1985; Zukin and DiMaggio 1990). This

makes embeddedness to encompass the social structural, cultural, political, and mental processes of decision making in economic and social contexts. It points to the lasting connection of the actor with his or her social environment. From the above deliberations, African players can be seen as embedded in their locales and that enable them adhering to their cultural values, customs, norms, and taboos which form a significant core of the community where they come from. This shows that their social relations and networks are also embedded in their culture and how it may influence their economic action in relation to their 'GBP' is explained in the next section.

### **2.3.3 CULTURAL APPROACH: Cultural embeddedness**

Apart from African players' social embeddedness, there is also a connection to their culture which may have a possibility to impacting their social behaviour concerning the phenomenon of 'giving back' to their communities. It shows that African players' choices can be affected by norms and cultural values regarding their economic interest in supporting the cause of their local communities. That is, Zukin and DiMaggio (1990) claimed that economic behaviour is culturally embedded and this makes culture sets limits to economic rationality. The cultural norms and values may limit the economic rationality as well. For instance, the ideologies, beliefs, norms or customs can also have a ripple effect on the choices of African migrant players who have spent most of their lives in the local communities.

Beyond that, culture dimension has a possibility to influence on their social and economic decisions in terms of the type of investment or projects they undertake in the localities. This is due to the embeddedness in their birthplace or abode. However, we cannot rule out a possible effect of acculturation due to the change of environment and their lived experiences abroad. But also it will be interesting in identifying how the African players are able to manage the different

cultures to their advantages or vice versa. Then again, do these African players really consider the exact needs of the local communities before providing support and assistance that may reflect their cultural background to impact the local development or otherwise? DiMaggio (1994) elucidated to the fact that it is appropriate to differentiate between constitutive forms of culture (to include categories and scripts) and regulatory aspect (such as values and norms). DiMaggio (1994) argues that there are those who view culture and economic behaviour as mutually generative. That is, culture provides the categories and understandings that enable us to engage in an economic action. As to whether this plays a significant role in the decision making of African players will be explained concerning the phenomenon of 'giving back' to their communities.

Another school of thought on culture is those who treat the economic action as analytically distinct from culture but emphasised the ways that norms and conventions constrain the individual's untrammelled pursuit of self-interest (DiMaggio, 1994: 28). All the distinctive views tend to suggest that culture may play a certain role to influence the social and economic behaviour of people. This can mostly affect those born and bred a particular locale since their shared values and norms are embedded in the community. An example can be seen in the communal labour activities such as general cleaning around their hospitals, schools and others.

The concept of cultural embeddedness refers to how shared understanding and meanings give form to organisational activity, structures and process. This makes the concepts of culture to include norms and values as well as belief systems and logics, and the latter overlapping with cognitive mechanisms of rules and schemas (Dacin / Ventresea / Beal, 1999: 328; Zukin and DiMaggio 1990:17). That is also peculiar to the kind of work African migrant players do abroad



since their clubs have such structures, shared values and norms that defined their identity. Beyond that, culture embeddedness raises the role of shared collective understandings in shaping economic means and ends. This makes its influence on the economic action undeniable as the brightest among the types of embeddedness proposed by Zukin and DiMaggio (1990).

However, much as the culture has a possibility to influence people economic action, there is also a possibility for some people to avert those systems of shared meaning which can be attributed to acculturation because of globalisation and new technological advancements. But in many African communities especially the villages, it is difficult to influence their cultural values, norms, taboos and customs. Some of these cultural elements are seen as a measure to inculcate good values, discipline and control that may go a long way to shaping and reshaping behaviours of their people. With time, it becomes part and parcel of those people and therefore has a high possibility of affecting their goals and means per the economic action. In the present times, it is a bit dicey to fully accept that assertion totally due to rural-urban migration, urban-rural migration and transnational migration. Yet, culture permeates almost everything that we do but identifying cultural effects on social and economic projects can be quite difficult in some situations.

From the perspective of economic sociology, preferences or tastes cannot determine an action either, because the preference ordering is not transitive or because preferences cannot be translated unambiguously into scripts for action (Swidler, 1986). This proposes to think of cultural embeddedness as affecting economic action in a more contingent way which focuses on the interpretation of symbolic meaning structures in concrete interactions. According to Swidler (1986), the effect of culture on the action cannot be understood as deriving from the cultural determination of ends or goals. But then we are coaxed to believe ‘because of the intuitive

credibility in our own culture of the assumption that all action is ultimately governed by some means-ends schema' (Swidler 1986: 274).

The value-rational of action coincides somehow with the rational actor approach in the sense that both view action as constructed new at a time, either based on values or based on interests. By that, Swidler suggests that culture rather provides *cultural components that are used to build strategies of action* (Swidler 1986: 273). That is, an action should not be explained by reference to values (or interests) but rather based on cultural competence of actors which is manifested in culturally-shaped skills, habits, and styles. These *strategies of action* help to organise action into relatively stable and enduring patterns which can prevail even if goals change (Hamilton and Biggart (1992: 182). To change established strategies, which take a status of being taken for granted, involves high cognitive costs, hence established strategies have a tendency to endure. So, the notion of relevance of culture in economic action stresses its constitutive role to providing cognitive classifications, while the evaluative role of culture has little significance in it (Swidler 1986: 282).

In the constitutive view of culture, the cultural stock on which actors draw on strategies of action does not have a deterministic effect because cultures contain diverse, often conflicting symbols, rituals, stories, and guides to action (Swidler 1986: 277). Culture is like a 'tool kit' from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action (see Mead, by Doyle, E. McCarthy, 1984). However, in the unsettled periods, the role of culture in shaping strategies becomes more direct. Culture in the form of ideologies then shapes action in a highly conscious way and reduces the contingencies inherent in the situation (Swidler 1986: 280).

Apparently, the motives behind African migrant players 'giving back' phenomenon could have a significant cultural influence considering where they come from and their embeddedness

in those communities. For instance, it may be expected that the majority of migrant players have deep connections with their social environment where they grew up or began with teams or clubs in the domestic leagues.

The cultural aspects of African migrant players' can be observed most often through their various actions and interactions as well as the impact of social forces on their behaviours in various economic contexts (e.g Akerlof, 1980; Austen-Smith and Fryer, 2005; Becker and Murphy 2000, or Bernheim, 1994). African players' cultural actions can also be seen in their social relations and networks that facilitate their migration to teams and leagues abroad. These networks and social relations go a long way to support their mobility in leagues abroad. The next section gives details on how the institutionalised networks of African professional players create opportunities in their migration processes abroad.

#### **2.3.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC APPROACH:** Institutionalised networks in social context

North (1991) argues that institutions are the humanly devised constraints that shape political, economic and social interaction. North explained further that they structure incentives in human exchange and consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights). Throughout history, institutions have been devised by human beings to create order and reduce uncertainty in exchange (North, 1991). This is why there are specific times for international players' transfer in the football labour market. This football market provides an opportunity for many best African talents who desired to have a reputation as a professional footballer abroad.

On another hand, the institutional change has affected the way societies evolve through connecting the past with the present and the future and, provides the key understanding of

historical change (North, 1991). For instance, in the football labour market, institutions are put in place to regulate the system as well as offer the opportunity to assist clubs to make the best choice set regarding their recruitment strategies in order to achieve their economic and sporting success. All these are some of the measures to streamline the football market and promote the game's uncertainty.

The clubs do not only benefit from the international transfers but also professional players having the ability to control their movements within the football market. Thanks to the decision on 'Bosman ruling' in 1995 that have contributed to intensify the migration of international players across borders, nations and the continents. Beyond that, these institutions provide incentives that have brought some transformations in the structure of professional clubs as well as shaping and reshaping the direction of the football market towards growth, yet there may be some ethical and governance issues. Also, clubs make use of informal institution by committing professional footballers to acquire their playing rights. This is done through their scouts, agents, sporting directors, their footballers acting as referrals to getting the rights of best talents into their clubs.

The evolution of the football market has provided the intermediaries with an opportunity to scouts, recruits, negotiates, manages and connects with other agents or sporting agencies. To ensure fair environment, it calls for the proper enforcement of institutions (together with the technology employed) to improve how transactions are done in the labour market. The literature on institutions and transactions might have provided efficient solutions to issues of the organisation in a competitive framework (Williamson, 1975; 1985). For instance, with the football, the regulatory framework enacted by FIFA has framed the labour market to enchant best international players to the best leagues abroad.

This again has stimulated player movements, clubs, agents, and the football market, all to reduce problems and ensure smooth functioning of the system. With the institutionalised networks, best talents from Africa are able to move to leagues abroad. The migration of African football players' started with the merchants who docked on the coast of Africa, to the colonial era, to the post-colonial phase, and then the electronic colonisation pioneered by transnational media (Onwumechili, 2014:7). These illustrative processes brought its own specialisation and division of labour at the various levels of activity or operation. Yet, FIFA's frequent revision of its regulations after the post-colonial period has improved the football labour market for its industrial players and other stakeholders of the game. This has been possible with the activity of network facilitators like the licensed agents, scouts, sports agencies and club officials to spread their activities across the globe through a partnership where they could not have operated previously (Poli et al, 2012).

The development in the football industry has changed the trends with the roles of licensed agents and other parties clearly defined to bring sanity and stabilise the labour market. In the football labour market, a system of exchange provides an incentive for actors or parties to invest their time, resources and efforts in knowledge and skills that improve their material and sporting status. These are towards enhancing the economic and social interactions for clubs and other stakeholders of the game as they abide by the laws and regulations of the system.

Apart from the formal constraints, the immediate sources of decision interactions are guided by mostly informal constraints to include a code of conduct, norms of behaviour and conventions. These form part of the cultural heritage that enables people to socially transmit information. It plays a crucial role in facilitating the migration processes of many African professional players abroad. Such contacts can be situated

in ‘friends-of-friends’ networks involving colleagues, former and current players, particularly providing important tools for passing information about mobility destinations and employment opportunities (Bale,1991). For instance, Elliott and Maguire, similarly, suggest that sometimes these migrants ‘bridgeheads’ and (Meyer, 2001) argues that those who have experienced mobility are actively involved in mobilising additional movement through their own interdependent networks (Elliott and Maguire, 2011: 104).

The significance of people getting more connected through social relations and networks helps to facilitate their interests and actions. In the context of African settings, the family tree is quite limitless and consists of the extended family which sometimes includes the ‘so called good’ people becoming part of the close family.

Culture is an essential part of the society and how it is sustained and continued from the present to the future serves as an important legacy for the generations to come. It ensures that the community people are guided by the informal constraints (social norms, customs, taboos, and values), which also help to shape and reshape their way of life and social networks. In African communities, people are governed by a delicate balance of power that is not taken for granted since each person was constantly involved in securing his own position in situations where he had to show his good intentions. Particularly, in the villages and towns which are often governed by the chiefs as heads of that territory.

That makes the usage of customs appear to be flexible and fluid given that a judgement on whether or not someone has done rightly varies from case to case (Colson, 1974). Most often, it is the individual being judged and not the crime. Such that, under these conditions flouting of generally accepted standards is tantamount to a claim of illegitimate power and becomes part of the evidence against the one (Colson, 1974:59).

In the African context, this is real and shows how importance informal institutions applied in certain communities to streamline behaviours of its people.

Beyond that, societies that do not grow could be as result of deviant where primitive institutions still exist but innovations and technology are seen as threats to the group survival. In brief, literature tends to provide the direction and form of economic action that individuals and institutions reflect on as enshrined in the basic institutional framework of customs, religious precepts, and formal rules (and the effectiveness of enforcement). Some theorists have described the development of a network society, which are shrouded in the 'new technologies that have created a new pattern of social relations in addition to the existing ones (Remennick, 2003). North (1991) claims institutions as 'personalistic' relationships which are still the key to much of the political and economic exchange. The resultant of an evolving institutional framework implemented by FIFA has produced a significant growth in the football industry concerning player transfers issues and the football market dynamics.

It is interesting to fashion out how these institutions influence social behaviour or action of people in their environments. Dequech (1998, 2002) identified at least three types of institutions that can influence on social behaviour. First, the *restrictive function* of institutions explains their role as constraints on economic behaviour. This is the type of influence emphasised by neoclassical economists and many new institutional economists. The second type of influence refers to the *cognitive function* of institutions, which is related to the (strictly) cognitive aspects of culture. The cognitive function refers to the information that institutions provide to the individual, including the effect of the likely action of other people. Cognitive function of institutions also influence on the very perception that people have of reality, that is,

in the way people select, organise, and interpret information. Institutions perform a third function through their influence on the ends that people pursue.

This function is related to the value-oriented aspect of culture and to the identification of culture as providing values. By this, institutions influence the emotions guiding social behaviour (Dequech 1998, 2002). It can better our understanding of the role of this in the decision making of African players' 'GBP' to their communities. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the cognitive and social behaviour of people and how it influences their social behaviours. Thus, institutions can affect individuals' social behaviour without taking into account the recognition of others.

The place of institutions is very vital in shaping organisations and promoting orderliness. This defines the unique cultures of most African countries though some people may hold different views. An example is where the young ones are expected to respect their elders, as well as giving them helping hand whenever they are in need without hesitation. Ethically, a person refusal to support an elderly person in the locality gives him/her a bad image or disrespecting their culture which the locale people frown on.

Some of these cultural values and norms or habits are guides for many African players since they are supposed to show respect their culture. It may be through some of these connections that many African players had an opportunity to move abroad. This is because the cultural values and belief of the community people tend to strengthen easily their social relations particularly those who want to migrate abroad are linked to family members, relatives and friends.

Aside from this, African players cannot just move to any European club or leagues without the appropriate processes as enacted in the transfers' regulations otherwise, it becomes



an illegal thing. This illegal aspect of migration on the part of some African players has attracted scholars' attention as football trafficking generating political and media interests (Ali 2008; Darby et al. 2007; Haynes 2008; McDougall 2010; Poli 2010b; Rawlinson 2009; Scherrens 2007; Sparre 2007a).

In this way, it facilitates exploitations of young talents with an adverse risk for the Africa continent as their future leaders are being drifted into the uncertain land. The emerging trend of this situation continues to be worrisome for the community since they stand of losing their talents to go waste. Beyond that, McDougall argues that this migratory practice is creating a tragic legacy of homeless young boys across major European capitals (McDougall 2008). But of concern to the study are those who went abroad through legal means.

The institutionalised networks strongly support the activities of the intermediaries that act as network facilitators (football agents, club officials, scouts, etc) who are legally licensed and other social relations (like players acting as recruitment referral (Agergaard and Tiesler, 2014). It also covers informal network, mobility (within the leagues) and the regulatory framework of the football market to promote sanity and maintain the game's uncertainty. The institutions processes extend to member associations of African countries where these professional players' career start from after playing in their domestic leagues, clubs, football academies, the juvenile team (colts), community teams, and corporate leagues.

More importantly, many of these football players get into those teams through social relations and later become visible to authorities and sometimes those who matters in the game (Agergaard and Engh, 2013). In support, Carter (2014) pointed out how coaches and club officials' also nurture prospects and develops athletes with certain skills and through their own formal connections within global soccer, suggests to higher authorities that an individual may be

a prospective footballer. Beyond that, many of the professional African footballers get the opportunity to feature for their national teams through networks of coaches and friends at all levels.

Thus, social relations and networks are embedded in the societal culture and are the reason why Zukin and DiMaggio (1990) propose that it can influence African players' economic action in supporting their communities through the 'Give Back Phenomenon'. The culture of African players is found in both '*embeddedness and institutionalised networks*' concepts, with similarities likely to have a consequence on the individual rationality. These similarities are the social networks and social relations which can have an important effect on the African footballers' routine and choices of programmes in their communities.

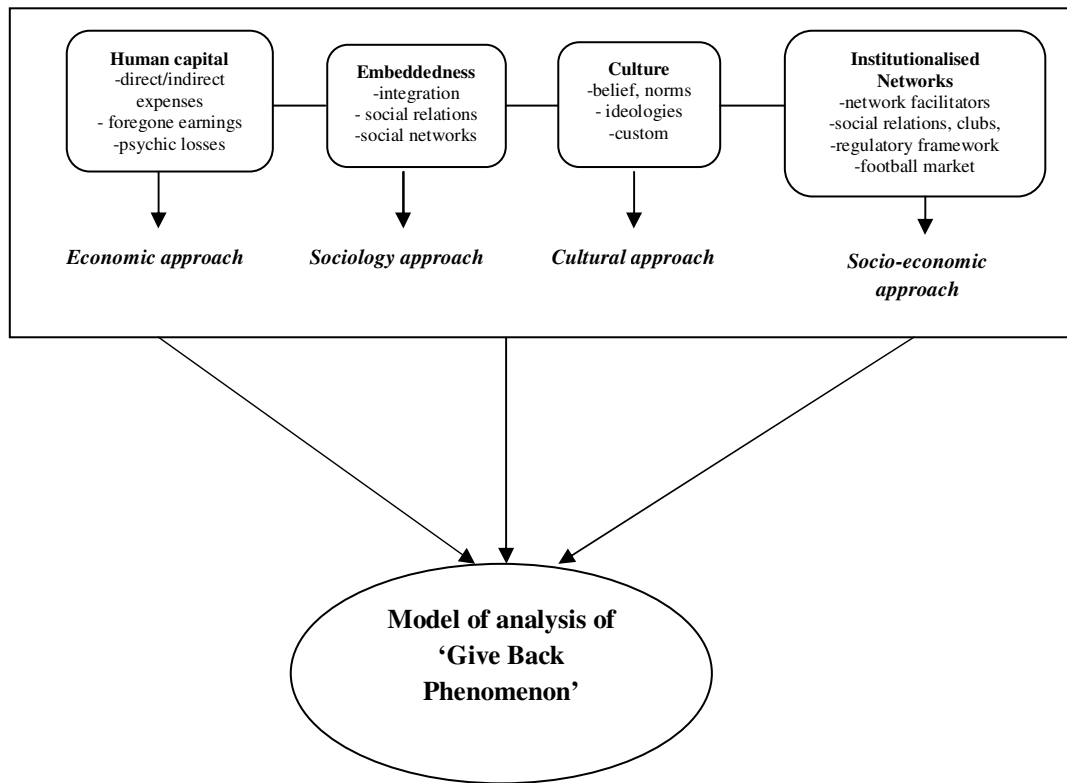
The significance of family, extended family, the community, scouts, agents, clubs officials, and sports agencies as resources play a crucial role in the migration processes of the African players abroad. Such interrelation connections can facilitate a successful migration of the African players to leagues abroad. Aside from that, those contribution models may exert a strong influence on the players' decision making to giving something back to their communities. This can provide an insight into how the African players are supported in their migratory projects abroad as well as assist to analyse their effect on the 'GBP' to the larger society. Therefore, a key issue to explore here, includes the social rationalities determine the African footballers' actions of 'Give Back Phenomenon'. To do so, the research employs the Weberian social action theory as a methodology in analysing the contribution of the theoretical models.

## **Conclusion**

The illustrated theoretical models were derived from the economic sociology approaches that a clue to understanding the rationalities behind the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ of African professional footballers support to their countries of origin. That is, the human capital theory examines how individuals are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge through education and becoming productivity in the economic sense. The embeddedness nature provides the individual with a worth of social relations and networks that support their integration in the communities and beyond. This determines the sociological approach that may facilitate their economic and non-economic activities in the locales. In the communities, these individual are guided by cultural values, norms and custom that shape and reshape their actions. This cultural approach can set a limit on individuals’ economic action by some informal and formal constraints.

This institution creates an integrated web that improves individuals' social viability in the system. These individuals mobilise the various social relations and connections to their advantages through the integration of the institutionalised networks. These together contributed to our understanding of the subject and assisted in identifying some indicators for the interviews.

Figure 1. Development of the contributions of theoretical models



## **2.4 MAX WEBER'S THEORY AND ITS APPROACH IN TERMS OF METHODOLOGY**

An action does not exist in isolation and as such must be oriented to the behaviour of others. That is why different actions come into conflict and at the end, it creates tensions for the specific individuals in terms of decision making in relation to their actions. In many classical societies, individuals live highly customised lives, which every day ceremonies are generally seen as ends in themselves (Weber 1922; 1978). But this development may be different from the actions of the modern individuals who have to adopt flexibility character that requires them to constantly shift perceptions and royalty.

This could be due to the new technological advancements and diverse forms of communication in a globalised world, which has a greater chance of changing people economic action or interest. By shifting people ultimate outcomes of an action often far removed from their specific beliefs and norms that could guide their everyday behaviour. Beyond this, Weber argues an action that is social to that an extent considers the virtue of the subjective meaning one attaches to it by taking into account the behaviour of others which are oriented towards its course.

Since the behaviour of individuals can manifest in four different forms, which Weber labelled as the typologies of social action that a person may undertake. That is, a purposeful or goal oriented rational action or their rational action may be value-oriented or may engage in traditional action or may act from the emotional or affective stimulus. In effect, Weber's typologies contribute to explain and differentiate what informed the choices of African professional footballers relating to their economic actions toward the larger society (Bouhaouala,

1999; 2002; 2007). The various Weber's social rationality is explained below and the importance of its application to the research's methodology.

### 1) *Rational or purposeful Action*

An action may be rationally useful if it is based on logical or scientific grounds. Here, decisions are made based on a complicated multiplicity of strategies to achieve outcomes that are economically viable to the individual. The outcomes of an action (for example goals) are either taken as means to achieve other ends or are treated as if they are set in concrete. In this way, the action becomes purely instrumental. That is, the decision is towards achieving certain purposeful desires to enable one maximises returns on investment. For example, two individuals who are trying to maximise their income over the course of a year, we might find that one person uses far more effective methods or strategies to achieve this ultimate goal than the other person. This individual who made good returns from investing the money properly is deemed to have engaged in more purposively rational action than one who just kept the money and spent it anyhow without accruing returns on it. Classical economic theory treats individuals as *if* they were rationally purposeful. This theory explains that individuals will always try to maximise their utility. According to Weber, action cannot be valuable unless it is goal oriented.

Rational action in relation to a goal corresponds roughly to Pareto's logical action. For example, the action of a footballer who invests his football-related money into oil and gas business is to achieve a purposeful goal oriented towards maximising profit on returns. In all these cases, rational action is determined by the fact that the actor frames his goal clearly and combines means or conditions with a view to achieving it. Thus, the decisions pertain to rational action are distinguished by the expectations and consequences in relation to the behaviour of

objects in the environment and other human beings. These expectations are used as ‘conditions’ for the accomplishment of the actors own rationally pursued and calculated ends. This makes it possible to compare the degrees of rationality that various individuals exhibit with their choices of social action. Here, it is assumed that individuals drive their decision making processes in order to achieve their goals.

## *2) Rational Action/Value (Axiological Rationality)*

Here, an action is rational in relation to individuals’ value. That is, the individual makes a decision using rational means to achieve goals or outcomes that are defined in terms of subjectively meaningful values. Here, the individual makes decisions based on their valued rationality due to the commitments they attach to certain subjective economic goals (in terms of interests by gain). This makes them adopt an effective means that are in coherence with their values to reaching their goals. It shows that the means are chosen for their values coherence and efficiency but the goals are replaced by values.

For example, a female footballer of Nigeria national (U20) refused to accept a monetary reward for playing for her country of origin could be due to her value coherence. Since her decision was not directed towards achieving a specific economic goal like profits or gains but for respecting those values associated with the wearing of national team colours like honour and patriotism. Some also tend to dole out gifts to the needy or disadvantaged people in the community based on their passion and emotion toward such category of people in the locales (This is solidarity action). In sum, value rationality action is identified by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake that includes some ethical, aesthetic, religious or other forms of behaviour which are independent of its potentials for success or material gains as economic

consequences.

### 3) *Traditional Action*

The traditional action occurs when social and economic actions are oriented towards customs and traditions. The ends and means of action are mechanically fixed regarding to customs and traditions. An example would be putting on national team colours or observing a cultural ritual of a town or village. Here some traditional actions can become a cultural symbolism. Traditional actions can be divided into two subgroups that are, customs and habit. A custom is a practice that rests among familiarity of an ethnic group or a community. A custom is often continuous and entrenched in a culture. It normally lasts for generations. Habits are a series of steps learned gradually and sometimes without conscious awareness.

More importantly, decisions made here should not be taken for granted because they appear to be natural to the actors concerned. Since the decisions are embedded in one's culture and therefore, it is not easily compromised on as ingrained in a tradition. Since the actions are guided by customs and long-standing beliefs which become second nature. For instance, in many African communities no matter how your parent may neglect their responsibility towards taking care of you, it is an obligation (custom) that when you become successful in life, you cannot also neglect them because it is traditionally unacceptable irrespective of the past experience.

### 4) *Affective /Emotional Action*

Decisions made here, are emotion actions reflecting one's feelings in response to a certain situation at a point in time. The decisions taken tend to reflect one's feelings in response to a certain situation at a point in time. These decisions towards the individual can arise from social emotions, counterfactual emotions, emotions generated by what may happen (often

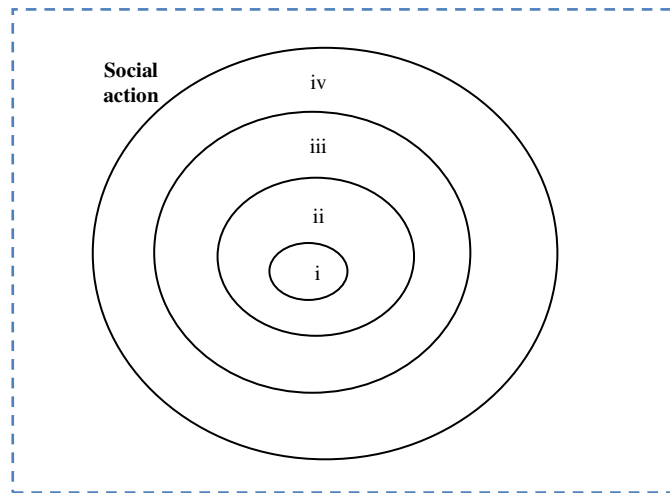


manifested as anxiety), emotions generated by joy and grief, thought-triggered emotions (sometimes manifested as flashbacks), or emotions of love and disgust. All of these emotions are considered to be unresolved and is contrary to economic rationality because the actor concerned makes the passionate relationship between the action and the means that supposedly exist to serve these ends. In other words, they do not evaluate their decision regarding the economic utility. They assess their decision with regard to their passion or emotions. This kind of action results from the emotional and affective side.

In a situation where one decision is to express personal feelings is an affection action. For examples, African players are excited about signing a professional contract and express dissatisfaction after experiencing downward mobility (Roderick, 2013) in their professional career would be affection actions. It can result from an uncontrolled reaction and emotional tension. Thus, the decision made here results from the inner feelings and commitment of individuals to certain situations of others. That is a person with an uncontrolled reaction becomes less inclined to consider other peoples' feelings as much as their own.

Also, an emotion tension comes from a basic belief that a person is powerless to obtain his/her deepest aspirations. When aspirations are not fulfilled, there is an internal disturbance. Most often, it becomes difficult to be productive in society due to the unfulfilled life. In short, the decision made here considers the situations of others that may need the support of those with passion or emotion that share their feelings and sentiments of others. Sometimes, it can be an inborn trait or learned experience or lived experience that people may acquire along with their journey of life and can become part and parcel of their personal values. Application of Weber methodology is seen in the previous case studies of the micro mentalities of Sport entrepreneurs.

Figure 2. Schema of Weber ideal type's methodologies



This permits us avoiding the conflict between the holistic and individualistic methodology. Each type of social action refers to the sense given by individuals. This alters when they share the same sense given and that constitutes a type of rationality.

## Conclusion

The various sociological meaning to actions was examined. It provides a tool to explain the importance individuals attach to their subjective meaning in the process of making decisions in the society regarding their actions. Parson (1947; 1968) argued that social action is a process in the actor-situation system which has motivational importance to the individual actor or in the case of collectivity, its component individuals while Pareto (1915-16; 1935)<sup>23</sup> situated its context

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<sup>23</sup> It is also considers the social reality in which actors give subjective meaning to the action which is driven by meanings, motives and sentiments.

in logical and illogical aspects of actions-which involves reality and form of a phenomenon that presents itself to the human mind. Both explanations did not emphasise much on the importance of behaviours of others which according to Weber affects the subjective meaning of the individual as their actions are also oriented towards the course of others (1922; 1978). Thus, African professional players' logic of actions by far may consider the importance of the behaviour of others in their local communities since they have played a crucial role in their football career transformation right from their locales to Europe.

This makes the theory of Weberian fits into the context of the research in the sense that, it creates avenues to explore the various economic actions of African professional players concerning the phenomenon of 'give back' to the communities. Therefore, the study considers that ahead of Parson (1968) and Pareto (1915-16; 1935) concepts of social action. Looking at multifaceted dimensions of the subject matter it would be relevant to employ the theory of Weber as an appropriate methodology because it provides possibilities for assessing the rationality behind African professional players' economic action (Give Back Phenomenon) to their local communities.

All in all, the contributions of those identified theories described previously will be integrated into models with a combination of the social rationality in developing an interactive model to explain the phenomenon of 'give back' from the professional players' perspective to their countries of origin in Africa. Enhanced interactive model was developed to explain the 'give back phenomenon' after a thorough analysis of contributions from the theories and models. It also took into account the model of Bouhaouala who applied the methodology of Weber in economic sociology to understand the economic rationalities of entrepreneurs which reflected in

their behaviour through forms of organisations, strategies of the enterprise, and commercial actions. The model was applied to this research.

## **2.5 MODEL OF ANALYSIS OF THE GIVE BACK PHENOMENON**

Figure 4 displays the enhanced model of analysis the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ of African professional footballers to their countries of origin. It is observed that the players’ subjective dimension can have a strong influence on their logics of action. This can be due to their shared values and norms of the community that create a porous boundary between them. This makes African footballers recognised the immense contributions and support they have received from the different people in the communities towards their development and migration processes abroad. Beyond that, it illustrates the significance meaning African professional footballers attach to their subjective dimensions (that includes values or conceptions or objectives or interest) in order to invest their efforts, time, finances and other resources through the ‘give back phenomenon’ to the local communities in their countries of origin.

Further, African footballers’ rationalities can be determined through their economic and non-economic activities in terms of the ‘give back phenomenon’ to the larger society. The ‘give back phenomenon’ of African professional players can also be influenced by their values (economic, social, norms or cultural, professional) or conceptions (work, economic, future, sport, social and reintegration) or objectives (economic, social, solidarity, professional or cultural) or interest (social, solidarity, economic, professional).

African players’ subjective dimension informs their decisions on the ‘give back phenomenon’ as they invest in various projects in their local communities of origin. The players’

rationalities are situated in the Weber's (1922; 1978) typologies of social action. That includes rational purpose or goals-oriented towards creating investment opportunities and making profit to maintain family's future, value-oriented often towards social or rational projects, not for profits but with reference to their values, traditional action which most often can be an obligation for them in transferring remittances to families, friend and others (under the influence of customs and norms), and emotional or affection action that can be observed through donations to charity, orphanage homes, awarding scholarships to needy students, etc. (oriented towards one's feelings/emotion in a certain situation).

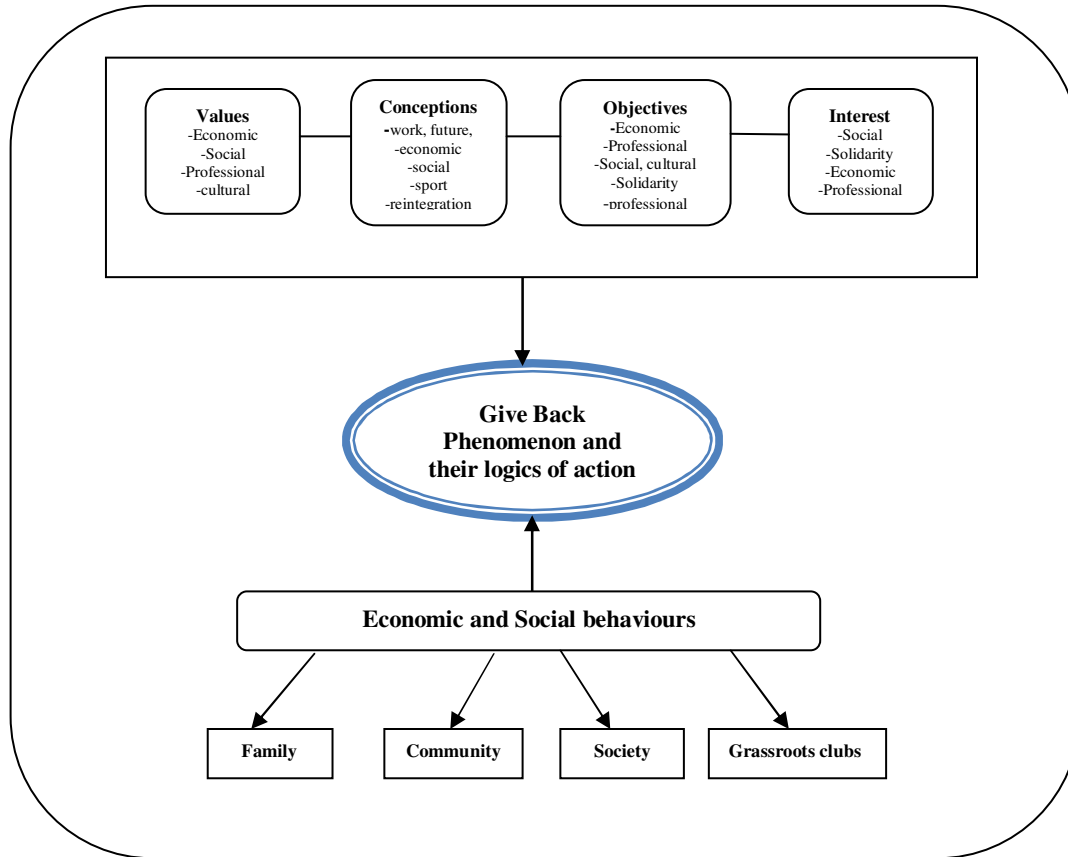
The premise under which African professional players make decisions can be seen from economic and social behaviours in relation to the 'give back phenomenon'. For instance, Darby (2014) argues that apart from some African migrant players direct remittances to their people, a number of high profile players like Samuel Eto'o, Michael Essien, Didier Drogba, Stephen Appiah and Emmanuel Adebayor are engaged in charitable work and philanthropy activities, which allow them to 'give back' and support various causes in Africa. But, the underlying factors of their social rationalities are not known in relation to the social projects out of the sport and /or *plus* sport (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011).

In African communities, professional footballers may react to social pressures from the media or locales people to give something back to the society. However, the intent of their actions cannot be easily identified, yet it is impossible to rule out some African professional footballers 'give back phenomenon' been influenced by emotions or passion. In a broader context, the importance they attached to such social behaviours can determine the rationality behind that particular action to the society. There are times, African professional footballers'

‘give back phenomenon’ may also reflect their deep connections to the society regarding their norms and cultural values. In short, their rationalities demonstrate the individual sense of meaning by taking into account the behaviour of others in confirmation to their values or conceptions or objectives or interest.

This goes to influence the logics of action regarding their economic and non-economic activities to include financial remittances, economic aids, social aids and investments. From the analysis, the interactive model of the footballers’ rationality model highlights the significance meaning African players attach to their economic and social actions through the different projects they invest in their local communities. The research does not only focus on African players’ giving back projects but also the rationality that determines their behaviours. That is, to say whether their actions are determined by the return on investments (ROI) or norms and cultural values or social and cultural embeddedness or the integration of the institutionalised networks or the economic interest to invest in their countries of origin. This provided a tool to developing the research questions in the next section.

Figure 3. Model of analysis of the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’



## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section outlines the various research methods and approaches employed to solicit the needed information to explain and analyse the motives behind professional footballers 'Give Back' Phenomenon to their communities of origin in Africa. It does so, by gathering data and documents of African players were collated and used to gain an insight into the research. It combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches to delve deeper into understanding the decision making of the players in terms of the social rationality. The theoretical framework contributed in developing and designing the analysis grid, out of which structured interviews were generated to comprehend the logics of action of African professional players to the local communities. At the same, all ethical issues were considered to aid produce a reliable and viable research.

The theoretical framework helped to extract the various indicators that supported in developing the analysis grid (details in the subsequent section). It covered all the aspects concerning the football career of African players' right from their communities before moving to leagues abroad. This was essential because it broadens the chances of obtaining information that was directly connected and related to the real situation on the African professional players (Burns and Grove, 2009).

### **3.1 SOURCES AND METHODS**

The main sources include the statistics on African professional players from their countries of origin to the host countries plus the in-depth interviews with the professional



footballers, visits to some of their projects in the communities, and the analysis of other relevant documents such as autobiographies and biographies of some African migrant players. The literature review from the various sources contributed to developing an extensive database with the needed indicators to design and construct the analysis grid. Both quantitative and qualitative research instruments were used to solicit the necessary information to find answers to the research questions.

The data were collected from academic materials, articles, newspapers, magazines, sports and clubs websites, players' personal sites, federations, FIFA website, international transfer records, Wikipedia and national team sites assisted in developing a pooled database of African professional players plying their trade abroad. It helped to develop an extensive database covering players' profiles, national team, domestic clubs, beginning leagues in Africa and Europe, town or city, youth club, country of origin, current and previous clubs in Europe, market value, and wages/salaries, image right, socioeconomic projects, length of stay in leagues abroad and other criteria. African football player comprised of those who were born in their countries of origin and might have left to Europe at pre-teen and/or opted to play for the country of origin while others too played for overseas but reconnected to their roots and reinvest in the communities.

African migrant players were traced from their beginning leagues overseas until the 2012/2013 season and the same time determined the end of some players' active professional career in the chosen 13 UEFA countries. It also showed the entry of new professional players to leagues abroad. These African players were drawn from the 30 professional European leagues

due to the leagues' quality and the same time represents the best UEFA leagues<sup>24</sup> ranking in 2012/13 and 2014. The top three professional leagues of those countries namely England (Premier, championship and League One), Spain (Primera, Segunda and Segunda A), Germany (Bundesliga 1 and 2, Liga 1), Italy (Serie A, Serie B and Lega Pro), and Switzerland (Super League, Challenge league and Liga 1) were considered because of their professionalism, but Ukraine has only one professional league and the following have two professional leagues respectively-France, Turkey, Greece, Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal and Russia.

Out of those leagues, are the 'big five' European leagues in Spain, England, Germany, Italy and France which are noted for their huge economic potentials and sporting success of some clubs as well as attracting a global viewership. Autobiographies of three African professional players namely Didier Drogba, Jay-Jay Okocha, and Fabrice Muamba were critically analysed to support the discussions. Other sources of information complemented with the extensive interviews from the former and current professional players.

### 3.2 **STATISTICS:** Descriptive analysis

In the development of the database, materials were collected in the early part of 2012 to May 2016. It ended in May 2013 after the construction extensive dataset. Statistics covers African professional players from the 54 member associations affiliated to CAF but only 44 have migrant football players in the chosen European leagues. Meanwhile, ten (10) African countries had none of their football migrant players in the 30 professional European leagues studied. The

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<sup>24</sup> Source: <http://www.uefa.com/memberassociations/uefarankings/country/index.html> (07/05/15)

selection has been defined to cover the 30 professional European leagues of African professional players based on the need to include satisfactory number of players in the survey. The research took into account the number of years these players have spent playing professional football in Europe which spans from 1-20years within the duration of 2012/2013 season.

Their length of stay in the European leagues was grouped into 1-3years, 4-7years, 8-11years, 12-15years and 16-20 years as it covers the duration of African migrant players' in the 30 professional European leagues. It provides information on the longest stay of African professional players in leagues abroad. The research considered the mobility of African players who have played in different countries with the highest being 12 overseas countries. A few African players have stayed in a particular European country's leagues for less than 11 years. The research further provided an essential insight into the beginning leagues countries of African players' prior to joining the top European leagues and the pattern of mobility exhibited by particular donor African countries. At the same time, the research is limited in the sense that large sample of African players' mobility didn't cover the entire 55 UEFA countries though some might have moved to the lower European leagues.

Further, many young and former migrant players were chosen could still be in the leagues though some might have retired, yet their views were analysed regarding their vast migration experiences. The ages of African players were between 17 and 36 who have experienced different mobility abroad along with their career paths. The statistics on the age range of players' favours majority of the players who have stayed and experienced professional football for less than 12years (83.86%). The database analyses draw on the migration of African players' right from the beginning leagues abroad to include any of the 13 UEFA countries. Careful

considerations were given to other overseas countries from Asia, Gulf and South America where some of these African players began their professional career from.

The literature review produced some theories and model to assist explain the rationalities behind African professional players 'Give Back Phenomenon' to their local communities. Here, the social action theory of Weber (1922; 1978) was employed as the methodology to explore and analyse the individual rationality regarding their logics of action to the local communities. It included those former African professional players who might have ended their career within 2008 and their views were important due to their vast experiences in the European leagues.

In order to get the needed responses from the footballers, the research constructed an analysis grid with the various indicators extracted from the literature to develop the structured interviews. The below table explains the content of it.

### **3.3 ANALYSIS GRID**

The analysis grid was derived from the theoretical approaches and results of other studies gathered from the literature to identify some characteristics /variables to construct the interview guideline. It was based on the economic, sociological, cultural, and socioeconomic parameters as extracted from the theoretical model.

Table 2. Analysis grid designed and developed for the interviews

Sub-theme	Characteristics/Criteria	Questions	Observations
Career path	aim, previous club, current club, years spent, success, difficult, memorable moment. (understanding the evolution)	Could you tell about your aim before and after becoming a professional, your difficult, success and memorable moments?	What drove you to become a professional player?
Football and sport profile	training, position, other sport, duration/length of stay	Could you tell about your football background?	What other sport did you do?
sociological and economical activity	evolution of economic situation (revenue, investment, salary, wages, remittance , etc)	How do you invest your football money?	What did you do with your first contract money?
Social profile	education, parents' profession, family, siblings, ethnic, city or town, village ,religion, local dialect, beginning of football, attitude of parent and household	When, where, and how did you begin to play football and attitudes of parent and family?	What support did you have from your family?
link with the community and country of origin	travel ,regular visits, financial aid, remittances, contract, network, commitment to national assignments, social , cultural and economic capital	What is your relationship with the community and country of origin?	What kind of support did you receive from the local people?
Professional itinerary	Europe, other country, country choice, agents, scouts, officials, media influence, transnational media, family aid and support, networks, supports.  orientation prior to country of choice	What informed your choice of country to start your career there?  Could you speak about how and when you got to the club, and who supported your movement to Europe?  Did you have anybody to brief or orient you before your departure to abroad?	How did you relate with your team colleagues or mates?  Were you fortunate to have people orienting you?

<p>traditional motive (cultural, social,)</p> <p>individual motive (value oriented or emotional)</p> <p>objectives</p>	<p>remittance, hospitals, schools, community health centre, playing grounds, church, water pump facility, sport pitch, toilet facility, sporting facility, financial support, charity foundation, needy support.</p> <p>football academies, sporting facilities, transport business, management of clubs, real estates, manufacturing factory, entertainment and music promotion, schools, credit facility, bonds.</p>	<p>What is your motive and values for undertaking projects?</p>	<p>What drives you to do those investment and your values in life?</p>
<p>Opinions or views on country and Africa</p>	<p>life, the people and Africa</p>	<p>What is your general view or opinion on the life of your country people and Africa?</p>	<p>General view on the life of your country people and Africa as a whole.</p>
<p>socioeconomic profile</p>	<p>revenue/wages/salary/transfers</p>	<p>Could tell about how your revenue evolves as you change clubs? (Evolution of their salaries during transfers)</p>	<p>Any fair idea about your salary increases?</p>
<p>socioeconomic commitment</p>	<p>charity foundation, schools, scholarships schemes, health centre, remittance, hospitals, training &amp; vocational centres, playing grounds, needy support.</p>	<p>Could you mention some of the social activities/projects you have done in your country of origin?</p>	<p>Why did you invest in this type of businesses?</p>
<p>engagement of experts/ professionals</p>	<p>individual/business groups</p> <p>environmental</p>	<p>Which role did other professional play in your projects?</p>	<p>Did you have other people managing your investment while playing?</p>
<p>socioeconomic prospects</p>	<p>actual and future projects</p>	<p>Could you tell about your short and long term projects?</p>	<p>What is your short and long term future plans?</p>
<p>lessons from your experiences in Europe</p>	<p>feedback on your experience</p>	<p>What is your experience in general on football?</p>	<p>What lessons can we learn from your experiences abroad?</p>

### 3.4 INTERVIEWS

In-depth and structured interviews were conducted with former and current African professional footballers who have played or playing in leagues abroad. This allowed the footballers to share views on their social background, football and sport profile, migratory itinerary, career path in domestic leagues, transformation in their economic and social status, and their involvement with the community, social and economic projects out of sport or investments made, and general opinions on the life of their country people and Africa as a whole and their professional experiences abroad.

Professional footballers were arbitrarily selected based on their ability to express themselves in the English language though some played in other leagues abroad. It should be noted that informal interviews were also captured particularly those connected to the subject matter. These helped to utilise the different interviewing techniques as players provided answers to specific questions and also generated insights and understanding by promoting narration (Witzel, 2000). The interview guidelines constructed from the analysis grid was used as the outlined while other emerging questions were discussed. Some of the questions were referred in particular to the experiences of interviewees; football career itinerary, important and difficult moments, memorable moments, the drive behind their projects, football itinerary, the role and support of family, relatives and the community, motive for them to invest their football-related money in the local communities and abroad, the types of investment, social life, and their future plans after football career. African professional players had the opportunity to share their memories, aspirations, interests, objectives, values and conceptions, and their family relationships.

The interviews were taped or recorded, transcribed and processed using the techniques of qualitative content analysis proposed by (Mayring, 2000; 2002b, 2007b, 2014; Glaser and Laudel, 2013). Firstly, the transcriptions were grouped according to the structured interview questions and carefully revised within the process of analysis (feedback loops). New topics and categories which emerged inductively were included in the analysis and interpretation (Mayring, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For instance, players asked for the change in the attitude of some of the community people that see them as different people from others in the locales. To gain insights into the different rationality behind African professional players 'Give Back' Phenomenon, the research classified their years of migration abroad into three generational groups. This is because the interviewees captured constitute those who went to play professional football abroad within 1990-2016 and the same time, was the period that intensified the migration of Africa talents to Europe.

The first generation of the footballers was those who migrated during the year (1990-2000) and that paved the way for the frequent local talents exodus to leagues abroad. This period also identified the increase in the networking of football agents across continents (Poli et al, 2012). There were African footballers that joined the migration 'train' from 2000-2008 was termed as the second generation where we witnessed an improvement in the FIFA regulations on football transfers as earnings of players began to skyrocket as well as the increase in clubs' budgets, and lastly those from 2008-2016 also termed the third generation group of African migrant players with huge financial potentials as the football labour market continues to experience a lot of capital investment from the clubs on best international talents. Yet, those African players who left at pre-teen were placed into the appropriate grouping regarding their



status at that time.

All these categories of African footballers were interviewed because of their diverse experiences in the evolution of the European football market to enhance the study. The interview of African footballers started from June 2013 to May 2016 due to their clubs busy schedules and unavailability of some players' to participate. Significantly, the majority of interviewees have spent more than ten (10) years playing professional football abroad. Some of the interviews were conducted by Skype, on the telephone, and face-to-face with players at their residence or business centres. At the time of the interviews, interviewees were between the ages of 18 and 52.

In delimiting the interview sample, careful consideration was given to the former professional players that cut across the classified generations due to the dynamics in the international football market. Some of the interviews were recorded from radio and television sources as professional players granted personal interviews to the host/presenters on their football career paths. Most of the interviews were conducted with individuals based on the pre-arranged appointment dates. The length of the interviews varied from 20 to 90 minutes. In all, 32 interviews were recorded and transcribed with the consent of the participants. A table for the interviewees is provided at the end of the section (Table 3).

The research represents different generations of African professional players who have had the opportunity to feature for their national teams at the various age levels of international competitions, with varying social background and different levels of education per their migratory itineraries.

Most of the interviewees have specific ties with their left-behinds, two (2) left at pre-teen to study and live with their families overseas, and one obtained bachelor degree and the other

Baccalaureate. Of all the interviewees, seven (7) ended their active playing career within 2008, three (3) of the players ended theirs, within 2014 season, and twenty (20) currently playing professional football abroad at the time of the data collection. The majority of the interviewees played/playing in the top leagues for their respective European clubs with seven (7) in the second leagues and three (3) in the third leagues.

An interviewee was included though he played for a different European country but reconnected to his birthplace in the country of origin where he has established a magnificent sports complex together with other businesses which relatively is an example for youths in Africa. His vast experiences both on-and-off of the pitch have earned him much respect and recognition in his country of origin and working as an entrepreneur after his football profession. The social action theory of Weber (1922; 1978) was used as a technique to understand the underlying basis of African players' decisions making in terms of the phenomenon 'give back' to their countries of origin. It further assisted to examine and analyse the social rationalities of the footballers and the importance meaning they attach to their actions in giving something back to their local communities.

This methodological approach was supported with the model of Bouhaouala (1999; 2001; 2007), as applied in the small businesses in the sports tourism market by entrepreneurs. It is essential because it helped to understand whether players' personal values or conceptions or objectives play a significant role in the 'Give Back Phenomenon' to the larger society. Bouhaouala's model of analysis contributes to identifying those African professional footballers with entrepreneurial skills that can have a homology to innovative and the classical entrepreneurs through their particular type of investment activity.

Table 3. Total number of African professional footballers interviewed

<b>Years of professionalism</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>4-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Former Players</b>	0	0	1	4	6	<b>11</b>
<b>Active Players</b>	9	1	5	5	1	<b>21</b>
<b>Total</b>	9	1	6	9	7	<b>32</b>

The table further explains the number of interviewees with the different years of professional football experience in Europe. The former professional migrant footballers captured for the interviews were eleven (11) and those actively playing are twenty-one (21). This sums up the number of African professional players interviewed in an attempt to answer the research question for the study. The next table represents interviewees from the various CAF zones.

Table 4. Classification of the interviewees with their countries of origin in Africa

<b>African Countries</b>	<b>Migrant players</b>	<b>CAF zone</b>	<b>African Union (AU)</b>	<b>Official Language</b>
Ghana	19	West	ECOWAS	English
Nigeria	5	West	ECOWAS	English
Senegal	2	West	ECOWAS	French
Cameroun	2	Central	ECCAS	English and French
Ivory Coast	1	West	ECOWAS	French
Sierra Leone	1	West	ECOWAS	English
Togo	1	West	ECOWAS	French
Zambia	1	South	SADC	English
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>			

From the table, it is not surprising to have the majority of the interviewees coming from West African countries. This reflects the increasing number of professional players from those countries to the various European leagues. CAF zoning is grouped into the following that is, Northern zone 1, West zone 2 & 3, Central zone 4, Central-East zone 5, and Southern zone 6. It is illustrated with the organisation of African Union (AU)<sup>25</sup> where the various zones are members. The researcher realised that the trading and economic exchanges hardly influence professional players' decisions to their communities of origin in Africa. A detailed map on the professional players' movement from the key donor African countries to the leagues in UEFA countries is attached (page 156). In order to have insight and first-hand information, observation visits were undertaken to see some projects of African migrant players particularly those in Ghana where the majority of interviews were conducted. Other projects were monitored and verified with friends in those countries and also with the support of the internet. The combination of interviews and observation facilitated an in-depth understanding of professional football players' rationality of the 'Give Back Phenomenon' to their countries of origin in Africa.

The interviews again gave an insight into African professional players' values or conceptions or objectives that may influence their logics of action regarding the types of social and economic projects undertaken in their communities.

To have a clear view of the African Union, the inter-community trading activities are briefly discussed to see if they have any impact on players 'Give Back Phenomenon'.

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<sup>25</sup> African Union: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_Union#Treaties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Union#Treaties). (Accessed on 08/07/2016)

### **3.5 ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIC AND TRADING UNIONS**

They consist of Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD: 28members), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA: 19members), East African Community (EAC: 5memebers), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS: 11members), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS: 15members), Southern African Development Community (SADC: 15members) and Arab Maghreb Union (AMU: 5members). However, each African country has the opportunity to join one or more economic community states depending on their trading relationships.

The CAF zoning is similar to that of the geopolitical division of the Africa continent. That is zoned into North, West (A & B), Central, East-Central and Southern. With the majority of African countries been colonisers of France and United Kingdom. These two colonisers' languages are dominant in African countries and the majority of the professional footballers interviewed were from the Anglophone with a few coming from the Francophone that cut across the West, Central and Southern zones of CAF division. From here, it is important to have a brief understanding of the social background of the interviewees.

### **3.6 MERITS AND DEMERITS OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES**

The adopted methodology afforded the researcher an opportunity to ask questions developed from the panel data and those that arose from their responses during the interview session. At the same time, it created room for an understanding of some reasons behind the professional players' giving back phenomenon to their countries of origin. By that enabled the

interviewees to express themselves freely. It also provided a chance for knowledge exchange in terms of ideas and views with the participants.

From the complexity of the subject matter, this method helped to explore the motives behind the footballers 'give back' phenomenon to their countries of origin. Further, it created flexibility for the researcher to manage with the respondents' appointment changes to meet their schedules. This technique provided sufficient information to support with an in-depth analysis of the subject matter and also minimised the indecision on the part of the interviewees since they freely expressed their views on issues. The methods again allowed for first-hand information from the interviewees. Lastly, it has created a cordial relationship between the researcher and the interviewees that can facilitate cooperation in future researches.

On the contrary, some of the footballers were not willing to be interviewed due to image rights, representation and agency issues. The main limitation was long travelling to African players' countries of origin and places of work. It was difficult to get even representation from all the CAF zones because some players refusal to honour their pre-arranged interview schedules after several reminders. The next section looks briefly at the social background of those interviewees.

### 3.6 SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS INTERVIEWED

This section explains the social background of those African professional players' interviewed according to their career trajectories and achievements in Africa and abroad. It took into account their beginning leagues abroad and the 30 UEFA professional leagues as at 2012/2013.

1. **Abedi Ayew Pele** (born in 1964): One of the first African players who made history with French club of Olympique Marseille after winning the UEFA champions league trophy in 1993 as well as African player of the century awarded by IFFHS (International Federation of Football History and Statistics). He won African footballer of the year award for three consecutive times and played professional football for over 18years in six foreign countries. He is also the youngest player at age 17 to have won a gold medal in AFCON 1982 tournament. He was former captain of Ghana senior national team (Black stars) until his retirement from active football in the year 2000. The interview took place at his residence in East Legon, Accra-Ghana on 09/03/2016.
2. **Anthony Yeboah:** (born in 1966): One of the finest strikers for Ghana and Africa who is noted for scoring spectacular goals. He played for Ghana national senior team (Black stars) several times until his retirement from active football in 2002. He is always remembered in Germany for his role in fighting racism as an ambassador. He played over 14 years of professional football in three different foreign countries and his interview took place in his office at one of his magnificent Hostel building in Dansoman, Accra-Ghana on 10/08/2015.

3. **Charles Kwablah Akonnor** (born in 1974): He was former Ghanaian international footballer who spent most of his professional career in German leagues and now head coach of Dreams FC, a premier league club in Ghana. He played professional football for over 16years in two different foreign countries and also had the privileged to captain the Ghana national Black stars team during his active time in 2008. His interview took place at his residence in East Legon, Accra-Ghana on 01/09/2015.
4. **Marcel Desailly** (born in 1968): He is a Ghanaian born footballer who opted to play for France national team having relocated with his family at pre-teen from Ghana to France. He won the FIFA World Cup title with France in 1998. He won two UEFA champions league titles with French club of Olympique Marseille in 1993 and AC Milan in 1994. Apart from the league titles with his clubs, he played in four different foreign countries. Currently, he manages his own businesses in Ghana and abroad as an entrepreneur. He played professional football for over 19years and his first interview took place in his office in Accra, Ghana at Lizzy Sports Complex on 14/06/2013. His second interview was on the telephone at the Amsterdam airport on 17/05/2016.
5. **Samuel Eto'o** (born in 1981): He is the most decorated African player of all time having won the best player award for four times. Eto'o scored over 100 goals with Barcelona and was the former captain for the indomitable Lions of Cameroun. He had made a lot of histories with his national teams as a youth player and with European clubs in UEFA champions' league. He had won three UEFA champions league titles with Barcelona in 2006, 2009, and 2010 also with Inter Milan. He has played professional football for over 18 years and now with a Turkish club as his fifth foreign country. His interview took



place in Guinea when he inaugurated a new sports training centre and granted an exclusive interview to BAH Abdoulaye, a correspondent for Africa Top Sport.com on 24/03/2013.

6. **Asamoah Gyan** (born in 1985): Currently, he is the captain of Ghana national senior team and also among the first 10 Best Paid footballers in the world published by Matt Hamilton in an article “In Football/Business of Sport”<sup>26</sup>. He is also all-time highest scorer for Africa in FIFA world cup competitions. He has played professional football for over 12 years in five different foreign countries and an active footballer as well. His interview took place on both television and radio on 20/05/2015 and 26/11/2015 that was recorded by Ernest.
7. **Stephen Appiah** (born in 1980): He was the immediate captain of Ghana national senior team (Black stars) and always remembered for his role in qualifying the country for its first FIFA World Cup competition in 2006. He achieved the same feat in 2010 for the second time. He played professional football for over 16years in three different overseas countries and adored for his humanitarian activities in Ghana and Africa. The interview took place at Lizzy Sports Complex, Accra, on one of his routine gym training on 10/07/2013.
8. **Jean-Claude Mbvoumin** (born in 1973): He was former Cameroonian international footballer who played 11years of professional football in France. Some of his youthful national teammates’ generation players were late Marc-Vivien Foe, Rigobert Song, Jay,

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<sup>26</sup> <http://thekingmaker.me/200-best-paid-footballers-in-the-world-today/> (accessed on 29/10/2015)

Jay Okocha, among the rest. His European football experience led him to establish the 'Foot Solidaire' (Association Culture Foot Solidaire -CFS) with the humanitarian action towards young players who are recruited or trafficked in Africa. He was interviewed on the telephone from his 'Foot Solidaire' office in Paris, France on 07/10/2015.

- 9. Augustine Ahinful** (born in 1974): He was former Ghanaian international footballer who played over 15 years of professional football in five different foreign countries. He is actively involved in the Ghana Football Association activities as a member of the technical committee for the past 4 yrs, and also management member of the national U20 team, a board member of the Professional Football Association of Ghana (PFAG). His interview took place at his residence in East Legon, Accra-Ghana on 11/08/2015.
- 10. Bouna Coundoul** (born in 1982): He is Senegalese international player who has played for over 10 years of professional football in four different foreign countries. He received All New York City Goalkeeper of the Year award from his beginning league and a holder of a degree in Information Science and Policy from the states. He was interviewed took place in Accra, Ghana when the Senegalese national team was camping at the Lizzy Sports Complex, Accra-Ghana on 14/07/2013.
- 11. Nii Odartey Lamptey** (born in 1974): He was predicted by the world Pelé as the next 'Pele' after his exploits during the FIFA U17 World Cup in 1991 ahead of Alessandro Del Pedro and other future stars having won the player of the tournament award. This made him a superstar as a teenager and played professional football for over 17 years in ten different foreign countries. He played in all the Ghana national youth teams and ended up with the senior team as well. Presently, he is a football coach and director at his

football academy and educational centre. Lamptey was a former professional footballer for his country. The interview took place at his residence in Spintex area close to his educational centre in Accra, Ghana. He was interviewed twice on 26/04/2015 and 08/08/2015.

**12. Seyi George Olofinjana** (born in 1980): He was Nigerian international footballer with over 12 years of professional football experience in two different foreign countries. He is one of the African players with a master degree in Project Management in addition to his chemical engineering degree. Seyi won two gold medals with Nigerian national team in AFCON competitions. He was interviewed on the telephone from his residence in England on 17/01/2016.

**13. Prince Ikpe Epong** (born in 1978): He was former Nigerian international footballer who played over 18years of professional football in twelve different foreign countries before his retirement in 2012. According to him, he is known in Nigeria as the most travelled Nigerian player in their history after playing with several clubs in different countries. He was interviewed on the telephone from his residence in Sweden on 09/12/2015.

**14. Michael Chidi Alozie** (born in 1986): He is Nigerian international football player who has played for over 12 years of professional football experience in three different foreign countries. He also benefitted from an advice of a former Nigerian international (Julius) in the area of investments that made him described the former professional footballer as super professional. He was interviewed on the telephone from his residence in Ukraine on 10/12/2015.

- 15. Anthony Kofi Annan** (born in 1986): He is Ghanaian international football player who has played over 12 years of professional football in three different foreign countries. He has won several league titles with his clubs abroad. He was a former member of the Ghana national senior team that won a silver medal in AFCON 2010. He has played professional football in five different countries in Europe. He was interviewed on the telephone from his club in Europe on 13/04/2016.
- 16. Noah Chivuta** (born in 1983): He is Zambian international football player who has played over 14 years of professional football in three different countries overseas. He played for five different clubs in the same league abroad. He was a member of the Zambia national senior team that won a gold medal in AFCON 2012. His interview took place on the telephone from his club abroad on 23/04/2016.
- 17. Reuben Ayarna** (born in 1985): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 8 years of professional football experience in two different countries abroad. He has individual honours to his credit at the club level and still plays actively abroad. He is unmarried and his interview on the telephone from his residence in Europe on 20/01/2016.
- 18. Sam Ayorinde** (born in 1974): He was a former Nigerian international who played over 14 years of professional football in twelve different clubs in twelve different countries abroad before his retirement in 2008. He played for the Nigerian senior national team and married with 3 children. He started his European professional football journey by road through some African countries without an agent. His interview was on the telephone from his residence in Sweden on 08/12/2015.

- 19. Emmanuel Eboué** (born in 1983): He is an Ivorian international footballer with over 11 years of professional football experience in three different countries abroad. He is still playing and had won some trophies with his previous clubs abroad. He is married with three kids and his interview took place at the Lizzy Sports Complex, Accra, Ghana on 14/06/2013.
- 20. John Paintsil** (born in 1981): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 11 years of professional football experience in three different countries abroad. He has achieved individual honours at both clubs and national levels. John has participated in two FIFA world cup competitions in 2006 and 2010 where they reached the quarter-final stage and won a bronze medal in AFCON 2008. Married with three kids, his interview took place at the Lizzy Sports Complex, Accra, Ghana on 13/07/2013.
- 21. Isaac Cofie** (born in 1991): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 8 years of experience of playing in a country abroad. He still plays actively and also featured for his country's national senior team in 2012. Married with a child, his interview took place on the telephone from his residence in Italy on 22/01/2016.
- 22. Samuel Bangura** (1995): He is a Sierra Leone international footballer with over 4 years of professional experience in two different countries abroad. He is a member of his country's national senior team and still plays actively in Europe. His interview took place on the telephone from his residence in England on 06/01/2016.
- 23. Michael Anaba** (born in 1993): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 2 years of professional experience in Spain. He won a bronze medal at the FIFA world U20

competition in 2013. He still plays actively in Europe, yet unmarried and without a kid. His interview took place on the telephone from his residence in Spain on 07/12/2015.

**24. Stéphane Badji** (born in 1990): He is a Senegalese international footballer with over 3 years of professional experience in three different foreign countries. He is an active member of the Senegal national senior team. Stephane is married and still, plays actively in Europe. He was interviewed during the Senegalese national team camping at the Lizzy Sports Complex in Accra, Ghana on 14/07/2013.

**25. Samuel Owusu** (born in 1996): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 2 years of professional experience abroad. Samuel is unmarried and still plays actively in Europe. His interview took place on the telephone from his residence abroad on 22/12/2015.

**26. Lumor Agbenyenu** (born in 1996): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 2 years of professional experience in two different countries abroad. He has featured for the national U20 team of his country and into active professional football. Lumor is without a child and unmarried. His Interview took place on the telephone from his residence in Portugal on 10/01/2016.

**27. Gideon Baah** (born in 1991): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 2 years of professional experience abroad. He has been a member of his country's national senior team for sometimes and active in professional football. He has achieved both individual and club honours. He has a diploma from the Polytechnic and married without a child. His interview took place at the Lizzy Sports complex, Accra-Ghana on 05/12/2013.

- 28. Yaw Yeboah** (born in 1997): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 2 years of professional experience in two different foreign countries. He still plays actively and has featured for his national U20 team and senior team. He was the best African youth player at the African U20 tournament in 2015. He was also voted the best player at the Gothia Cup in 2014 in the U17 category. He is unmarried and had his education from the RTD football academy. His interview took place on the telephone from his residence in France on 26/03/2016.
- 29. Ibrahim Ayew** (born in 1988): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 2 years of professional experience abroad. He was a member of the Ghana national senior team that reached the quarter-finals stage of the FIFA world cup in 2010. He won a silver medal at the CHAN tournament in 2009. He is unmarried and the first son of Abedi Pele Ayew. His interview took place at the Lizzy Sports Complex, Accra-Ghana on 30/07/2013.
- 30. Richard Gadze** (born in 1994): He is a Ghanaian international footballer with over 2 years of professional experience abroad. He has featured for his country's national U23 team and in the WAFU tournament in 2013. He is unmarried and has a diploma from the Polytechnic and still active in football. His interview was on the telephone from his residence in Europe on 09/04/2016.
- 31. George Ekeh** (born in 1980): He was a former Nigerian international footballer with over 13years of professional experience in five different countries abroad before retiring in 2015. He was interviewed on the telephone from his residence in Sweden on 20/04/2016.

**32. Zakaria Isa Sukura** (born in 1996): He is a Togolese international footballer with over 2years of professional experience and plays actively abroad. He is not married and without any national team call up yet. He was interviewed on the telephone from his residence abroad on 22/12/2015.



## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section focuses on the research results with the extensive database developed and interviews to understand the decision making processes of African professional players in leagues abroad. It also assisted to unravel the rationalities of professional African players underlying the ‘give back phenomenon’ which is based on their decisions to take part in many types of social or economic projects in the local communities. These together contributed to understanding the rationalities behind African professional players’ support with their resources to close families, extended family, friends, coaches, teammates and others in the community. The results are organised into the following subthemes, migration dynamics from Africa to Europe, African footballers beginning leagues abroad, African professional footballers’ mobility process in Europe, new market of football in Europe. It includes the periodization of African football evolution. This periodization explains a specific period through which African football has evolved to its current state in the football industry.

### **4.1 DYNAMICS OF MIGRATION FROM AFRICA TO EUROPE**

The European football market has always been enchanting for the international migration of best talents around the globe. This is because the structured leagues and competitions as well as other socio-economic potentials for the principal actors (professional footballers) and other stakeholders of the game. It has further provided international footballers with the opportunity to control and become more mobile in the European football market. This has become a stimulus for many African talents that recognise their leagues and competitions as the only way for them

to achieve a reputation as a professional footballer.

Africa continent is seen as a gold mine of talents with the love for the ball, elegance and passion for playing football (Thielke, 2009; see Ungruhe, 2014), yet lacks proper structures and facilities to support their development. This is also the case with their educational structures and other supporting systems that, fail to empower the youths resulting in them losing hope and facilitating migration abroad. Simon<sup>27</sup> narrated his case of moving abroad as a result of low wages and lack of perspectives despite the efforts he had put into his football career back home. He went on to mention some corrupt management practices both in clubs and the federation that do not care about the welfare of players (Büdel, 2013:13).

In many African leagues, this is an emerging trend and provides less hope for best talents with dreams of playing professional football career abroad. Indeed, factors such as the opportunity to move abroad, develop their football skills, have sustained welfare, and choose a specific destination country often influence players migration decisions abroad. Some of the factors that push African players to pursue a football career abroad are inspired by a new market of football in Europe. This is because many African football players have less confidence in their countries' economies that look bleak for their future. Based on this reflection, it provides some of the football players with a guarantee to borrow money to facilitate their migration project abroad. But, in the event of unsuccessful mobility abroad, they have to pay back money invested in their journey overseas (see Büdel, 2013).

This makes European leagues and competitions featured as a focal point for international football migration (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). The migration of football talents from Africa to Europe is nothing new (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001; Darby, 2014). African footballers

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<sup>27</sup> Interview by Büdel, 15/09/201. (see Büdel, 2013)

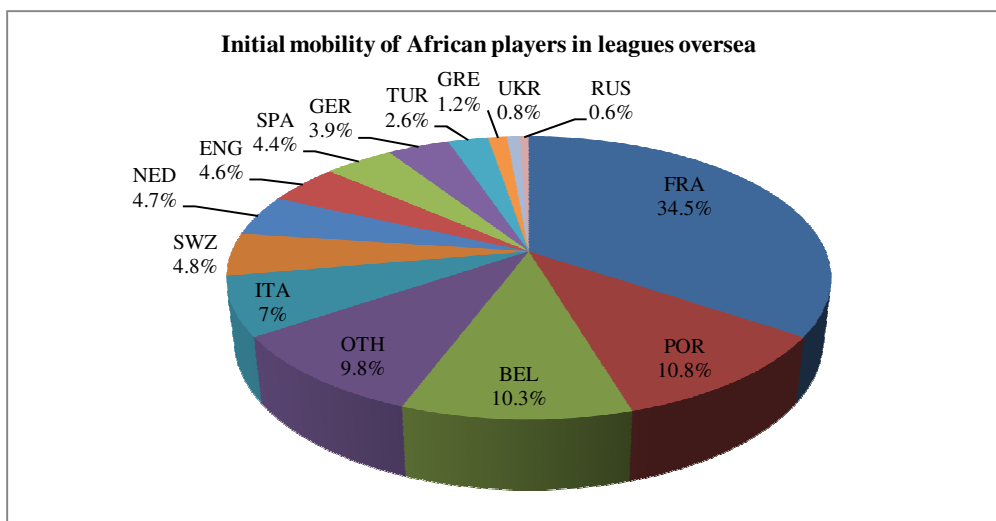
mobility in leagues abroad provides them substantial earnings which some are remitted to their left-behinds in the larger society. This represents a ‘give back’ model in support of people in the community.

To live up to the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ the migration abroad often influences players’ decisions. This affords them an opportunity to reciprocate the support received from the community during their migration projects. Therefore, getting migration opportunity abroad can improve one's social upward mobility in their communities. The ‘give back’ model can become an incentive for the young ones that have a strong desire to pursue a professional football abroad. Many African football players have identified limited opportunities at home as one of the barriers to their professional career abroad.

In addition, the study provided an understanding of how African professional footballers’ make decisions on host country abroad. It further assisted to explain the exporter countries of foreign players from Africa to Europe considering their beginning leagues abroad. This includes those African football players who began from the leagues in Eastern Europe, Asia and South America. All together with statistics, charts, and tables supported to substantiate the migration of African footballers in Europe (**Appendix A: 329**-Summary of the African footballers’ database 2012/13).

#### 4.1.2 AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS BEGINNING LEAGUES ABROAD

Chart 1. Beginning leagues of African professional footballers overseas



##### Keys

France (FRA), Portugal (POR), Belgium (BEL), Others (OTH), Italy(ITA), Switzerland (SWZ), The Netherlands (NED), England (ENG), Spain (SPA), Germany (GER), Turkey (TUR), Greece (GRE), Ukraine (UKR) and Russia (RUS).

Chart 1 illustrates the beginning host countries of African players and their migration destinations in leagues abroad. It was revealed that 34.5% of the players moved to the leagues of France, followed by Portugal (10.8%), Belgium (10.3%) and Others (East Europe, Nordic and Asia)-(9.8%). Those leagues absorb the majority of the players towards their migration projects. Nigerian international footballer who spent 11years playing professional football abroad narrated how his career started;

“I never thought I was good enough to be a professional footballer so to start choosing or picking wasn’t in my mind at the time because I never saw myself playing abroad. But, we watched a lot of English football at the time when we always converged on Saturday afternoon to watch football on TV. We watched a lot of English football and Italian football on TV which always come to mind and apparently if I was going to

choose, then it would have been England or Italy. But I ended up in Norway first before moving on to England” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

The football player, even though was not sure of a professional career in football but found it difficult in making decision about his migration. Thanks to the role of the European football market that provided him with an alternative to begin from Norway. This saw him moving on, to the English premiership where he ended his active football career there. Most often, African players watch foreign leagues match on various paid television channels and that can affect their migration choices to leagues abroad. This transnational media can increase players’ migration abroad (Akindes, 2011:2182). For instance, a football player mentioned that:

“To proof to myself when growing up like there were a lot of them we were watching and inspiring to be someone in football” Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Thus, limited opportunities for media coverage of their domestic leagues can influence their migration abroad as some would like to be seen on television by their community people. Another interviewee mentioned that:

“While young I knew I had a bit of talent but I never in my life dreamt about professional football. I was always like it was just a game I knew how to play a little bit because I thought there was so much to it that I would never be able to cope at the professional level” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Aside from the player doubting his capabilities at the onset of his career, he was still able to decide on his migration destination abroad when the time came for him to choose. He considered those constraint factors that limited his opportunities to the ones toward the new market of football in Europe. Another player narrated his choice of destination country that:

“England leagues are fascinating and very attractive. It is the wish of every footballer to play there. But, there are people that get the chance outright and others have to go round before, they can get the chance to

play in the premiership. With regard to playing, I didn't really get a chance to go to England or Spain or anywhere, I only had the chance to come and play in Italy" Cofie (25yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

Analysis of the African player's statement, he was presented with an upward mobility opportunity (Roderick, 2012). The upward mobility provides footballers with the opportunity based on their performance and quality. But, he wishes to move and play in the English premiership regarding his future relocation because it is fascinating and attractive. Some of these opportunities are towards the new market of football in Europe that offers players migration options to leagues abroad. The same football player shared his experience on downward mobility:

"Unfortunately, a ball deflected my foot and went straight into the goal post which made us lost the game. The next day, it was all over in the Sports papers but mentally I was strong so, this didn't let me down. And since then, the coach didn't give me the chance again to play so, I left the club."

In such situations, it may be difficult for a player to get a top club immediately, and the only option for him was to move and find a lower division or team. This was to help him get more playing time that can improve his skills level rather than stay on the same team without playing matches. It decreases the economic value when one moves to a lower team or goes on loan. According to Roderick (2012), it indicates one of the cases that present footballers with downward mobility aside from other issues with team managers and a dip in performance.

From chart 1, 54.4% of African players mobility project is located in the 'big five' European leagues while 45.6% covers the rest of the other leagues overseas. Breakdown of their mobility choices abroad represents 81.3% which the majority is from the francophone countries of Senegal (72), Mali (39), Morocco (39), Cameroun (34), Algeria (32), Cote d'Ivoire (18), Congo (18) and Guinea (18). Indeed, their mobility project dominance in the French leagues can

be attributed to a partial colonial and neocolonial linkage (Darby, 2007), yet there may be other factors towards the new market of football. The below table illustrates further on the mobility trends of African players in the European leagues ending for 2012/2013 season.

#### 4.1.3 AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS MOBILITY PROCESS IN EUROPE

Table 5: Mobility trends of African players' in the European leagues as at 2012/13

<i>Country (host)</i>	<i>Football players size</i>	<i>Mobility from (donor)</i>
<b>France</b>	266	SEN 38, MAL 30, CAM 26, CIV 26, MOR 25, ALG 18, TUN 14, GUI 11, GHA 10,...
<b>Belgium</b>	130	SEN18, GHA 15, CDR 12, NGN 11, CAM 9, EGY 7,...
<b>Portugal</b>	129	CAV 33, GUB 19, NGN 9, CIV 9, SEN 9, CAM 8,...
<b>England</b>	90	NGN 17, <b>SEN 9, CAM 8, CIV 8, MOR 6, MAL 6</b> , GHA 5, SFA5,...
<b>Turkey</b>	76	NGN 14, CAM 14, SEN 8, CIV 8, MOR 4, GHA 4, GUI 4,...
<b>Spain</b>	71	CAM 9, NGN 9, MOR 9, SEN 8, GHA 7, ALG 6, EQG 5,....
<b>Italy</b>	70	GHA 18, SEN 11, NGN 8, MOR 6, CIV 5, GUI 4, TUN 3, MAL 3,
<b>Germany</b>	62	TUN 8, SEN 6, CAM 6, NGN 6, CDR 5, GHA 4, CIV 4, MOR 3, BUF3,...
<b>Switzerland</b>	54	SEN 7, CAM7, CIV 7, CDR 6, TUN 5, NGN 3, GHA 3, CON 3,...
<b>Greece</b>	54	SEN 9, CAM 8, NGN 6, GHA 5, CIV 4, GUI 4, CDR 3, MAL 2,....
<b>Netherlands</b>	37	MOR 20, GHA 3, NGN 3, CAV 3, SFA 2, CIV 2, CAM 1, ALG 1, CON 1,...
<b>Russia</b>	25	CIV 7, NGN 5,SEN4,CAM 2,MOR 2,GHA 1,CON 1,SFA 1,ZAB 1,CHD 1
<b>Ukraine</b>	20	NGN 7,GHA 4,CAM 3,TUN 2,CIV 2,SEN 1, MAL 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1084</b>	

#### Keys:

Senegal (SEN); Cameroun (CAM); Nigeria (NGN); Cote D'Ivoire (CTV); Morocco (MOR); Ghana (GHA); Mali (MAL); Algeria (ALG); Cape Verde (CAV); Tunisia (TUN); Congo DR (CDR); Guinea (GUI); Guinea Bissau (GUB); Burkina Faso (BUF); Congo (CON); Egypt (EGY); South Africa (SFA); Togo (TOG); Benin (BEN); Angola (ANG); Gabon (GAB); Sierra Leone (SEL); Gambia (GAM); Zimbabwe (ZIM); Equatorial Guinea (EQG);Comoros (COS); Burundi (BUR); Zambia (ZAB); Central Africa Republic (CAR); Kenya (KEN); Mozambique (MOZ); Liberia (LIB); Rwanda (RWA); Chad (CHD); Libya (LBY); Uganda (UGN); Niger (NGR); Somalia (SOM); Namibia (NAM); Ethiopia (ETH); Sao Tome Principe (STP); Madagascar (MDG); Mauritius (MUS) ; Mauritania (MTA).

From Table 6, 65.05% represents mobility process of football players from the donor countries of SEN, MAL, CIV, ALG, MOR and GUI offering majority to the French leagues, and Cape Verde (CAV) and Guinea Bissau (GUB) also exhibiting similar trend in the Portuguese

leagues (former coloniser) that represent 40.3%. The mobility project of African players shows the same pattern as their initial mobility choices to leagues abroad. This may demonstrate the role of colonial ties in facilitating their mobility to France and Portugal considering the history of the game (Darby, 2007).

The research revealed that out of 44 African countries, only six (6) representing 13.6% having a strong colonial, culture and language ties with former colonisers, while 86.4% are without such connections. That is, other factors are informing the agency of players' mobility project towards the new market of football in Europe. Though there is a strong colonial and neocolonial linkage with players from Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa to England but the dominance of francophone professional players makes it a weak connection. This development explains how important the factors towards the new market of football in Europe can drive players' mobility choices abroad. Another interviewee explained his destination choice as:

“The country I was dreaming of starting my football career was France and thank God my first travelling took me to that country before I came to Portugal, but in the future, I wish to end my career in England. My reason is that in France, we have a lot of African players there and that will be easier for me to cope with them. I think there is not much racism in France like the other countries, though there is aggressiveness in their game but I still prefer to have started from there” Agbenyenu (19yrs, 2yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

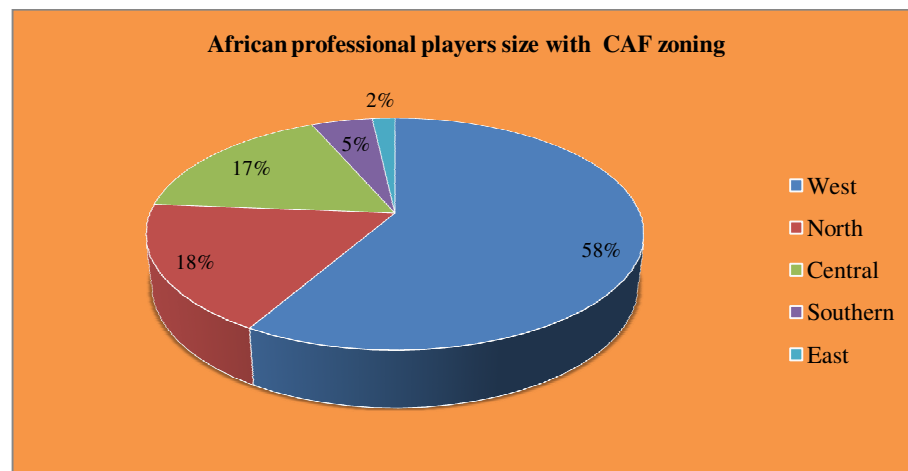
The 19-year-old Ghanaian international footballer has no colonial ties with France, yet dreamt of continuing his career there in the future. This is because of the mobility opportunities that may support his choices towards the new market of football in Europe by upward mobility. However, it will be interesting to figure out, what explains African players' strong desire to play in the English premiership. The table further reveals that only four (4) UEFA countries have strong colonial and neocolonial ties to the mobility project of players. That represents 30.8%,



whereas 69.2% can be attributed to the role of the new market of football in Europe. That is, nine (9) UEFA countries represent the majority which also reinforces the earlier findings on other factor informing their mobility patterns.

The research revealed a specific process of players' mobility project; firstly, movement from Africa to the leagues of France (374), Belgium (118) and Portugal (112) and Others (Nordic, Eastern Europe and Asia (106)-preparation, organisation and refinement of players talents). Secondly, movement from latter leagues to the 'big five' European leagues (talents development and economic value increases) and thirdly, movement from the 'big five' leagues to lower (developing) and emergent leagues (Russia, Ukraine, USA, and Asia) where many often terminate their careers. African professional footballers' mobility project in leagues abroad assisted to group them according to the CAF zoning of its member associations. It is supported with the below chart focusing on the composition of each CAF zone foreign-based players to leagues in Europe.

Chart 2. CAF zoning analysis on African players' mobility in the 13 UEFA countries



Based on the CAF geopolitical demarcation, foreign-based players from the Western zone represent the highest in Europe followed by the Northern zone and with the least from the Eastern zone. However, the Eastern zone is noted for their athletic prowess on the continent and the world at large. This may account for their low number of foreign-based players offer to leagues in Europe. Further, the analysis showed that foreign-based players from Central Africa countries are dominant in the other eight leagues than those from the North of Africa. The high number of West zone foreign-based players can be attributed to rampant football farms (academy culture syndrome), yet some are not well managed (see Darby, 2013; Esson, 2013).

Both the Western and Northern zones of Africa continue to dominate the offer of professional players' to Europe while, the east of Africa still remains unaffected due to their few numbers. The research database revealed 1084 foreign-based players from Africa to leagues overseas with the majority found in the 'big five' European leagues representing 51.57%. The study even though focused on 30 professional European leagues, observed an increase in the migration of African footballers representing 21.88% in the 13 UEFA countries. These developments may serve as an incentive for players' mobility project by inspiring their choices towards the new market of football in Europe. (see Map 1:155).

#### **4.1.4 NEW MARKET OF FOOTBALL IN EUROPE-** An incentive for mobility project of African footballers abroad

This concept tends to place the agency of African players ahead of other factors in their mobility abroad. It considers the mobility project as part of the broader processes towards the

new market of football. It also provides players mobility opportunities abroad by informing their choices to play in Europe. African players mobility project include but not limited to opportunities to develop football skills, improved players welfare, sustain intergenerational trend, become a professional footballer are some of the factors that the new market of football offers them. Such elements support players view to exert their agency in managing their mobility projects. For example, Nigerian international footballer who has spent over 11years in Ukrainian league as his initial destination country narrated some reasons for him to seek professional football opportunity abroad;

“I had good results but since the love for the game was just there so I wasn’t really thinking of furthering my education rather finding ways of getting outside the country to seek greener pastures ” Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Analysis of player’s statement showed that limited economic opportunities at home and his desire for a football career abroad influenced his mobility project. This to a large extent made him to discontinue his education and pursue a football career abroad. He also remitted money to his family from his first professional contract because his family was not all that rich. But, it was to make everybody more motivated for their support that something good has come out of his mobility choice. So, he had to let them understand that, his hard work and their support has paid off for him. This acknowledgement from the player to the family justifies, the important role they played in his mobility project abroad (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014).

The player’s remittance to his family supports the argument of Carter (2011a) that family members are significant actors in the mobility of athletes, and the family can serve as a key unit for their mobility motivations and experiences. This is due to the active involvement of family members in his development and in decision-making processes linked to his career path (Van der

Meij and Darby, 2014). It shows how African professional players are supported and encouraged by family members and their social relations because of the perceived potential future benefits that a professional career overseas might bring them (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014:22). It is always not the case that, family members, agents and significant others will share the same mobility choices to their final destinations. But, the final mobility choice rests with the agency of the players since they are at the receiving end and wrong decisions can affect their own future.

Still, it makes African players become more receptive to mobility opportunities towards the new market of football in support of their careers abroad. This can influence young African talents who may decide to abandon their schooling and focus fully on football as a profession. If this is not checked, it can breed a generation of poorly educated males keen to live the ‘X-Way’ by channelling their energies and attention toward a profession that is unlikely to reciprocate this devotion with employment and social mobility (Esson, 2013:91). Another player shared his experience after abandoning his college education in the USA to chase after his desired dream of professional football in Europe. He mentioned that;

“I was excited to move to Europe and play. I’ve always wanted to play in Europe, and I got the opportunity, and I took it” Ayarna (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The player’s mobility choice to Europe has satisfied his professional dream because he has the opportunity to develop and improve his football skills there. The limited economic opportunities at their countries plus other conditions make African players recognise a professional career in Europe as a feasible way to secure a lifestyle characterised by wealth, conspicuous consumption and considerable social status, one referred to by Ghanaian youth as the ‘X-Way’ (Esson, 2013). This may entice young people to abandon school by taking to

football. But this can also affect their future when it becomes a habit among them. Some African players even abandoned their final year examinations to pursue a football career abroad. The former professional player was the youngest to win AFCON in 1982 with his national team narrated his experience as follows:

“I was then in my fourth year of college but because of that, I had to leave school. This is an interesting part. When the abroad club came for me, there was a group of people in the Real Tamale United FC who said, yes, because it was an opportunity for the club to make some money. The other group said no, because he was too young and we should hold on and protect him until the time is ripe. But, who knows when the time is ripe, nobody knows. There were so many meetings and finally, Malik Yakubu, Aliu Mahama, B.A. Fuseini and others, who were all influential at that time. And this became a debate among them. We should allow him to stay on, make sure he is protected, and others were like, it was an opportunity for him because, we don't know tomorrow and maybe if this chance passes today, tomorrow we won't get it again. You know both sides have a case but, at the end those who said I should go succeeded because, I also came out and said though education is good, writing my exams is good, but my parents have never seen their son abroad before” Abedi Pele (52yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

At the end, the footballer took mobility decision based on his family's future and later on, became a bread winner for them. This is because a successful career in professional football overseas is also seen as a way to live up to reciprocal expectations from family members (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014:24). From his poor family background, he saw the mobility opportunity as a relief to their social status in the community. It got to the extent that, he did not write his final college examinations and opted to pursue a football career abroad. What would have been the consequences for the player, if he had not been financially successful professionally? Well, he made mobility choice towards the new market of football in Europe that supported his desired professional football dream abroad. Another Ghanaian international with two FIFA World Cup appearances (2006 and 2010) also shared his experience towards his professional career abroad. He said;

“I simply wanted to play abroad because of the quality of the game and, it doesn’t matter where I’ll start from because I wanted to play abroad” Paintsil (32yrs, 11yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

His mobility choices landed him in Europe, yet his lived experiences there have also taught him lessons that he would like to share with the young ones desperate to play abroad. He advises that *‘young African players to wait for their right mobility opportunity than to rush because sometimes, African players try to go to Europe at age 16 or 17’* which to him is not necessary but the best age for them to move abroad should be around 21 or 22. In that case, players at that age can handle some of the challenges along their mobility projects abroad. African players interviewed admitted that having the opportunity is a key that informs one's mobility choices towards the new market of football in Europe.

The widespread presence and popularity of football in African communities has become part of their culture since they see a bright future from that especially those who may be financially successful professionally. Interviewees attested to the fact that their mobility abroad was brokered by football agents based on their choices not only limited to the financial potentials but also the opportunity to play abroad. Some of the football players interviewed moved to Europe by road through various routes connecting African countries with supports from social relations. Though they encountered a lot of problems along with their adventurous journey, they still got to Europe. African players mentioned the barrier of language at their new place of work, however, they did not see it as a priority because getting mobility opportunity was just enough for their future. It is unclear what perspectives can explain how African players are supported to integrate into their new environments after their mobility abroad. Players admitted that the limited economic opportunities at home and for their welfare and development also influence their mobility choices towards the new market of football. An interviewee mentioned that:

“People who had completed university have no jobs and those graduates loitering in the streets without jobs and that the future just looks bleak. The next tendency was to invest in something that one could see a better future from and that was football and that’s was how I got back to taking football seriously. And is almost like the same path like every other African footballer career who dream of ending in Europe as their solution” Ekeh (35yrs, 13yrs.exp: NGN [2016]).

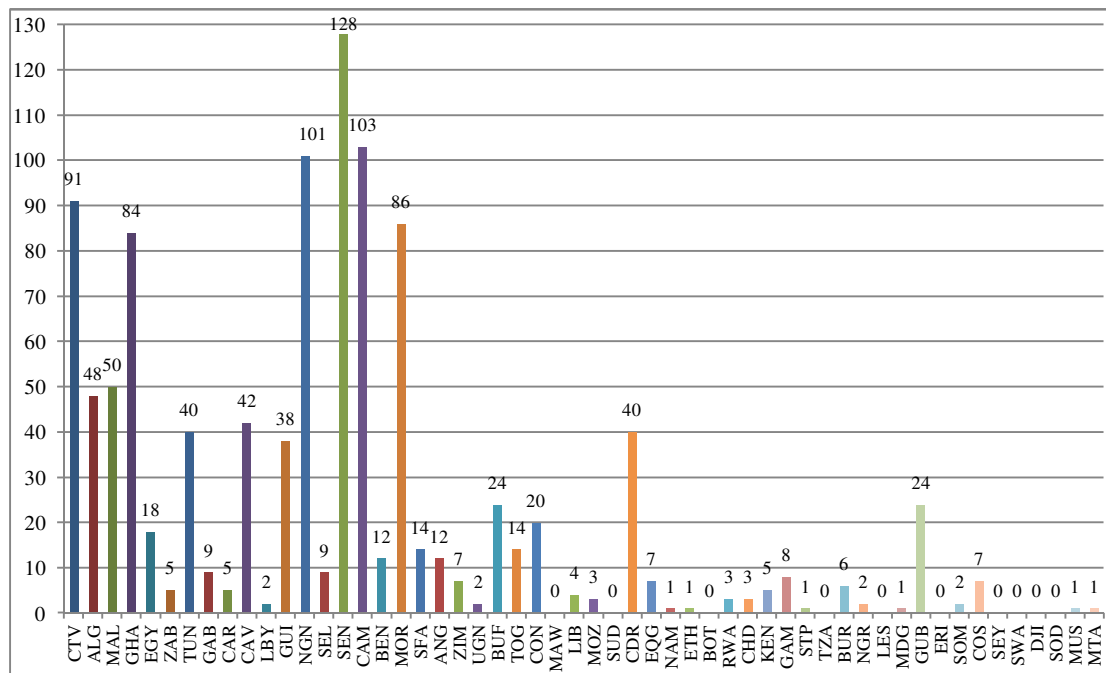
The footballer recognising the poor economy of their country opted for a career in football as a professional. This could be the same for many African talents as the only way to becoming a professional footballer abroad by looking for the opportunities.

In sum, the elements towards the new market of football include mobility opportunities abroad, develop football skills, become a professional footballer, and choice of league destination, future opportunities and promote ‘give back phenomenon’ opportunities.

Owing to the nature of the globalised game, donor countries continue to dominate the offer of talents in the football labour market. Particularly, African talents are still chasing a professional footballer status in Europe due to the weak structures and poor economic conditions in their countries of origin. This has also failed to empower its youths making them directing their energies to where they can find a better future to survive. Similar situations exist in the development of African football. Therefore, it has facilitated the movement of more African talents to the European leagues in return for their contractual rights and services.

Beyond that, the research provides some statistics on the migration of African professional footballers’ identified in the 13 UEFA countries as at the ending of 2012/2013 season. The below chart explains further following African players offer to the host UEFA countries.

Chart 3. A total number of African professional footballers from each donor countries as at 2012/13 season



**Keys:**

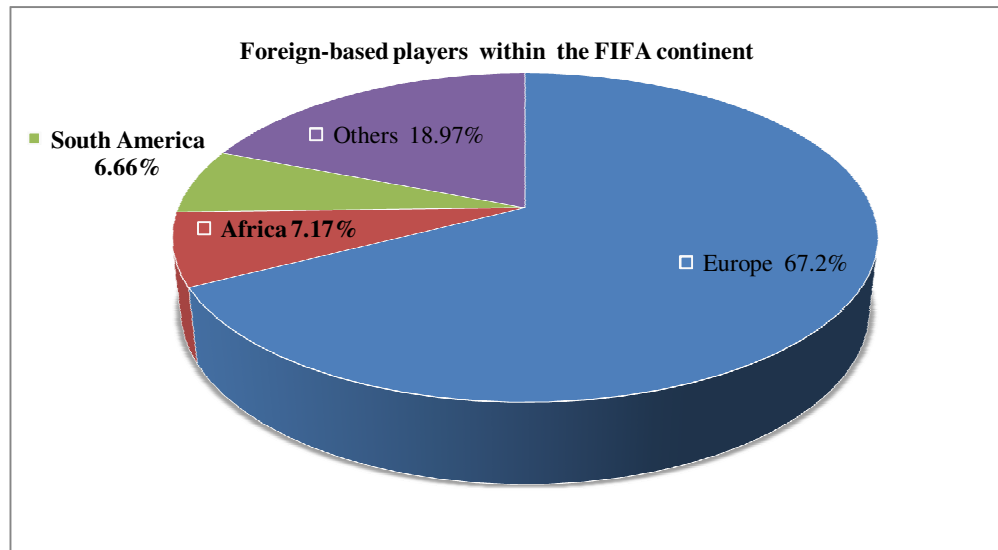
Senegal (SEN); Cameroun (CAM); Nigeria (NGN); Cote D'Ivoire (CTV); Morocco (MOR); Ghana (GHA); Mali (MAL); Algeria (ALG); Cape Verde (CAV); Tunisia (TUN); Congo DR (CDR); Guinea (GUI); Guinea Bissau (GUB); Burkina Faso (BUF); Congo (CON); Egypt (EGY); South Africa (SFA); Togo (TOG); Benin (BEN); Angola (ANG); Gabon (GAB); Sierra Leone (SEL); Gambia (GAM); Zimbabwe (ZIM); Equatorial Guinea (EQG); Comoros (COS); Burundi (BUR); Zambia (ZAB); Central Africa Republic (CAR); Kenya (KEN); Mozambique (MOZ); Liberia (LIB); Rwanda (RWA); Chad (CHD); Libya (LBY); Uganda (UGN); Niger (NGR); Somalia (SOM); Namibia (NAM); Ethiopia (ETH); Sao Tome Principe (STP); Madagascar (MDG); Mauritius (MUS) ; Mauritania (MTA).

The chart explains the distribution of African football players to the host countries in Europe. It shows the value of each donor African country and the total number of foreign-based players in the 30 professional UEFA leagues. The research recorded the following for the first 15 African donor countries that include Senegal (128), Cameroun (103), Nigeria (101), Cote d'Ivoire (91), Morocco (86), Ghana (84), Mali (50), Algeria (48), Cape Verde (42), Tunisia (40), Congo DR (40), Guinea (38), Guinea Bissau (24) Burkina Faso (24), and Congo (20). The



survey showed more African talents are exported to the European leagues than the South Americans. The below chart explains further.

Chart 4. Continental representation of foreign-based players with reference to the research



The chart draws on foreign players exported to the thirty (30) professional European leagues considering the FIFA confederations division. Africa size represents 7.17% showing a rise in their migration to Europe that is, ahead of South America with 6.66%. This research reaffirms the studies of Poli et al (2015) that ranks Africa continent as the second best to UEFA. Out of the 1084 African professional footballers exported to the European leagues, their breakdown regarding the CAF zoning is illustrated in table 7.

Table 6.CAF zones analysis of African players in the 30 UEFA professional leagues

CAF Zones	West	North	Central	Southern	East	Total
<b>‘Big five’ league</b>	318 (56.89%)	115 (20.57%)	97 (17.35%)	25 (4.47%)	4 (0.72%)	<b>559</b>
<b>Other leagues (8)</b>	314 (59.81%)	79 (15.05%)	91 (17.33%)	26 (4.95%)	15 (2.86%)	<b>525</b>
	632 (58.30%)	194 (17.90%)	188 (17.34%)	51 (4.70%)	19 (1.75%)	<b>1084</b>

The majority of African professional players are from the Western zone, yet the Northern and Central zones are also relevant. These three zones offer the bulk of professional players to the leagues in Europe. The ‘big five’ European leagues host the majority of African talents due to its huge financial potentials and attractiveness. Poli and Besson revealed that the ‘big five’ European leagues have a chunk of the football market with 55% of the transfers in Europe (2012). In short, the numbers from Africa may play a significant role in stabilising the football market in Europe.

This trend is also observed with the initial migration of African professional footballers to leagues abroad. The data was extracted from the developed database within the period of 2012/2013 season in the 30 professional UEFA leagues. This is shown below.

Table 7. Summary of African migrant players and their beginning professional leagues overseas

	C'TY	FRA	POR	OTH	BEL	ITA	ENG	SPA	GER	RUS	UKR	GRE	SWZ	TUR	NED	TOT
1	CTV	18	10	14	16	8	5	1		2			10	2	2	88
2	CAM	34	2	8	9	4	1	8	6		1	3	12	6	1	95
3	NGN	9	9	21	10	14	12	6	3	1	3	3	1	7	5	104
4	TOG	10		2	2						1			1		16
5	SEN	72	8	17	11	13	2	4	1			1	4	2		135
6	GHA	6	6	14	5	19	6	8	4			2	5	3	4	82
7	MAL	39	2	1	2						2					46
8	GUB	4	22													26
9	SFA		2	2	8	1	5			1					4	23
10	ALG	32	2	1	1	1	3	1	3				1			45
11	GAM			6	1			1	2				2			12
12	BUF	7	3	5	4	1	1		2			1				24
13	CAV	4	33					1						1	3	42
14	MOR	39		1	6	4	2	4	3			1	2		26	88
15	TUN	15	1		1	1		4	10		2		6	2	1	43
16	ZAB	1	4	1												6
17	ANG		6				1		1						2	10
18	CDR	9	1	1	13		4		5				5		1	39
19	BEN	9	1	2	1											13
20	GAB	9		1				1								11
21	GUI	18	1		7	3	1	1				1	2	1		35
22	SEL			3		1	1					1			1	7
23	EGY	2	1		1	1	3			1			1	1	1	12
24	LBY		1				1									2
25	LIB			1										2		3
26	MTA	1														1
27	MUS	1														1
28	CON	18						1	2				1			22
29	EQG	1						7								8
30	RWA				3											3
31	STP		1													1
32	MOZ		1													1
33	SOM					1	1									2
34	KEN			3	2											5
35	CHD				1					1			1			3
36	ZIM	1		1	2		1									5
37	CAR	6														6
38	BUR				5	1										6
39	NGR	2		1												3
40	UGN		1													1
41	MDG	1														1
42	COS	6														6
43	NAM								1							1
44	ETH				1											1
		374	118	106	112	73	50	48	43	6	9	13	53	28	51	1084

(2014)

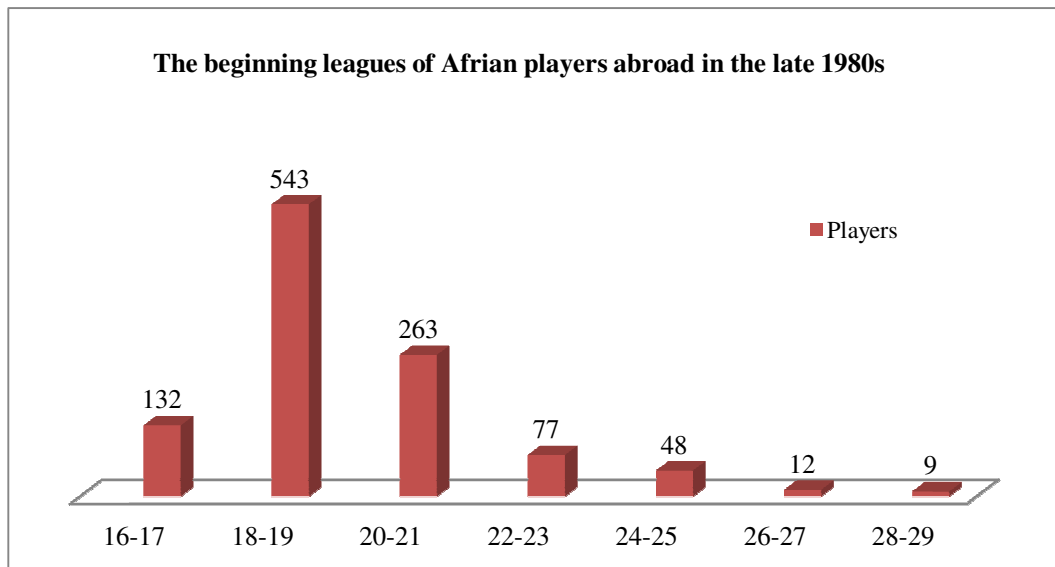
The data displays the 44 donor African countries of professional footballers to the host UEFA countries. This is essential because it assisted to understand the patterns of their initial migration abroad. The top 15 donor African countries include Senegal (135), Nigeria (104), Cameroun (95), Morocco (88), Cote d'Ivoire (88), Ghana (82), Mali (46), Algeria (45), Tunisia (43), Cape Verde (42), Congo Democratic Republic (39), Guinea (35), Guinea Bissau (26), Burkina Faso (24) and South Africa (23).

Still, France dominates as the most receivers of African talents which are followed by Portugal and Belgium. Yet, the Netherlands connection is widely minimised as identified by Poli (2006), and replaced with Portugal, becoming the second host of African talents. Once again, the Francophone's colonial and language ties with their former colonisers dominate but, there may be other factors as explained by the role of the new market of football in Europe. This follows the same trend as observed at the end of 2012/2013 leagues season in the 13 UEFA countries. Beyond that, it reinforces the identified patterns of African professional footballers' migration project to Europe. Thus, the observed patterns of African footballers' mobility follow this trend. Firstly, movement from Africa to France, Belgium, Portugal and others (Nordic, Eastern Europe, and Asia), secondly, from latter leagues to 'big five' European leagues, and thirdly, movement from 'big five' leagues to minor (developing) and emergent leagues (Russia, Ukraine, USA, and Asia) where many often terminate their active professional career. The majority are located in the West African nations representing over 55% of the talents offer to those leagues in Europe.

However, the following countries Malawi, Sudan, Botswana, Tanzania, Lesotho, Eritrea, Seychelles, Swaziland, Djibouti and South Sudan have no professional players in those leagues abroad probably due to the low level of their football leagues in Africa. The nationals of Senegal

have the highest of African professional players with Nigeria dominance of talents in all the host leagues abroad confirming the West African zone superiority in the continent. The initial migration of African talents betters our understanding of the periodization era, particularly the 1980s when the regulations on the minors were not strictly enforced. It was also the period where migration of African footballers began to intensify as they chase a professional footballer status abroad. In support, the following statistics were analysed considering the ages range of African footballers to their respective leagues abroad.

Chart 5a. African professional players beginning leagues overseas in the late 1980s



The range of ages included 16-17 because it was the first level of FIFA youth competition for male footballers which started with U16 in 1985<sup>28</sup>. This was the first edition of the FIFA U-16 World championship held in Beijing, and with Nigeria emerging as the gold medalist for Africa. Africa was represented by Nigeria, Congo and Guinea (placed fourth). Talents from Africa in the competitions were monitored and later on, followed up for a possible connection to Europe but, it was not rampant like after the 1989 FIFA U-16 World tournament hosted by Scotland that saw the phenomenal display of raw African talents.

Analysis from the early 1990s was examined to compare its influence on the migration of African football players abroad. It was observed that activities of football agents or sports agencies intensified in the same period when foreign scouts turned their attention to the Africa continent in search for cheaper football labour, and to speculate on, and resale their playing rights for higher profit. This period might have begun the exploitation of African talents by the Global North (Poli, 2006). Looking at the trend, it was quite impressive as the majority of African players' progressed steady from 16-17 years to 18-19 years, and however, what happens afterwards is a bit alarming. In the sense that, from 16-17 years saw an increase of 12.2% then at age 18-19 with 50.1% (climax level), and suddenly huge drop in numbers at age 20-21 (24.3%). There is a sharp decrease to 25.8% between ages 18-19 and 20-21. Apparently, this trend is not encouraging for African talents development since there seems to be a continuous decline in the age of football players that may have a negative effect on the continent's game growth in the future.

Furthermore, the period from the 1990s to 2000s was also assessed using the age ranges of the African football players as a follow-up to the early migration of some African footballers

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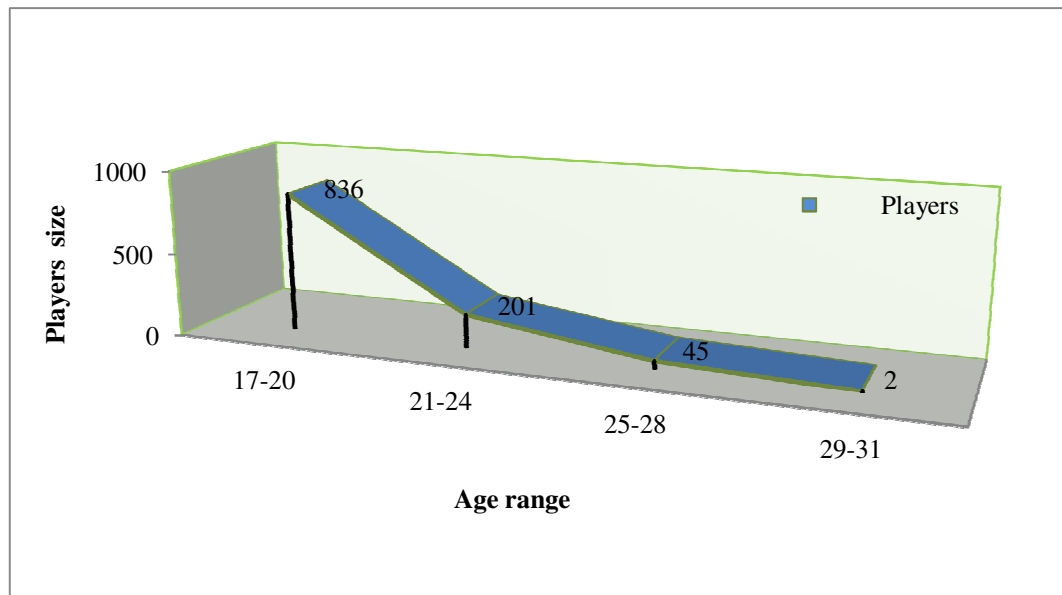
<sup>28</sup> <http://www.fifa.com/u17worldcup/archive/chinapr1985/teams/index.html>

in late 1980s where there were lapses in the regulations on minors scouted to leagues abroad (Chart 5b). Analysis indicates that 77.1% of African players started between ages 17-20 with the majority of them migrating to leagues of France. Averagely, the expected peak performance for African players tends to reduce representing 18.5 % (21-24years) that is a quite disturbing regarding their performance trajectories.

This situation is different from other professional footballers that participated in the UEFA champions' league per the records. Thus, the top-ranked teams in 'big five' European leagues often recruit players at an average age of 24.09years, middle-ranked teams with an average of 24.48years, and the bottom-ranked teams with an average of 24.69years (Poli et al, 2014). That is, the rate at which African professional players decline in their football career abroad may be an unfamiliar trend since they are expected to rather improve or maintain their performance at the age when nearly the ages of 25-28. Beyond that, it can be a concern for CAF if it really wants to catch up with the modern trend of football development worldwide.

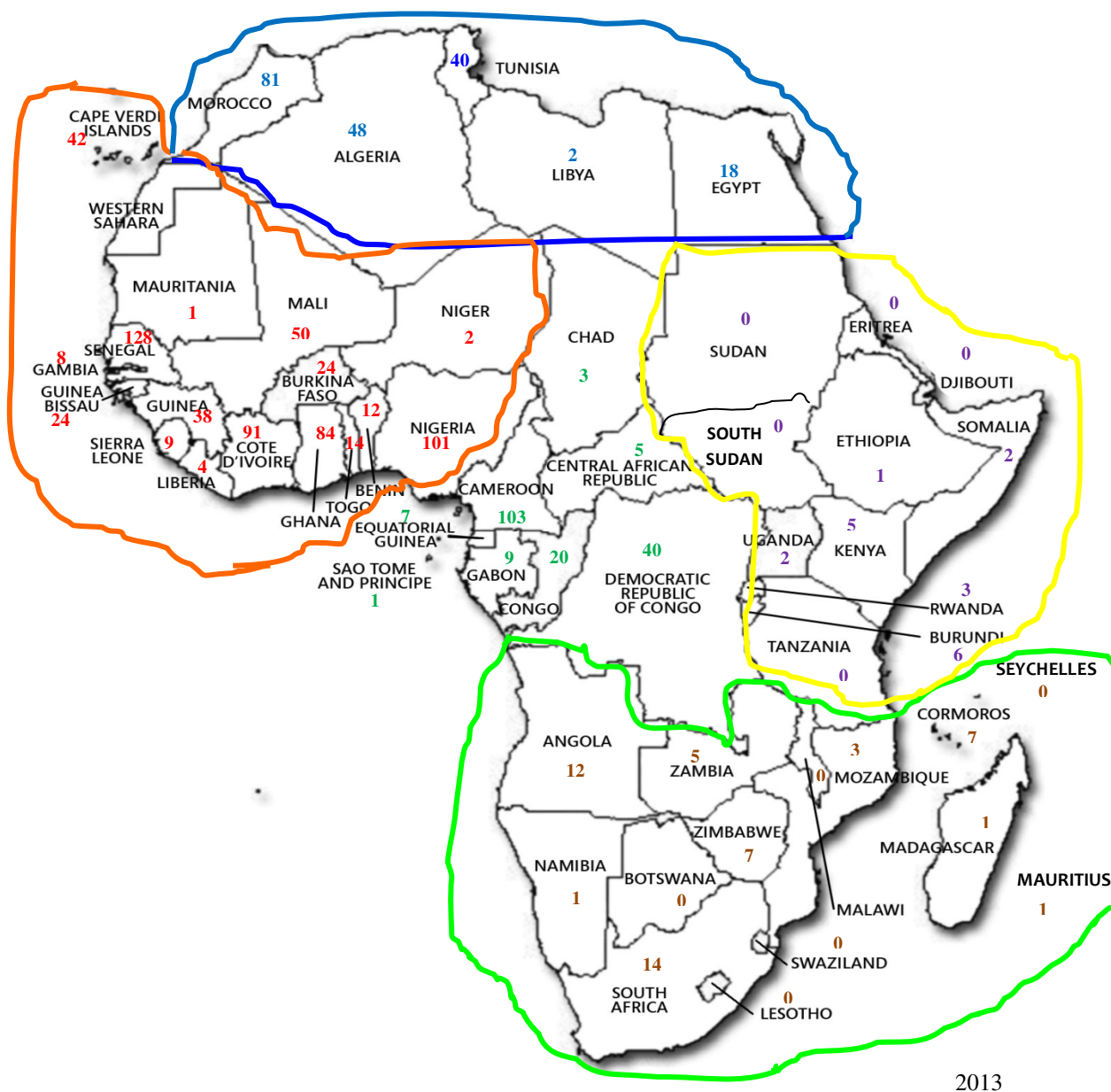
From the database, the distribution of African professional footballers in the 13 UEFA leagues identified is assigned to the donor countries on the map according to CAF zones (Map 2:157).

Chart 5b. The age range of African players professional overseas from the 1990s to 2000s



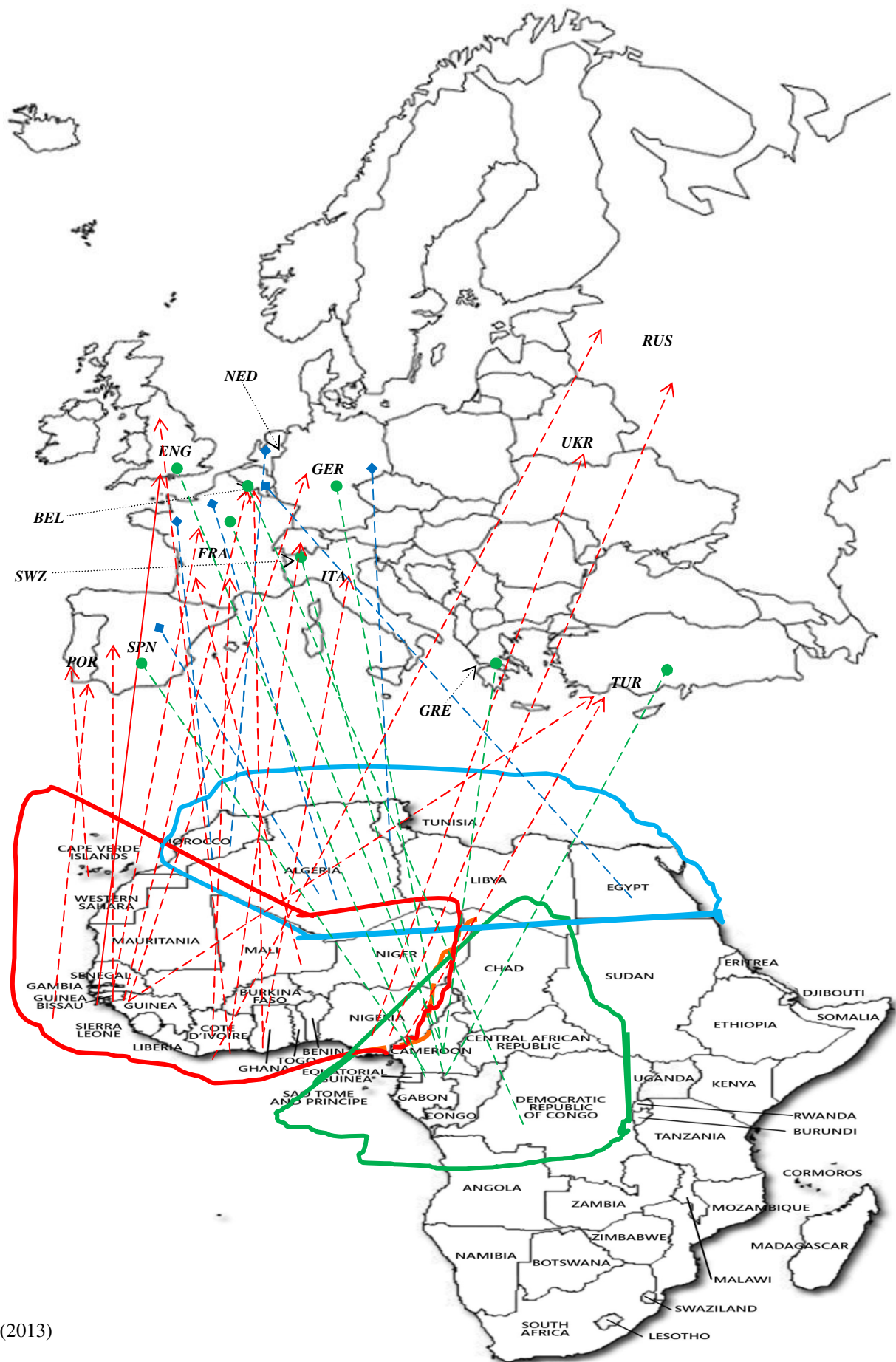


Map1: A total number of African professional footballers in Europe with their respective countries.



The map shows the divisions of CAF geopolitical zone with the number of African professional footballers for each member affiliates. This is distinguished by colours that are, blue (Northern zone), orange (Western zone), yellow (Eastern zone), green (Southern zone) and Central zone without a border colour. The above map helped in tracing the movement of professional footballers from Africa to Europe with the focus on the Western, Northern and Central zones. That is, differentiated by coloured arrows showing the convergence of players' migration to Europe. It is significant because they form the majority of donor countries in Africa.

Map 2: Destinations of African professional players in the 30 leagues of 13 UEFA countries



(2013)

## 4.2 PERIODIZATION OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL EVOLUTION

It is a specific period at which African football evolved as well as the evolution of African societies, African football and European football. This saw the game becoming globalised. Further, provides a clear understanding of how social negotiation facilitated the youth's football ambitions, by satisfying their family choices on education, so as to play football with their social groups in the communities. This is essential to the study because it provides a distinction between children progressing through the various periods to acquiring a professional footballer status, and how that can influence their 'Give Back Phenomenon'. The periods include;

- a) The controversial vision of football (the 1980s): Football vs. School
- b) The shared vision of football (the 1990s): Gradual shift from social activity to a professional opportunity
- c) Football professionalism became an opportunity (the 2000s)

### 4.2.1 The controversial vision of football (the 1980s): Football vs. School

*"We had two stones for goalposts and played four against four. Sometimes something sharp would cut your feet, but we played through our wounds, and didn't even think about them. We just loved to play" (Utaka, 2011)<sup>29</sup>*

In many African communities, football is played everywhere provided children find the space and the look-alike-round thing like to represent a ball and have fun with. Children start to kick things around especially when they meet as friends in the neighbourhood to have fun with the ball, sometimes at the backyard of people houses, verandas or a piece of land on somebody's building. Some playing with barefooted, legs caked in red dirt, playing the game with an old ball or one made of recycled materials, on an uneven dirt pitch and with pieces of rock as goalposts

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<sup>29</sup> John Utaka, former Nigerian international footballer who participated in two FIFA world cup tournaments for his country in 2002 and 2010, and last played in the Turkish league in 2015.

(Van der Meij and Darby, 2014). Contrary, this is different overseas as children cannot play football everywhere unlike many Africa communities. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that:

“Where I grew up, you could play everywhere people will give you space to play though, sometimes you may not value it but if you happen to consider things here (abroad) you will realise that these things were really important” Anaba (22yrs, 2yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

Many interviewees shared the same experience as narrated above while others grew up to know football as a reproduction of social practice specific to the social group in the communities (Bourdieu, 1986). As one of the footballers puts it:

“Actually, I have been playing football the moment I started to walk by kicking everything that I can lay my feet on I just kick it and is something that I inherited from my father who was an ex-soccer player so, is something which is in the blood” Ikpe (37yrs, 18yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

In African settings, children start to play with a ball at an early age of 5 thereabout because people often lived in compound houses which are common in most of the communities. Even nowadays, those not living in compound houses move to areas or locales where they can get the opportunity to play football with other kids in the communities. Football is more than a game, it is a social practice which is based on the social integration of young people in their social groups. Moreover, there has been an evolution in the way football used to be practised and played in the local communities, in the cities or regional capitals. Thus, from the social practice to the economic or social alternative which is another social role we give to football in Africa. In many African communities, football indirectly plays a social role by keeping children active and the same time improving their health status. But, its main purpose at that time was to reinforce their social embeddedness and integration through football practice within their social environments.

The generations of African talents began from their communities where football activities were organised and promoted in the locales for the youths. With this period, the generational group could rarely remember most of the footballing activities at that time, but some shared their experiences. Some also talked about starting to play football at the primary school level around age 7 thereabout alongside street football within the locales. It was more like grassroots football for enjoyment and having fun, but more for social integration. This was a way of belonging to the community. Playing football at anytime was also seen by some parents as waste of time until parents came to realise the opportunities for economic aid. An interviewee mentioned that:

“I was in school then and my parents didn’t like it so they didn’t encourage me to play football because football was a kind of entertainment for the youth since it wasn’t a profession. So it was very difficult to play football, so I play on Wednesday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday but my family didn’t agree with me to play football. As I was very good player my team Yaoundé was paying my school fees, buying books, anything for me. Later on, my family accepted that I can play football because my team was helping for my schooling. In Cameroun that time a football player was sometimes very poor people and it was any activity seen like for ‘bad guys’ who were unsuccessful in life. Football was not a good example or model for the youth because of the kind of perception people had at that time” Mbvoumin (42yrs, 11yrs.exp: CAM [2015]).

At that time, parents were not in favour of their children playing football because they thought it as a waste of time. That made most parents considering education as a privilege that they view as important for one to becoming ‘somebody’, defined as a person of status and respect, somebody who is responsible, matured, independent, knowledgeable and capable of taking care of others in the future (Langevang, 2008:2046). That is how parents saw education as an essential part of their children development for their future. Another interviewee also added:

“I mean those days in 1980s and 1990s, you don’t dare say you want to play soccer even your neighbours will laugh at you, and people will mock you. I knew a lot of friends that by the time we go play football and come back they need to sneak in or they wash themselves very well before they go home otherwise they get

serious beatings and because then in African everybody has seen football players to be hooligans, cowards, they feel they are not educated people, so to be playing football it was like you are 'jobless', you don't have a future, no plan, no career ambition. So when they hear football but in this part of the world, Europe it is not like that" Ikpe (37yrs, 18yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

During this period, the community people recognised football players as 'hooligans, cowards, uneducated people, who were like 'jobless', don't have a future, no plan, no career ambition. In a way, parents also identified them as not serious, visionless and just wasting time with that round object (football). These conceived views by some parents and the community people nearly shattered their children talents and prospects in the sport.

This is because some of them were likened to social deviant covering up their bad things with the football in the communities. On one hand, the sport was seen as a social practice and, on another hand, it was assigned to practitioners as people without vision in the life. This social vision was dominating in African communities because football was not based on the strong economy, and professional footballer was not a recognised with a social status.

In those days, the fun aspect of the football was huge as boys gathered sometimes in the streets, commonplace within the locale, to entertain themselves with football after school and on weekends. It was a way of deepening their social integration through various social groups. Football provided a platform for young people groups' integration. Also, it did not have a social positive status in the locales and was unappreciated by parents.

Through this means those with talents were spotted from the social groups by football enthusiasts that managed to train and nurture some of them in their clubs within the communities or nearby towns. Those football enthusiasts used their social relations and networks by getting them placed with teams. During this same period football players used to play with barefooted and didn't care about injuries whatsoever since they were bent on doing what they had passion for. Thus, it facilitated their social integration among the young people groups within the locales.

For example, the former skipper of Ghana Black Stars team after Abedi Pele's retirement and also the first black player to have captained Germany club named VfL Wolfsburg from 2001-2002 mentioned that:

"I was a young boy playing for fun. We used to meet as community boys to play in the area and I was spotted by someone who took me to Tema industrial city of Ghana while I was leaving in Nungua a town in the capital of Accra" Akonnor (41yrs, 16yrs. exp: GHA [2015]).

Abedi Pele also recounted his experience where he sometimes has to commute between his school and a locale just to go and practice football. He explained a similar situation he went through as a teenager. He mentioned that:

"Then at the primary school level somebody saw me playing so he said let me take this boy to go and play for a 'Colts'<sup>30</sup> team in Accra called Great Falcons, so he took me there but it was a long way from my Dome village to the Circle area to play football as a 10-year-old boy taking buses to Nsawan town and back" **Abedi Pelé** (52yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

Abedi getting the opportunity to join the 'Colts' team in another locale was through the effort and support of a community member. This testifies to the fact that, the sense of belongingness in the locale was prevalent in those days. To the extent that adults used to act as fathers or mothers for their neighbour's child or children within the same community. During this same period, football was not also developed in Europe.

The main challenge was parents resisting their boys from playing football but rather concentrate on formal education. Since at that time parents believed in education as the only means for their children to be successful in life, but not football which was supposedly for low-minded people or '*blunt' heads or 'lazy' boys*'. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that:

"In Cameroun, that time a football player was sometimes for very poor people and it was an activity seen like for bad guys who are unsuccessful in life. Football was not a good example or model for the youth because of the kind of perception people had at that time" Mbvoumin (42yrs, 11yrs.exp: CAM [2015]).

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<sup>30</sup> It is a juvenile club that trains and develops football talents from U12, U14 to U17 which is common in many Africa communities.



This shows that African communities strong social values about education are indispensable (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014) that is, why parents, family members and the community always try to support education of children irrespective of the financial constraints they may have to deal with. It again shows that football was not an opportunity at this period for children. At this period, African communities and families adopted the European model of education as a social model to follow.

At the same time, in Europe, football was also considered as a popular practice that, sociological identifies workers, classes, and immigrants, for instance, those from the Eastern European countries. Another example is seen from a player with over 18years of professional football experience abroad mentioned that:

“I remember my auntie who was living with us she used to say so many abuse words to me that I’m a criminal and I used football to disguise and that I should go look for something else like my teammates. I also remember vividly when I was going to training I heard people murmuring and gossiping about me in our street that this guy is a hopeless guy always football, football so it became so obvious that sometimes I had to put my football shoes in a polythene bag when am going to training to pretend like I was going to buy something in the market or am coming from the market but my football shoes will be in the polythene bag” Ikpe (37yrs, 18yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Some relatives of those boys that played football were been discouraged. This player was resilient by adopting a strategy of putting his football shoes in a plastic bag like he had been sent to the market. The same period witnessed some conflicts between parents. For instance, a player shared his experience case on that when the mother supported him but the father was against it. He said:

“Occasionally, when I go to play and come late, my father will be waiting at the door with a cane/stick that he will cane me. My mother will then open a small window so when I come and instead for me to pass through the main entrance, I just go through the window and my food will be placed just near my bed, take it, and eat without bathing. And the following morning, my father will be sitting there and they will be fighting because my father never saw me passing through the main entrance. Even when I was in the

primary school, the rich or well to do family kids, they also like football so, when they buy the football, I'll keep it in my house because they can't also take the ball to their house. I always kept the ball and at school, when it was break time, I will bring it out then we play. So, in my family, I was called the bad boy because I was never in the house always going to play football with people and so they never liked me in the house”  
**Abedi Pelé** (52yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

Even in his nucleus family, he was called the *bad boy* because he wasn't studying at home. His father did not like the idea for him to play football but the mother was supportive. This situation was worse for the rich people kids because they accepted football as something for those low-class people in the society who can't afford education for their children. Thus, they never recognised the social and professional value of football for their children that can be useful as well.

In sum, during this period football was a controversial in the African societies as it did not create professional opportunity for children, rather regarded as a social practice to support the social role for integration, and sports for the poor and the same time affected the development of those with football talents in the communities. This kind of perception started to change a bit with many parents during early 1990s when some teams from African countries performed creditably well at both the FIFA world youth and senior tournaments respectively. That also witnessed the development of football market and economy in Europe.

#### **4.2.2 The shared vision of football (the 1990s):** Gradual shift from social activity to a professional opportunity

Football changed from a controversial social practice for the children in the community to an organised socioeconomic activity. Because of the role played by formal and informal institutions including football academies, foreign scouts, club officials, and other intermediaries through recruiting talents for the European market. After the dramatic display of African talents

at the various FIFA world competitions, brought hope to many of the youths within their social groups. Beyond that, there were some positive signs for those who were able to combine schooling with playing football. An interviewee mentioned that:

“I started playing at age 9 like every child normally start to kick the ball from age 5 or 6 thereabout but I really started playing at age 9. You know primary school was more of schooling not much football because my parents were not really allowing me to play the game then. But at the secondary school, my parents saw I have a passion for the game and they weren’t disturbing me about the game now not really going to school though I was but football took more of my time because I was playing for the school team. I started playing for the school team the first day I got into the school” Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs. exp: NGN [2015]).

This demonstrates how the youth were able to enrol at the secondary school and also had the opportunity to still practice and play football without much interference from their parents. At the time, sports at the secondary schools were competitive and served as a ground for hunting football talents. An example is seen from the West African country, Ghana as they established a programme called ‘the Academicals’ where it combined sport and formal education initiatives towards the selection of football talents from the secondary school at the local, district, regional, and national levels (Darby et al, 2007; see Esson, 2016). This player narrated his experience that enabled him to play football. He mentioned that:

“I was in school then and my parents didn’t like it so they didn’t encourage me to play football because football was a kind of entertainment for the youth since it wasn’t a profession. So, it was very difficult to play football, so I played on Wednesday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday but my family didn’t agree with me to play football. As I was very good player, my team Yaoundé FC was paying my school fees, buying books, anything for me. Later on, my family accepted that I can play football because my team was helping for my schooling” Mbvoumin (42yrs, 11yrs.exp: CAM [2015]).

His parents only accepted for him to play football based on the condition that the local team pays for his schooling. The parents were of the view that, football wasn’t a profession let alone provides an opportunity for their child to attain a social success. In other words, the parents were expecting to hear that, the local team could not afford so that it can prevent their boy from

playing football and concentrate on his schooling. In Cameroun, at that time, football was for a *very poor people* and seen as an activity for '*bad guys*'. The local team action was to change the perception of his parents that football can serve other social purposes, and the same time, provide an opportunity for him.

However, the boy's breakthrough came after 1990 with the Cameroun national team performance at the FIFA world in Italy, something changed, footballers' won a lot of money. As the result of the globalisation of the football market that saw movements of talents across continents. Mbvoumin went on to mention that:

"At that time, players started to move to Europe, Asia, Middle East and other overseas countries"

Mbvoumin (42yrs, 11yrs.exp: CAM [2015]).

Football started to change people's perception in Africa after the sterling performance of the Cameroonian national senior team at the FIFA World Cup in 1990. The subsequent edition also saw Nigerian national senior team display at the FIFA World Cup in 1994. This was testified by an interviewee as he mentioned that:

"People began to get an idea but still it was not rampant. That was when scouts began to come into Nigeria from Europe. I played football in my primary and high school levels and I was also a sport person apart from football. I was very good in table tennis, athletics, and handball that I would have presented the Nigeria but I had to quit handball because it was dividing my focus" Ikpe (37yrs, 18yrs. exp.NGN [2015]).

Though the player had talents in other sporting disciplines but the national senior team performance at the USA, FIFA World Cup in 1994 changed his perspective by sticking to football. This inspired his football dream as foreign scouts turned their attention to the Africa continent in search of talents for the European football market.

At the same time, football started to deliver an important social role for talented players. Again, it became an economic opportunity and provided social recognition for high-level

players. The same period, there was improvement in sport facilities and equipment that enabled raw talents in Africa had access to football training shoes, sport kits, and an improved coaching methodology. This is reflected in the performance of African youth teams at the FIFA World U17 competitions as Ghana won a gold medal in 1991, 1995<sup>31</sup> with Nigeria also winning a gold medal in 1993 that intensified their migration to leagues abroad.

During this same period, African talents started crossing European borders in a greater numbers (Darby, 2007). The trend intensified significantly in the midpoint of the decade there were an estimated 350 Africans playing first or second division football in Europe (Gleeson, 1996). African foreign talents participation in AFCON<sup>32</sup> has accelerated significantly in the 1990s. These were 1990 (27), 1992(100), 1994 (90), 1996 (107), 1998 (157) and 2000(186)<sup>33</sup>. The rate of increase in the participation of foreign-based players at the AFCON for their irrespective countries can be attributed to the evolution of the European football market. By that, attracts the best footballers from Africa as they began to enjoy the economic and social benefits of their talents abroad.

Even at this period, some parents were still sceptical since the risk of abandoning formal education is akin to playing the lottery, with failure likely to result in psychological anguish and, even worse, a life as a drop out (Esson, 2013b; Van der Meij and Darby, 2014). This made parents to provide a caveat for their talented children by putting a high premium on education than football. For instance, low performance in class can affect one's chance to play football again. These situations with parents and their children playing football have gone to sometimes create conflict between mothers and fathers.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.fifa.com/fifa-tournaments/statistics-and-records/u17worldcup/index.html>.

<sup>32</sup> African Cup of Nations, the biggest African football event organised every two years on the continent.

<sup>33</sup> Presentation on the "Influence of African professional players on AFCON tournaments" at the ACAPS congress in 2013, Grenoble, France by Ernest, Malek and Michel.

Particularly, fathers of ex-footballers who may want their children to play football while the mothers may not be in favour. In such situations, where mothers tend to compromise, however, insisted that their children take their studies seriously in addition to playing football. Sometimes, the fathers were able to convince their wives to allow their children to play football due to the family traits.

This phenomenon is contrary to the 1980s period, as mothers and fathers position on education reversed. Here, mothers still have emotional rationality and fathers are formal, based on their interest. An example is seen from the case of this footballer with the father been an ex-footballer. He mentioned that:

“Mum was like we should make sure that we take our studies (schooling) seriously though we could play football alongside” Annan (30yrs, 9yrs exp.GHA [2016]).

Some boys began to get the opportunity to play football, yet it was on a low level. The social classes of parents also played a role in the decision making whether their children can combine football and schooling. For instance, they were cases where the rich people children could not combine both rather sneak out to play football with their social groups’ teams. So it was for the highly skilled parents (like engineers, technicians, professional teachers) that some did not even want their children to play football.

We continue to observe a link between social classes and football or sports practice as a profession. Owing to classes, social success is not limited to high revenues. But social status and social recognition are so important. Even in Europe, the high classes do believe that school is more adapted to social success. A collection of views on that, this is what some professional players had to say:

“I was scared because they will tell me to stop and concentrate on my studies (schooling) more in the beginning. Why? Obviously, like growing up in Zambia, football wasn’t a career where somebody thinks

like he will get a good living out of it, it was just like part time thing, finishing in short time and then, no one can get a good living out of it. That was the view of my parents” Chivuta (32yrs, 14yrs. exp: [2016]).

Another player also mentioned that:

“Usually, we all started about age 7 or 8, going around in our youth teams, school boys playing against people from another area, neighbourhood football, it accumulated into inter-street football then to inter-street football competition if you are good enough to make the grade and gradually we grew up like that. But it was very difficult, I mean, I don’t know if it has not changed, these days there are a lot of parents buying football boots and kits for their children to go and play football but back then it was bad because not many good guys played football at the time, for it was a question of don’t play football make sure you go to school, everything was about school back in the days for us about academics and if you weren’t studying and you go play football you’re dead seriously” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

We see here, the beginning of the social evolution of football. Through the informal organisation of street football, parents negotiated between football and school waiting to identify which could be a better way for their children’s future in at least some social groups. From the onset, parents, families, and others in the communities accepted education as the only means for children to have social success. This is because parents imagined that football and education ran parallel with the belief that education is a prerequisite for the individual social mobility and national development (Esson, 2016). In addition, parents or families acknowledged that providing education equip their children with an employable skills and knowledge, which can improve their future earnings (Becker, 1993).

Also, football was strongly associated with poverty and social deviance, and with the best talents intended to come from low-income communities, as middle-and-high classes were often loathed to allow their children to play football outside of school (Esson, 2013b). Contrary, some parents have a thought that gluing to football was for only low-income communities where they cannot mostly afford paying for their children to get formal education. This led to the neglect of some individual sporting talents that could have been developed and refined with the possibility of earning a living from it, by catering for their future too.

In the 1990s, we started to see that there was an emergent link between school and football, as it can improve the social status of the individual in their local and footballers' communities. The social role of football can also support the integration of children through the school system. It can also promote the skills level, imbued cultural values and support social upward mobility of children in the future. For example, some of the footballers who did not go to school testified how it affected their professional career abroad. An interviewee mentioned that:

“I would have been a better footballer if I was educated” (Nii Odartey Lamptey, 2016)<sup>34</sup>.

The emergence of the relation between school and football is witnessed here, as it could have improved his talent and avoided exploitation by football representatives abroad.

In the broader context, the school should be a core function of football practice in the sense that, it involves training and education geared towards equipping the individual talents and prospects with the necessary skills and capabilities for lifelong. Simply, adding value to the development of individuals' human capital to become employable in the future (Becker, 1993). Much as one can become financially successful professionally, it may support the socioeconomic activities of their families, friends and others in the community.

In this era, things were not all that flexible, yet parents could not recognise the need for individual talents in other fields or sectors apart from classical jobs. That may be due to the effect on the 'Westerns' idea of education as the good means for persons and societies to have a better future. Their assertion depicts that school is view as a better form for their children to achieve social success and obtain a social status which is recognised.

At the start of the new millennium, a lot of parents began to support their children who wanted to play football with a condition that they keep to their studies. This made some parents

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<sup>34</sup> Ghana Guardian website (2016).



to buy sporting and training kits for their children with sporting talents to practice football since it could also provide the opportunity to a better future.

#### **4.2.3 Football professionalism became an opportunity (the 2000s)**

The period of the 2000s continues to realise dramatic transformation in the globalised sport (football) that enabled the free movement of sports workers across borders and nations worldwide. European football development witnessed changes as professionalism gained a lot of popularity with its huge media rights and huge budgets of clubs, sponsors, the mobility of talents in the football labour market and other socioeconomic potentials. This made professional football to offer better social opportunities to African talents and their figure intensified as they moved to leagues in Europe. As African successes at the world senior and youth levels effectively displayed the potential of African talents to European clubs and created an opportunity for African players in Europe (Darby, 2007:447). By that, European clubs began to draw on African talents as a source of cheap but highly skilled labour (Darby, 2007:446). This era again saw the figure of African migrant talents to leagues abroad doubled in the new millennium (Ricci, 2000). The consequences reflected in African players attracting the attention of big clubs worldwide and been financially rewarded in exchange for their talents.

This period realised an increase in the activities of football agents or sports agencies as they turned their recruitment lens to the Africa continent. That further created an opportunity for some parents to invest in their children football talents. The emergence of modern sporting facilities and training equipment was introduced to enhance the development of football talents and performance at clubs and leagues level in Europe. Even though, in the absence of these, African best talents strive to achieve their desired goals looking for mobility opportunity to

leagues abroad as the only way forward for their football profession to sustainable social development. It also changed the position of the parents, families and communities concerning football. Thus, football got a social and professional status as well as recognition in the society.

The exploits of these talents abroad changed the direction of youth football development with the advent of football farms (football academies culture) across Africa continent particularly, West, North and Central zones of CAF. The football farms provide improved sporting facilities and modern methodologies of coaching to nurture and develop talents and prospects for the European football market. For example, Feyenoord Academy project in Ghana, Ajax Academy in South Africa and Ghana, RTD academy, WAFA, JMG and others.

Beyond that, we observed a formal *structuration* of football training in Africa. The society and communities interest increased because football became socially important. So, parents and others began to socially and materially support their children with football talent. This model changed the families' vision and strategies as they could anticipate a better future for their football talents if they invest well in them.

Based on the sprung up of various football academies on the Africa continent, Darby (2007a) identified four broad typologies of football academy common in Africa: i) African academies-: which are organised and managed by African club sides or national federations. ii) Afro-European academies, which typically take three forms: a) involves European club setting up its own academy in Africa as a foreign outpost; b) identifies a partnership between an existing African club or academy and a European team; and c) concerns an arrangement whereby a European club takes a controlling interest in an African club and then either subsumes the club's existing youth structures or establishes new ones. iii) an academy can be classified as private, charitable or corporate sponsored academies, which operate with the support from sponsorship of

the corporate sector or private individuals, usually former African players or philanthropists, and iv) non-affiliated, improvised academies which are set up on an ad hoc basis and typically lack proper facilities and involve poorly qualified staff.

These typologies of football academies provide opportunities for talents export to the Global North with intermediaries acting as a ‘cling’ for both players and clubs. However, some of the established football academies combine education and football which seems to convince many parents to allow their wards to enrol there. Even with that, it is not a guarantee for many children who want to play football. A player mentioned how football academy supported and changed his life after getting the opportunity to join one of the best academies in Africa. That is:

“In Right To Dream (RTD) academy, I had everything free, accommodation, food, training kits, school fees, and others and that really helped my parents a lot because there was no way they could afford in the academy buying all those things. At the academy, you are offered 5 years scholarship for high school education but in the academy itself was in two folds that are, you have to be good academically and on the pitch too. But I was not actually good in class, unlike the football field, I was ok. RTD academy really did well for my education and improvement in my football that without them there was no way I was going to improve” Yaw Yeboah (19yrs, 2yrs.exp:GHA [2016]).

Parents began to realise the need to support their son’s talents development after taking into account the economic and social opportunities. Some of the opportunities that football provides them include developing their skills, giving hope and empowerment for their boys. This makes their investment in a football player useful as they develop their human capital through football training and education. Another interviewee also shared his experience after his father watched him played in a match. He mentioned that:

“He sat me down and asked what do you want to do, I said I’m really happy with football but I’ll not drop out from school, I’ll continue by doing both. Then he said, no. I watched you and I think you can really make it and that’s when he believed after he saw me played, and I was so happy that comment was coming from him which was like a blessing. Then, he said, you can go ahead along and don’t drop out of school” Chivuta (32yrs, 14yrs.exp: ZAB [2016]).

The consent from his father excited him, yet it was with a caution that he should also take his studies seriously as well. Thus, he could combine school and football at the same time. On another hand, the father realised his child's talent and encouraged him by providing the needed social and commitment to his development. It was not surprising after he finished secondary school and got scouted into the Zambia national U17 team, and that charted the beginning of his professional career. In sum, football provided a platform for preparing young people and integrating them into a society through a job opportunity. Beyond that, football became associated with scholastic, skill development, social integration, social status, etc. This made families, scouts, clubs, agents, football academies to invest in the youths with football talents and potentials.

This period exactly changed the mindset of many African people about football and its associated economic and social opportunities one can accumulate through becoming a successful professional footballer. Yet, those who are unsuccessful must find ways of integrating well so that they do not become social deviant in the community. The evolution of football in Africa has gone through a lot of process getting to this level despite parental restrictions of their children taking to football.

In addition, some people different perception about the sport in the past, yet it continues to play a social role in the communities. On the other hand, it has turned to support job creation opportunities, promote social integration, skill enhancement and equipping sporting talents with employable resources for a better future. The by-product of the periodization showed the saturation of the football in Africa. This has created an opportunity to examine the interplay of football academies, European football structure and the migration of talents from Africa to Europe.

### **4.3 The Role of Academies and European football structures towards the youths in Africa**

The evolution of football in Africa can be traced from the controversial period where football was seen as a social gathering and fun for the youths in the various locales. The practice of the sport (football) was to promote social integration in a way to maintain their deep connections in the communities. By making the sport to assume a social role where parents, families, relatives and the community never thought of its economic and social opportunities that can provide a better future for their children. This reflected in the parental strictness attitude towards their children by insisting on only schooling as an adapted to social success. Yet, those resilient youths were able to combine playing football until reaching the secondary school level where most of them had the opportunity to pursue it further.

Their breakthrough came when the successes of African countries' senior and youth teams at the FIFA world cup competitions continued to enchant European clubs to that continent. This platform provided European clubs with a clear view of '*natural footballers*' who relied on their instincts, speed, physique, and skill but lacked the tactical maturity, discipline, and organisation to compete effectively on the international stage or in the European game (Bale, 2004; Lanfranchi, 1994). The potentials displayed of Africa talents attracted European clubs and created the '*demand*' for African players in Europe (Darby, 2007). This demand for the best talents on the Africa continent was dependent on the improved European football market that also appealed to other international footballers to their leagues.

Owing to the structured European football market which is economically more developed than the previous periods in African football context. The market of African football players integrated the new structures in Africa. To make those recruit talents attractive to the demands of the European football market, European clubs prepared the grounds in Africa by providing the

needed resources including administrative structures, facilities, technical exchange, sports kits, training equipment and funds to develop and refined them. The European clubs were able to achieve this through the establishment of football academies with the appropriate structures across the specific talents prone communities in Africa.

This was observed in the sprung up of many different football academies including Afro-European, private, federations, affiliated and non-affiliated football academies in those talents infested communities on the Africa continent. At the same time, parents, families, relatives and the community awareness of these football projects changed their vision and strategies on football for their talented children.

These developments of the football academies across the Africa continent created a pool of best talents in a queue for the European football market that offers considerable economic returns for the released academies and the engaged players. To link those best talents to the various European clubs, witnessed the introduction of informal and formal institutionalised networks that specifically assisted to facilitate the migration of African football talents.

This institutionalised networks cut across a wider spectrum involving social relations and networks that are situated in the purview of football agents, sports agencies, families, scouts, clubs and academies officials. Within the integration of institutionalised networks, football academies and families played a significant role by supporting those talented with their social and economic resources. That includes using the formal and informal networks to supporting their progress, and the same time facilitated their migration to those structured football academies. The migration of African talents abroad continues unabated due to lack of modern sporting facilities and structure in Africa football development that rarely support those talents and prospects growth in the communities.

Some of these challenges among the underdevelopment and lack of professionalism status in African football development (Poli, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Darby, 2000, 2002, 2007a, 2007b; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001) are akin to those found in African governments such as corrupt and selfish leaders, lack of funding, disputes between ethnic football clubs and the exodus of best talents to overseas (Eugene Augustus, 2011). Some of these constraining factors in the development of African football rarely empowered the youths to let alone, giving them hope.

The European football market development has played a role in African parents, families, relatives, scouts, clubs, and football academies to invest in the youths. Since this can create social and economic opportunities for the youths' future. To conclude, the links between the periods, migration and the European football market development is an established trend for African talents to leagues abroad. This is further revealed in the continuous increase of the foreign-based players' participation in the AFCON competitions with a data from 2000-2017. Their numbers always exceed 52% far better than the locally based-players<sup>35</sup>. That is for 2000 (52.80%), 2002 (60.70%), 2004 (59.90%), 2006 (58.70%), 2008 (61.40%), 2010 (61.70%), 2012 (54.10%), 2013 (55.40%), 2015 (70.90%) and 2017 (70.40%).

The following examines the various ways and means African footballers migrate to Europe.

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<sup>35</sup> The locally-based players include those that ply their trade within Africa.

#### **4.4 AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS ITINERARIES TO EUROPE**

*“We go to the streets to play and later on we find ourselves in the big stadium” (Eto’o, 2013).*

Evidence from the evolution of African football in the past demonstrates how football used to play a social role by integrating the youths in the African communities through the practice of the sport. The sport has seen some transformation but insufficient to help overcome the challenges bedevilling the development of football on the Africa continent. This includes lack of infrastructures, ineffective administrative measures and the lukewarm attitude towards the professionalisation of football on the continent. These constraining factors concerning the development of African football complement the weak economic structures that rarely empower the youth while leaving the low- income communities with despair. The political instability and power struggling in some African communities also played a role in the relocation of some children abroad and elsewhere.

The talents and prospects in the communities are tapped right from the street football system to inter-street competitions. This created a platform for the lucky ones which most often were from the low-class income communities, scouted and integrated into the locale clubs or town teams. In all these cases, those scouted talents and prospects have to work under conditions that hardly supported their appropriate development in the communities. That is, insufficient sporting facilities and ineffective manpower support to facilitate their growth and direct their football development paths were absent.

Aside from some of these difficulties, how were those talents able to migrate abroad and when do they begin to identify their potentials in football and pursue it as a profession? The option for a professional career in football opened a new beginning in their lives outside their countries of origin. Based on these processes, the research analyses the migratory itineraries of



African talents to Europe and assesses how it can influence the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ to their local communities.

The local communities are endowed with talents and prospects that need to be developed, nurtured and refined, and the same time can offer social and economic opportunities to better their future. This is because the local community is the natural habitat of all professional football players where their careers kick started regardless of the level they might have attained abroad. A player mentioned that:

“As a young lad you get to play with people older than you are and in that light, you tend to outperform them so I think in that sense you get to know the one who is talented and then urge him on. You displayed a certain understanding of the game which is beyond your age. As we were growing up we started gaining a lot of interest through group peer or that stuff. But I guess my football career really kicked off almost at the secondary school when we went through difficulties in the country I mean the economic constraints-people who had completed university had no jobs and those graduates loitering in the streets without jobs and that the future just looks bleak. The next tendency was to invest in something that one could see a better future from and that was football and that’s how I got back to taking football seriously. So, I started with the local leagues in the streets and then as I said earlier on, if you are talented you got to make a way to the top in local teams” Ekeh (35yrs, 13yrs.exp: NGN [2016]).

The player started by playing street football and gradually got integrated into the street local leagues in the community. It is observed that indirectly the street football provided him with a certain exposure which saw him scouted into a local team in the community. Looking at the political and weak economic situations prevailing at that time, this helped parents to accept football career as an opportunity and migration through football became a ‘*royal way*’. At the same time, football became more reliable than university because the general labour market in African wasn’t able to absorb all these young people. Another player also narrated how he gave scouted while playing for his school team in the community. He mentioned that:

“Growing up in my country Zambia it wasn’t like really something you can do it for say becoming a big footballer even in my city it wasn’t possible where I was living. I was really playing hockey because grew

up in a mining area. The mining company was sponsoring activities like other sport, badminton, hockey and you know they could provide you with transportation every week if we have a game and you go played. Many of us like where I used to stay, it was like a suburb of the city, and we used to do those kinds of games. Only football for people from the locations and it was difficult for somebody from the location to go and play football until one day when I was in Grade 7 playing in a school tournament” Chivuta (32yrs, 14yrs.exp: ZAB [2016]).

The player used to play hockey in the community which was sponsored by a mining company. Initially, he did not believe that one can become a big footballer in the locale because he thought football was for those living in the cities. Through playing in his school tournament, he got scouted and integrated into a football academy that was in a different locale. An interviewee also shared his experience and he said that:

“I moved to England when I was 8years, and my dad and mum were already living here. My dad lived there for 7 or 8years before I moved over and my mum also moved over shortly after my dad. I started living with my grandparent after my parents had left for England. With my grandparent I was still playing football in the street with my friends for fun” Bangura (21yrs, 4yrs.exp: SEL [2016]).

Even when his parents left him in the care of his grandmother, he was still playing street football with his friends in the community. In many African communities, this shows how football can provide a source of leisure and recreational activity for the young ones by getting them more integrated at their youthful stages. This again demonstrates a link between classical migration and football. Beyond that, we can also observe a strong link between families and communities. This explains why the ‘give back phenomenon’ (GBP) exists.

Indeed, the youths in African communities are infested with football that they hardly give up on it. An interviewee explained his beginning in the locale and mentioned that:

“I grew up just knowing football and at the age of 8, there were two ‘Colts’ teams that were fighting over me. This became a big issue between the two teams and finally, a policeman escorted me home. When I got home the policeman narrated everything to my mother and quickly she decided that she can’t take care of me so I should go to my father in Kumasi- so I went to Kumasi” Nii Odartey Lamptey (41yrs, 17yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

Lamprey was destined as the best young player in the world between 1989 and 1992 (see Darby, 2010) but it could not materialise due to his inability to produce a consistent performance. At age 8, those two Colts teams identified the prospect of his talent and wanted to take possession but at the end, he relocated to his father, who was leaving in a different city in Ghana. The child joining the father depicts the first step of movement within the same country. Football in the locales served as a social role and the same time, impressed on the youths to attend school. The community people also support those talented children in their own small ways either by economic or non-economic means. A footballer mentioned how some of those comments transformed his career. He said that:

“I put through with my dream and believing that I can make it, and also people that used to see me when I was a younger, they used to tell hey! Kid you can believe in yourself and keep working it can happen and I kept pushing myself and you can ask some of my friends when I used to play with the local teams, I was the first one there and the last one-so people were telling this kid *gonna* be something” Coundoul (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: SEN [2013]).

In Europe, even getting a space to play football is not as easy as one may think and sometimes, you have to pay for every minute that one spends on the pitch. But, in the African communities, young people have free space to play and have fun without any costs. Interestingly, the young boys get football enthusiasts from the locales to support their street football activities. This demonstrates the role of the communities by providing opportunities for them to play football.

Another interviewee admitted this kind of football activities really exposed his talents and got him integrated into a local team where he practised football after school. He mentioned that:

“At the time we used to combine playing at the backyard of people houses after school but sometimes when school was not in session, we used to sleep at our team’s owner place after playing but when it was school time we slept at our homes. Actually, it wasn’t organised like the ‘colts’ system now but those days

when it was time, you just go and play and try to perform for them to see you. It was like the street football stuff” Annan (30yrs, 9yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

Unlike the formal training previously explained, the football player testified to the fact that footballing activities in the locale were through informal training system.

A thorough analysis from the interviewees confirmed that they all started kicking football right from their communities at the tender ages. However, there were those who left at pre-teen and so, could not get the opportunity to play for their local teams and the leagues.

They might have left as a consequence of relocation with families or/and reunion or to continue their education or visiting social relations abroad or seek a better life outside the borders of their countries of origin. In African communities, children are embedded in the extended family where they are catered for and sometimes more distant relatives or the ‘so-called’ good people in the society become part of the extended family. As a teenager, Didier Drogba was taken to his uncle (who was then a professional footballer) in France to have a better education by his parents. His father was a banker and the mother a student at that time. The parents wanted him to get a good education in France because of the best condition as compared to political tension in the Cote d'Ivoire at the time (see Penot, 2008)<sup>36</sup>. This is the role of extended family’s network for his migration.

Education in Africa is a key to adapted social success and that makes parents impress upon their children to study at schools rather than concentrating on football. This explains the some of the reasons behind African parents’ strong social values for education. For instance, Bouna Coundoul explained how he migrated to America. He mentioned that:

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<sup>36</sup> Didier Drogba: The Autobiography foreword by Jose Mourinho

“I left Senegal when I was 13years and went to America, New York City. I went there to get my education. To me the most important as a football player, you need to get an education so I went to America to finish my education and after that, I was drafted into the MLS” Coundoul (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: SEN [2013]).

It is a common saying in Africa that ‘*education is a key to better life*’ and could be one of the main reasons parents always want the best conditions for their children to be educated. At age 11, he has to join the father in exile due to the political conflict that arose in Kinshasa, Congo. To Fabrice, it was painful when his father left for abroad. On another hand, he was heading for a life outside his country of origin (see Brereton, 2012). At the school, he realised one thing, he said:

“My learning was way ahead thanks to what I had been taught in Africa” (Muamba, 2012).

For Fabrice, he learned that back in Congo at age 8, he was being taught the same in England at age 11. The difficulty was with the English language because of his French background. It reaffirms the strong passion and commitment African parents attach to providing their children with better education.

Through football, some also got the opportunity to studies abroad. An interviewee mentioned that from the street football he got scouted by the U14 team of Liberty Professionals FC based in Accra, the capital of Ghana, where Michael Essien, Asamoah Gyan, Sulley Muntari and others played. While at the youth side of the club, his former coach introduced him to his friends in the States who came to Ghana and watch him play. He mentioned that:

“I played two games while they watched. They said we want you to come and play for us in the States. There was no involvement of an agent but it was only my former coach’s friends” Ayarna (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The player had the chance through the social network of his former coach at the Liberty Professionals FC that facilitated his migration abroad. Another successful player who made two

FIFA World Cup appearances for Ghana as the first captain to have qualified his country and now history narrated how he moved to Europe. He mentioned that:

“After a domestic league match, I saw this white man (agent) with one of our team officials and I was invited to join. There, I was told that there is a team in Italy which was interested in me so they think that I have to go to Italy. At that time, I was so young and enjoying the fans because they called me baby Jesus-at that time because I was doing magic for the team so I didn’t want to travel outside because I was enjoying the support of the Heart of Oak SC fans. But, finally, I had to accept and go and try my luck out there. So, I travelled with the white man (agent) and there my professional career started” Appiah (33yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

He was scouted from a ‘Colts’ team into one of the revitalised football clubs in Ghana called Accra Heart of Oak SC. The club officials introduced the player to their football agent that facilitated his movement to Europe. That means the club used their contact with the agent to support his migration processes abroad. Here the migration of the footballer was not seen as an opportunity but also a constraint in disguise as well. This is because he had to leave his community when he was still young.

Some players also went on a normal visit to go and have fun with friends and social relations. A former Nigerian international footballer, Jay Jay Okocha went on a visit to one of his brother’s friend in Germany. It was a normal tourist visit so he was expected to have fun. He knew the friend had played for a German football team. It would not be wrong to say every child from Africa knows how to play football right from the streets. Okocha had been playing street football in Nigeria since he was little (see Orr, 2007). He asked for some time to go and have football training with the host (brother’s friend). He had no idea what this quick visit could do for him. He narrated that:

“It was quite amazing. It never occurred to me that I was old enough to be on my own and start my own career. But, I realised I had a big opportunity in front of me and knew that I didn’t want to let it go. I knew I had to grab the chance I’d been given” (Jay Jay Okocha, 2007).

His quick visit was made possible by using the social relation of his brother. This created an opportunity that he never dreamt of, becoming a professional footballer abroad. It was shocking and amazing that things suddenly went through for him with the support of his host, he got registered by a club in Germany. The talent and prospect he possessed gave him that opportunity he never expected through that visit.

Others were searching for the opportunity to just obtain a reputation as a professional footballer abroad. This is an example of a young player who desperately wanted to become a professional footballer abroad. From the Ghana national U17 team camp break, Lamptey went to the bank for his small savings and decided to go and look for the local manager in Nigeria. To see if something positive will come out from the man's previous visit to deliver the message from Keshi concerning the Anderlecht club's interests for his talent. Lamptey went to withdraw the small money in his account and decided to set off to Nigeria. With money in hand, the 15-year-old boy asked for directions and documents needed to enable one travel to Nigeria by road. After several inquiries, he finally arrived at the transport terminal of Nigeria in Kumasi-Ghana. Lamptey narrated that:

"He only remembers people took him to the transport station but he can't remember exactly where they took him to, and all he can remember was the driver asked me if he had a passport and he said no. The FA officials had our passports. The driver asked if he could double the fare, he can take him to Lagos, Nigeria. He accepted and gave the driver the money demanded after which he put him in his '504' Peugeot' vehicle and they set off" Nii Lamptey (41yrs, 17yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

Lamptey explained the hell he went through because at all the borders along the road they had to stop the vehicle and asked questions, and sometimes he had to hide in the car because he didn't have a passport. He finally arrived in Nigeria and met the local manager of Keshi and that is where his migration processes started after he left for Belgium with Keshi (see Acheampong,

Malek and Michel, *forth coming*).<sup>37</sup>

In pursuing their football ambition, African players use their talent to facilitate their migration process as an individual to achieve their professional status. Büdel identified that some West African footballers' migration project were financed by family members and friends and with loans, and many expectations are invested into that journey as they chase for a professional football abroad (2013)<sup>38</sup>. This shows that individual players sometimes invest in their own migration processes with or without resources from family members and friends towards achieving their professionalism status.

The phenomenon of these footballers migration abroad takes into account the different means and ways they are able to mobilise the various resources to achieve their ambitions. Sam played for a local team in Nigeria called NEPA Lagos FC after his secondary school education. He earned so much money than even his mother who has been an accountant for many years. After spending two years at NEPA Lagos FC and he decided to move on because of comments from some elderly people in the community. He mentioned that:

“Especially the elderly ones, their comments they affect you quite much in the first place and as far as I was the youngest players, you are like a beacon of European player and when I signed for NEPA Lagos FC, I was making money of my own. I mean I got money than my mum who has been an account for years and so, I was a man of myself” Sam (41yrs, 14yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

One day, he told his parents that he was leaving to Europe after several visa attempts failed in Nigeria, not as a first traveller. Sam explained to his parents how he was going to make it abroad by road as other have narrated to him. In his mind, it was just a straight forward journey probably in some few days he was going to be in Europe. He narrated his journey as:

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<sup>37</sup> Accepted for publication by *idrottsforum.org*

<sup>38</sup> (See Büdel, 2013)



“I thought that sounded like a good solution to them anyway and I got my parents blessing and I left. I took taxi and some buses in between, I got to Niger and then to Algeria. I got to Niger and went to the information center and apparently Air Algeria does not fly direct to Niger anymore. I decided that I was going to continue this journey to Mali, because I was told that from Mali I can fly from there. So, I continue the journey, I was there and went through the borders and that was quite an experience. You get to the borders you need to bribe, saw these border cops, police with face covered, with guns and you can’t even look at their faces, you’re beaten, I mean I thought I was going to die but anyway I survived that is, what I went through. Then I continued to Mali, took a taxi to see if I can get a flight, no Air Algeria, they don’t come anymore so, I cannot fly to Algeria. I said then what I’m going to do then I have to continue to Senegal. From Mali, there was no way out so I continued to Senegal. I got to Senegal then I started to get scared because you meet a lot of people that have been stranded on the way trying to do exactly what I was going to do. When I was in Bamako, Mali, I met a Nigerian guy who was on his way from Lagos, he was travelling to Dakar and we started to talk and then I don’t know why, I just opened up to him, this is my plan and he said, you know what if you do that I mean there have been a lot of people who had been doing this, and this connection is really blocked and you doing to get stalked. I was lucky I stayed with him for a week while he tried to help me get a ticket to Tunisia. I felt sick and had a serious fever for few days. When I was well enough he booked the ticket and went to the airport and they were not going to let me fly to Tunisia and lucky enough I had all my newspaper clips from my team, Lagos. So when I wasn’t speaking French they were going to deport me and they weren’t going to let me fly anyway. I said I needed to do something so I went straight to this guy’s office and I just took out everything and put it on his table my photos in the newspapers and told him look I’m a football player and made up a story, that I’m going to Tunisia and that is. I think he changed his mind and they gave me my passport and boarding pass so, I went through the immigration and while I was waiting I saw some African magazine and going through it, I saw Stade Tunisien, this is a team which has been playing in the African clubs competitions and I just wrote the name of the team down. After everything, I checked in and got to Tunis” Sam (41yrs, 14yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Along the way, he stopped to play in Tunisia for a year to enable him continue his European football dream. While in Tunisia he wrote several letters to his parents but none got to them until the last letter he sent which met his arrival upon returning to Nigeria. It was to keep informed the family his whereabouts at each stage of his adventure journey. He returned to Nigeria for some documents where he was introduced to a football agent and through him, he went to Austria, Sturm Graz FC. This footballer engaged in an adventurous itinerary for his migration.

On one hand, some talents migrate to leagues in Africa as a springboard to Europe.

Particularly, to the leagues of South Africa, Tunisia and Egypt which are substantially resourced financially than the rest of the leagues on the continent. For example, the South Africa leagues also attract international players from South America. It is assumed that football players from those leagues get active international exposure through their pre-season training abroad. This makes them more visible to foreign clubs and leagues abroad that may seek the services of those talented players to join their teams. On another hand, African clubs, from the domestic leagues, football academies, and local teams positioned talented players in the visibility of authorities that attract their attention for national teams' invitation (Agegaard and Engh, 2013) that exposure them internationally to clubs and leagues.

In sum, analysis of African players' migration processes from their communities through street football, to the various local competitions, and to leagues in their countries of origin and Africa. They are connected by networks and social relationships and other resources that facilitate their migration project to Europe. This processes supported to produce a typology of their itineraries that is presented in figure 7. The below model illustrates the stages of football talents progression from their local communities to Europe.

#### **4.4.1 A model of African footballers' migratory itineraries**

The model explains the processes of African talents from their communities in chasing a professional footballer status in Europe. To begin with, talents are identified in the locales through playing of street football as a social practice to help their integration. This makes their initial contact with football as a way of instilling social and cultural values. Beyond that, football plays a social role as individuals gather to have enjoyment and fun within their communities. Children have access to free space in their communities and converge as social groups to play

street football that also strengthens their social relationships. It is observed through their social group teams to playing inter-street competitions.

1) the first stage of children meeting to have fun with the ball is summarised as a social practice in the locales. The next section involves the identification of talents from the street football competitions to be introduced to formal and informal pieces of training.

2) the second stage focuses on nurturing the talented and potentials of those selected for refinement and development. Some are placed in structured football academies that include Afro-European partnership model, private and philanthropies model, and federations' academies. These academies provide formal training for the recruited talents. The informal training is gotten from those juvenile teams that are non-affiliated and without proper structures in place but feel obliged to support talents within the communities. It is often based on their enthusiasm for the game as well as a social contribution to foster integration in the locales. Through this platform, some of them get an opportunity to join clubs and leagues.

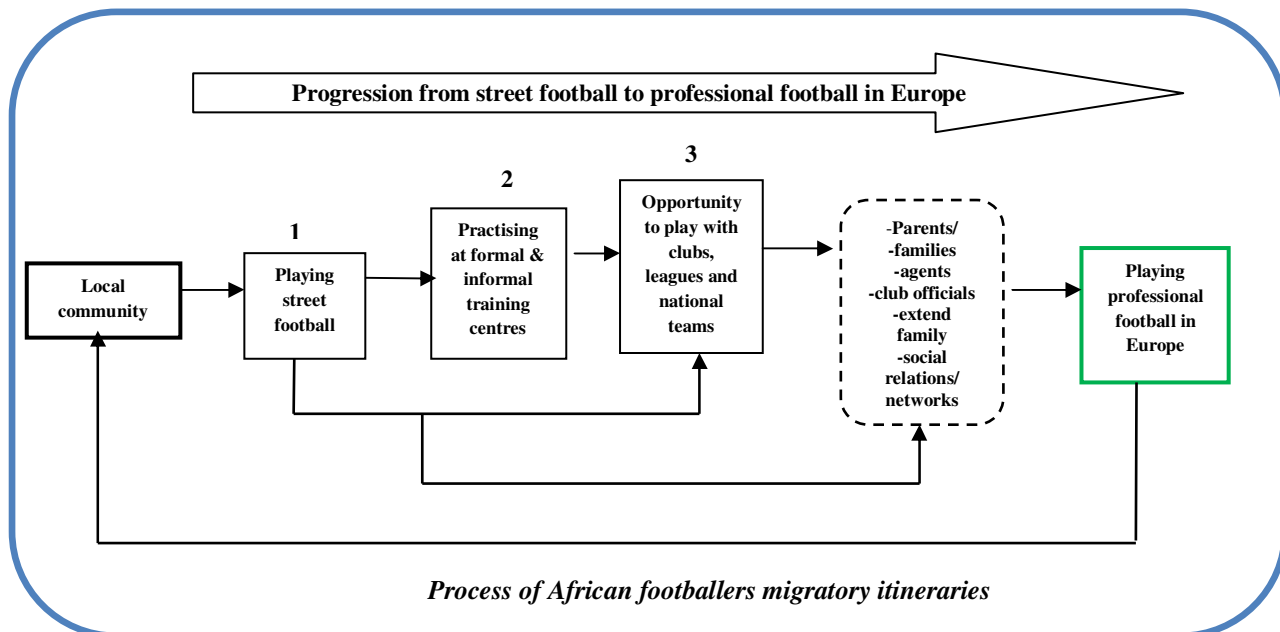
3) the third stage involves where talents are transferred to clubs and leagues that provide them exposure. Others join clubs that are community-based, corporate owned, private ownership or national juvenile leagues organised by federations. At the same time, talents get the chance to feature for their national teams with others playing in leagues within Africa. Even at this stage, there are informal and formal networks that connect talents to the various clubs and leagues on the African continent. After this exposure, where is their next destination of play as they search for a reputation as a professional footballer?

From the first three stages, talents have a greater chance of moving to European leagues. Their migration abroad is facilitated by social relationships and networks that act as intermediaries. The intermediaries include parents, families, extended family, football agents and

sports agencies, scouts, club officials and social relations. These facilitators play a significant role with their resources to support the migration of talents to Europe. The role of parents, families, extended family and social relations is often noticed from relocation, normal visits, reunion and schooling abroad. That of agents, scouts, club officials, sports agencies and networks is seen through direct transfers and negotiations with clubs for the release of talents to leagues abroad. These agents, scouts, and sports agencies and club officials also play a key role in African talents distribution in the various leagues in Europe.

After talents achieving professional footballer status abroad, they still maintain a connection with their communities by reintegrating through their football-related revenues and sporting resources. This is done through the ‘give back phenomenon’ to the larger society. The following explains further enhanced migratory itineraries of African talents to Europe.

Figure 4. The process of African footballers’ migratory itineraries



#### **4.4.2 Typologies of African footballers' migratory itineraries**

In the migration process of African footballers, it considers the role of various actors and structures that influence and support their journey abroad. The migration itinerary processes begin from their communities through engagement with street football that plays a social role in support of their integration within the locales. This accumulates into inter-street football competitions that provide best talents with the opportunity to join various local leagues, football academies, Colts' teams, school/university teams and sometimes institution teams. Through that, some again get the chance to progress to main domestic leagues, juvenile leagues, national teams and other leagues in Africa. At this level, the players are provided with both local and international exposures and the same time being monitored and supervised by families, parents or relatives and others in the community.

Apart from the international and local exposures, it also helps them to build their social relationships and networks along the paths. These social relations and networks are intermediaries that act to facilitate talents movement to leagues in Europe with their various connections abroad. They include scouts, agents, sports agencies, coaches, club officials, and friends or teammates. They form the integration of institutionalised networks that play a key role in supporting talents migration process to their destination leagues abroad.

However, other talents may get an opportunity to attend school and play college football abroad through their parents, family members, extended family or more distant relatives, and social relations. Beyond that, some talents and prospects can also move directly through social relations and networks with their engagement from the street football or inter-street competition or football academies or local teams or Colts' teams to leagues abroad. The institutionalised networks serve as resources that play a decisive role in facilitating talents or children migration

process abroad.

In the leagues abroad, talents and prospects get considerable economic earnings in return for their services. Some of their skyrocketed earnings from the football-related revenues are transferred to parents, family, friend and others in the community and how they influence their 'Give Back Phenomenon' will be discussed in the subsequent section. Yet, a thorough analysis of the migratory itineraries of African professional footballers can be grouped under the following types based on the kind of resources they were able to gather in pursuing their professional ambitions abroad (figure 7). That is:

- a) **Collective resource-based itinerary:** This is where those footballers derive resources from family, parents, extended family and many distant relatives that support them in achieving their professionalism status abroad. It includes sending their children to study, relocation, reunion with family members or reconnection with their exiled and expelled parents or families. Through that they improve their football talents since they have access to better conditions or environment to support their development.
- b) **Formal networks-based itineraries:** This involves where those footballers are connected to intermediaries such as scouts, agents, sports agencies that take the responsibility by organising the needed support services and documentations to facilitate their movement abroad. It includes club officials, local managers, coaches and teammates acting as recruitment referrals<sup>39</sup>. It can comprise both collective and individual resources as they tend to act as a 'cling' for the talents and their host clubs.

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<sup>39</sup> See Agegaard and Ryba, 2013)

- c) **Individual resource-based itinerary:** This involves those footballers that take their own initiative and efforts to move by mobilising their own funds, personal relations and networks. It is often to fulfil personal desires or ambitions or achieve self-esteem in their professional career. This is adventurous and risky itinerary.

In general, the economic and non-economic resources generated from the typology of African footballers' migration itineraries can influence their 'give back phenomenon' to their countries of origin. Below illustrates an enhanced interactive model and a comprehensive interactive progression of African talents migratory itineraries in pursuing professional football abroad.

Figure 5. Enhanced interactive model of African footballers' migratory itineraries

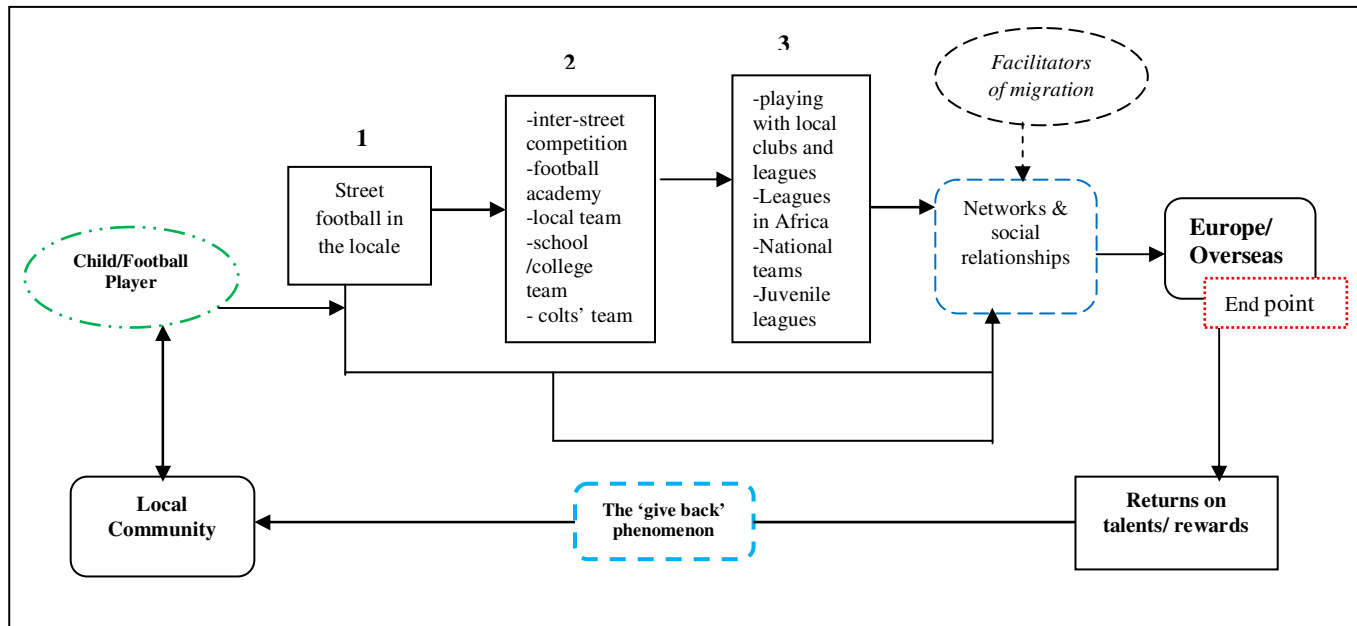


Figure 6 explains in details the combination of the processes involved in the migration of African talents from the local communities to playing professional football in leagues abroad. At the local communities, talents engage in football activities as a way of engendering their social integration and the same time, leisure among social groups within the locales. It was also for social identity in the locales. In the local community, playing football was a social practice for the children. Through this, it accumulated into informal practice where children from social group form teams to compete among themselves. The inter-street football is not only the way for their informal practice but also playing in schools, colleges, districts and regional competitions. This informal practice of the sport was to deepen their social integration in the communities. Indeed, as previously noted in the two models, all the processes involved formal and informal networks that play a role in supporting the movement of children through the system.

Beyond that, those with football talents and prospects may find their way out to acquire



formal training with structured football academies or playing in organised juvenile leagues by the federations or non-affiliated clubs with the intent of preparing talents for a professional integration. It is a deliberate strategy for talents getting integrated and the same time, becoming developed as a refined footballer. This emerging strategy ushers talents into the professional activity as they search for a professional identity. The two types of strategies identified and related to talents formal training process were deliberation and emergent (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

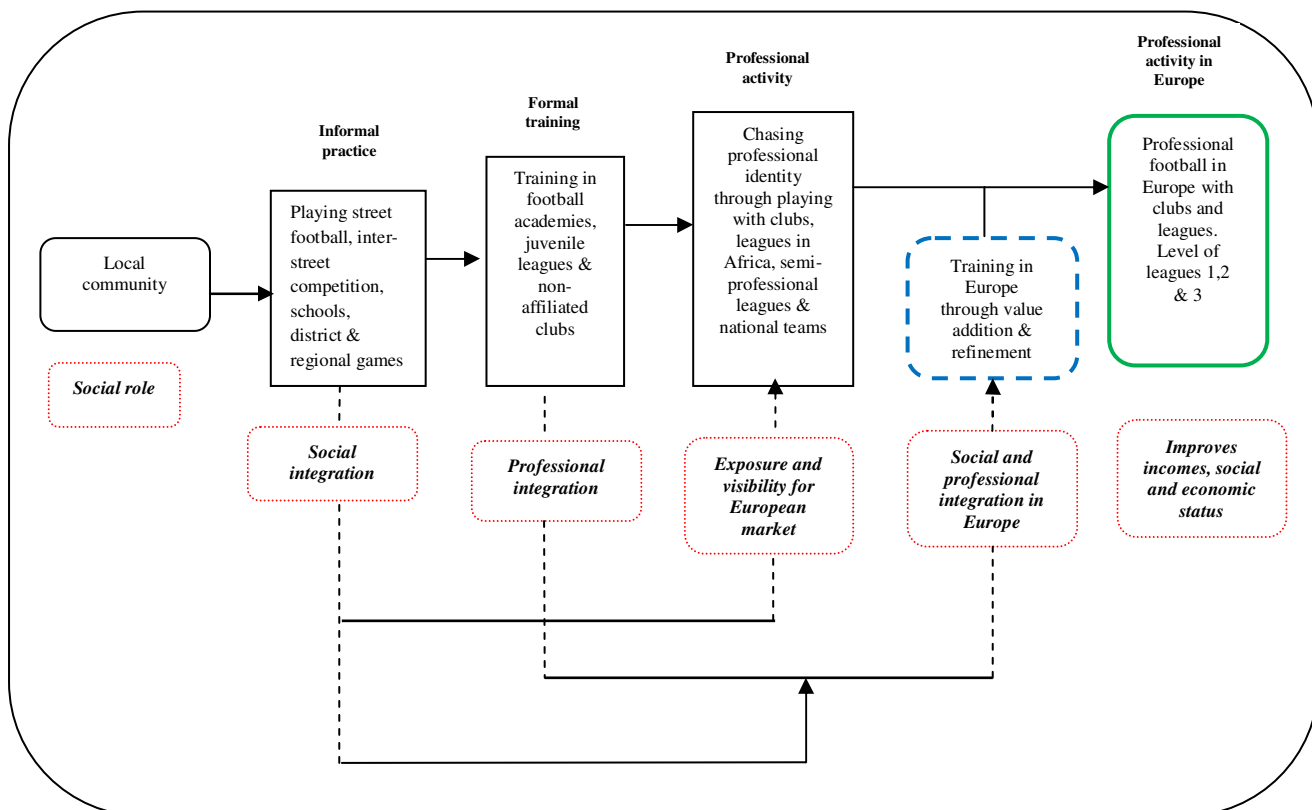
Their professional identity is achieved through joining registered football clubs or playing in semi-professional and federations organised competitions and leagues for clubs. The professional activity of the sport provides talents to be more exposed and becoming visible to their national teams' authority (Agergaard and Ryba, 2013). When talents get the opportunity to feature for their national teams in international competitions, they become more visible to foreign scouts, clubs, and leagues in the European football market. There are instances, where some of the talents get the opportunity to train directly in Europe from their informal practice level. Some of these talents are developed and refined by adding value to their raw talents through training abroad. This promotes their social and professional integration in Europe. Those fast talent developers have the opportunity to play for clubs and leagues in Europe.

It charts the beginning of Africa talents professional activity with some playing in the various levels of the European leagues. These leagues guarantee them substantial incomes that commensurate with their quality and prospects, which they have never earned while playing in leagues within Africa. This goes along to improve their social and economic status back home in their communities of origin.

In sum, their skyrocketed earnings far exceed what they used to earn back in their

domestic leagues or Africa continent which conventionally some are remitted to households, extended family, friends and others in the community. These football-related remittances and sporting capital from the overseas professionals can support and sustain close and extended families (Darby, 2014) conditions living in African society. This made the research proceed to figure out the importance African migrant footballers attach to the ‘give back’ phenomenon to their communities where their football began from. By examining how African players use their football-related revenues and other non-economic resources to support the cause of the larger society.

Figure 6. Comprehensive interactive progression of African talents migratory itineraries



#### **4.5 GIVE BACK PHENOMENON: The usage of African players' football-related revenues**

The majority of African professional players invest their football-related revenues into economic projects such as buying of properties, telecommunication networks, sporting facilities, food production, bank savings and shares, real estates, football academies, hospitals, sports promotion, oil and gas, transportation, microfinance, large scale farming, oil and logistic businesses, schools, gaming business (Casino), lending capital to banks, bank auctions, buying of plots of land, apartments for rentals in home country and abroad, hotels, hostels and other private and personal businesses.

Also, some professional footballers invest in non-economic projects out of sport that includes health centers, clinics and hospital equipment, sporting kits and equipment, investment in their human capital, scholarships, building and renovation of schools, donations to orphanage homes, installation of well water/pump water, charity foundations, intellectual capital, cultural capital, gifts, free health insurance scheme, community library and financial supports. The economic and non-economic projects of African players to their communities are informed by the various reasons which may be in line with their values, conceptions, and objectives or economic interest.

Their rationalities behind the 'give back phenomenon' to the local community can also reflect the influence of their norms and cultural values, return on investment from families, communities and society, social and cultural embeddedness, and the integration of the institutionalised networks. Professional footballers' rationality may due to their economic intention of investing their football-related revenues and sporting resources in Africa. These economic or non-economic actions of their 'Give Back Phenomenon' represent a form of obligation by *giving back to the society*.

The resources invested in their migratory itineraries from families, communities, society and grassroots clubs could demonstrate a form of appreciation through professional footballers' re-investment with their incomes and sporting capital in the countries of origin. That reinforces the 'give back phenomenon' through their economic and social behaviours.

### **Analysis of African professional footballers 'Give Back Phenomenon'**

A careful reflection on African professional footballers' economic and non-economic activities through the 'GBP' by the usage of their revenues, further analysis was conducted to reveal the rationalities behind their behaviours. This was supported by analysing their views and other essential documents that contributed to better our understanding of their 'GBP' actions. The 'GBP' can be determined by family education, norms and shared values, social and cultural embeddedness, community networks, and parents' investment.

#### **4.5.1 THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

"My father played as an amateur who had to choose between being a footballer and being a schoolteacher. At that time in Ivory Coast football couldn't pay the bills, so he chose to be a teacher. I was in his class and he was harder on me than the other boys. When we came home he was nice, and then when we got in the class it was different. He said I had to set an example" (Kalou, 2010)<sup>40</sup>.

This interviewee narrated the effect education had on his professional football career due to his inability to attend school regularly and that has thought him a lesson in life. It therefore supports the strong social values parents from Africa attach to education as a privilege that they view as important for becoming 'somebody', defined as a person of status and respect, somebody

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<sup>40</sup> Salmon Kalou (born in 1985) Ivorian International footballer who spoke to Steve Tongue (Independent newspaper) on his career path: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/salomon-kalou-chelseas-family-man-makes-himself-at-home-1905821.html> (Accessed on 12/10/2012)

who is responsible, matured, independent, knowledgeable and capable of taking care of others in the future (Langevang,2008). That is why families, communities and society always support the education of children albeit financial constraints. This is what he had to say:

“Education was a problem for me as I did not go to school and I lost so many things. Contracts-I remember when I was signing my first contract I did not know anything about the contract. I did not know what I was signing too, even if I ask how much money I made in that contract I can’t even remember so I have been cheated. Some agents cheated me because I couldn’t write and read so I did not want other kids to go through this experience that is why I decided to use my football money to set up a school in Ghana because football gave me something so, I decided to give back as I said education was a problem for me and I have learnt a lot as a professional footballer. And that, I did not want my kids to go through the situation I went through. I think education is the best gift you can give your child. You can give your child money, house, whatever, but if you give him education nobody can take that one away from him. You can give him a car today and it will crash same day, a house, it can be burnt but education until he dies. So, I said let me invest into education” Nii Lampitey (41yrs, 17yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

The former professional footballer experience can explain the basis for individuals particularly, those from Africa to have a form of literacy background or secondary education. This can equip them to be able to read and write before embarking on professional football abroad. It can also contribute to reducing cheating by agents and clubs. Clearly, the football player admitted his mistake for dropping out of school and focusing only on football that made agents exploited his playing rights for continuous 5years.

Apart from that, his inability to attend school could be attributed to the parental neglect of their core responsibilities to their child. This caused him a great deal in life because with better education, he could have been prevented from the signing of certain football contracts that nearly ruined his future. But now he enjoys the social status and recognition achieved through professional football abroad. This made him to have solidarity for education.

In African communities, families are embedded in a patriarchal and hierarchical system that determines men having a higher status in society. Therefore, it was a core duty of the father

to invest in his son's education, but he failed. In African communities, respect for the elderly and their opinions are not challenged no matter, how objective a person issue may be. This is something institutionalised in the local communities that, when not checked can inhibit creativity of children in the locales. That could be a bad side of African culture in the communities.

Even those who wanted to play football, firstly, they have to attend school after which they were sometimes allowed to practice football. An interviewee mentioned that:

“In the beginning, it was very difficult for me because my family didn't want me to play football they wanted me to go to school. But I went to school first and after school sometimes, I go to play football with my friends in the street” Eboue (30yrs, 11yrs.exp: CIV [2013]).

This explains the importance parents attach to the education of their children. Since it is assumed to equip and prepare the individual for an adapted social success in the future. That is, why some parents do not want their investment in their children's schooling to go waste hence, move to the extent of discouraging and restricting them from playing football.

In effect, his family believes that equipping him with the skills and capabilities through education is considered an investment in his human capital to improve his material condition in the future (Becker, 1993). But, the football player believes that academically he wasn't good and football can provide him opportunity to become professional as well as social recognition.

It is considered that benefit from education is a lifelong investment which makes parents from Africa to put premium on their children schooling than football. The concept of education is assumed to be the only way one can become a better person in the society. This was introduced to them by their former colonies. In the context of Africa, children are told from an early age that they should reciprocate their parents' child-rearing efforts (Twum-Danso, 2009) and that include the investment in their human capital development. This can also be rewarding for parenting that creates the lifelong ties of obligation among those one has raised (Coe, 2012)

through investment in the human capital.

This development can be likened to intergenerational contract, that is, the shared, although possibly conflicting, understanding between family members as to what each owes and can expect from others within the family (Kabeer, 2000:465). So, this intergenerational contract explains further the returns on human capital development provided by families, parents or relatives and the community which most often, not legally binding on the individual but are expected to last over the long term. But, conflicts that may arise from this intergeneration contract are dealt with on the level of applying the norms and cultural values of the society.

The investment in their children education and training takes various forms according to the parental status in the social class within the communities. That is why they mostly try to choose for their children the kind of programmes they should study at school. An example is seen from this interviewee who mentioned that:

“I studied Chemical Engineering because I always love engineering, I just love the sound of it since I was a kid even though my mum wanted me to study medicine and my dad wanted me to study accounting. My dad studied marketing and my mum was a matron in her own clinic. Dad said, whatever you want to do as far as you’re happy but make sure your education does not suffer and go for it” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN[2015]).

The social class of a particular family can determine the kind of education they provide their children. This is because low-class income communities have insignificant choices to make concerning their children schooling than the middle and high-class with sufficient resources to develop the human capital of theirs. Other parents, families, and relatives tend to trade off their properties in financing education and training of their children. For example, this Togolese international narrated how his mother sold her building to finance his migration all in the name of achieving a professional footballer status abroad. He mentioned that:

“My mum supported me to enter into professional football by selling her house support to me when I told her I had gotten a chance to play in Serbia. She gave me almost everything I needed. Due to that, I am killing myself to get back the money she got from selling her house” Zakaria (20yrs, 3yrs.exp: TOG [2015]).

*What makes the professional footballer think this way?* This is as a result of the cognitive element of culture (Di Maggio, 1994) that takes into an account the action of other people. It raises two questions to the footballer ;(i) the negative effect on his image and personality should he fail to support the mother either financially successful or unsuccessful and (ii) the perception that community will have from the footballer's action after the mum invested her property in his professional football ambition abroad. In such instances, culture regulates the social behaviour of the individual since he is supposed to find all possible means to get the mum return on investment back to avoid public ridicule or being labelled as an ungrateful person. On another hand, it is the responsible of the mother to cater for her son's education and training for a better future.

At the same time, some parents, families, relatives and others investment in their children education move beyond provision of means but also supporting their academic works at home. A player shared his experience and how he was able to combine with his football practice. He said that:

“The family has been supportive and helped me through because the work from university was hard to combine together especially if you are playing full time. Support like advisory and my mum helped me over with my assignments for university. She made sure I did them” Bangura (21yrs, 4yrs.exp: SEL [2016]).

The investment in human capital goes with costs in the near term, and with the expectation that one would have the accrued benefits in future. To Becker (1993), the costs of adding to the individual human capital can take various forms including out-of-pocket or direct



expenses, foregone earnings, and psychic losses. These are part of the costs that families, parents, and the community incurred developing their children human capital. Aside from that, the individual develops well enough to become useful and better person in society. Thus, parents, families, relatives, and others play a significant role by catering for their children developmental and other social needs to support their proper upbringing in the communities.

A clear analysis of parents, families, relatives and others investments in children education and training showed different levels of human capital development. In effect, this is expected to affect their returns on investment to those that played an active part in their migration to Europe. The support received from the principal investor may also differ depending on the type of investment made in their human capital development. This definitely would influence African footballers' actions towards their 'give back phenomenon' in that respect.

That means it may influence whatever they offer to close families and parents, relatives, extended families, scouts, agents, clubs, and others in their countries of origin. This extends our understanding of African footballers' decision concerning the 'give back phenomenon' that can be determined by norms and shared values of the society.

#### 4.5.2 GBP' AND THE NORMS AND SHARED VALUES

*“My past and especially my mother’s good deeds have really made an impact in my life” (Mensah, 2012)<sup>41</sup>*

In African communities, families and households are responsible for managing the risks associated with child/adolescent development choices, particularly schooling (Kelly, 2001). Based on this logic, it is expected which families and households prepare their child to get a job so that they benefit from their successes particularly when they become old and cannot work. This is essential because the African social system does not provide an intergenerational or collective solidarity. That is why families and households continue to invest resources into supporting their children development in the communities not only through education.

Without that, community people see those parents or families as not caring for the future of their children and this does not prevent them from contributing to the former situation when they can become successful. This is because of the norms and cultural values that tend to shape and reshape behaviours of people in the communities.

On one hand, parents and households refusal to develop the human capital to their children could lead to preparing the grounds towards poverty, and on another hand, it do not prevent them from giving back. The conception about education has become a norm and accepted part of African communities’ culture. Not only cultural meanings do restrict them to the mind but also influence conduct and actions as well as can reveal themselves through the organisation and regulation of social practices (Hall, 1997). For example, an interviewee mentioned that:

“I was often sending some monies home as when I was able to and buying things for the family usually on Christmas and also able to help my immediate sister get a summer education” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

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<sup>41</sup> John Mensah, former international of Ghana national senior team remarked. Weekend Globe and reported by ghanasoccernet.com (Accessed on 22/08/12).

The football player's regular remittance to the family is a norm in African settings because it is an obligation for the well do adults to support the cause of their family members. Broere and Van der Drift (1997) have explained the importance of remitting money home to their family for many African football migrants, even those who play for small European clubs. As African football migrants' remittance serves as a means of supporting families they leave behind (Darby, 2002:171). This practice is assumed to strengthen the family bonding as well as the intergenerational relationship (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014) which Whitehead et al (2007) also described as an intergenerational contract. This is not a legally binding agreement but rather culturally embedded in social norms and values (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014).

In a broader context, it is an assumption that the consequence of its violation not a crime but the person is seen as not respecting the norms and cultural values which may lead to societal rejection. It also shows non-conformity to societal norms and cultural values in the community. The same professional player further explained his motive for setting up some social projects out of sports in his locality as:

“My mother was a philanthropist and I feel very appreciative of all her efforts and life what she did for me and what I have today she was a major part, of course, my father did his able bit as well but my mother was everything to me and wants a better way to remember her. The football project is a way of me thanking God for what he has done in my life essentially is not so much about football but picking as many youngest off the street rather than does bad things they can use their talents to do the best they can be. In the football academy where we have 40 or 50 students, not all make it but we ensure that they start the academy and leave there well individual, even when you don't make it in football they might have learnt one or two things that will be beneficial to them in life they can take with them and become well individual. It is a way of giving back to the society. I mean every time, I go to see these boys, I always see myself in them, and I was like that when I was young but by the grace of God, I would have found myself at the other way. Without God's grace in my life, it would have been very difficult and for him to have helped me the more people *I can help the better for me*. Whatever God has given you to make sure you help others that they were like you before you started” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

The player's acknowledgement of the mother demonstrates how his closest with her and that is not a surprise in the context of African communities. This is because boys are more glued to their mothers than their fathers while girls exhibit the reverse by glueing to their fathers than their mothers. It is even observed in his projects that a trait of his mother social value has been replicated through his giving back action. This is seen in his projects, as he picks up children from the streets to develop their skills and talents to make those better individuals in the future.

The footballer's action also demonstrates a mixed of cultural norms and religion. His belief in God is brought to bear on his projects that are, the more he helps other people, and the better it would build his religious faith to improving his moral behaviours expected of them. This is a belief of the contemporary Protestants that was quite different from the 16th and 17th century's protestant concept that had a special tendency to develop economic rationalism (Weber, 1930, 1992) than building their faith.

African professional footballers plying their trade in leagues overseas attribute the opportunity to migrate as a result of the support and assistance of families, households and others in the community. This links them to their roots or where they come from by reinforcing their deep connections as they keep their relationships. In many of the African countries, it creates a sort of social bonding through the shared values and that can incite other African professional footballers to spread their projects across the continent. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that:

"My latest project is in Kenya, specifically in Nairobi where we opened training centre. As I said earlier, I am a child of Africa. I do not choose I have no preference. Whether Guinea, Gabon, Cameroon, I am a child of Africa, I feel good all over. Today is Guinea, tomorrow will be another country. Do not ask, do not look to see the devil everywhere. This is done naturally. And I hope God will give me long life to bring this project in most African countries" Eto'o (32yrs, 15yrs.exp: CAM [2013]).

Eto'o is one of the African richest footballers with a lot of history in professional football. He is Catholic and believes in the concept of helping others who are in need by spreading his projects across the continent as a child of Africa. These will go a long way to impact the social lives of the youths in those communities within the countries.

In African societies, many successful persons are culturally recognised according to the legacy they leave behind in their local communities. It determines how the society values those people by according them with respect and goodwill and this can also incite them to do more in the communities. On the Africa continent, this has become a norm and shared values in many of the communities. As they believe, it can challenge particularly the 'well to do' people within the localities to emulate the good examples of others. An example is this professional footballer who mentioned that:

"I want to build something like what Marcel Desailly had built- Sports Complex in Accra, Ghana but I want to do it with schools and stuff. Why? Because of the importance of education and extracurricular activities so if Ghanaian kids could have that opportunity since most of them, play sport because their parents couldn't afford for them to go to school. There are also those who go to school and don't get the chance to play football so if I could build something which is close to each other then, that will be good because once you finished training, you go and play football or after school you just go to training so it is right in front of you. That will actually help so, all the kids will not be involved in social vices" Ayarna (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The professional player has in mind that his project will affect the lives of the young ones and inculcate good social values to empower them for a better future. In the long run, it can also equip them with the necessary human capital for their future. He further explained that:

"I mean every human being should have some form of character in them to always want to help somebody who is in need but then, we have the *African culture*. if you have it everybody joins you unlike the Europeans everything is yours though some will help their family out when they are in a better position but most often European footballer signs a contract the dad says good luck, African player, you sign a contract this is not good luck now you have a responsibility to yourself, present family, friends, extended family,

former teammates, and others in the community, and I don't think any football player complains about that". Ayarna (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

He is actively playing in Europe having spent over 8years as a professional footballer, admitted that African professional players are aware of this '*African culture*' embedded in the shared values of the community. Simply, by assisting those in need because they are in a better position to support. Morally, he thinks that they cannot support everybody. But the few that they can, some will appreciate it, yet some won't and, it is just human nature. This is because they can't satisfy everybody in the society.

Marcel Desailly left his country of origin at pre-teen but reconnected to his roots through the mother constant reminder of his birthplace and family members. His mother imbued the shared values of his country of origin that helped him to maintain good relationships with his family members and extended family. At the end, he has established a multi-million dollar Sports project named after his late mother-Lizzy Sports Complex in Accra, Ghana, when he was nearly his retirement from active professional football. Marcel is the first Ghanaian-French professional player to have established such a magnificent sports complex in Ghana.

To Marcel, it represents a cultural symbolic for his children and the families aside from the job opportunities provided for them. T The transfer of the norms and shared values of his country of origin from the mother supported his reintegration through a regular visit, leading to the establishment of that magnificent sports complex in Ghana. On another side, it could demonstrate the mother's investment in his human capital by naming the artefact after her. He mentioned that:

"I have done it for my kids to be able to have something physically there to show their children what their grandfather has set for them in Africa. It will obligate them to come back once I'm dead, then my face and image stay through the project. They will be obligated to come back and coming back they will love the

country, they will love the culture, and is a very good transmission of who I was and what I have done” Marcel Desailly (45yrs, 19yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

The former 1998 World cup winner with the France national team made a decision to invest in this sports project based on two motives: that is, supporting his concepts to remain in the sports industry and also represents a symbolic meaning for future generations as well. With his mixed cultural backgrounds, he strictly adhered to what the mother told him, never to forget his country of origin or birthroot. Beyond that, his Ghanaian identity reflects in the sports project that also serves the community. The sports project is business driven and the same time for the shared values of his community of origin in Ghana.

Another professional player counts himself a lucky to have played in three (3) FIFA world cups and six (6) AFCON tournaments for the national senior team of Ghana. He is also the top scorer for Africa in the world cup history and one of the highest paid African professional footballers as at 2015. He mentioned that:

“My parents have done enough and this is the time I have to pay back to my parents” Asamoah Gyan (30yrs, 12yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

He simply wants his parents to acknowledge the fact that, it is time for him to also pay back by taking responsibility to manage the risk associated with their living and everything as they are ageing. Clearly, he appreciates the parental investment in his human capital for him to be financially successful professionally. Based on the norm and shared values, he has to reinvest in them by taking care of their livelihood that is a give back to his family members.

As previously noted, a player mentioned that it is an African culture for those professional footballers to assist other people in the community, because they are economically in a position to support and improve social lives of other people in the larger society.

The norms and shared values play a significant role as a social practice to support the

various cause of the family, households, extended family and others to improving their situations in the countries of origin. This shows that the norms and shared values have a tendency of influencing their economic actions through the transmission of their football-related revenues and other sporting resources concerning the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ to the communities of origin.

African professional footballers have a belief that, it is good to support others who don't have the means since someone helped them to be where they are now and, so, they cannot refuse not assisting others too. The norms and shared values are embedded in many African communities which are exhibited through the ‘give back phenomenon’ to people in the society. An interviewee shared his views on how he supported his former school. He mentioned that:

“You just giving back actually because there are a lot of people in your situation in the game and they have not gotten anywhere you are just one of the lucky few so, giving back is also good. It is like a gift from you to them. Like my secondary school I played, grew up and left, I also did a little project there which nobody saw it because am not this kind of person that does something and put it everywhere. There are a lot of things done hidden that nobody sees them, am not to put it on my pictures on facebook because the social network is not my life because I can’t put my life all about there for people to see. In my secondary school, I set up the classrooms, chairs, tables and I just did some renovations with the classrooms which I gave money for those works” Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

He is one of the professional footballers that prefer to do things on a quiet without blowing his horn out there. His action is seen as a norm particularly for former students of his alma mater in return for their contributions to his education and sports training. That is a form of value addition to his human capital through formal and informal training in the community. His ‘give back phenomenon’ was in reaction to the weak condition of the school and renovating it as a form of a norm for the well-to-do in the society support such projects in their communities.

Sometimes, supporting those projects can give a person social recognition and on another side, could be a way of promoting their popularity in the locales. Some African professional



footballers 'GBP' activities are to reciprocate the support they have enjoyed from their villages or towns they come from. By establishing such recognised social projects as a norm and sharing in their cultural values of that community. An interviewee mentioned that:

"My brothers and I have built a school in our hometown in Paga (Northern part of Ghana) for the education there to be improved. Because most of the kids there cannot afford school fees so, we have made it affordable to them. We have built 6 classrooms and every year, we try to give them something" Ayew Ibrahim (25yrs, 2yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

He is the 3rd son of Abedi Pele, and together with his two brothers both professional footballers decided to set up that project as a way to support the village kids have an improved education for a better future. Though they didn't attend school in their father's hometown but, they saw the need to build classrooms for the village kids there. Culturally, it symbolises the shared values of the village people, and that gives the Ayew's family a social recognition as well. Their 'GBP' through educational project has a valuable impact on the village people, and that can support development within the territory.

In addition, they provide them scholarships because they see education as an important tool that can support their future by making some becoming 'somebody' in the community (Langevang, 2008). Their choice of projects was influenced by the plight of the community kids upon their visits and, a line of action and economic behaviour as mutually generative of their father (DiMaggio, 1994).

Other African professional footballers provide the kind of projects to support the needs of their social relations or families or extended family as the cultural norm from those well to do people in the society. An interviewee explained that:

"Helping in paying school fees for some of them their kids, these are some of the ways I show my appreciation. There are other social institutions that I go to and give out something. I do it in the name of love, sometimes in the name of appreciation, you're being grateful for what somebody has done for you

and like the old adage say, you have to give back to the society. For example, sometimes you can buy some provisions (grocery items) for orphanage homes, donate sports kits to a school, former clubs and others, and in that sense, you are giving back to the society. There are a lot but in Europe, the mentality is different than in Africa. In Europe, a mere photograph, taking a photo with somebody the person is so appreciative of it. In Africa, is the other way round you have to give probably a pair of boot, jerseys and others because they don't really like photos but rather something substantial (tangible) like jersey, boots and stuff like that" Cofie (25yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

In African communities, most of the support and assistance must be tangible (material things) for the beneficiaries to appreciate it. So, it was not amazing for the player to admit that his support should culturally conform to their interests in material terms. He mentioned the difference in cultures of Africa and Europe in terms of giving back to the society. Thus, the 'give back phenomenon' represents different cultural meanings to different people around the globe. The same professional footballers went further by investing in the human capital of some kids from the extended family which is a norm and shared value in African settings among relatives.

Many African professional players tend to involve much in non-governmental organisations (NGO) by setting up charity foundations to support societal causes in their communities. This is an emerging trend influencing many African professional footballers' economic and non-economic behaviours which gradually becoming part of their norms and shared values in the locales. But, how effective are their charitable foundations' and philanthropic activities impacting the various communities in Africa will be interesting to find out what perspectives can describe their activities. This is essential since it provides them appropriate feedbacks on their social projects out of sports whether they are meeting the needs of their communities. A player mentioned that:

"Like I said the society has given a lot to me and you know in our country we have some conflict areas, ethnic fighting among some tribes, so I sat down and I thought about this and said football always bring people together, bring peace so I'll use football and education to teach the kids from 8-12 years Peace, Love, Discipline and Tolerance because when they are kids whatever you tell them they will pick up and

grow up with it. That is, what I'm trying to teach the kids because those words I have mentioned have helped me in my career and brought me far to this level and I think this is better and good to also share it with the kids" Paintsil (32yrs, 11yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

The player is transmitting some norms and shared values into the kids that can contribute to reducing social deviance in the future. At the same time, strengthens their sense of belongingness in the society while avoiding ethnic conflicts. His 'GBP' behaviour demonstrates a civic mission to the children in society. Other professional footballers have admitted that the norms and cultural values have molded them to become sensitive to societal needs. Those people can be identified as humanitarians using their fame and image for a good societal cause that helps to integrate people of different religious backgrounds with different cultures. An interviewee shared his social projects out of sports to the community as:

"In one way or the other, I have also been helped by these people. I built a HealthCare Center for mothers in Chorkor a suburb of Accra, Ghana for them to receive free medical attention. In the same locality, I had also built a community library. I have also created an annual StepApp Sports Day in the Chorkor locality with football activities where the best player is sent to Europe to do some trials with clubs" Appiah (33yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

This footballer also exhibits civic responsibility through his 'gave back' action to his grassroots locality. The player's economic behaviour was analytically towards supporting his former locality with cultural intentions that did not constrain the individual's untrammelled pursuit of self-interest (DiMaggio, 1994:28). Stephen acknowledged the immense contributions from the community people that supported him becoming financially successful professionally and therefore, sees no reason for neglecting them as well. Beyond that, his embeddedness in the former locality raises the role of shared collective understandings in shaping his social projects to the needs of the people (Zukin and DiMaggio, 1990). At the same time, the football player uses his networks with clubs abroad to support his Sport Day project in the locality.

A former Ghanaian international goal poacher for Leeds United and a household name in Germany mentioned that:

“I also have my own charity that I do for people. For instance, when I used to play active football on holidays in Ghana, after waking up from bed around 6 am I will see people queued (over 30 people) in front of my house to tell their problems (such as my mum is sick, medical bills, no money to buy medicine for their sick parents, children school fees, parents no food among others) for help and all I had to do was to provide them with money” Tony Yeboah (49yrs, 14yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

The football player realised that he has to support the people in need which are seen as a norm and shared value in the society. But, as to whether he can sustain this giving of money project all the time is also a matter of concern in the subsequent analysis. Looking at the various charitable foundations and philanthropic activities of many African professional footballers, they are, however, not under any obligation to legitimately ‘give back’ to the society rather feel obliged to impact lives of others as part of their norms and shared values in supporting people.

These projects in a way connect them to their roots or beginning communities where their street football kick started. Other professional footballers believe that supporting their village children is very important because they are their future leaders. For instance, a player mentioned that:

“We built many wells (borehole water) for people somewhere in the North. These are some of the things we have done, I and my children (Andre and Jordan). We built a school, some classrooms in our village, Nania in Upper East region and you see the names of Andre and Jordan on the schools’ wall. So, these are some of the things we have done but we don’t do them for people to see what we are doing. We are doing it because we believe that to educate other villagers, you come from that village and you have excelled, so there will be other Dede Ayew or Abedi Pele from that village. So, we need to engage them and these are some the things that we do” Abedi Pele (52yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

In line with their shared values, it deepens their connection with the village people through those projects particularly, on the issue of education that is, targeted at equipping several talents for development in the village. It also creates a strong social and cultural connection with

them as they are inspired by their image and social status locally and internationally in the football arena. He believes that establishment of the school for village people, it will provide them with an opportunity to have access to education and concurrently, can assist discover sporting talents of children through school games.

Also, it was through the same school system and, he got discovered and integrated into a community team. That made him believed the role of getting sporting talents from the schools' system.

Others identify their support as an inborn thing that can be related to their religion. An example is seen from this player who mentioned that:

“The wish is just God. It is an inborn thing in me not trying to show that, I have something. It is just trying to give back to the community because somehow other people helped you or the community that you grow up” Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

The role of religion and culture seems to dominate among African professional footballers. This inspires his beliefs and rekindles his faith as well. The player's action was inspired by his religious beliefs because he grew up in the same community where other people also supported him. The shared values of the community and his religious belief influenced his ‘GBP’ by supporting the needy people in the locale.

A thorough analysis of African professional footballers ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ determined by the norms and shared values provide them with the possibility to select the line of action in achieving their economic and non-economic activities to their communities (see Mead, by Doyle, E. McCarthy, 1984).

In sum, the norms and shared values of the society play a significant role in influencing the African professional footballers’ economic behaviour regarding the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ to the communities. The norms and shared values of the society are strongly

complemented by their religion that also affects 'GBP' action of African players to the communities.

It was realised that African professional footballers' shared values and norms are also embedded in their social relations and networks that facilitate their migration to the various leagues abroad. This opens a new section to understand how their social embeddedness influences the 'give back phenomenon' to their countries of origin.

### 4.5.3 ‘GPB’ AND SOCIAL EMBEDDEDNESS

African professional players started off from their communities playing street football at the early stages of their childhood. All the African professional players alluded to this fact during the interview sessions when they described how their football career began considering the different generational groups of talents at that time. The footballers accepted the challenge by exploring their surroundings for avenues that could support their football dream. African footballers’ interviewed admitted that like every African boy, they often start from street football in the locales, then to inter-street football competitions. At the same time, others also tried to combine football with schooling that might have helped them to progress alongside in their career. An interviewee mentioned that:

“It was when I got to the university that my football career actually kicks started. I was studying and playing for a local team at the time within the area. I was studying and a few years later, I got scouted by the national team and I started playing but I was bent on finishing my degree before leaving the country which I did, thank God” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

This shows the extent to which some African professional footballers were able to combine their passion for the game and schooling while participating in various community footballing activities<sup>42</sup>. It supported their integration through the various social groups that took part in those events within the communities. Through that, the football player became a member of his social group defining their social identity to them (Tajfel, 1978). One of the high-profile African professional players explained his beginning career from the locality as follows:

“I think I started approximately those days at the age of seven playing in a primary school. I was in a school called Dome Anglican primary. You know everybody saw that I was having a unique talent. Then within the primary school, somebody saw me playing he said let me take this boy to go and play for a

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<sup>42</sup> It involves football-related activities organised in the communities for the young people to have fun, get integrated and the same time developing their talents.

‘Colts’ team in Accra called Great Falcons. So, he picked me up but it was a long way from Dome village to Circle area to play football for a 10- year-old boy taking buses to Nsawam, Ghana. So, that was what I was doing. Most times when I get back home, it was late around 8 pm. And those days, there were no street lights so, it was dark and also it was a very difficult moment to get back home around 8 or 9 pm. My parents were asleep and you know my mum will just put a small bowl of food around my bed where I sleep. With the challenges but it was fun. It wasn’t something really difficult in my life that you didn’t like what you were doing. I was enjoying it and having fun” Abedi Pele (52yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The former Ghanaian international footballer with a lot of laurels was picked up from his local community to a juvenile team far from his place of residence. This is because there was no football team in his locale. It means without the support of the community his talent could have gone wasted. The fact that, he was taken to another locality to be developed, nurtured and refined by improving on his talent was a social support for him. A player also shared his experience on how he started to play football in the streets. He mentioned:

“Usually, we all started about age 7 or 8, going around in our youth teams as school boys playing against people from another area, neighbourhood football. It accumulated into inter-street football, then to inter-state football, if you are good enough to make the grade and gradually we grew up like that” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

The community football provided them with an opportunity to practice and expose their talents. It promoted their social groups' integration within the locales as they had leisure alongside. This further deepens their social identity. In this context, the football activities play a social role for the young people to have fun and improve on their talents. The community support provided for the footballer has a possibility to influence his economic behaviour. That is to say, through his social integration he had the opportunity to interact and make new friends as they practice football together. By this action, he feels embedded in a set of relationships with others whose choices can influence his own interest (Granovettter, 1985). It shows that when professional footballers emerge from such community, they are already aware of some challenges the youths face in those environments. That alone can also affect their economic



behaviour in terms of the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ to the community.

An interviewee mentioned the strong relationship he has with his village people and that always facilitate his easy reintegration. Even as a professional footballer, he still lives with them the same way he used to before getting that opportunity to play abroad. He said:

“There was this radio station called ‘Akwaaba FM’ and that is where my dad and everyone listen. So, there were few times they called me on the phone and told me to speak on air. That’s where people realised, is it not that boy who lives here, that he mum sell things, dad is this, and they went to our house to ask my parents, is that your son we heard on that radio, is that he and they replied yes, village people were surprised. After they asked me, what you want to tell them (community), I want them to continue and support me with their prayers. My parents were happy as well when they heard my voice on the local radio. First of all, I didn’t want to talk on the radio because I wanted to take everything cool first but later, it was like, I wanted my parents to hear my voice on the radio to know exactly what am doing now. And back in the village, anytime, I visit I have big respect but I still hang out with my old friends in the village, eat the same food as them, drink the same water from the stream as them, and I don’t think am different or that, so I do everything with them. And for this, my parents are happy with that” Yaw Yeboah (19yrs, 2yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The professional player appreciated the opportunity provided him to speak on the radio and displayed his social and cultural embeddedness by acknowledging the support enjoyed so far from his village people. His deep connection has created a strong tie between them. This may play a role in affecting the decision he makes to the village people in his social environment of abode. Beyond that, his networks of social interaction have the tendency of influencing his economic behaviour that is completely embedded in his social relations with the village people (Granovetter, 1985).

Another professional player narrated immense contributions he received from the community people that helped him to become successful professionally and financially and therefore see no reason for neglecting them as well. He mentioned that:

“I always see myself as a humanitarian and not just doing something for my community alone. I remember after the FIFA World cup in Germany 2006, I was just walking around the locale where I grew up (Chorkor in the capital of Accra close to the sea) and said to myself these people have supported me a lot or done a lot for me with their prayers and all that, so I have to give something back to them” Appiah (33yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

The former Ghanaian international is noted for his exemplary leadership qualities with the national senior team and his deep connection with the country people. He is loved by all and sundry in Ghana despite that he used football as a means to escape from poverty. He also reiterated that without the fans and our people we are nobody, so for them coming to the stadium, paying to come and watch us play, they pay money to come and shout and we are just on the pitch to entertain them, I think that we always have to give something back to the community or the society. Everyone is trying to do his best in our small world we always have to give something back to the society for their support and assistance. The player’s action tends to reflect what the country has given him and that makes him dedicated to giving back to the community.

It is no wonder that professional footballers’ social connection with the community people also influences some of their wives to contribute in the decision making concerning the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’. It is noted here, as the wife suggested to the husband and he mentioned that:

“My wife told me that after my football career we were coming to live in Ghana. So, we have to invest here and out of which the people who come queueing can also get a job to do and earn money. The investment should also provide the people with the chance to get a job and same time enjoy. Because *you can give today but you can’t give always*. With this idea, we started to build hotels first in the city of Accra, Kumasi, and we had wanted to spread out to other cities but the conditions weren’t favourable for us. This will ensure that the people who come and ask for money, we can direct them there to go and work and earn something. Especially, menial job that some of them can do to earn a regular income” Tony Yeboah (49yrs, 14yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

The player's wife influenced his decision to channel giving out of money every day into projects that can help generate employment for those people in need since the gesture wasn't sustainable. This development could be related to his wife earlier intention of living in their country of origin and therefore factored that into their investment plans back home. Analysis of their situation revealed that it was a rational decision and the same time, providing social enterprise service by creating employment opportunities for people in the community. This was to ensure their investments sustainability so that the people can continue to have regular earnings than been idle.

Others professional footballers are made ambassadors for their social embeddedness and values that connect them to the larger society. For instance, Jay Jay Okocha is an ambassador for SOS Children's villages where he often talks to the kids and gives them some assistance and support (see Orr, 2007). But when he was asked, what makes him take part in charity matches, he said:

"It's an opportunity for us footballers, who've enjoyed all the advantages life has to offer, to give something back to people in need. It's a great and beautiful initiative" (Okocha, 2015)<sup>43</sup>

Okocha appreciates the important role of their people in the social environments and loves to support such activities so far as it impacts on the needy in the society. Other professional footballers continue to refer to their local communities for their support in various ways. It is to strengthen their social relationships and this can also influence their decisions. For example, a footballer mentioned that:

"When I returned to Ghana, I felt the warm welcome from all my people. They are people who really trust me, push me, and want me to get to the highest level. I have been in the national team since I was 17 years old, so, all of the Ghanaian people have seen me grow up as a person and as a player. They wanted me to

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<sup>43</sup> [http://www.fifa.com/world-match-centre/news/newsid/259429/9/index.html?cid=newsletter\\_en\\_20150430\\_interview](http://www.fifa.com/world-match-centre/news/newsid/259429/9/index.html?cid=newsletter_en_20150430_interview) (accessed on 30/04/2015)

go to the Premier League and although I took this decision also for myself, I took it for a lot of people in my country because they wanted me to be here” (Dede Ayew, born in 1989)<sup>44</sup>.

He captained the national U20 team that won a first gold medal for Ghana and Africa at the FIFA world U20 cup in 2009. He is an active member of the Ghana national senior team and the second born of Abedi Pele. His decision for moving from French league to the English premiership, some extent was influenced by many people in his country of origin. This is due to the social deep connection with them and as such, recognises their views as an important part of his decision, showing the cultural meanings to his action.

The social and cultural embeddedness of the professional footballers is seen through their social contributions and support to the communities. This is outlined in the publication of goal.com<sup>45</sup> as they mentioned the various social projects of some high-profile African footballers, yet others are not made public. Some examples of their social activities to the people community are explained below:

i). *Michael Essien (Ghana)*: He has a soft spot for the less fortunate in society. He has set up the Michael Essien Foundation to raise funds to give the underprivileged of his hometown access to basic amenities like health care equipment, libraries and public toilets, and clean drinking water. He is also involved in several charity works including the ‘Reading Goals’ to inculcate reading habits in students.

ii). *Didier Drogba (Ivory Coast)*: For many Africans, he brings back home a lot of joy. He is seen as an epitome of peace in his West African country. He is a demigod to many. Drogba has promised to donate all his endorsement earnings to charity. He kicks started the effort with the

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<sup>44</sup> This took place when he changed club. <http://www.swanseacity.net/news/article/swansea-city-andre-ayew-ghana-2545061.aspx> (accessed on 15/07/2015)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.goal.com/en/news>. (accessed on 19/05/2015)

\$5 million he received from Pepsi. The money will be used to build a hospital and orphanage in the Ivorian capital of Abidjan. He has used his influence to stop five years of continuous conflict in Ivory Coast. He has fulfilled part of his promise of building five hospitals in selected towns in Ivory Coast. For example, he has built the first hospital in a district in the capital of Abidjan called Attécoubé in 2015. His hospital project focuses on medical care and treatment for less fortunate who cannot afford more expensive healthcare. The other four hospitals are still under construction in other cities<sup>46</sup>.

iii). *John Utaka(Nigeria)*: He has launched the John Utaka Foundation to empower Nigerian youths at the grassroots level. He would be providing scholarships with the help of the Central Bank of Nigeria. *I believe that giving back to the society is essential because I was in the system before I travelled abroad where I started playing my professional football*, he recalled when unveiling the foundation.

iv). *Aaron Mokoena (South Africa)*: The former South African captain is known for his human qualities above his football skills, and has done a great deal for various charities and foundations, as well as setting up his own foundation in South Africa. He is also one of the major personalities involved with the 1Goal initiative and is often seen giving his time to those less fortunate, and children in particular.

v). *Samuel Eto'o (Cameroun)*: He carries out many societal activities as his social responsibilities. The Cameroonian is involved with many causes. He has set up several scholarship programmes donated ambulances and has been involved with the building of hospitals and setting up football academies. Besides, he has been involved in several charity games in aid of the poor in many African countries and beyond.

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<sup>46</sup> <http://fusion.net/story/117997/dider-drogba-hospitals/> (Accessed on 10/04/2015).

vi). *Mohamed Aboutrika (Egypt)*: He has participated in several charities and humanitarian work. He joined UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors plus 40 international football stars in 2005 for a 'Match Against Poverty' in Germany to raise funds. He volunteered to appear in a World Food Programme 30-second public service announcement in which he drew attention to the tragic fact that 25,000 people die from hunger every day, 18,000 of them children. He is a WFP Ambassador Against Hunger. He has appeared in some PSAs for free for a worthy cause back home in Egypt.

vii). *John Paintsil (Ghana)*: The former Black Stars defender has set up the Paintsil Peace Kids Project geared towards promoting the interest of children. The Foundation is to inculcate the values of respect and guide young children towards the path of success. It would hold football clinics to impart these values to the children. The Fulham defender donated \$20,000 for football competition in his hometown Berekum in the Brong Ahafo region.

viii). *Nwankwo Kanu (Nigeria)*: As one of the most decorated African footballers, the Nigerian icon is arguably almost as famous for his philanthropic work. He has the Kanu Heart Foundation. Inspired by his own brush with death due to a heart defect, the striker - who is also a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF - has arranged for over 1,000 children to travel abroad for life-saving surgery.

ix). *Stephen Appiah(Ghana)*: The humble and inspirational former Ghanaian captain of the Black Stars has established StepApp - his own self-designed clothing range - some few years back. All proceeds are channelled into his StepApp foundation, a charity that works towards providing health insurance and medical facilities in some deprived areas in Ghana. He is also active with the UN children's fund UNICEF to promote education in Africa.

x). *Joseph Yobo (Nigeria)*: The Everton centre-half has through his Joseph Yobo Charity Foundation handed out over 300 educational scholarships to the poor ranging from primary school to university. He has also established a football academy in the country's Ogoni region. He spends much of his summer breaks doing charitable work.

All these sons of African footballers might have done those social projects out of sports and with sports in support of their communities. This displays their social and cultural connection with the larger society as they reciprocate their contributions through the giving something back to the locality with their various social projects. The general backgrounds of these professional players' social conscience better our understanding of the many of their social projects that may be independent of any social forces but, as a result of their deep connection to the local communities. That is, their economic actions are influenced by the social relations within the communities of which they are part and embedded (Granovetter, 1985).

Another interviewee shared his experience of his social connection with the locales where he was developed as a footballer. He said:

"I never forgot the friends anytime I return to the community. Even the team that, I played for when I go back home. I always go and visit the people because our situation in Zambia may be different in other African countries. Everywhere you go as known professional player to have a drink at somewhere and there are 100 people there, they will want you to buy them things like that but, I don't see it as helping someone by doing that. There are those people, who you say these are my friends, they tell you their problems and in any way that you can help them. But what I have done to all the clubs I played in Zambia, I always buy them football equipment all the two teams I played for every time, If I have to the capacity to do that but sometimes give them shirts, etc. It is like giving back to them whatever they have contributed to your career because without them I wasn't going to be discovered or become who I am now. It feels good when you give something and you don't expect something in return, and some people will say thanks which make me feel blessed. I'll just give and forget and if somebody says thank you I feel good and my mission is accomplished. This is part of my values in life. The main important one is just to help not in terms of material things but sometimes to pay visits them by making somebody smile. You know with some people

just been around them you talk with them they will feel privileged and important as well, so I do that more often” Chivuta (32yrs, 14yrs.exp: ZAB [2016]).

This demonstrates his deep connection with the local people by identifying some of their needs particularly, the grassroots teams, he played and supported them accordingly. It strengthens his social relationships with the teams and paying individual visits is culturally embedded. Beyond that, his social relations with the community people can have an influence concerning his economic action to the 'give back phenomenon' in support of them.

Others show their social connections with the family, friends and teammates through their cultural beliefs. An interviewee mentioned that:

“My experience back home in my country and Europe. If you're not smart you will end up living a poor life after football because here in Europe what I've learned is, if you are 18 years and let say you earn £1,000 from your contract all is yours and you don't share with anybody. But in Ghana, they watched you grow so you have to watch them grow too. I think, is a bit complicated, knowing too well, that you'll also one day have a family which the money you have now, you will spend on them and your extended family too. I think, is a responsibility for me but, it also depends on how you relate to your family. It shouldn't be a problem because there is a saying that always family first and for you to keep going, you always have to show your love to your family, friends, people around you or anybody who has helped you in one way or another but it shouldn't be about only your family. I'll go into a biblical saying that, *there is more blessing in giving than receiving, which I strongly believe in that quotation and it has really helped me*. I believe when I give out, I'll get in abundance so, I don't think twice that is if I have” Gadze (22yrs, 2yrs. exp: GHA [2016]).

The player recognised the contributions of other people apart from his family and the extended family which supported him get to this far with his football career. He also believes in his religion principle of giving out to others so that he receives more blessing in return. This action has socially connected him with the people in the communities. Therefore, he acknowledges the need to provide support for his family, extended family and others from the local community. It clearly shows that the family and other people have been supportive of his professional career abroad.



His religious belief influences the vision and ‘GBP’ in terms of the economic behaviour that is, shown in his social relationship with them. He is still young without his own family and the same time, in the process of learning from others to building his future. Beyond that, professional footballers identify the important role of social relations in getting the opportunity that is, crucial for African talents to realise their dream of professional football dream abroad. Their social embeddedness in the community has changed their conditions for the better and using that platform to create an enabling environment for others to be identified and supported for their turnaround in the village. At the same time, serving as an incentive and a model for the young ones to emulate in the locale that there is still hope for them. Yaw Yeboah shared his experience on that:

“I understand the fact that ‘giving back’ is not actually about money, it can be anything that changes one’s situation which can be advice that will help the person. I mean when in Ghana, I still stay with my old friends I knew. I don’t have many friends because I came from a small village and staying in Accra, is not something I do. When back in the village, I go out with my friends to chill a little with them. Sometimes, I organise tournaments in the town with prizes at stake for the winners and all the participating teams. I just want them to feel that everyone has the opportunity to be what they want to be in future if only you are determined and ready to work hard as you want to be at the top. If I organise the tournaments in the village, I join them to play because I feel the same as them just that I had the opportunity and I took it. When I come and organise this tournament, I join them in playing for those who are talented or good to know that they even play similar like Yeboah, how come Yeboah is there and am not. That means there is something I have to do. By working hard to be able to get there and do more than him. I do this for my friends and village people to be happy and they feel happy when playing with me and I’m also proud when playing with them. I don’t try to be reserved but I mingle with them as I used to do when I was a kid. I’m still young and can do so many things, but as at now the little I can, I will do to help them. When I talk about giving back, I’m actually talking about my friends, community and nation or country. For instance, going to play football with them as an organiser of the tournament, I’m essentially giving back as well. Like you don’t know if someone is learning something from you and I’m also learning something from them, and I don’t think am better than someone or someone is better than me. Everybody has got a different style that makes him unique. The fact that, I’m here in Europe, I still want to achieve the goal I had set for my future” Yaw Yeboah (19yrs, 2yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The professional player continues to show his established close relationship with the social group in the village. This depicts a positive cultural embeddedness since their young days. He believes in the concept of opportunity for each and everyone but, it takes hard work and dedication to get there. While he displays a strong social bonding with his peers through the various activities and on another hand, trying projecting himself as a role model to them that their time will come one day. This reflects his level of maturity at age 19 but it will be interesting following up on those African professional footballers below 20years and compare their social behaviours after 5 years stay in Europe, and evaluate their choices to see what would have changed.

Another interviewee narrated how he conceived an idea of giving something back to his alma mater for their support and keeping the connection with them. He mentioned that:

“About 5 months ago, I told everybody about this Astroturf (synthetic pitch) project. It came to my mind when I came for a visit at the school and I just said it to the students that I’m here to do the Astro turf for the school. That is, to give back to the school and I think giving back is a good thing, and I’m not the only person who has given back to the school. But this project will be an example for my fellow students, who are coming up and I’m sure they won’t let the school down” Asamoah (30yrs, 12yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

Social projects in sports from the professional footballer could signify returning something to his former school for their support in developing his football talent and also serve as an example for other students when they have completed and gainfully employed. Considering the popularity of the player locally and internationally, it could be a face-saving and a way of promoting his fame in the eyes of the larger society. The football player’s action is influenced by the old students’ association culture of supporting their former school through various projects. It will also help to sustain a good relationship with the school as well as become generative for the present students.

Other professional footballers also testified the kind of respect, love and support they

have gained from the local communities which sometimes financial means cannot compensate for them. Their embeddedness in the community has gained them those societal values that reinforce their relationships. An interviewee mentioned that:

“That is my favourite community, they’ve always shown me love, support and every time I go home. Everybody was supportive because I wasn’t that kind of a person who causes troubles, so even before I travelled since I was a kid I have never had any problem with them and then I moved to Europe. They have always shown me, love, since I was young because it was all about football and wasn’t interested in anything else. For now, there are 3 or 4 amateur teams that I used to take footballs, jerseys and other equipment and I go give to them because it is not easy for them to get those things. That is, the little that I could do and train with them so that I could also inspire those young ones. This is for the short term, while the long-term is to build something that is going to be there to help kids, the present and those who are going to be born and is a great feeling actually” Ayarna (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA[2016]).

The footballer’s social embeddedness with the community is displayed here, as he recounts his youthful experiences that might have culturally shaped his values and football career. This established social relationship and unflinching support received have gone to influence his short and long-terms plans for the community.

A cursory look at the various social and economic projects of African professional footballers in their communities, tend to have different perspectives. However, the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ has been central to their social behaviours and approaches regarding their different activities undertaken in the locales. It is all towards a common purpose that is supporting their communities through the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’.

African professional footballers’ social and cultural connection is also observed through the cultural transfers experiences abroad to their countries of origin through the form of giving something back to the game. That includes the acquisition of new languages, culture and social remittance, and enhanced technical abilities (Williams, 2014) that are shown in the ‘Give Back

Phenomenon' through their various projects. An example is seen from this former footballer who mentioned that:

"Football gave me something so I decided to give back as I said education was a problem for me and I have learnt a lot as a professional footballer. As a footballer, I had been through the hands of many coaches which I have learnt a lot from them as well. And I don't think I can't give it back I have to give it back that is, why I've set up this football academy to give back whatever I have learnt for over 20 years as professional footballer" Nii Lamptey (41yrs, 17yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

Through his economic and social projects, he is transferring the acquired knowledge and skills from the professional experiences abroad to bear on the young kids that want to take football as a professional in the community. Another interviewee shared his experience by transmitting through his social project. He mentioned that:

"I have projects that are related to football because I think, you cannot do anything in life, you cannot see a doctor becoming a trainer, and trainer becoming a professor and vice versa. I'm not a generalist, I think my life was dedicated to football. I can say I was born with football in my hands and grew with football in Cameroun, which is Africa. And because of football, I meet the world by travelling around the world and I make a lot of friends around the world. Football was not just to collect money and for me, I want to remain in football world with education to give another philosophy in Africa since 10 or 15 years ago with this phenomenal of football academies in Africa. Everybody wants to set up football academy for the purpose of money, just for the purpose of money using children for money. But these football academies don't do it for the benefits of these children education, for their health, for the purpose of youth development, is just for the purpose of themselves. I think this philosophy, we have to change. What about in our countries if everybody set up academy just to send players abroad may be 20years to come Africa will be a wizard nobody will be left there because all the youth will go abroad. So, I think is a dangerous problem, a dangerous phenomenon of these football academies philosophy. This philosophy of today's football academies in Africa, everybody wants money, money, what to do with money, and what about the development of the community, the well-being of the people. We have a lot of issues in Africa like gender equality, the building of the community, promoting peace, health, education among others. And in sport, football in particularly where we are excellent, Africans are very excellent there, we have some of the big star players in the world are Africans. So, in Africa, we have to use this powerful tool to develop our communities, educate our children, unite the people, and solve social issues which are very important. That is, why I still have to remain in football because it is very important for me. Football helped me to have a good life, so I trust football and the power of football to change the lives of many people. I wasn't born into

the richest family in Cameroun but with football, I can say I have a good life, I met people, and that is why am convinced that with Foot Solidaire, we have a lot of things to do so that we can achieve our goals. That makes my projects related to football and education for instance, we were in Cameroun to set up a Youth Football, in Senegal we have opened an information centre for young players, and we also have collaboration with football academies and schools. I know the power of football which can change a lot of lives in Africa. Football is one of the powerful tools you can use sport for development in the community, for education and so many other things” Mbvoumin (42yrs, 11yrs.exp: CAM [2015]).

The former Cameroonian international believes that his professional and lived experiences abroad can help support the cause of the larger society. By advocating for Africans particularly, professional footballers to identify the need to using football as a powerful tool in solving some social issues on the continent than focusing too much on the financial rewards from the game. Since this can be disastrous for the young generation future in the Africa continent. To him, the football as a tool can promote social development, education and many other things. This has informed his action by establishing the Foot Solidaire (AFC) project to giving back to the community. His project seeks to engender and protect the youths that are being lured into illegal migration abroad through football. Socially, he is getting closer to the grassroots level so that through his integration and deep connection with them this issue of football human trafficking (Esson, 2015) in African can be minimised. But, he is conceived that football can change a lot of lives in Africa.

Some African footballers admitted the fact that through their social integration with the communities, it supported their career progress leading them to achieving high status through football. With this, an interviewee mentioned how he is developing talents to make them self-sustenance. He said:

“Football has given me everything, money, fame, and has influence in society. So if it has given me all these, is just good and nice that I should also give back that is, why I created FC Nania in Ghana, so that other less fortunate child who have got talents we let them go to the school or academy. A lot of them have gone outside playing professional football out of Ghana borders. With that kind of mental attitude like I

said before *don't give them the fish to eat but show them how to fish*, i.e. show them how to play football don't always give them 10 or 20ghc they will spend it, and is finished but show them how to play so that they can continue or take on, and also able take care of their families and that is the best way" Abedi Pele (52yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

Abedi Pele accepted that football has changed his life and without the contributions of the social environment, he could not have achieved this high status with the game. However, he thinks that it should be used to provide support for the unfortunate ones with talents by making them becoming self-reliant. This approach can help the youths to also cater for themselves and their families, and also able to support others in the society. It again shows how some professional footballers are transferring their lived experiences, technical acumen and other sporting capital to the young ones that can impact positively on the larger society.

The cultural embeddedness of many African footballers is demonstrated through their religion. For instance, the protestant ascribed to their religious belief that "*the more you give to the needy or disadvantaged people the more you receive from your creator*". Professional players' integration with their communities provides them with an opportunity to interact and identify some of their issues. Through that others provide support as a means of commitment to their religious belief. A former footballer mentioned, giving something to others is a commitment between his creator and himself. Thus, he does things to please his creator than people. He stated that:

"Sometimes if I'm driving and see a woman carrying sachets of water with a baby at her back and may be the total costs of what she may be selling, say less than 20\$ why don't I pay for the everything she is carrying so that she can leave the street and go home to take good care of her child. These things always touch me" Akonnor (41yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

His action was influenced by his religious belief by providing the support from its own resources. Another football player mentioned that his support to the community is seen as a religious obligation. He stated that:

“I see it as my religious obligation to help the poor and needy in the society because I didn’t get to where I am today without the society-family, friends, clubs, relatives and others” (Chibsah, 2015)<sup>47</sup>.

He is a Moslem and believes in almsgiving to the needy. The wealthier people are mandated by their religion to always support the needy in the society. The almsgiving action is an obligation that those well-off owe to the needy since their wealth is seen as a “*trust from God's bounty*”<sup>48</sup>. Their kind of almsgiving is as opposed to voluntary charity. His support to the people in the community is seen as a religious obligation and also keeps his social relationship with them.

A former Ghanaian international footballer with over 15 years of professional experience in Europe through his social integration with the community people provided them a plot of land to construct a church building. He mentioned that:

“I didn’t build the church but I gave them the land and all of us the church members contributed to putting up the structure. After giving my land, I still contributed financially so, were other members of the church. That is, where they were worshipping before they were been sacked from the place and I had a land somewhere that I wasn’t ready to use so, I gave it out to the church” Ahinful (41yrs, 15yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

He further explained his indebtedness to the society and the drive for his action. That is, “*I feel that, it is my obligation to help the society in my own small way*”. This is part of his giving back to the society. His obligation connotes the culture embeddedness as a result of his deep

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<sup>47</sup> Yussif Chibsah (born in 1983) former Ghanaian international footballer in Europe. Interview took place on 14/03/2015.

<sup>48</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam#Concept\\_of\\_God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam#Concept_of_God).

connection with the members of the church. He supported his ‘GBP’ action as based on the religious. He mentioned that:

“If I help somebody I don’t need to brag about it, just hope that God himself up there knowing that, you have helped that person wholeheartedly without any benefit. Then God himself will reward you. So, we’ve helped but not something one wants to dwell on and then talk about it” Ahinful (41yrs, 15yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

The football player’s action connotes Protestant characteristics of giving to support fellow Christians by showing them love in anticipation of his reward from God, that is, purely religious. Indeed, cultural meanings do not restrict themselves to the mind they also influence conduct and reveal themselves through the organisation and regulation of social practices (Hall, 1997). For instance, an interviewee shared his experience as:

“I’m somebody who helps a lot even If I don’t know you but, so far as you need help and I can provide for you, why not. Because I realised that it was an opportunity I have had since there are people who are talented than me but, it is the favour of God that I have reached that height. So, I shouldn’t be stingy (mean) to other people who don’t have. So, I try also to help my friends and others whatever they need if I can provide them” Annan (30yrs, 9yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The football player’s support to other people is seen as solidarity due to the cultural and social connections that provide the underlying meaning to his ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ to the community. His support also reflects the opportunity he had since there were better talents than him, yet the favour of God manifested in his direction. It also demonstrates that his actions are imbued in the religious belief that influences his vision. He is from a Protestant background and therefore believes in giving to those who need assistance and support. The same footballer elaborated the benefit he has also enjoyed from his integration with the community. He said:

“The investments are for my pension in the sense that, I didn’t learn any other occupation apart from football. Also, I’ve my family and after my career, I can’t go begging people for support. Simply, it is for my family’s future. I had advice from people in terms of my choice of investments in establishing schools,



hostels, or investing in properties though there were other plans but for now, it is to help the future of my kids and family” Annan (30yrs, 9yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

Through his social relations with the community people, he got advice on investment opportunities which influenced some of his projects undertaken in the locale. The GBP is observed with the projects, on one hand, to sustaining his family’s future and on another hand, providing employment opportunities for the locale people. This again shows his deep connection with the people through those investment activities in the community.

All in all, professional footballers’ social relations and networks are situated in the integration of the institutionalised networks with the community people that plays a significant role in affecting their ‘Give Back Phenomenon’. This was observed through the rationalities behind their action to the larger society. African professional footballers’ social relationships with people in the locales are also, observed as they mobilise their integration of the institutionalised networks in facilitating the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ action to the communities. The next section provides details on how professional footballers ‘GBP’ behaviours are influenced by their institutionalised networks.

#### 4.5.4 ‘GBP’ AND THE INSTITUTIONALISED NETWORK

The international transfer market is relatively a larger part of the football industry. In the football labour market, the focus is on international footballers’ mobility brokered by agents or sports agencies. They form part of the intermediaries that also rely on their personal relationships, scouting networks, club officials, social relations, and networks. The agents act as the *cling* because they hold the football market together by managing confidential information on potential openings and negotiations process, and also leveraging their social networks with other agents, and club officials (Poli et al, 2012). The agents do not work in isolation but sometimes through their intermediaries called social networks (scouts, other agents, club officials) and personal relationships with clubs.

Football has seen a growing pattern in the attraction of international footballers with the abled support of intermediaries. The involvement of those intermediaries’ forms institutionalised networks to facilitate the migration of African talents to leagues abroad. At the same, we cannot rule out the involvement of families, relatives, extended families, and more distant relations in the migration of talents from Africa to Europe. The majority of African footballers interviewed admitted that their transfers abroad were brokered by their respective networks comprising agents with a few from club officials, and self-initiatives. An example is seen here with an interviewee through his self-initiative approach after he has been contacted by the local manager<sup>49</sup> from a neighbouring country. He said:

“I think through that competition and Anderlecht SC (Belgium), spotted me and they wanted me but they did not know how to contact me. At that time, the late Stephen Keshi was with RSC Anderlecht, so they contacted him to try and get me because Nigeria is the closest Anglophone country to Ghana making it easier to contact him. The club told Stephen Keshi, to look for me. So, he informed his local manager in

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<sup>49</sup> In the African context, they are representative of individual players that they assumed to providing them with the necessary support for their talent development both on-and-outside the pitch.

Nigeria to come and look for me in Ghana. This local manager came to Ghana and delivered the news to me” Nii Odartey Lamptey (41yrs, 17yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

The Anderlecht club used their player, Stephen Keshi as a link to get to Lamptey who was then a member of the Ghana national U16 team in 1989. He was destined as the best young player in the world between 1989 and 1992, but his failure to produce on a consistent level was a consequence of the fact that he ‘*was treated like a piece of meat*’ by a range of representatives (see Darby,2010). This shows his lack of basic education caused him a great deal particularly, signing of contracts with football agents (see Acheampong et al, 2017)<sup>50</sup>. That is, why African communities have a strong attachment to education as an important ingredient for their children social success in the future.

During the early 1990s, FIFA regulations on international transfers were a bit relaxed concerning minors. Around the same period, the migration of football talents intensified after some teams from African countries performed well with their talents displays at the various FIFA world youth competitions. This development takes into account the role of intermediaries that are situated in the institutionalised networks. Since the importance of networks and social relations form an integral part of the footballers' migratory itineraries to leagues abroad.

Thus, African footballers' migratory itineraries are embedded in the institutionalised networks. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that:

“I had then cancelled my contract with the club. Then I spoke to a friend in a Turkey with a football club. He also informed his coach that I was a free agent and upon that I was invited to a trial with their team and later on, they signed me and the rest became history” Ahinful (41yrs, 15yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

Aside from the legalised football agent networks, social relations of players can act as recruitment referral (Agergaard and Tiesler, 2014) using their informal network and mobility

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<sup>50</sup> Accepted for publication in idrottsforum.org (June, 2017)

within the leagues to their advantages. The football player used this to his advantage as he was able to secure a place in the club. All the necessary procedures governing international players' transfers were evoked to facilitate his license and permit to continue his career there. Another professional footballer shared how got to Europe as:

“Actually, before Austria I went to Greece, it was also through somebody (some Nigerian who had been there for a long time) for some months to try and see if they can fix me a club so, he can make some money. Finally, they arranged for me a trial with Thessaloniki FC, it went well anyway” Sam (41yrs, 14yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

The professional footballer used his social relations and networks as it was a win-win situation that facilitated his migration to the country's league. Indeed, the migration of African players to Europe is often associated with social relations, close families and networks of agents, club officials, and the 'so-called local' managers in the African context. An interviewee explained how he got to Italy through his local manager. He said:

“So when they came and organised a game for us to play and Techie (my local manager) now invited me again. As he has been promising me and said come, and play. I went, played, and scored the only goal that we used in defeating the other team. Because we were a selected players and I was the youngest and smallest among them. I was the only one that Techie was managing and the youngest of all, aside from professional players and others. I performed so well and the video was taken to Italy. That was when they asked for me. It was between my local manager and the Italian club scout” Ikpe (37yrs, 18yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

The local manager acted as a link between the football player and the foreign scout and later on, he was offered a four-year contract. After signing his first professional contract in Italy, he said:

“It was the most important moment of my life, and I knew that it was the beginning of my career. Because not hearing that I wasn't going back to Nigeria but I have made it and they had offered a contract what else will be more greater than that for a boy that has gone through hardships, hot times, and was hoping and dreaming every day and finally, a contract has been given to me. I didn't care how much was the money even though it was so small but the moment I have the platform to exhibit my abilities, skills and potentials that were fit for me” Ikpe (37yrs, 18yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Through his local manager's network, the football player had an opportunity to showcase his talent abroad and interestingly enough, he ordered the local manager to take his first contract money, and make sure that he sort out his family. This was his statement:

"I just told my agent to take the money, go and give mine to my father and sister I don't need anything here. Take it, make sure you remove my father and sister from the one bedroom we were living in and take them out of that '*den neighbourhood*' and give him enough money in his hands so, he can get into a business and have a life. I said to him send all because am fine here, I'll survive with my salary".

The used of the '*den neighbourhood*' refers to the way some of the people in the locale perceived him as *bad boy* because of football. They were against his football career though he didn't like it nor happy neither. But, he later realised that people do things out of ignorance, yet he visits and gives them foodstuff, money and they were shocked and amazed. His action of giving something back to the people in the neighbourhood also shows his social relations and getting reintegrated as well.

On another hand, the people in the neighbourhood attitude towards his football development might have challenged him to achieve his professional footballer status abroad. This can also form part of his 'GBP' action to the neighbourhood.

There are instances, the upcoming African professional footballers recognise those ahead of them in the professional as '*senior colleagues*' which some eventually, become their mentors or role models. When they happened to play with the same club abroad, they serve as advisors in various ways to the young ones with the same national or continental identity. For instance, Mike Alozie shared his experience as:

"As he told me, Mike, it no be now, na later you go know when we finish football so, don't let anybody they know anything, just make them think say you no get them, make them see em, then them eyes go make clear when we finish football then we come relax"

The professional footballer played with his senior colleague on the same and this strengthened their social relationship. Through that relationship, he learnt a lot of things from his senior football player both on the game and business perspectives. He mentioned that:

“I have a lot of housing projects, into oil business thanks to Julius Aghahowa, he advised me on that. I learnt a lot from him for like I knew him for 10years and within that one year, I had to learn so many things from him that I never knew. I thought I knew something about the game but no, he taught me a lot of things I never knew and was already like 28years when I met him. And it was like am a baby in the game and he opened my eyes to see the real football and understand how it is to live with the people of Nigeria. Because I was living differently with them. For instance, I was trying to help everybody this is not possible since you cannot satisfy everybody. He made me understand that I have to keep my things away from a lot of people, see the people you want to see and don't see those you don't want to see but I was trying to see everybody. So, there are a lot of housing projects, we're into oil and gas business in Nigeria, transportation also, we've got things going on and still got more offers coming on, so, we still have many things to do. Now in Nigeria, we go into what you know will bring money to you, that is getting properties, lands, the plot of lands, and others, you know there will be always movement of cars but going into oil and gas business was a good one for me” Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Beyond playing on the same team, the established social relationship has provided him with a lot of benefits. This includes improvement in his game quality and new investment opportunities in his community of origin in Africa. The institutionalised networks have broadened his perspectives on dealing with the people in the community as well as managing his various investments. Much as he got new business concepts from his senior colleague, he also benefited from the advice on managing his social relations and networks in the community.

The institutionalised networks have supported many African professional footballers' migration and mobility projects in leagues abroad with some passing through countries in Africa. An interviewee was asked about how he moved to Tunisia, then to abroad. He mentioned that:

“He was an ex-international footballer, Gabriel Okorosi who worked with different football agents and the another person that helped me is called Adewale (Alla)-that helped me from Abidjan to Tunisia because there was a little financial problem there so, he came and helped us get the tickets to Tunisia. I moved from

Tunisia to Bulgaria. Everything just happened so quick within a year. I was 17years when I got into Ukraine and had to wait until I was 18years to play. I was just training with the team. When I was 18years, I started playing in the premier league for Volyn Lutsk FC. I had already signed but I could not play until I was 18 years” Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

Aside from his family been the greatest critic, they were always pushing him to get better all the time. Yet, he acknowledged the contributions of social relations and networks, by facilitating his migration process from Nigeria through Tunisia, and then to Bulgaria. Thus, without the support of institutionalised networks, his journey could have been thwarted along the way. Why not, this influences his ‘GBP’ action, as he provided support and assistance for the family, friends and others in the community.

Sometimes, those African footballers desperate to migrate have to endure certain difficulties as they become resilient in playing professional football abroad. In their attempt, some ended up been cheated or exploited but all the same, they manage to migrate abroad and begin a new career there. Another football player shared how the social relations and networks took advantage of his strong desired to move abroad. He mentioned that:

“So, I met an agent through one of Fred Odegbami’s brother, he was a legend in Nigeria and introduced me to football agent. And through him, I went to Austria, Sturm Graz FC. It was some deal that was going on because he took all the money and I didn’t get anything. Then I was not 18 years yet, so, I was loaned out to a lower division team because of my age” Sam (41yrs, 14yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

In some situations, especially when African talents are minors, mostly, they may be exploited by football agents through their networks because of their eagerness to play professionally abroad. For instance, Nii Odartey Lamptey was a victim of this, as the various representatives exploited his playing right for over 5years aside from his low educational background because he just wanted to achieve a professional footballer status abroad (see Acheampong et al, *forthcoming*).

The institutionalised networks situated in social relations and networks manifest in many African talents migration to leagues abroad. An interviewee mentioned how he got the opportunity to move to Europe and begin his professional career. He said:

“There was a guy called Darko in Europe who was a friend of my local manager. After I returned from France with Red Bull Academy, I became famous. And my local manager spoke with me about Darko, who wanted to help me travel to Europe but he didn’t mention the specific country, until the last few days to my travel” Owusu (19yrs, 2yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

Through the social networks of his local manager, he had the opportunity to travel abroad and begin his professional football career. Even though the local manager used his networks to facilitate the migration of the football player, he also benefitted from both the agent and the boy. Another interviewee mentioned, how he has maintained his social relationship with the friends of his grassroots social groups from the locales till now. He said:

“You don’t need 20 people around you. You might need two or three, they will be the ones to facilitate and push others on your behalf. So, I was very lucky in that regard like I said, there are few of them that I grew up, play football together, and supported ourselves together. They facilitated all those things I did in Nigeria. I used the right professionals with the support of my school friends mentioned” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

The former Nigerian International footballer with a master degree used the various social relations and networks from his childhood, and school friends to facilitate his investment projects in the country of origin, yet he declined to mention some private investment with his wife. He mentioned some of the public investment with his university friends as:

“The only investment I want to talk about is what I did publicly not my personal one. We’ve a football academy right now with two colleagues from my undergraduate university. We came together and started a football academy which we’re still running until now” Seyi (35yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

His action is quite different from many African professional footballers, who couldn’t make use of their social networks from friends regarding their childhood social groups and



school colleagues. It is not a surprisingly, he wants to study another master degree in sports management after his active career to equip him with sufficient knowledge in the area of football management.

But, other professional footballers change in their social status, tend to see themselves at different social class. Clearly, it was revealed by many of the professional footballers as one puts it:

“One thing about some of us is that, when we start becoming important that is famous, winning cups, playing important games, we become too arrogant, and forget our old friends saying, now I'm at this level, and now you are no more my friend, and I have to go along with those at that level” Cofie (25yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

This kind of attitude can let them lose some opportunities from their grassroots social group friends as well as school colleagues. Beyond that, it limits their networks back home in their countries of origin and can have an effect on their social integration. That is, their new social class level will have an influence on their social and economic behaviour because of change in social preference.

On the issue of migration abroad, the national teams also facilitate the connection of football talents to foreign scouts through the exposure and visibility at international tournaments. In the broader context, professional footballers recommended to their national teams by the authorities, who manage the various categories of those countries' teams. Apart from their quality getting them into those national teams, there are other social relations and networks that play a role in their invitation. An interviewee mentioned that:

“At the end of the day, I was among the four players that were chosen. We then went to the main Lagos screening but, you know the way things work in Africa. You may be a very good, still, you need somebody like ‘*Godfather*’ or connection in this kind of things to get through” Sam (41yrs, 14yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

This statement from the football player supports the argument of other ways that some talents got invited to their national teams. It is may not be a healthy development but happening in many African national teams call-ups. Particularly, the influence of football agents is an emerging trend in this development.

From the interviewees, the majority secured professional contracts after getting the opportunity playing for their national teams. This professional footballer mentioned his experience as:

“I was part of the U20 team that reached the finals in Argentina 2001. So, from there a lot of scouts came around to watch our matches and after the tournament they followed me up to Ghana and then start to link up” Paintsil (32yrs, 11yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

The Ghanaian footballer's performance at the said FIFA youth competition attracted the attention of foreign scouts that followed him to his country of origin. Firstly, the football agent took him to Midtjylland in Denmark for trials, and he returned and joined his former club Liberty Professionals for few days. Finally, the agent took him to Maccabi Tel Aviv in Israel where he began his professional career abroad. The professional footballer migration to the league abroad was brokered by an agent with the involvement of his parent club in Ghana. This shows the influential role of his former club and, it was not a surprise that he provided them with training kits, and financial support in return for their contributions. It has led to strengthening his social relations and network with the club officials of his former club.

In Africa, few institutionalised football academies continue to facilitate the migration of their talents to leagues abroad. They do this through their established social networks and contacts with agents and clubs to assist in the transfer of their best talents to the European football market. These processes ensure their breakthrough abroad and some of them may reciprocate the opportunity by offering various financial and sporting resources to their former

football academies. Others also channel their support to individuals in the community. An example is observed from the action of this footballer who mentioned that:

“So, I was there in the academy in my country for 3years, and after that, I went to Belgium. I went there when I was 16years and after that my professional career started from there. I played there for 3years and I got a lot of options to go to clubs like Olympique Marseille, Real Mallorca but I made some sacrifice and I said no, so, I have to wait a bit. One day, Arsène Wenger came to watch a match of our club, and that day I think God gave me more than power. And I will never stop to say thank you, God, because of him, today, I’m so happy and I try to help everyone when I get something. This is because of my level before it was very, very, difficult. So, today, the money I have, it is not only for me alone, is for everybody so, when I get something, I try to share and to change a life” Eboue (32yrs, 11yrs.exp: CTV [2013]).

The footballer moved to Belgium through the football academy in his country. They gave him the platform by reaching that far in his first movement abroad. Also, he attributed the opportunity to the belief that God made everything happened for him and see no reason why he should not support other people.

Other professional footballers were able to combine football and schooling with the support of their parents, families and extended family and relatives. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that:

“I have come a long way in football. Actually, I never laid all my eggs in one basket, because I was going to school, and the same time, playing soccer. I never knew which path will be worth pursuing and have to do two things. My parents knew that I was playing soccer but, what was important for them, was my academic work. Academically I was good and so, they couldn’t complain because they wanted me to go to school and, I was giving them the results in the classroom too” Cofie (25yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

The Ghanaian international footballer was scouted through playing for his university team. He also enjoyed support from his uncle who invested in his football training by providing kits and other support. So, it wasn’t surprised that he provided them with two bedroom apartment and also paid for the school fees of his children. Due to his academic performance, he gained the full support of his parents and extended family which built a good relationship with them.

This demonstrates a wide institutionalised network integrated into complex nodes ranging from parents, families, extended family, more distant relations, structured football academies, non-affiliated teams, local managers, scouts, agents, clubs officials, sports agencies, federations, coaches, and friends aimed at facilitating the migration of African talents abroad. It also supports the transfer networks within which African talents movements are managed and negotiated.

It further shows the relocation of a talent principal place of residence from an African community to a new environment in a European country in exchange for their services at a club. Per their frequent migration abroad which are also facilitated by the integration of the institutionalised networks, affect their 'GBP' behaviour to the communities of origin. Yet, there are some professional footballers that, simply want to invest their football-related revenues and sporting resources in Africa. The next section analysis determines how the institutionalised networks influence the 'GBP' action of professional footballers with the economic intention of investing their football-related incomes and sporting capital in their countries of origin.

#### **4.5.5 ‘GBP’ AND THE ECONOMIC INTENTION OF INVESTING THEIR FOOTBALL-RELATED RESOURCES IN AFRICA**

African professional players getting mobility opportunity abroad were through social relations and networks which are embedded in the institutionalised networks. In return, professional footballers benefit from financial rewards that considerably increase their economic value in exchange for their talents. Some of these economic returns (football-related revenues) are remitted to their families, households, relatives, and others in the communities and the same time, investing in Africa. A high-profile African footballer chose to spread its training centres (projects) across the Africa continent could be based on the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ which occurs naturally for him. He mentioned that:

“My latest project is in Kenya, specifically in Nairobi where we opened training centre. As I said earlier, I am a child of Africa. I do not choose and have no preference. Whether Guinea, Gabon, Cameroon, I am a child of Africa, I feel good all over. Today is Guinea, tomorrow will be another country. Do not ask, do not look to see the devil everywhere. This is done naturally. And I hope God will give me long life to bring this project in most African countries” Eto’o (32yrs, 15yrs.exp: CAM [2013]).

This is because the professional footballer acknowledged the fact that, investing in those training centres in different African countries can provide the right conditions towards adding value to the talents of the youth for the future. In a long run, this can produce the next African football stars on the continent. Eto’o further disclosed that his motive for investing in Guinea, consequently is a self-conviction, one day, an African country can win the senior FIFA world cup tournament. He said:

“I am convinced that Africa has the potential to win the World Cup tomorrow but that we must have some basis. We have a lot of luck because our mums made us have some talent, while Europeans learn football at football academies. However, we go to the streets to find ourselves in big stadiums. And I say Congratulations to all the children of Africa. When I had the opportunity to come here, I told myself that I just listen and see why not do tomorrow what I had to do in other African countries, a training centre here. I think that if the level of African football increases, we will have more chance of having an African team in

the future as world champion and this is my wish. I still have a few years in football, but do not close your eyes, maybe I would not have the chance. I, as a footballer, having the World Cup that is, the absolute dream of every footballer including our younger brothers. So, we must accompany their dream. I think the base for me, is the most important”

The sport projects are interesting and community centered but they may have other intentions as well. Can this help stop the illegal migration of young talents abroad or going to strengthen the unity among African countries? Much as the projects are supporting talents development in the various communities, they must also take an active part to safeguarding those investments for their benefits. The sport projects of the professional footballer can also go a long way to support the infrastructural improvement in Africa as well as equipping and developing football talents of the young ones in the communities. Thus, developing the human capital of young African football talents to make them productive and become beneficial to the larger society (Becker, 1993).

On another hand, a former Ghanaian international who won AFCON in 1982 at age 17 and UEFA champions league trophy with Marseille in 1993, mentioned that:

“I was always saying to my other players and colleagues that look I’m going to Ghana immediately I stopped my professional career. So, I was investing here in houses, real estates and everything that I bought was in Ghana and I never did anything abroad. So, it wasn’t difficult for me to stop football today because I had prepared the ground for my future. And it wasn’t very difficult for me also to integrate into the society because everything was ok. I had done my homework when I was playing and that was where my wife was very instrumental because she was coming down to take control and supervise all the projects when I was playing” Abedi Pele (52yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

Also, Abedi Pele has been the ambassador of Polio in Africa and helped to reduce Polio to about 2% on the continent. He planned his investment activities together with the wife when he was actively playing abroad. The approach he adopted supported his easy integration by exploiting business opportunities within the communities. This enabled him to strategically position his investments within the communities in his country of origin in Africa. It shows how instrumental

the wife has been concerning their investment activities by serving as a point of contact and information transfer to identifying business opportunities in the communities of origin.

Other professional footballers invest in their countries of origin because they have the intention of spending their entire life there. They think that their communities of origin gave an opportunity and have to reinvest all their acquired resources back in supporting others. Their 'GBP' is influenced by the support various people within the communities added to their human capital development. For instance, this footballer had spent over 12 years playing in Ukraine and mentioned that:

"Mostly, all my projects are in Nigeria because that is where I'm from since one day everybody will go back home" Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

All his projects in Nigeria are under the care of his family and the same time, hidden from people as advised by his senior colleague footballer (Julius Aghahowa). Because of his business activities back home, he visits the country of origin every year when their club is on break.

Some of the professional footballers' investment in their countries of origin represents a symbolic meaning to the children, family and the community. Another player shared his economic intention for his investments as:

"It is also for the fact that, all the considerations I got towards my kids were to show them who I was and the money that I was having. There were no physical structures to give consideration and that is how I was going to transmit something to my children because I could not transmit (show) my victories in the UEFA champions' league or my FIFA world cup to them. This magnificent sporting facility is also for my kids as a big example to show them that their father was an entrepreneur. I have worked hard and also set something for their future if they want to come back and work in Ghana" Marcel Desailly (45yrs, 19yrs.exp: GHA [2013]).

The professional footballer identified a way of leaving a legacy behind for his children as they never saw him achieving those honours from football. Apart from his children, he recognises the investment in a physical structure to show some of his achievements to the larger society and the generations thereafter. It also transmits cultural values through the projection of the family and his social integration in the communities.

Most of the African professional footballers' investment activities can liken them to managers of businesses and entrepreneurs as well. A player mentioned that:

“Right now in my country, I’m investing in houses (properties) for rentals. I do invest in buildings because, the risk is minimal and day in, day out people are giving birth so, you can always get somebody to occupy your apartments. You can always get your rent and those are the driving forces” Cofie (25yrs, 8yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

He went on to say that, there is *no place like home*. I have my family and everybody there that is, why I’m investing there, but in the future you never know. His investments are geared towards economic gains as he identifies properties business as a deficit in the country of origin and something that does appreciate all the time.

Also, Zambian international footballer and a gold medalist in AFCON 2013 mentioned that:

“I moved out of that area because it is not really developing so, now my home is in the capital of Zambia (Lusaka). My family stays in South Africa where I have most of my properties in Johannesburg. The reason for these investments, you know our career is a bit short and you need to do something after football. It is a good way of investing your money because the properties don’t depreciate so easily, it can maintain you. For example, I buy a car today and drove off, the dealership has started to depreciate but the house, and it will never be that. I would like to be comfortable but I’ve a limit because I wouldn’t go for the sake of I just want to drive Lamborghini cars, and I will be sitting alone with one person on the side. So, I’ll never do such kind of investment” Chivuta (32yrs, 14yrs.exp: ZAB [2016]).

The football player thinks more about his future after football career and that of his children. Subsequently, during the interview, he mentioned that giving your children better education is in



the right direction for their future. Chivuta believes that South Africa is more developed than Zambia and therefore, having some of his investments in that country is good, though, his wife commutes there on business purposes. On another hand, he explained the reason why he will never invest in luxurious cars at the expense of his family's future.

With over 14years of professional football in Europe, he conceived the idea to investing in his country of origin. His reason was that when you are a football player, you are not a businessman so, you have to concentrate on the game as such. After your football career, you can choose what you want to do either a business or whatever. He mentioned that:

“So, the time I was playing and the money I earned, I decided to invest in properties because at the end of your football career then you can do what you want to do with or you can sell some of your properties to do different businesses. Because you are actively playing you find it difficult to do businesses but with the properties, the value always goes up (increase or appreciation) so that, by the time you finish your career the money will worth a bit” Tony Yeboah (49yrs, 14yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

He further explained how he converted one of his properties to a hostel to meet the demands of a nearby private university. He said:

“This building we are sitting in, it used to be a hotel (Accra) but now I changed it to the hostel because there a lot of students are around this community. I have a big hotel in Kumasi too. Apart from these, I have a lot of properties in East Legon, Cantonments in Accra, and some apartments in England. All these are from the football money. The money I had from football, I used it to do investments” (ibid)

Can we also say that the former professional footballer exhibited an entrepreneurial skill having identified an opportunity around the community of his former hotel building? He also has some apartments in Europe particularly, England at a location that is very attractive to holiday makers and those who spend their leisure time there. He explained that it was for his children in England so that they can also use for their life in the future.

Some African players also invested where their professional football career started

especially, in the mid-1990s. Among those professional footballers is a former captain of the Ghanaian senior national team, the Black stars. He mentioned that:

“I have the majority of my investments in Germany and, I get returns on it here while in Ghana. But here in Ghana, I did something small and am still doing a lot of different things. In Ghana, I’m into transportation business, auctions-thus you work with the banks, and the banks manage your money, buying shares, lend capital to microfinance companies, but it not easy. Sometimes, I had been in a situation where I lost a lot of money because of what happened in the World Trade Centre in the USA. If I tell you how much I lost...you know” Akonnor (41yrs, 16yrs.exp: GHA [2015]).

It could be that initially, he wasn’t convinced about his country’s political stability or acting accordingly to investment opportunities available during his playing career time. There is also a possibility that because of the huge capital lost through the America World Trade Centre incident on the 11th September 2001, he has become scared of investing outside his country of origin. The professional footballer investing in the financial businesses is due to his belief that *you never know tomorrow and it's for tomorrow sake*. Personally, he would have done his part for the future of his kids and, if he is able to lay a good foundation for them, they will follow.

Others don’t have any personal projects but rather invested in social development activity geared towards protection of young players in general and particularly, African talents. For this former professional footballer, he mentioned that he is doing this for his community and Africa. He said:

“This is why I decided to create Foot Solidaire (Association Culture Foot Solidaire -CFS). It was not to get medals or awards or make me popular, that is, not my first goal. When you noticed that you’re not supported in Europe like how I was not supported in France; a lot of people fighting me even those Africans, including those people who are recruiting players or trafficking in Africa. They fight or combat me very hugely; even the institutions didn’t help me. So, sometimes is a kind of satisfaction to know that my work or action is recognised by some big institutions like United States Department, United States Sports Academy among others. Fortunately, in France, I got some awards from the Clubs Union and even from various other organisations, a kind of recognition but what we need today is that Foot Solidaire, should be there, grow and help and do its first work which is to help young players, sensitize everybody

and spread in Africa to help on this issues; help the government of African states. This is because football is very important in Africa. And we the former players, we don't think about that, is a problem to take the time and look into what football in Africa really means because football can contribute to the development of the youth of the country for our dignity of the people in general" Mbvoumin (42yrs, 11yrs.exp: CAM [2015]).

The former professional footballer continues to invest time, efforts, money, and other resources into the CFS project. Thus, promoting and protecting the social dignity of young African talents supposedly, been abused through football trafficking. With the power of football, he believes it has a role to play in the social development of African communities. This is due to the game's popularity and place in the national identity of African countries. For instance, he wasn't from a rich family, yet football provided an opportunity for him to have a good life and networking around the globe.

Beyond that, he is convinced investment in the Foot Solidaire (CFS) project can engender children's education and change social lives in Africa communities. The football phenomenon has been an integral part of his life from childhood towards achieving a professional and social status in the community. That makes his projects related to football and education, for instance, they have a centre of Youth Football in Cameroun. In Senegal, they have opened an information centre for young players by collaborating with football academies and schools. There is hope for his projects with the recognition coming from institutions like United States Department, Sports Academy, and Clubs Union in France recognising his social contributions to fight this issue of human trafficking through football.

In sum, professional footballers investments in Africa have both economic and non-economic action that are directly related to their 'GBP' with an intention of supporting families, extended family, relatives and others in the communities. The investment activities have the elements of social, cultural and economic strategies towards contributing to families, extended

family, relatives, and others in the communities for their future and improvement in social lives of people in the countries of origin.

Considering their various investments spread over, it provides an opportunity to identify those African countries offering more football talents to leagues in Europe. This is what the next section gives a vivid analysis of those exporter African countries with more foreign players abroad.

## **CHAPTER 5: TYPOLOGIES OF THE ‘GIVE BACK PHENOMENON’**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In developing the typology for African professional footballers, the various factors were taken into account. The factors were based on;

- a) the family structure, organisation of footballers’ family settings and marriage
- b) social and cultural embeddedness, the norms and cultural values, and the role of family or family extended or relatives or the community. All these, affect their economic and non-economic activities to the countries of origin in Africa.

### **5.1 FOOTBALL PLAYERS AND THEIR FAMILY PATTERN IN AFRICA**

African communities are dominated by collective culture rather than individuality. For instance, older people have an authority in the communities because of their social status that society gives them. This is why their views are always given the necessary attention and importance regarding family’s issues in the localities. In African communities, the family sizes are likened to the conceptualisation of Makinwa-Adebusoye (2001). Thus, the key characteristics of African household are mostly rural, patriarchal and hierarchical and open to kinship networks with substantial importance to lineage continuation. All these, are situated in hierarchical society.

In general, many African countries have two main family compositions, the nucleus family and the extended family. The nucleus family consists of parents and their children and the extended family also composed of family members along the bloodline, often cross-generational and sometimes distant relatives and 'so-called' good friends. While the concept of extended family is not always as easy as one may think because it goes beyond the bloodline or genetics to

include those not blood related or bounded by marriage. According to Adegoke (2001:27), the extended family is a socio-cultural phenomenon that finds expression in mutual solicitousness about the welfare of one another, a quasi-communal approach to the supervision and the correction of younger ones and a kind of social insurance that works. That is, *the extended family as a clan* can represent a social group.

This makes the concept of the family rather fluid (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014). Hashim and Thorsen (2011, cited in Huijsman, 2011: 1310) argue about kin practices in West African contexts, ‘*several adults may behave like fathers and mothers and have claims on and obligations to children*’. However, intra-family relations and expected roles and responsibilities also differ significantly depending on local cultural contexts (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014) within the African settings. The social organisation of most African families is based on embedded individuals in a patriarchal and hierarchical system, which determines families, having a higher status in society. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that:

“In Africa, when your dad tells you to do something you have to accept and respect his opinion and so, I didn’t want to disrespect his opinion” Yaw Yeboah (19yrs, 2yrs. exp: GHA [2016]).

This shows how norms and traditions dominate the relationships between the members of families as a clan. It happened when the father did not want his son to play football again because his elder brother got hurt through the same football practice. But with the social intervention from some people in the community, the father permitted him to play football because of his talent. Even though mothers are economical and the main actors in a clan, social mechanism of negotiation into the clan may regulate decisions.

African family sizes are subject to changes that emanate as a result of traditions, norms or customs within the communities. However, there are instances, the ‘so-called good people’ become part and parcel of a family size that is, an ‘*adapted*’ *extended family*. For example, some

people in the communities often intervene for talented children when their parents are preventing them doing any sport. An interviewee narrated a similar situation of his as:

“I had some older people coming to our house to see my dad, telling him about his child football talent, and when we have seen him playing for his school and he is doing well so, he should allow me to play football- no, I’m not going to let him play football, I just want him to study. So, they kept visiting a couple of times and, there was a time my dad listened, and I didn’t know. But, finally, my dad was really, really happy when he heard that, I was in the national team to represent my country. And mum was in tears as well, because it was unbelievable for someone from the village straight into the national team, then to Europe”  
Yaw Yeboah (19yrs, 2yrs.exp: GHA [2016]).

This shows that those elders acted upon their norms and cultural values within the village since they are knitted by social and cultural embeddedness of giving attentions to others opinions in the society. This demonstrates how social relations into a clan play a role to organise society and resolve social conflict. The elders visiting the father were not expert in football but, they could recognise a talent and prospect of a child with their diverse backgrounds, and as lovers of the sport.

At the end, their social intervention paid off, for the player as he got invited to the Ghana national U17 team through his football academy. This provided the player with international exposure and visibility towards attracting foreign clubs attention. For example, had it not been the timely intervention of social forces (elderly people from the village) to impress on the player’s parents to consider his football talent what could have happened to his dream? In African settings, this makes the concept of extended family broader than only to central in the social organisation and youth education. This is because of the social system that also caters for the needs of solidarity, to sharing and providing other means. In the Western societies, the collective (natural) social solidarity through the social system reduced the influence of groups and, gives more liberty to the individuals. The solidarity becomes impersonal.

Unlike the ‘Western world’, the nucleus family dominates but in Africa, the extended family is strongly upheld despite the advent of modernisation. The main reason for this is linked to the role of the extended family as a social security in the society (Therborn, 2006). This shows the significant role of many families plays in the migration of their members and sports talents particularly, football players abroad. All to generate the means and extend their resources which are based on the ‘GBP’. Even, if members are far, they still belong to the group and manage their relations regarding the rules of the clan.

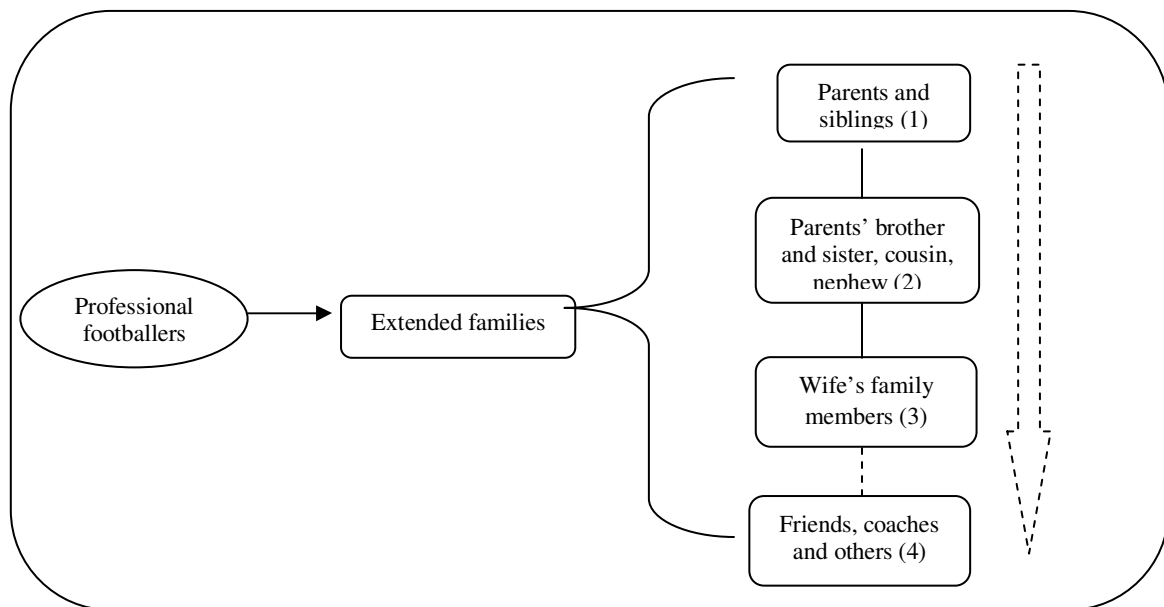
Some scholars have alluded to the important family members, family unit among other partners played in supporting and contributing to decision making processes in their migrants abroad. Some scholars have alluded to the importance of family members, family unit among other partners played in supporting and contributing to the decision-making processes toward their migrants abroad (Carter, 2007,2011; De Haan, 1997; De Haan et al., 2002; De Haas, 2010; De Vasconcellos Ribeiro and Dimeo, 2009; Hugo, 1995, cited in Faist, 1997; Kuhn, 2002; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001; Massey, 1990; McDowell and De Haan, 1997; Stark, 1991; Stead and Maguire ,2000; Taylor, 1991; Tiemoko, 2004; Van der Meij and Darby, 2014; Young and Ansell, 2003), which cannot be totally ignored in their migration projects. This is because they form part of the larger society of which migrants are embedded in the community. This makes, it imperative for African professional footballers not to ignore the significance role of the extended families and others in their decision-making process concerning the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’. For example, an interviewee described the meaning of African family context as:

“You know when I say family the African mentality, it doesn’t mean father and mother, including both brothers and sisters but anybody that want to bring you peace, anybody that gives you good advice means is part of the family. I’ve people like say uncles and those of the same age as my uncles, they are also part of the family, and good friends sometimes can be family, so, everyone around me, who was very positive”  
Coundual (31yrs, 8yrs.exp: SEN [2013]).



That means the ‘GBP’ is taking into account more than material things or objective investments. Through norms, values, and social influences of mentors that, members may use as persons to ask for giving back. Footballers live as persons because this reduces their individual investments, risk taking, and social assurance. They deal with these persons that, they may not really agree with but, they deal with them because they are still embedded into their social Africa group. Based on the understanding of African professional players’ importance they attached to the family and extended family settings, the chart below illustrates the model extracted from their discussions on the subject.

Figure 7. The model of African players’ extended family structure and their contributions



The following classification was observed. This was determined based on the different ways and means that they mobilise resources towards their professional career. It shows what each category contributes to support football players' professional activity abroad and that may also determine their level of giving back and its importance to them. They comprise;

- 1) *Those members of family including parents and siblings*: resources provided include means, money, education, social relations and networks.
- 2) *Those members of family to include parents' brothers and sisters, cousins and nephews*: resources range from assistance, money, means, migration opportunities, social relations and networks.
- 3) *Those members from the wife's family size*: resources include assistance, social relations and networks, advice, prayers and migration opportunities
- 4) *Those members from close and distant social relations* identified as 'shadow' family: resources include advice and counselling, prayers, migration opportunities, grassroots football and formal training opportunities, encouragement, assistance, social intervention, social relations and networks.

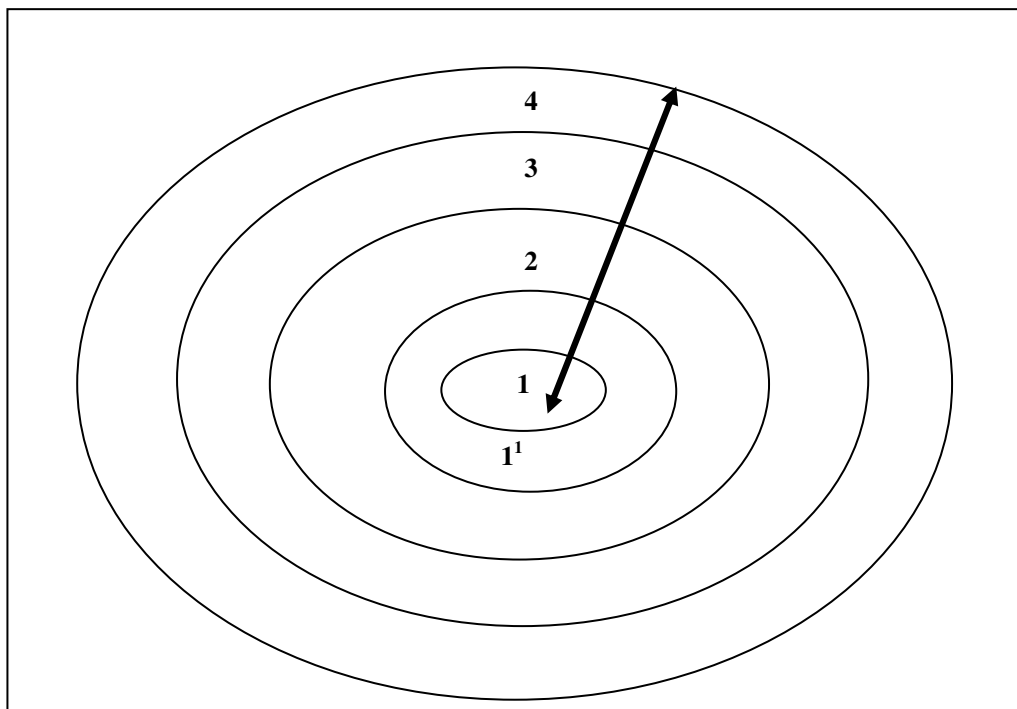
This classification tends to influence the 'Give Back Phenomenon' action of professional players undertaken outside their exact family size of wife and children. They are given preference over the extended family tree, yet equally important in African family structure. The next section walks us into the organisation of their family setting in Africa.

### 5.1.2 ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN PLAYERS' FAMILY SETTING

The discussion on how the organisation of African players' family pattern is further explained. This demonstrates the enlargement of family size as one move away from the close or immediate nucleus family. The family size increases as one gravitates towards the largest circle. It involves the 'shadow family' that may have good connections or linkages with professional players plus others in the local communities and beyond.

All forms part of social relations and networks along with their trajectories are amassed and used to their advantages. Mostly, this is guided by social and cultural embeddedness as it helps to promote their activities in life. This family pattern of professional footballers plays a critical role in the 'Give Back Phenomenon' to people in their communities and beyond. The family pattern goes to the extent of affecting their choice of partnership for life in marriages

Figure 8. African professional players' family pattern in the communities



- 1- football player's own family (wife and children)
- 1<sup>1</sup> -extended family (close family)
- 2-extended family (parents' brothers and sisters, niece, cousin and nephew)
- 3-extended family (wife family members)
- 4-adapted extended family (friends, coaches, team mates, agents and others)

### **5.1.3 OVERVIEW OF MARRIAGE IN AFRICA CONTEXT**

In African society, marriage is an integral part of a tradition that can be perceived from different facets. It can be regarded as an institution, a partnership, a lifecycle and customary status. Africans way of marriage is quite different from the 'Westerns' model, though, there seems to be a modern perforation in the marriage structure. This is typical of many marriages in the cities of African countries, yet customary marriage is always performed before other things are added. Some of these additions to African marriage structure could be due to other socioeconomic factors that influence fundamental values of their cultures. Kalu (1981) argued that the institution of marriage is considerably subjected to the trend of accommodation to the process of industrialisation /modernization.

In an African setting, the perforation of marriage structure tends to affect socioeconomic changes in a way, which may have some impact on the main norms and cultural values. For instance, marriage is universal, and there is an early and universal female marriage (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987). This aspect of marriage is seen as very important in the communities that prepare people for lifelong. Therefore, various marriage age ranges exist for the first timers in different African countries which include the following. For instance, in Guinea, it was moved

from 16 to 19years, from 15 to 18 years in Niger, Nigeria from 19 to 20years, Ivory Coast from 19 to 21 years, Mali at 20years, Zimbabwe from 19 to 21 (Boogaarts et al, 1984) and Ghana from 18years onwards. Analysis of these examples put the average range of female marriage for the first timer between 19.3 to 21 years. These changes suggest that females might have reached adulthood, completed High school or college, and prepared to face the challenges associated with marriages in life.

However, this is different for the males in many African communities too. With the males, it is assumed that one has to be either self-employed or employed, which can make him responsible enough for the lifelong contract. Thus, the person must have attained age 20 and beyond, and above all, gainfully employed so, as to be able to manage a family of his own.

In many of the rural African communities, contraction of marriage is often dominated by arranged marriages, whereby parents usually indulged in the selection of marriage partners for their children, this is mostly for their daughters (Makinwa-aдебусоуе, 2001). According to Makinwa-aдебусоуе, mostly, it is often done without the consent of their children. In contemporary African communities, there has been an alteration to the extent that some countries have adopted policies that strive to advocate for the consent of both parties that are to be married as is the case of the Tanzania marriage act of 1971 and the Ivory Coast civil code of 1964 (Therborn, 2006). Yet, it does not halt the involvement of parents in the marriage of their children. These policy directions have engendered the recognition of the consent of the parties to be married and the right of prospective partners to select their partners (Makinwa-aдебусоуе, 2001).

Despite this development, the selection of marriage partners is still done with the consent of family members. Thus, it is believed that parents and family members have to grant partners

their blessings before the marriage, otherwise, any aftermath issue, partners cannot consult them let alone seek their support and pieces of advice. By that, neglecting your family members in marriages can be seen as flouting norms or cultural values of the extended family. This can lead to them washing off their hands from the marriage because they do not want to be a part of the taboo either incurring the wrath of their ancestors or cultural values.

Additionally, when a man gets married, it is the beginning of responsibility for himself and his family. But, he is still connected to the extended family. His marriage also projects the good image and reputation of the family and respect for himself. For instance, some professional footballers shared their views on reasons for doing things for their wives' family. An interviewee mentioned that:

“Her family is mine as well, and whatever I do for my family, I balance it up, that is, how it should be because they say when you’re together you become one so, I can’t just say this is my family and I should support my family alone, and not the other side. That’s not it. So, her parents are my parents as well. So, whatever I give, I give both sides and balance it, and we do it together” Chivuta (32yrs, 14yrs.exp: ZAB [2016]).

This shows that when footballers get married their family size increases and therefore, gravitates towards the larger circle in the family patterns. They always married after becoming a professional footballer because they have a job that can make them more responsible. It not surprising, seeing their wives contributing meaningfully to their decisions making regarding the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ activities to the local communities. That makes women economically the main actors in an African family due to their rational and passion action about things. Examples are seen from the interviews with players like Abedi Pele, Tony Yeboah, Annan, and others.

On another hand, some African professional players who went abroad at pre-teen and got

married there also tend to have a different view in relation to this issue. For instance, a former footballer mentioned that:

“European people, it is completely different they have access to education through their own parents already so, they have settled and organised themselves in the environment that they have. You know my wife is a European, and in Europe, you have access to education and potentially, more chance to get things to be stable not rich but stable at least. So, the approach and behaviour are completely different, if you give, fine, but if you don’t give, fine because they have some kind of small stability that allows them to keep their dignity. That is, why I think in Africa, we still have to wait a couple of two more generations to think that Africa tomorrow can be one of the best continents in the world. But, there is still that sort of issue, where too many people are into poverty because there is no work, no this or that, so, people behave and sometimes use the cultural something in a wrong way” Marcel Desailly (47yrs, 20yrs.exp: GHA[2016]).

Culturally, Marcel admitted that it is a good, yet the socioeconomic factors hinder its effectiveness as some people hide behind those norms and cultural values to be idle. Therefore, waiting to rely on children to be financially successful and provide them means for their livelihood. Yet, it has some positivity by transforming people with social and cultural values in the communities. These issues should be a concern for further redress to see how people can be liberated from been obliged to the extended family. Surprisingly, the two views are dicey finding a common balance. This is expected due to their different backgrounds and different environment of their upbringing. At the same time, African footballers after their European experiences have a very critical vision of the ‘GBP’ based on the cultural norms which are caused by the socio-economic situation of African countries.

Kalu (1981) argues that there is increasing competition prevailing between the Western conception of marriage and the traditional African conceptualisation. That is, why sometimes in African societies, it is regarded a taboo or indent on culture for people to live together as an unmarried couple which is often not the case in Europe. However, in situations of unwanted pregnancy, those involved are forced to marry or wait for the unborn child afterwards, before

performing the traditional marriage ceremony. Also, in some African communities like Ghana, a man would be asked to pay a fine for flouting the custom or tradition.

Here, family members would feel disappointed and disrespected from their children's action for the neglect of traditional marriage procedures before impregnating one's daughter. This may be one of the reasons why many families in Africa always prefer their son to get married early when they become professional footballers (star) in the community. It is a way to protect them from getting into other social issues often associated with some professional footballers in the social and print media. This also obliges them to divide their resources. That can be the reason why a former professional footballer advised his colleague to marry quickly. He said:

“He told me to marry quickly so that you get more concentrated, but if you don't marry on time, there is a lot of destruction from women. You know, when the money starts coming, and with the fame, you just get carried away especially, in Africa, when players start to see small change then they start misbehaving”  
Alozie (29yrs, 12yrs.exp: NGN [2015]).

African footballers getting marriage also provide women the opportunity to having resources.

Analysis of African traditional marriage tends to skew towards a sort of social pressure pursuit for change among the younger generations in the communities. This makes the practice of acculturation favours the adjustment to modern times (Kalu, 1981:358). Despite modernisation in marriages, African communities still stick to their customary marriage as a symbol of respect to their culture. It is also a core in maintaining the intergenerational linkage of a particular family clan. Therefore, it can play a role in influencing some of their subjective dimensions towards the 'Give Back Phenomenon' to the local community. All these factors contributed to building the typologies of African professional footballers as deduced from the 'GBP'.



## 5.2 TYPOLOGIES OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS ‘GIVE BACK PHENOMENON’

A thorough analysis of the database and discussions conducted with the African professional footballers contributed to categorise their 'Give Back Phenomenon' to the local communities. That is, based on the role of the economic and non-economic factors which determined their rationalities behind the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ supported in developing these typologies. They are *hybrid family approach*, *cross-closed family approach*, *shared family approach* and *shadow family approach*. Attached is a schema (Figure 9) to illustrate further on this typology.

### 1. Hybrid family approach

African professional players under this category make decisions based on all inclusive approach to an extended family structure comprising of close family, wife’s family and others in the locality. Thus, they take into account the impact that their give back may produce on their family, clan, and the society in a long term. Their rationalities reflect all types of investments from different businesses to social projects with the tendency to support family future as well as contribute to an extended family structure that is obligatory. Here, professional players often invest in either social project out of sports or social project in the sports with others engage in both. It is associated with players who have over 8-18 years of professional football experience abroad. This is dominated by those footballers that migrated from the cities or regional capitals to Europe. Their give back is rationally based even though some values play a role. They also reflect the objective of social and economic changes.

Few of them have high-profile status and migrated from the towns or villages to the cities

or regional capitals in search of a professional football activity. The age category ranges from 26-52 and with a close family size of 4-11, and either married with a child or have less than 6 children. Former African professional players dominate this category due to their vast experiences after active football career. Professional players' actions demonstrate their deep connection in the communities as a collective culture rather than individuality. The majority are Protestants and with a few Moslems. They believe in giving to the needy or underprivileged people as directed by their doctrines.

The majority of African professional footballers 'Give Back' action vary from economic/financial (Entrepreneurship and Patrimonial investments and), Social projects out of sport (P), remittances for family/community (R), Social project in sport (P), and business in sport (Ps). They are into sports projects, particularly football academies as they feel more comfortable in that area by transferring their expertise to youths in the communities. This shows part of cultural transfer by 'giving something back' to the game with acquired new languages and enhanced technical ability (Williams, 2014), by impacting on the identified talents becoming productive individuals for themselves and the society as a whole. Others who return home on the conclusion of their European professional career become ambassadors to champion social issues in the local communities and Africa.

The role of their wives' and family members is indispensable as the close family concerning their contributions to the various projects. That is why those married footballers continue to appreciate the support and efforts of wives in their businesses.

Beyond the acquisition of personal investments and the use of his financial capital for philanthropic purposes, he offered a cheque of 200,000\$ for the construction of a hospital for the local people in his mother's village Ngambe in Cameroon, gave additional \$1million for other

projects, donations to orphanage, etc, Eto's was crowned paramount chief in Kaffu Bullom, a chiefdom in Sierra Leone in November 2015<sup>51</sup>. This was part of his role towards fighting against Ebola in that African country. Some of these examples are a plethora of African professional footballers' contributions to the cause of the larger society. Of this category, involves more active footballers than former professional players investing in such projects to benefit their close family, extended family and others from the community. Thus, often invest in financial and social projects out of sports and social project in sports to secure family's future and support for the needy in the communities

Beyond their direct support and assistance, the majority of them are high profile players with an educational background ranging from a master degree to high school level, and some dropping out of school. They played/playing in elite European leagues, with mouth watering earnings (wages/salaries) for their talents. At this level, almost those who retire from active professional football get involved into football projects. This is where they can perform best and therefore, investing in that sector of the sport.

## **2. Cross-closed family approach**

This applied to those professional players who behaviours are towards the close family of parents' siblings and the locales. With this group, their give back is rationally based and towards the family and clan and the society but on the short and medium terms. They engage in projects from business investments including social projects of all kinds to support children education, donations to orphanage homes, solidarity, etc. Their age ranges from 22 to 32 with over 2 to 14 years of professional football experiences abroad. The majority of them lived in the cities or

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<sup>51</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel\\_Eto%27o#Other\\_activities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Eto%27o#Other_activities)(accessed (16/04/2016))

regional capitals and a few coming from the villages and towns.

Most of them are unmarried and those with a spouse have less than 4 children. The close family size is around 6 members with a strong family bonding and a desire for social commitments. Their give back is based on the objective of social commitment to the family, clan and the society at large. It is more of norms and cultural values influence, as an integral part of the local community. Yet, their give back is also rational and more geared towards the benefits of the larger society. Here, their socio-economic and educational level is lower than the first group. Their give back actions vary from remittances for family/community (R) and Social project in sport (P) and Business project in sport (Ps).

The majority are Protestants with an educational background ranging from first degree to High school level. There are some who could not go to school by sticking only to football. Professional players are often found in leagues 2 and 3 with a few in the top leagues. Their wages are higher than what they used to earn in the African leagues. It is dominated by active footballers with a few former professionals who are more or less into football sector. They are working as scouts, coaches, technical support staff and director of their own football academies.

### **3. Shared family approach**

Apart from professional players' business investments, they also have desired for social projects out of sport and social project in sport. It includes professional players with the motive of supporting an extended family of their wife's family members. Their age category ranges from 30 onwards with a close family size between 4-10 and married with less than 5 children. Here, the professional footballers have over 11 years experience of professional football abroad and include some high profile players as well. This category of professional footballers often

began from their towns or villages before migrating to cities or regional capitals. Here, their socio-economic and educational level is lower than the first and second group. Their economic investments are rationally based and focused towards themselves and families with a little attention to social activities. They often prepare for their post-professional transition life of football.

Their contributions are towards the community because they believe that have played a significant role to help them achieving what they have gotten so far in their careers. The level of education ranges from secondary school (senior high) to elementary school. Their give back actions vary from remittances for family/community (R) and Social project in sport (P).

The majority of the professional footballers is married and has Protestants status with a few Moslem. Apart from their various supports to families and others, some invest in real estates, properties, transport, and oil and logistics businesses for their future after football career is over. It is dominated by those playing actively and with a few former professional footballers. They often played/playing in the top leagues as well as league one (1) with substantial wages for their talents. Those retired professional footballers often engaged in football activities such as scouting, coaching, etc.

#### **4. Shadow family approach**

It is applicable to those professional players with decisions of impacting the lives of the 'shadow family' comprising friends, coaches, more distant relatives, adopted family and others, who might have directly or indirectly contributed to their professional careers. Apart from the basic economic benefits offered them, they also supporting with social projects out of sport.

Most professional migrant players are not married and those with a spouse have a small family size of fewer than 3 children. They often have a close family size of 4 to 14

The majority of them migrated from the towns or villages to seek greener pastures in the city or regional capital with the ball. Professional footballers are often found in leagues 2 and 3 with substantial wages in excess than what leagues in Africa could offer them. They also invest in apartments, bank shares, with regular transfers of remittance to family, friends and others which they recognised as an obligation by contributing to people social lives since someone supported them to reach where they are now. Their socio-economic and educational level is higher than the third group. The 'GBP' is based on an obligation that is linked with human capital theory. With this group, social commitment is high and towards their grassroots clubs, coaches, and others in the locales. But, it is often for a short term. Apart from the remittances for family/community (R), their give back action focused more on the Social project in sport (P).

Due to the level of their leagues and age, they mostly assumed to have more years ahead to play and do not take strategic economic decisions. The level of professional players' education ranges from Polytechnic to high school. This is often dominated by young footballers within the ages of 19-26 less than 3years of professional experience. A few of the professional footballers are found in the elite European leagues. The majority are Protestants with a few Moslems. Normally, there may be one or two former professional footballers that could not progress in the European leagues by returning to play in African leagues.

Before the concluding comments under this section, the migration of African footballers abroad to the development of their typologies, the research revealed the following additions. That is, on the typologies of footballers' migration abroad, apart from the six types of Magee and

Sugden (2002), the research identified two additional types with African footballers' migration to play professionally abroad. That is:

7) **Duality**: those players who want to attain citizenship of the host country during their active professional career in addition to their country of origin nationality.

8) **Educationistic switch**: those sent abroad to continue their education and ended up taking to professional football career in addition to obtaining an academic qualification.

With the ambitionists' sub-types of Magee and Sugden (2002), the research revealed two possible additions. **Fourthly**, there are players that move to foreign leagues because they simply want to train with modern sporting facilities to improve their quality, and **fifthly**, there are those players who feel enchanted after watching those dominant foreign leagues on television in their home countries.

### **Conclusion on the Typology of African footballers' GBP'**

In general, African professional players make economic and social investments to support their families, relatives, friends and others in the communities. The give back to the families differs depending on their profiles. It was realised that players have obligation to contribute and support the family, extended family, friends, coaches and others, which is part of the norms and cultural values in Africa. For instance, they regularly remit monies to support the family, households, relatives and others in the local communities. The typologies of African players' were derived from their values, objectives, conceptions and interests, yet they consider the role of significant others as a crucial to their 'Give Back Phenomenon'.

Their behaviours are translated into the various types of social and economic activities they undertake in the communities. However, there are elements of social forces (media, friends,

social groups, and the people of locales) that may influence the decision of many African professional players' social and economic projects in their communities. This is because those football players always want to safeguard their reputation and social interests in order to enjoy support from people in the communities otherwise, they stand been accused and labelled as ungrateful persons, who do not appreciate their communities' irreplaceable contributions to their careers.

The Protestants exhibit a typical approach of the 16th and 17th century's concept with a special tendency of developing economic rationalism (Weber, 1930; 1992). But, the present-day Protestants tend to support the needy or disadvantaged people in their communities. This approach goes to build their religious faith and also improve moral behaviours of the members. That is similar to the Moslem doctrines, which obliged the wealthier people to support the needy in the society.

Beyond migration abroad, professional players acquired knowledge and skills, influential relations and, social and cultural remittances returning to their countries of origin (Al-Ali et al, 2002). For example, Abedi Pele is former Ghanaian international footballer transferring his technical know-how and vast experiences abroad to managing and nurturing talents for his club (F.C Nania) in the country's leagues and the same time, providing them international exposure.

In general, African professional footballers provide football equipment, training kits and some financial contributions to their origin clubs in the communities. It is a platform to maintain their deep connections with them. The research revealed that some of the professional footballers' economic and non-economic actions are strategically taken as a way to avoiding societal pressures. That is, the community tends to recognise those without any economic or non-economic activities as irresponsible and therefore, lose their social status in the locales. Also, the



family sees their investment as a waste of resources which could have been channelled to support a family member human capital development. So, for those African footballers to avoid been labelled as such, they are forced to contribute something to minimise pressure from the social groups within the organisation of African society.

The below table summarises the typology of the ‘GBP’ of African footballers.

Table 8. Table of comparison

<b>Characteristics/ family</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Education	Master-high school	Degree - high school	Secondary-elementary	Polytechnic-high school
Age	26-52	22-32	<30	19-26
Prof. experience(yrs)	8-18	2-14	<11	2-12
Leagues	Elite /top	Elite-1	1-3	2-3
Level of revenues	100k-15,000	18,000-5,000	15,000-2,000	5,000-2,000
Religion	Protestant/ Moslem	Protestant/ Moslem	Protestant/ Moslem	Protestant/ Moslem
Family status	married	married/unmarried with children	married	unmarried /married
Children	≤ 6	≤ 4	<5	0
Family size	4-11	6	4-10	4-14
Main factor influence	Family/clan/ society/grassroots	Family/Society/ clan/grassroots	Family/Society/ clan/grassroots	Family/grassroots clubs/ society
Domicile	city/town/	regional/cities	town/villages	town/villages
Footballers dominance	active with few former	active with few former	active with few former	young players

This is also supported with the diagram illustration.

-Numbers 1-4 represent extended family types that inform the decision of African players regarding the 'Give Back Phenomenon' to the communities.

*-PI-P11* represents the total number of African players' with over a year of professional experience in European leagues. (Detailed chart is provided at **Appendix B**: 331)

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### **5.2.1 SOME NOTICEABLE REVELATIONS**

There were some professional players that have future projections but with an excuse of low wages and therefore, waiting to earn big before supporting their family and others in the communities (figure 9). But, in African communities, no matter how meagre your salary or wage may be, it is obligatory for one to support the cause of the left-behinds having contributed to developing their human capitals. It includes supporting their migration process abroad. Some of them gave reasons of spending their low earnings on accommodation, feeding and personal kits and as such found it difficult remitting some home to families and others in the communities.

There were some professional players that have future projections but with an excuse of low wages and therefore, waiting to earn big before supporting their family and others in the communities. But, in African communities, no matter how meagre your salary or wage may be, it is obligatory for one to support the cause of the left-behinds having contributed to developing their human capitals. It includes supporting their migration process abroad. Some of them gave reasons of spending their low earnings on accommodation, feeding and personal kits and as such found it difficult remitting some home to families and others in the communities. This may be quite unpleasant news, particularly for the families and relations to easily accommodate such feedback. Some family members only understand that, so far as one lives and works abroad they expect them at least to remit something back home irrespective of how much one may receive or earn.

Moreover, families, friends and other people are aware of other benefits footballers get even with insufficient wages like bonuses, etc. In such situation, it tends to portray the wrong image of players as unappreciative of every support invested in their human capital development, which is often the mindset of the left- behinds and that become difficult to change. In sum, it can

induce a sort of social pressure (Dohmen, 2005) on individual footballers by taking wrong and disputable decisions regarding their social and economic investments in the communities.

A thorough analysis of the research revealed that the majority of professional footballers left Africa with a modest level of education. That tends to have effects on most African footballers before their pre-departure, during, and after professional careers are over. Thus, many rarely plan ahead concerning their post-career transition. The situation often lands them becoming match analysts or pundits for television and radio. It can be an emerging trend for former professional footballers both in Europe and Africa.

Also, it was observed that those who took to football faced challenges regarding the societies' organisation in Africa, yet were resilient and persevered with the support of the family, society, community and grassroots clubs. The latter responsibilities were to provide the enabling environment and resources that contributed to their development. However, education became a barrier for talents that wanted to take football as a career. This is because, in African communities, football was considered as, something for social practice that could not prepare a person for a better future.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

This research allowed us to highlight the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ of African professional footballers, in other words, their remittance behaviours towards the left-behinds in Africa communities. The theoretical model of analysis employed on the subject contributed to understanding the influence of social, economic and cultural determinants as to be able to explain African professional footballers’ remittance and support actions they provide their communities. These latter constitute the ‘Give Back Phenomenon’ (GBP).

The knowledge gathered from the literature enabled to build a theoretical model of analysis and to work out a methodological solution to this perspective by using economic sociology approaches and Weberian comprehensive sociology. That provided the analysis grid and pertinent indicators which contributed to highlight the GBP and the motives of African professional footballers. This seeking makes the GBP comprehensive conduit to discover the link with African football evolution, players’ migration itineraries and football structures. This again assisted to organising the findings of the major parts as well as factors of the main results that sometimes, were not expected to play an important role in the understanding of the GBP, as the periodization of African football evolution. This permitted to highlighting an explicative theoretical connection between the migration itineraries and GBP.

The research led to the discovery of the periodization with the evolution of African football. Firstly, during the 1980s, football assumed a controversial vision between families, communities, and the societies as children were restricted to only focus on education. Secondly, around the early 1990s, the shared vision of football gradually changed because it became a professional activity that could provide an opportunity for children with sporting talents. Lastly, football became professionalism as it could provide children with economic opportunity and

social status in the communities. This was observed in the 2000s with an improvement in the structures and activities of football around the African continent and that facilitated the migration project of best talents. African players' migration abroad provides them with a strategy to become self-reliant quicker than education can offer since many achieved a professional footballer status with fewer becoming financially successful professionally. Importantly, this demonstrates how crafty African footballers can be in their quest to achieve a professional footballer status. Through their craft approach, they developed a strategy to becoming footballers which were not deliberate but as a result of an emerging strategy along with their path of social practice of football in the communities (Mintzberg, 1985). For instance, the informal social structure of their strategy was also observed through their participation in the street football activities during the 1980s. In the 1990s, players' strategy could be likened to the entrepreneur as they employed an entrepreneurial approach. This was observed when they started to build a new strategy through the informal and formal structures, which made them pioneers by exploring professionalism opportunities with their resources toward the European football market. For instance, when they joined structured football academies and leagues that exposed them internationally. In the 2000s, they assumed the position of managers of their own resources. With this managerial approach, they turned toward managing and increasing their financial resources. For example, football players achieving high professional status abroad that provided them with escalated earnings. From the evolution trend identified, what is the future evolution going to be like? Or can we expect a new period?

The evolution of African football betters our understanding of the players' migration project. This development also influenced their migration project which the research identified by three migratory itineraries that facilitated their migration abroad. These are;

i) **Collective itinerary:** Talents derive resources from parents, family, extended family, and many distant relatives. It includes sending their talents abroad to study or relocation or reunion with family members or reconnecting to their exiled and expelled parents or families. Through that, they improve their football talents with access to better conditions or environment to support their development.

ii) **Individual itinerary:** This involves talents that mobilise their own resources, including funds, social relations, and personal networks towards achieving their professional career ambition abroad. This is often adventurous and risky itinerary.

iii) **Networks itinerary:** This involves talents using resources from intermediaries such as scouts, agents, sports agencies. It comprises both collective and individual itineraries as they tend to act as a '*link*' for talents and the clubs abroad.

These migratory itineraries have a greater tendency to influence players' subjective dimensions regarding the 'Give Back Phenomenon' to their countries of origin. This is significant in the sense that, it provided the necessary information on how African footballers' mobilised the various human and material and social resources in supporting their itineraries by getting to their final destinations abroad.

On another hand, African footballers' rationalities supported in producing the typologies that provided meanings to their behaviour situated in their social aids, remittances, investments and economic aids. These are;

i) *Hybrid approach:* players make decisions by exhibiting entrepreneurial skills combined with social investments to support the cause of the larger society. They take into account the impact that 'GB' may produce on the family, clan and society on long-term basis. Their 'GB' is

based on the objectives of social and economic changes.

ii) *Cross-closed approach*: players' choice considers more of patrimonial investments as well as social commitments to families and others. Their 'GB' is based on the objectives of norms and cultural values that reinforce their social behaviours. It is a continuous process regarding their deep connection.

iii) *Shared approach*: players' decisions create a balance for both families of spouse but social commitment and investment are a key in their approach as well. Economic investments are for themselves and families. Their focus is more on the post-career transition.

iv) *Shadow approach*: football players 'GB' focus more on social programmes with financial and material support to the needs of others including grassroots clubs, and probably as result of social pressure from the environment. Their 'GB' is based on the obligation that is, linked to human capital theory. It is often on a short-term basis.

Beyond the typology, it revealed one constant African players' remittances decision that is mostly coerced by social and cultural norms, if not religious belief may impact on their behaviours. The give back is a complex social phenomenon which may be based on the same individual with different determinants (economic, social, cultural, etc.), (Lahire, 2011). This is because, in African communities, the social and cultural norms of the community are prevalence over the individuality and therefore, have a tendency impacting on the rationalities of locale people that were observed through the behaviours of professional footballers. That makes the 'Give Back Phenomenon' represents a form of obligation for African migrant players to give back to their local communities of origin in return for their contributions toward their careers.

Deduction from the typology of African professional players' behaviour can explain the 'give back concept' as providing either tangible or intangible assistance with the interest of



undertaking an economic and non-economic activity to supporting the social lives of people in the larger society. The tangible or intangible support includes but not limited to intellectual and cultural capitals, skills and knowledge, finances, efforts, time, social networks, sporting capital, and other things that can better people situations in the local communities.

These findings were achieved with the application of economic sociology approaches that provided a conduit to solving the complex issue of the research.

The thesis adds to the knowledge on African football players' behaviours in term of their migration strategies and how they make use of their football-related revenues from Europe. It again highlights the social status of these African professional footballers in the communities as European football gave them everything including money, fame and influence in the society, and therefore, it is good, they also give back as a token of their social contributions to the society.

Weberian methodology produced a good contribution to resolving the combination of different theories coming from the social sciences and other multidisciplinary areas. With all these, the research could not cover the entire 55 UEFA countries as well as those African footballers in the lower leagues. The research was also limited in terms of getting African professional footballers from all the CAF zones for the interviews especially those from the North and East of Africa yet some contributions were extracted from their previous interviews in the sports papers which were directly related to the subject.

Further studies on this work should try moving beyond the application of social sciences with other fields that can add a new dimension on the subject. Based on the research outcomes, it could be interesting to describe the relation of African and European football, the evolution of the football labour market, and the evolution of the GBP depending on the evolution of African football.

Studies on African migrant players overseas have concluded on various findings such as underdevelopment and lack of professionalism and other administrative lapses among the main challenges of African football development. Obviously, it is true, however, this research identified some difficulties African migrant players grappled with regarding their beginning leagues countries abroad. This includes lack of orientation by their new clubs and football agents as well as a pre-departure briefing of the host environment. Because, it was identified that the majority encountered a lot of problems in adapting to the language, foods, and weather conditions, administrative and social issues to get them well integrated into the new environment. This is expected because many African communities are characterised, by a sort of togetherness and deep connection that hinges on collectivity than isolated individuals. That is, the sense of belongingness and cultural embeddedness which often affecting football players relocation from their home country. This explains the social and cultural belongingness that exists among locales of African players in their countries of origin. The socio-cultural affiliation among members of the locales transcends to the community borders that can create a kind of hindrance for many players in their new environment with a different culture and orientation. It is of a concern that professional players' relationships are situated in the close family, extended families, friends and others which play a significant role in their social lives. That is why it tends to have a great influence on players' values, objectives, interest and conceptions.

The increase in migration also reaffirms Poli et al (2015) studies positioning African talents, as the second donor of foreign players to the European leagues after UEFA. Moving forward, families, communities and the society should understand that every footballer has its own destiny and as such, is not every African player migrant who would succeed in their chosen profession, thus, *many footballers are called but fewer would become professional and*

*financially successful.*

Yet, the community sometimes forgets how some professional football migrants have spent so much money in supporting others, and contemporary if they don't have any more, instead of them to cooperate, rather they turn against them. It doesn't mean they didn't plan well or didn't do things well, however, such is life and professional players should hold whatever they have tight and support intelligently the way they can to the benefit of friends and the communities. However, providing for others may not be a bad idea but helping them become more independent is the best support they can offer their locale people to have a livelihood. That is, why it is often appropriate for professional footballers to show those in need *how to fish than giving them the fish to eat all the time*. This can promote their self-sustainability to also support others in the community.

Migration has been part of the changing social dynamics and transformation of people's lifetime, along with their adventures of rising but it shouldn't be an opportunity that a prolonged stay in Europe can affect African players' cultural values, customs, beliefs and norms. However, some professional players warned against people hiding behind the cultural values, norms and customs, as pretence to project their selfish interest at the expense of the larger society.

On the other hand, as professional footballers strived to support communities with their projects, society must change their mindset of self-seeking for their own pockets and rather focus on deep connection culture that characterised their social behaviours in the past. Without a change in people's attitude, it becomes difficult to improve their livelihood in the various African communities, no matter the efforts and support from professional footballers may offer to the society. From the African professional players, it is time everybody stops thinking about my own (self-interest at the expense of people) because they weren't brought up like that in the

communities. That can be a sign of cultural proliferation by shifting their cultural collectiveness towards individualistic approach. It was revealed, the best legacy an African professional footballer can leave their local communities by impacting meaningful on the lives of other people.

Interestingly, classical African migrants often form an association to support their communities with developmental projects which are unusual of professional footballers, who earnings are far better than theirs. Based on this logic, can we say African professional footballers 'give back' is aimed at promoting their popularity? African professional players can also emulate this gesture to improve regional and national development with their 'give back' model to benefit the larger society.

On the contrary, another serious concern is the way society tends to undermine their views, especially, those professional players that failed to attend school and are seen as low-minded and unintelligent. Due to some of these experiences, many professional players returning home at the conclusion of their career abroad have refused to contribute their views. In all, expressing their opinions, people may feel hurt, offended, insulted, and exposed when they speak on football and other societal issues. This attitude of some people in the community, if not checked can hinder their creativity and contributions to their local communities. In the future, this can become a disincentive for those wanting to invest in their countries of origin.

## Limitations

In general, it was very difficult getting African professional footballers to interview due to some identified issues. Firstly, many professional footballers from the forty-four (44) member associations of African countries could not be interviewed. This is because their various European clubs did not permit those players to participate after several letters were sent with follow up phone calls. They cited some reasons like clubs' busy schedules. For example "*I've looked into your enquiry and I am afraid at this moment in time the players are not doing any one-to-one interviews and are concentrating on the football only*" (Duah, 2016).<sup>52</sup> This makes the subject very sensitive.

Secondly, some African professional players think that researchers are '*disguised journalists*' and they tend to include a lot of unfounded things that make them feel bad sometimes and therefore, didn't want to be interviewed at all.

Thirdly, many African professional players contacted, intentionally avoided being interviewed and refused responding to several phone calls made with email message. Others gave excuses like not wanting to contribute because African leaders are self-seeking and failed to better the lives of their people.

Lastly, the research could not cover the views of some footballers from the North and East African countries though their size represents less than 19.6% as compared to the three zones of West, Central and the Southern countries with over 80% of the total. Meaning the latter have the majority hence, dominated the interviewees list. Clearly, African countries are dominated by France and United Kingdom colonisers but, the majority of interviewees were from Anglophone with few coming from the Francophone countries. This is due to their

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<sup>52</sup> Gemma Duah, Aston Villa FC, Media Department, received on 19/01/2016

unavailability and non-English speaking.

The subject is complex as it employed the multidisciplinary theoretical models to solving the main issue.

## **Perspectives**

1. There is the need to find out, the relationship between African professional players and their local or national authorities to assess the support they received from the representatives of the government concerning their social and economic projects in the communities.
2. Further investigation should be conducted to determine the impact of African professional players' football-related revenues and sporting resources on the community people in their countries of origin.
3. The role of institutions that further, the integration of African professional players in their new environment abroad must be given attention in the scholarship arena.
4. What can best explain the 'Give Back Phenomenon' of female professional players from Africa?
5. It suggested for researchers to investigate how those African professional footballers unsuccessful in the European leagues abroad are able to reintegrate into their local communities.
6. Examining the post-transition of African footballers from active professional career abroad: Entrepreneurs or football management?
7. Compare and analysis professional footballers and athlete runners' investments in their local communities of Africa.

## **Recommendations**

On another hand, the time has arrived for CAF member associations to intensify their efforts by developing a strategic policy that regulates and monitors the rampant sprung-up of football academies across the continent. Since we cannot ascertain the kind of school curriculum used to developing their talent recruits. For instance, RTD academy has a structured educational policy that seeks to produce both professional footballers and academic graduates. This development if not properly checked can affect the future of talents in those mushroom and unlicensed football academies without the proper education to support their growth in the communities.

In African communities, religion is very important in African education and society and generally, it influences professional footballers' vision and 'GBP'. Some of their rationality is more focused on the local culture and economic strategy to satisfying the larger society. It is also suggested that their 'GBP' concept must rethink and position their economic investments towards equipping individuals becoming independent. That is, they should be taught how to manage their talents and make a living from by providing them with regular earnings for life.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Summary of African footballers in the 30 UEFA professional leagues

CTRY	ENG			SPN			GER			ITA			FRA		TUR		NED		BEL		POR		SWZ			GRE			UKR		RUS		Total
Div.	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd		
CTV	6		2	1	2		3	1			4	1	12	14	6	2	2		4	2	2	7	6		1	2	2	2		4	3	91	
ALG		1	1	5	1		1	1	1	2	1		8	10	1	1		1	1	2	2	1		1	1	4	1					48	
MAL	4	1	1		1	1				3			12	18					2	1	2	1				1	1	1				50	
GHA	1	3	1	3	1	3	2	1	1	7	10	1	9	1	1	3	3		11	4	4	1	1	1	1	4	1	4		1		84	
EGY		4								1					1	1			7		2		2									18	
ZAB	1																1		1			1								1		5	
TUN				1	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1	8	6	1	1			2		1		4		1			2				40	
GAB													5	4																		9	
CAR													1	3						1												5	
CAV				1									2	2			1	2			11	22			1							42	
LBY											1										1											2	
GUI			1	1	1	1	2			2	1	1	4	7	3	1			2	4	1	1			1	1	3					38	
NIG	6	6	5	3	5	1	3	2	1	3	5		3		9	5	3		5	6	5	4	1	2		4	2	7		5		101	
SEL	1	1	1				1			1					1	2											1					9	
SEN	5	4		4	1	3	4	1	1	4	4	3	24	14	7	1			10	8	3	6	2	2	3	5	4	1		3	1	128	
CAM	4	2	2	4	4	1	4	2			2		14	12	9	5	1		4	5	4	4	4	2	1	4	4	3		2		103	
BEN	1	1						1					1	6						1	1											12	
MOR	4	1	1	3	2	4	1	1	1	3	1	2	10	15	4		11	9	3	3	2		1		1	1				2		86	
SFA	1	3	1														2		4			1				1				1		14	
ANG				1		1	1		1						1			1			2	3		1								12	
ZIM		1					1												2	1		1		1								7	
UGN																					2											2	
BUF					1		1	2			1		5	3	2	1			1	1		5					1					24	

[illegible]



## Appendix B

### Detailed typology of African footballers Give Back Phenomenon (Types of projects)

