

# Adaptive Transnational Identity and the Selling of Soccer: The New England Revolution and Lusophone Migrant Populations

Miguel Moniz

*The essay provides an overview of adaptive transnational identity processes related to soccer among Lusophone migrant communities in New England. Particular attention is paid to how the New England Revolution soccer team (in the US first division) markets the club to Lusophone migrants and as a result participates in the transnational social field, important for migrant economic and social integration in local contexts. The essay provides insight into adaptive transnational migration processes by examining an institution that may not discursively linked to the migrant group, but that nonetheless participates in the construction and maintenance of the adaptive transnational social category.*

## Introduction

In 1996, a group of US investors inaugurated the first competitive season of the MLS (Major League Soccer) a nation-wide first division professional soccer league.[1] The formation of the league had been planned for years, and its installation was one of FIFA's contingencies in awarding the 1994 World Cup to the US. It was the hope of the owners to create a financially viable league that would develop local talent, and appeal to an increasingly widespread and growing interest in the game in the US. The establishment of soccer in the States was also a goal of FIFA, given the vast financial potential of the almost untapped North American market.

The league was composed of US players (most not quite good enough to play in Europe or elsewhere; along with some aging stars and marginal players from Europe and South America who, although past their prime, were nonetheless standouts in the early years of the MLS. Another group of MLS players that yet form an important pool of talent for the league are first and second-generation Americans, including players

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Miguel Moniz, Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Social (ISCTE), Lisbon. Correspondence to: CEAS, Edifício ISCTE, Av. Forças Armadas, 1600-083 Lisboa, Portugal. Email: Miguel\_Moniz@netcabo.pt

such as Claudio Reyna (of Portuguese and Argentine parents) Alexi Lalas (Greek parents) Tab Ramos (from Uruguay) and more recently, Freddy Adu (from Ghana). Playing in the MLS during its inaugural year was the not-so-much-of-an *El Pibe* Carlos Valderamma (who was 35 by season's end). Much has changed for the MLS since 1996, but the quality of the talent in the first year was such that the aging Valderamma finished as League MVP – despite missing nine games due to injuries and Colombia national team commitments.

One concern in the formation of the MLS was how the nascent league would develop and maintain a fan base. Unlike Europe, where football aficionados come from diverse social strata, among most Americans outside of migrant communities, soccer was predominantly an elite, suburban sport of the college educated and their children.[2] Another group of potential fans were school-aged children who played the games in local leagues. Although these children enjoy the game, and others may have either played or watched it in college, most Americans had little tradition of watching and supporting local professional soccer teams. Of course in 1968, the North American Soccer League (NASL) emerged, but the fate of NASL served as a cautionary tale as the league ultimately failed, struggling for most of its existence at the verge of bankruptcy before going under for good in 1985. NASL also featured prominent, over-the-hill foreign stars, including Pelé, who nonetheless dominated while playing for the New York Cosmos.[3]

Although developing a fan base and interest in the league presented obvious problems for its projected financial success, a number of factors contributed to optimism among investors over the long-term financial viability of their new endeavour. The 1994 World Cup final phase, held at stadiums throughout the US, and including the stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts (the home of the New England Revolution[4] located in the geographic heart of the area's Lusophone migrant population) did much to raise the visibility of soccer in the US, and to promote the sport among a largely ignorant population. That the US national team has had recent success, advancing to the last three World Cup final phases (making it to the quarter finals of the 2002 cup); and that the team has slowly moved up in the FIFA rankings to hold a top 10 spot as of 2006, has also done much to promote the game in the states. The success of the US women's national team, and the celebrity status accorded to the team that beat China on penalty kicks (5-4) in the 1999 Women's World Cup, which was also held in the US, was another factor. Yet another issue was the emergence of soccer in the suburbs, among grade-school aged, middle-class children.

Translating nascent interest in the game among individuals with little history or tradition of supporting professional soccer so that they would pay money to go to games and watch them on television (ensuring strong enough ratings for league TV contracts) was key to the financial success of the MLS. Indeed, one major marketing problem with soccer in the US was due to a tradition of televising sporting events based on the corporate driven rhythms of baseball, (American) football, basketball and hockey in which frequent stoppage in play – to accommodate advertisers – allows for commercials to be aired throughout the telecast. The 1994 World Cup final phase, for example, was almost not televised in the US, due to broadcast television stations insistence that FIFA change the format of the games so that time could be taken and

commercials shown, or that the games be broken up into quarters so more advertising could be aired during the extra intervals.

Given the cultural logic of the US market one strategy adopted by team owners to varying degrees of success was to promote the league among migrant communities. Given these communities' deep knowledge of the game and cultural tradition of participating in the sport, it would be natural that team owners would play the 'ethnic card' – as one of the main US soccer sportswriters referred to the practice of hiring players or coaches from a team's ethnic demographic.

It was hoped that migrant passion for soccer would transpose into increased interest in, and revenue for, MLS teams. In different parts of the US these included migrants from Mexico, Spanish speaking Central and South America, Ireland, and the group examined in this essay, who settled in southeastern New England – Lusophone migrants and their descendents from the Azores, Cape Verde, Madeira, continental Portugal and Brazil (as well as California, where the San Jose Earthquakes also played among a sizeable Azorean migrant population[5]).

Various authors have treated how capitalist enterprises function within migrant communities and across national boundaries. In their influential work delineating the analytical usefulness and limitations of examining migrant social processes in a transnational frame, several chapters in Glick-Schiller *et al.*[6] treat the issue. In the book Lessinger,[7] Georges,[8] Ong,[9] Richman,[10] as well as Mankekar,[11] for example, examine facets of capitalist business enterprises and how the flow of money, labour and products across national borders shape cultural and adaptive social processes in both receiving and homeland communities. Likewise, other studies have examined similar processes among Lusophone populations including Harder,[12] Chapin,[13] Seiber,[14]and Sarkissian.[15]

In these and other studies, analyses generally examine the transnational migrant group from the point of view of their production of goods for capitalist markets rather than their consumption of them. That is, even when cultural artefacts are wholly reinvented for commodification, as in Sarkissian's examination of reinvented Portuguese rituals in Malacca to attract tourist dollars, the emphasis is upon how the culture of a migrant group is produced by that group to be sold to others.

The marketing of soccer by the MLS and the New England Revolution to the Lusophone communities of the region is unique in this regard. It involves capitalist production by a company outside the migrant group that in pursuing its own financial well-being both consciously and incidentally appeals to the cultural interests of local migrant groups. Through these market driven business activities, the US professional soccer league has had a concomitant effect on transnational migrant identity discourses and adaptive cultural processes among Lusophone and other migrant communities. What this study makes clear is that local expressions of transnational belonging, which have a subsequent effect on local political, economic and cultural power processes, are not only created, reinforced and maintained by the transnational migrant group itself, but can also be accomplished by self-interested forces outside of it. Further, the migrant Lusophone communities treated in this essay have had a concomitant effect on how the sport is perceived in the region as a whole, and through consumerism have

themselves shaped the business practices of a capitalist enterprise in such a way that serves their own ends.

### **Lusophone Migration in New England**

Lusophone migrants – predominantly from the mid-Atlantic archipelago of the Azores, along with those from Cape Verde and Madeira – have been settling in New England in significant numbers since the late 1800s. Mainstays on the crews of whalers, the Portuguese abandoned the ocean for lives as farmers upon landing in America. (It is no accident that the largest Azorean and Cape Verdean migrant communities in New England have either currently and/or historically been located in America's great whaling cities, such as New Bedford.) Although most contemporary studies of Portuguese migration in the United States tend to highlight the urban migrant populations (usually working in textile and other factories), the Portuguese also dominated certain mid twentieth century agricultural activity on both coasts. Although many still toil in factories and industrialized work, in New England, older and contemporary migrants from the Azores, Madeira, continental Portugal and Cape Verde and their descendents, along with newer arrivals from Brazil, currently predominantly hold positions in construction and the service industry.

The history of Lusophone migration to the US is understood as a narrative of economic, political and natural-disaster-escaping refugees; unravelling the complexity of ethnic group formation among this group of 'Portuguese' and related social processes as they have evolved over the twentieth century, however, is a fascinating exercise in understanding overlapping contextual and instrumental identities.[16]

Foremost, although they are termed 'Portuguese', only a relatively small percentage of the migrants in the United States come from continental Portugal: most have as their point of origin the mid-Atlantic Azores islands. Constructions of Portuguese identity in both the islands and among the contemporary migrant communities have historically been shaped in part by economic and political disputes among various factions in the Azores and continental Portugal over the 500 years since the islands' population. This intensified at various points over the past 30-plus years with the independence movements in the African colonies having a counterpart in the Azores,[17] and has continued, given the Azores unique autonomous political status, which provides the islands with political and economic autonomy, their own President and parliament, yet simultaneously has them enveloped through law, national status and discourses of cultural belonging within the Portuguese nation. The process is mirrored in Madeira, and although the situation is somewhat more complex in Cape Verde, given its political status as an independent nation, for migrant Cape Verdeans who maintain Portuguese passports, the situation is also similar.[18]

Migration has been a key structural element of economic and political adaptation in both the sending and receiving communities of the majority population island Portuguese, as well as among the pockets of continental Portuguese migrants. Further, concrete and discursive links among these migrants cause them to conceive of this Diaspora through a transnational frame.[19]

As a result, the maintenance of both conceptual and practical links among the transnational populations living across Lusophone spaces in North America and their geographic points of origin have simultaneously been carried out through political processes[20] as much as they have taken place as part of practical economic survival networks.[21] As this essay is in part situated in theoretical discussions of transnational identity and Diaspora (with cautions on the limitations of the analytical usefulness of the terms), I would note my agreement with Gonzales,[22] when he points out that a Diaspora group, dispersed from the homeland, maintains what is a mythical connection to it. Nonetheless, such myths have consequences for those ordering their social lives through them. In this I side with Tölölyan,[23] Cohen,[24] Safran,[25] Vertovec,[26] and Klimt and Lubkemann,[27] who move beyond the concept of Diaspora merely as a way of conceptualizing dispersion to examine the practical nature of those links created between homeland and host societies and how these bonds change the nature of social practices among those living in the involved geographic locales.

Anthropological analyses of transnational identity formation and its theoretical relevance to explain a unique set of social processes provide a useful tool to unravel Portuguese migration to and from North America over the past 100 years. A thorough explanation of the workings of transnational networks among Lusophone migrants is well beyond the scope of this essay, but it should serve to note that reference is made to a sense of belonging in a transnational collective at the level of participant discourse that runs the entire social spectrum from poor economic refugees with family sending them remittances or offering them jobs across national boundaries, to business interests, to politicians. Further, the discourses are neither narrowly confined to a small group of participants, nor merely empty, feel-good political speech. The discourses reflect concrete connections that shape cultural and social structures across transnational spaces (even as they also reify those structures and even if they only exist in delimited contexts).

Analyzing ethnic group formation through reference to the instrumental and adaptive ends achieved in the process, provides insight into the complex formation of local ethnic identities among Lusophone populations in New England. It also accounts for the contextual and overlapping sense of belonging that these populations have. Jobs, social status and economic opportunity have been denied or offered based upon the distinction. But the relationship between Azorean islanders, Madeiran, continentals and including many Cape Verdeans and broader constructions of the Portuguese category is not simply antagonistic and binary. What makes the case interesting is that the same individuals who separate themselves by engaging in social networks and political and economic interest groups based on one category also maintain a broader sense of 'Portuguese identity' (which in New England can include Cape Verdeans) that links them to the others, and finds them also sharing political and social institutions within a broad Lusophone migrant group. This group also includes (albeit in complicated fashion) migrants from Brazil.[28] What are at one point collective identity formations that are antagonistic to 'Portuguese' (that is, Azorean, Madeiran) can be in another moment the very marker of one's belonging in the 'Portuguese' category itself. As the process plays out in the Lusophone migrant communities, there is not a simple

one-to-one relationship between national identity and ethnicity. Beyond national citizens, the 'Portuguese' category as it is locally used can also include those born in the US and those from diverse points of geographic (and national) origin.

For the purposes of analytical clarity, I would state that transnational identity is not here employed merely to define a collective, but rather is consistent with uses of the concept that analyse migrant identity formation: 1. in which migrants are conceptually and structurally linked to their transnational sending societies, 2. by way of understanding political and economic adaptation, 3. that occurs in specific geographic locales, 4 but with reference to and as a result of the connection to the broader group as a whole. As is often pointed out, that transnational groups are imagined social constructions, however this does not diminish the fact that the social processes that coalesce around such constructions all have quite real implications for the involved social actors.

There are many socio-cultural links that serve to connect the Lusophone migrants with their homeland: among them remittances, family visits, media coverage, business practices, political discourse and action. One of the most prominent institutions creating and reinforcing the transnational link among the Lusophone populations in New England, however, is the game of soccer.

### **Transnational Identity, Lusophone Migrants and Soccer**

Soccer has a long tradition among the Portuguese communities of New England, with the Portuguese-speaking migrant population playing a key role (along with migrants from Italy, Britain, Ireland, Mexico, Greece and the Ukraine) in the sport's development in the US. Although international success of the US teams has been spotty, within pockets of the country the sport has thrived, due largely to Portuguese teams and Portuguese players. At mid-century the Southern New England Soccer League (SNESL) included Adelino 'Billy' Gonsalves (born in Tiverton, Rhode Island of parents from Madeira) considered to be the greatest native-born player in US soccer history, and the forward on the US All-Century team named by Gannett News Services. Gonsalves was instrumental in bringing the US team to the semi-finals in the 1930 World Cup and also playing in 1934. The multiple US Open Cup Champion Fall River Marksmen from the league had a roster populated by Portuguese players, as did another Cup Champion, Ponta Delgada (named for the Azorean city) that included US Captain Joe Rego-Costa. Portuguese players are honoured in the US National Soccer Association Hall of Fame with Gonsalves, New Bedford's Arnold Oliver, and Ed Sousa and John Souza, who played on the US team that beat England 1-0 in the 1950 World Cup, handing the UK what many consider to be its worst defeat ever in Belo Horizonte.

In 1973, Luso-Americans founded the Luso-American Soccer Association (LASA) in New England. LASA was widely recognized as one of the premiere amateur leagues in the US and has produced a bevy of top players that would later have success in Europe, the MLS and on the Portuguese and Brazilian national teams. In 2001, LASA merged with yet another Luso-American founded league, to form the New England Luso-American Soccer Association (NELASA). Currently, NELASA boasts some 50 teams from under-11 to Veterans.



Another contribution of the Lusophone communities to US soccer are the many coaches the communities have produced at the professional, collegiate and especially youth-league levels. In those areas of southeastern New England with prominent Portuguese populations, the children of Portuguese migrants also populate and dominate local high school soccer teams. There is nary a non-Lusophone high school soccer player in Southeastern New England, boy or girl, who does not have a teammate of Azorean, Madeiran, Cape Verdean, or continental Portuguese descent or increasingly, a teammate who was him or herself not born in Brazil.

The sport provides a nexus through which an array of socio-cultural integrative ends are accomplished. Migrants are able to transpose pre-migration structural cultural patterns to the migrant community and transnational in-group belonging is both expressed and reified. Participating in this transnational frame while identifying as Portuguese[29] brings jobs, housing, political and economic power, satisfies psychological needs, and provides a range of other advantages (along with responsibilities) consistent with belonging in a mutually beneficial communal group.[30]

Alliances to specific Portuguese teams and players, along with local broadcasts on radio and television of live matches or news from the Superliga and international competitions link migrants to their homeland; and through their highly-visible participation in the sport – as with other prominent markers of cultural identity, including socio-religious rituals, restaurants, social clubs, parades, and the like – ‘The Portuguese’ are conceived as a distinct ethnic group, as soccer provides them with a set of tropes to mark boundaries (important for instrumentalist constructions of ethnic identity).[31]

Among the Portuguese migrant communities, gatherings commune at restaurants, cafés, clubs and homes as fans watch games on RTPi (the Portuguese state international channel, broadcast on local cable outlets among New England’s Lusophone communities) and via Satellite from the first division, or international matches featuring the Portuguese or Brazilian *Seleção*. Often these gatherings take place at migrant soccer clubs that sponsor local teams and leagues, hold community integrative social events and organize visits of Portuguese teams and players.

Political activism has also emerged due to a passion for soccer, as interest groups formed to successfully compel local cable companies to carry RTPi, the result of migrants wanting to watch Superliga games. RTPi and local Portuguese language television have a number of *futebol* shows, including weekly-highlights of games, covering teams fighting for the *campeonato* of the Superliga to highlights of teams from nearly every small village in the islands. The Portuguese language press in New England also promotes transnational links around soccer, covering not only games, but also successful athletes from the transnational community. Receiving among the most prominent press of this kind in recent years has been the all-time leading scorer of the Portuguese *Seleção*, Pauleta, from São Miguel, Azores.[32] Bars, restaurants and local affiliates of Portuguese teams, like Fall River’s Benfica Club, provide satellite broadcasts of games which attract Portuguese-speaking as well as non-Portuguese soccer fans, watching matches from the Superliga, the UEFA Champions Cup, or the Taça Europa which are simply not broadcast in American bars. Also serving Lusophone and non-Lusophone patrons are migrant-owned soccer shops in the communities, among the more

prominent in the region. In such cases, transnational networks – embedded in both the connection to soccer, and the structures through which the connection is expressed – clearly provide tangible economic benefits to those who promote and participate in them.

In other activities typical to transnational economic exchange networks, North American travel agencies set up package deals for migrants and their children to travel to Portugal for games,[33] infusing money in both the homeland economy and in migrant business enterprises. Azoreans returning from watching matches in the continent will meet relatives on transatlantic stop-overs, or stay for a few extra days in the islands on their way back to North America. Many of the US-born generation will meet family that they may not already know. It is an opportunity for the second generation and those born in Portugal who left at an early age to create personal contacts with family that can be renewed for years to come.

Further, as soccer has become increasingly popular in the United States, the game provides American-born generations a mechanism to accomplish complex processes of identification and synthesis within the often contradictory cultural contexts between their birth and their parents' homes. Rooting for (usually their father's) favourite Portuguese team or for the *Seleção*, whether they travel to games or watch them in bars, they participate in the construction and conceptualization of the transnational community. The discourses also help them to define the nature of belonging in broader terms.

Ahead of the US-Portugal match in the 2002 World Cup, for example, local Portuguese and English language media outlets reported on allegiances in the Lusophone community for or against the two teams. Some expressed disappointment that the game had to be played at all, and hoped both would move out of the group. However, if only one could go forward, there was no question, Portugal was the clear favourite. On the final day of group play, various permutations would allow Portugal to advance, including either a win or a US loss. Watching the game in a Portuguese restaurant in Rhode Island, with about 80 other fans,[34] the American-born teenagers I interviewed (about a dozen were present) were far more conflicted than their parents. Even though the teenagers stated that they hoped the US would advance, that they were watching the Portuguese game live (as the US game was being simultaneously played), points to adaptive aspects of the transnational frame in relation to soccer. Watching games on TV, going to see Portuguese teams, or playing the game itself together provides fathers and their children with a common space through which a range of inter-generational issues[35] can be mediated.

Through their expertise in the game, as players, coaches and spectators; and their deep cultural tradition in the sport, soccer provides the migrants with one of few social fields in which their status as 'Portuguese' confers on them authority over (non-Portuguese) Americans.[36] An ethnographic example that demonstrates this authority is instructive. After the friendly ahead of the 2002 World Cup finals, in which Holland manhandled the US at Foxborough, a migrant sportswriter from the local Portuguese press called-out US coach Bruce Arena at the press conference, lambasting the scheme employed in the match, saying with disdain, 'do you expect to win with this tactic in



the tournament?' The unspoken part of the question was 'against Portugal', a heavy favourite going into the 2002 Mundial, and the US's first opponent. Arena responded defensively to the not-so-veiled criticism, as the reporter kept the pressure on. Arena would get the last-laugh,[37] but the point is that there are few other spaces open to Lusophone migrants to treat high-status non-Lusophones the way the reporter questioned Arena. From a socio-linguistic perspective, underpinning the exchange was the presumption of expertise on the part of the migrant from the small, limited Portuguese-language media, over the American, who happened to be the coach of the US national team.

### **The New England Revolution and the Lusophone Communities**

A topic common to transnational identity analyses is the economic relation between homeland and Diaspora communities among a transnational migrant group. Another phenomenon has occurred among the Lusophone Diaspora communities of New England in relation to the New England Revolution. Both intentionally and tangentially, the non-Portuguese business has contributed in significant ways to the construction and maintenance of the transnational social field, consequentially contributing to how Lusophone migrant communities adapt to the broader society of which they are a part.

Other non-Lusophone companies market to Lusophone populations in some limited ways. Circulars for regional supermarkets are placed in local Portuguese-language newspapers (as well as other businesses that advertise in the papers or on Portuguese-language TV and radio). The stores promote transnational identity links by including Azorean, Brazilian, Cape Verdean etc. food items on the shelves of the 'International aisle'. Non-Portuguese businesses in Lusophone bars and restaurants are also served by renting facilities to Lusophone migrants for parties and dinners, and one cannot forget politicians, who, if they have Portuguese constituents, all love bacalhau, especially during an election year.

One capital interest that has been promoted among the Lusophone (and Hispanic) communities is the New England Revolution of the MLS. Business promotions, public relations (there are two press representatives for the Revolution, one is a native Portuguese speaker), players on the team (although a much more limited aspect of marketing, given the role of coaches in personnel decisions) and special events have all been either intentionally designed, or have operated as a matter of course, to appeal to local Lusophone populations.

The Revolution has signed players from Lusophone countries to fill its international roster spots, and has drawn talent from the migrant communities themselves. The Revs (as they are known affectionately by fans) have had a number of Lusophone players. Mozambique-born, Sporting goal-scoring forward, Chiquinho Conde moved from the Portuguese Superliga to become the Revs first international player of note when he was signed in 1997, in a move directed at promoting the team among Lusophone migrants. Jaír, the Cape Verdean national team star; Carlos Semedo a continental Portuguese player whose parents are Cape Verdean; Tony Freitas, a former Portuguese first division bench player with Marítimo and Massachusetts native whose parents are from the

Azores; and several Brazilian players including Cassio have been signed by the Revs. Prior to the first season, the team's GM, Brian O'Donovan, travelled to Lisbon, making contacts with Portuguese teams in 1995, including Sporting and Benfica, and although they were not hired, spoke with Portuguese candidates who were under consideration to be the team's first coach, including António Simões and António Oliveira. He was also being advised by Carlos Queiroz about potential players.

The conscious marketing to ethnic communities was an objective of the MLS. To this end, in 1995, the league named Doug Logan – who is of Cuban and English ancestry and bilingual – its Commissioner, a move that was hoped would result in contacts with international teams (and their players) in Europe and Central and South America, while also working to promote the game among migrants from those areas.[38] Rule changes since the first season have also worked to make American soccer closer resemble the football of the rest of the world. For example, the league did away with the bizarre hockey style penalty kick to decide ties, in which the ball was dribbled from midfield before the shot was taken. Team names reflect the strategy, as well, making them more marketable to migrant fan bases, as is the case with the new Los Angeles entry, Club Deportivo Chivas, which has an affiliation with CD Guadalajara of Mexico, and has among the most ardent marketing programmes for migrant fans in the MLS.

In interviews, Jaír, Carlos Semedo and Tony Freitas said they knew about the presence of the Lusophone communities and their passion for soccer before they joined the team, and in each case, the players said that such support was a draw in their coming to New England. While with the Revolution, the three players took an active role in Lusophone community life as well. By way of marketing and promoting brand loyalty to increasing numbers of soccer fans, The Revs offer community outreach events, including fundraisers and clinics in which team members participate. Lusophone players participated in events specific to the fans from their point of origin in both official and non-official ways, putting on clinics, going to bars, *festas* and dinners in the communities, etc., through which they acted as emissaries for the team. Walter Silva, a columnist in the Portuguese migrant press who also has a Portuguese-language radio show, has spoken out vociferously, calling the Revolution the true team of the migrant Portuguese and has been insistent that his fellow Portuguese support them.[39]

Of course team representatives note that the Revolution does not sign players based (solely) upon their ethnicity, but rather seeks players that will first and foremost help the team, and if a good player's ethnicity will appeal to a fan base, so much the better. In support of the team's contention that the quality of the player is foremost, it is true that popular Lusophone players have been traded and waived to be replaced by players who have no ethnic connection to the communities whatsoever. However, explaining those Portuguese who are not interested in the Revs, Adelino Ferreira, the Editor-in-Chief of the *Portuguese Times*, attributed part of the problem to the lack of Portuguese players on the roster in recent years. He added that loyalties to Superliga teams also keep many fans from connecting to the Revs, as they would rather follow Sporting or Benfica. There have in recent seasons been Brazilian players on the team, but Frank Dell'Apa, the *Boston Globe's* soccer columnist, said the team could do much

more to attract the local Lusophone community, stating that if Figo played for The Revs they would sell an extra 10,000 season tickets. According to him there has been some discussion about wanting to bring Figo to Foxborough in the future. Imperfect though the Revolution's efforts may be in this regard, Lusophone players clearly have attracted Lusophone fans.[40]

Promotion of the team in the communities has resulted in the Revolution sponsoring international 'friendlies' with Lusophone teams (which are also independently financially beneficial). Benfica, Sporting, Santa Clara (Azores), Maritimo (Madeira), and the Cape Verdean national team have all been brought to Foxborough to play against the Revolution, or each other. Local Portuguese community organizers first hosted matches at the stadium between Sporting and Benfica in the early 1970s, (which for years remained the highest attended non-World Cup match in the US). In recent years, MLS efforts have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number and quality of international teams coming to play in the US, especially at Foxborough, and especially Portuguese teams. Sporting recently came to the US and lost to the Revolution, while Benfica plays in America with some frequency, with one game against the Revs in 1998 drawing a gate of 40,000, which was more than double the teams' normal attendance figures during that time period. When Benfica plays in Foxborough, it is usually the stadium's largest soccer crowd of the year. Real Madrid has played in Giants Stadium in the New Jersey Meadowlands with Figo drawing many Luso-Americans from New Jersey and New England. In one of the larger games held at Foxborough the Cape Verdean National team played a friendly against Maritimo, in a match that brought in migrants from Cape Verde, Madeira and other Lusophone locales. Half-a-dozen players on the Cape Verdean team had close family relations living in the area, including former Revs player Jaír.[41]

Once in the area, most of these teams play other games, barnstorming among the Lusophone communities in friendlies with semi-pro and amateur teams. The bulk of the expenses to bring teams to the US is covered under the profit margin of the big match at Foxborough, making it financially viable for them to play the smaller Lusophone teams.

Another marketing strategy employed by the team has been to hold two games in a row, in which an important international game is then followed by a Revolution game. For example, the Revs boasted having the single largest crowd in the US for a non-international game for a regular season match held at the stadium in Foxborough in 1997. What is not included in the record book is that the match was the second half of a double-header after a Mexico-US World Cup qualifier. The game was played in the northeast US, in Foxborough (rather than Texas or California), in an attempt to place the most US fans in the stadium compared to the opposition. Despite staging the match as far from the Mexican border as possible (without playing in Canada) based on the number of fans, Mexico was by-far the home team. After the game, not all of the fans remained for the second match, but more than half did, including both Mexican and US fans alike.

In another example of how the Revolution participates in discursive and practical aspects of the transnational sphere, the team has travelled several times to Portugal and

Brazil, including once to the Azores, to conduct its training camp, living locally and playing games against teams across several divisions of the Portuguese and Brazilian Football Federations. Training in these locations against local teams presents an interesting wrinkle on transnational return migration. In the Azores, given the frequency with which migrants move back and forth, and given the long standing transnational connection to the region, Azorean soccer teams from New England frequently travel to the Azores to play teams during the summer months. The presence of such teams are among many transnational links between Portugal and its Diaspora communities.[42] The difference, of course, is that they are Luso-American teams affiliated with Portuguese migrant sports clubs. The process of the Revolution travelling to these Lusophone spaces, however is interesting, as the Revolution are not discursively included as a part of conceptions of the transnational community, even as they participate in and contribute to it.[43]

By playing in Portugal and Brazil, the Revs interests are served in a number of ways. Foremost, the team is able to test and improve its skills against excellent, readily available competition, in a cost-sensitive location. They are also able to market to their Lusophone fan base as well.[44] Intentionally or not, the Revolution bonded itself to the community by participating itself in one of the more profoundly fetishized Portuguese migrant cultural events: the return to the homeland. That they would do so by way of playing a game that is so deeply structurally embedded into Portuguese social life makes the phenomenon all the more interesting from the point of view of adaptive transnational identity processes, given that the agent for its expression and reification in this case is a capital enterprise that may cater to Lusophone populations, but is not controlled, organized or composed by them.

Another unique aspect of this social phenomenon is how the local press in New England, both in coverage of the training sessions as well as other activities related to soccer, also participate and contribute to the transnational social frame. It is only the rare article that focuses on the Lusophone communities in New England's largest newspapers, including *The Boston Globe* and *The Providence Journal* (aside, of course, from the travel section and crime reporting). Frank Dell'Apa of the *Boston Globe* is a notable exception, as his writing on The Revs and soccer in general has included pieces on Portuguese, Azorean and Luso-American soccer, including articles that chronicle Portuguese players and the historical role of the community in the development of the game in the US. He also travelled with the team, writing about them during their Lusophone training camps. On the Revolution's trip to the Azores, Dell'Apa's pieces can be included with similar articles that appear in the Portuguese migrant press contributing to Azorean constructions of transnational identity. Dell'Apa even pointed out how Azoreans define themselves as separate from Portugal, although a part of the nation, in an insightful piece he wrote about Pauleta.[45] He also wrote about other soccer teams in the islands, most of which would be familiar to almost anyone from the Azores, but unheard of in the US outside of the migrant community. Other non-Lusophone sportswriters have also covered the visits of Benfica, Sporting and other international matches in the US, taking the opportunity to also write about other facets of the Lusophone communities.[46]

In this process, The Revolution's business decisions set in motion a chain of events that have the regional press covering stories about the migrant communities, which would be highly unlikely to occur otherwise.

### Capital Interests and Transnational Identities

Adaptive links among migrant communities living in Diaspora with each other and populations from their conceived homeland are a commonplace occurrence. Among the Portuguese-speaking communities, this exists in more ways than can be catalogued. These links may not always be explicitly articulated, but from an analytical perspective, they are nonetheless expressed.[47]

Among the Revolution and its Lusophone fans, there exists a mutually dependent capitalist exchange relationship. In the process, the Revs are responsible for creating affective connections among the transnational group, while also earning money by participating in the cultural milieu of the migrant transnational frame. By conducting business in a way that will assist the teams financial bottom line (whether that includes conscious marketing to Lusophone populations or not), the ends of the Revolution are decidedly different from Lusophone community organizations (such as Espírito Santo Societies, committees organizing Day of Portugal celebrations, or the Azorean government) that cater to the communities, which do not solely have profit as a motivation. Likewise, The Revs' goals are even different from those of the Lusophone organizers with whom they work to sponsor visits by Portuguese teams. Independent of the intended outcome however, the team's activities nonetheless rely upon transnationally referenced and locally articulated expressions of in-group belonging: which are both adaptive in assisting the migrants to integrate into and gain power in their host society, even as it serves the teams financial ends, as well.[48]

In the match between the Cape Verdean *Seleção* and Marítimo at Foxborough, for example, the game was played as a fundraiser and tribute to a Cape Verdean community stalwart, Jorge Fidalgo (called by Jaír a personal friend) who had been murdered in a robbery. Money raised went to support soccer leagues in the prominently Lusophone cities of Brockton, New Bedford, Boston, Pawtucket and Providence. The match between the two Lusophone teams then, was integrated into a complex array of social, economic and cultural adaptive processes that took place and can be analyzed within the transnational frame, even as the primary sponsoring institution (The New England Revolution) was discursively located outside of that frame. Even though the Revolution (as they control production) have what could be termed an antagonistic relationship to the Lusophone communities (as consumers), the team and the communities both share an interest in the continued expression of transnational ties to the Lusophone points of origin.

The Revolution's activities promoting their own capitalist interests (like businesses within the group appealing to ethnic cultural tastes) result in the strengthening of local in-group belonging, giving the process of adaptation within the transnational social field greater relevance and making it more efficacious than it would be otherwise. Reinforcing these transnational identities is of course a secondary effect and not the actual objective

of the team's business operation. Regardless, there is a circular process in which Lusophone populations' connection to the homeland is bolstered by the activities of an outsider business; and that connection, in turn, assists the profit of the business.

These business decisions further promote the use of the transnational frame as a field of social action among migrants in their link to their homeland, and among American-born Lusophone descendents who are able to connect through soccer to a cultural feature in their native America, one that is complimentary to cultural practices of their parents.

An analysis of this phenomenon has significance for anthropological treatments of transnational migration in a number of areas. First, it demonstrates one specific way that consumer capitalist choices can be an agent for the maintenance of adaptive cultural identities, and how capitalist exchange can further the articulation of those identities – in a way that is divorced from the intentions and ends of the producing agents. Those producing goods and services for a transnational ethnic group, even though they are located outside of that group, still make a prominent contribution to identity processes as they are adaptively utilized by participants. Rather than expressing and reinforcing the transnational link by controlling the replication of cultural forms within their own community, the process through which adaptive transnational identity is utilized here demonstrates a more complex operation.

The ethnographic example elucidates the fiction of Diaspora construction that would cast the relationship between the homeland and the migrant community as exclusive, pointing to the multiplicity of overlapping connections among the homeland, the migrant community, as well as to the institutions encountered in the receiving community. It is of course obvious (although not always explicitly stated in analyses of transnational identity construction) that migrants have a relationship to capital and political institutions in their receiving communities that are located outside of transnational frames. Some of these relationships, as is the case with the Revolution, are structured in a way that bolsters the usefulness of social action within the transnational field even as the existence of that transnational field incidentally and consequently assists the capital and political interests of those institutions.

It is certainly the result of pre-existing discourses and cultural practices among the migrant group that led to the Revolutions' participation. It is significant, however, for analyses of how transnational migrant social fields operate, that one prominent institution participating in the maintenance of Lusophone transnational identity in Southeastern New England, is a non-Lusophone business.

Conversely, the marketing of soccer to migrants also demonstrates the effect that transnational identity constructions can have on the receiving communities themselves. The presence of the Lusophone migrant group in southeastern New England has had an influence on how a large non-Portuguese corporate entity does business in the region. And although the Revolution is not included in discourses of transnational in-group belonging, it does, nonetheless, at the level of operation, belong to it.

The transnational identity frame has provided anthropological analyses with a necessary theoretical language to understand migration without locating adaptive social processes among a migrant group in a fixed location, and by elucidating that migrant



social fields exist across national territories. It is useful, as that vocabulary continues to expand and be refined, that the transnational identity field not be understood merely in reference to a rigidly defined ethnic group, however imagined that group may be in its analytical description. The utility of transnational identity as an adaptive process rests in how it provides individual social actors with a way to access multiple loci of power as they are constructed and exist both in the homeland and in the migrant community. As is clear by the ethnographic example presented, yet another locus of power embedded in transnational identities is the relationship between migrants and non-migrant institutions in the receiving community. The symbiotic nature of the relationship is also notable. Rather than a migrant group fighting as a labour-class might against a company for higher wages (as has often been the case for Lusophone labourers in New England factories, mills and other large corporate employers) the non-Lusophone business here contributes in symbiotic and positive ways in a social field useful to migrant adaptation. Structurally embedded in the transnational frame though they may be, it is raw consumer choices, however, that drive those business practices.

Transnational identity analyses that examine a specific ethnic or national migrant group without paying attention to the local context in which that identity formation operates, limit the ability of anthropologists to critique not only anthropological understandings of the nation, but of ethnicity as well. Analyses of the kinds of interactions pointed to in this ethnographic example, can assist with an understanding of the adaptive nature of transnational identity constructions and can contribute to a fuller understanding of how such identities serve as social actors in a non-essentialized and processual manner.

## Notes

- [1] Soccer is used here and throughout the essay, instead of football, as it is the term used locally by those in this analysis, Portuguese-speakers included.
- [2] At my high school in the 1980s, there were two kinds of soccer players. Those from Portugal or of Portuguese descent who came from one side of town, and non-Portuguese who came from the 'rich' parts of town.
- [3] Few fans of Portuguese futebol outside of the US, however, know that the great Eusébio ended his playing career in the NASL (spending his first year in the league with the Boston Minutemen).
- [4] Regionally the Revolution are largely an afterthought, as the stadium is the home of the famed New England Patriots of American Football, multiple NFL Superbowl champions. Patriots owner Robert Kraft also owns the Revolution.
- [5] This San Jose group was outside the scope of my field work however.
- [6] Glick-Schiller *et al.*, *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration*.
- [7] Lessinger, 'Investing or Going Home?', 53–80.
- [8] Georges, 'Gender, Class, and Migration in the Dominican Republic', 81–99.
- [9] Ong, 'Limits to Cultural Accumulation', 125–44.
- [10] Richman, 'A *Lavalas* at Home / A *Lavalas* for Home', 189–200.
- [11] Mankekar, "India Shopping", 75–98.
- [12] Harder, 'Between Two Worlds'.
- [13] Chapin, 'Channels for Change', 44–52.
- [14] Seiber, 'Composing Lusophonia', 163–88.
- [15] Sarkissian, 'Playing Portuguese', 215–32.

- [16] Instrumentalism here is situated in the anthropological tradition that views ethnic group formation as situational, contextual and ultimately adaptive. See: Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*; Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa*; Colson, 'Contemporary Tribes and the Development of Nationalism', 201–6; Eller and Coughlin, 'The Poverty of Primordialism', 183–202; Gluckman, *Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand*; Hicks, 'Introduction' in *Ethnic Encounters*; Mitchell, *The Kalela Dance*; Moermon, 'Who are the Lue?', 1215–30.
- [17] Even the *independentista* and *autonomista* movement in the Azores was carried out in reference to, and with the participation of, the migrant communities. The revolutionary FLA guerrillas promoting separation from the mainland had its base of operations in the Micaelense migrant community of Fall River, Massachusetts.
- [18] Other factors encouraged Cape Verdeans to articulate a Portuguese identity, for example, US law up until 1954 barred migrants from African nations from becoming citizens. Race discourses in the US that divided Portuguese national populations by phenotype have also created some interesting facets of Portuguese ethnic processes.
- [19] According to Bank of Portugal statistics, some \$40 million was transmitted from migrants in the US and Canada to accounts back in Portugal. This amount does not include money from visits, presents, etc., but it does indicate in clear economic terms, at least, the connection that these migrants maintain with their homeland.
- [20] Noivo, 'Towards a Cartography of Portugueseness', 255–76.
- [21] Moniz, *Exiled Home*.
- [22] Gonzales, *Dollar, Dove and Eagle*.
- [23] Tölölyan, 'Rethinking Diasporas', 3–36.
- [24] Cohen, *Global Diasporas: an Introduction*.
- [25] Safran, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies', 82–99.
- [26] Vertovec, 'Three Meanings of "Diaspora", exemplified among South Asian Religions', 277–99.
- [27] Klimt and Lubkemann, *Special Issue on Portugueseness, Migrancy and Diasporicity*.
- [28] Various social advocacy institutions, like the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, the Immigrants Assistance Center of New Bedford, the Casa da Saudade Library in Massachusetts are shared by Lusophone populations regardless of point of origin. Newer arrived Brazilians are assisted by living in areas with large Portuguese populations, as an array of linguistic and cultural brokers are already present to help them with transitions. In only a few cases (including New York City) have Brazilians settled in the US isolated from communities that did not have pre-existing Lusophone populations. The alliance and the connection among the entire Lusophone group can be contentious and antagonistic, but it is always, in some fashion or another, present.
- [29] Defined normatively, these transnational identities are not rigidly construed, and a 'Portuguese' who may benefit (or not) from belonging in one context, also has other adaptive identity frames available, through which being a 'Portuguese' is not primary or even non-existent.
- [30] Social processes involved in Lusophone transnational migrant networks have been examined by various studies that point out the instrumental factors underpinning the process including Bianco, 'Multiple Layers of Time and Space'; Leal, 'Identities and Imagined Homelands', 233–54; Lacerda, 'O Atlântico Açoriano'; Moniz, 'Exiled Home'; Lubkemann, 'Situating Wartime Migration in Central Mozambique' and 'The Moral Economy of Portuguese Postcolonial Return', 189–214.
- [31] See, of course, Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, for the necessity of marking difference in the establishment of ethnic identity.
- [32] Pauleta is a one-man trope used by Azoreans in the homeland and Diaspora to construe the social identity that finds them simultaneously separate from Portugal, even as they are enveloped within Portugal, mirroring the political status of the Azores within the Portuguese state; Ameida, 'Menino de uma Figa'.
- [33] I once saw a friend while flying back to America from the Azores. Asking how long he had been visiting his island, he said he and his nephew had only spent the weekend in Lisbon

- (where the plane originated) watching Sporting and Benfica play. As it turned out, about one third of the plane was filled with pilgrims returning from watching futebol in the holy land of the *Luz*.
- [34] In another example of instrumental transnational identity, patrons paying to watch the game with other Portuguese fans (and a large buffet) brought in a quick couple of thousand dollars for the owner.
- [35] See Portes, *The New Second Generation*; and Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*, for analyses of conflict between the migrant and locally-born generations in the US.
- [36] A fecund research topic would be to examine the relationship between migrant groups and native-born Americans around soccer, given the generally low-status social role of certain migrants in the US, and the fact that their cultural knowledge of soccer is recognized, even envied, by the educated non-migrant elites who participate.
- [37] The US won in what was then considered a major World Cup upset. A friend remarked that one thing he hated about being a soccer fan in the US is that going outside after the win, there was nothing but silence, as the victory went unnoticed by most Americans. Of course he watched the game in Providence, Rhode Island, in a region dominated by Portuguese migrants, providing an alternative explanation to the silence on the streets.
- [38] F. Dell'Apa, 'FIFA in MLS Corner'. *Boston Globe*, 26 March 1995, 69.
- [39] The Revs Portuguese press representative continues to promote the team in the communities, recently contacting the two main New England Portuguese language weekly newspapers to run a half page advert for the team in every issue.
- [40] Another factor is that the team has had much success with the current roster, making the finals of the MLS Cup twice and the US Open Cup once since 2001, and may be wary of making many changes.
- [41] An ethnographic note: the Cape Verdean-dominated crowd sang the Portuguese national anthem far more audibly than that of Cape Verde. Rather than speaking to national loyalties, it points out the complexity of Cape Verdean identity in the US as many Cape Verdeans migrated prior to independence, and the fact that the US-born generation knows neither national anthem. It may also suggest that many Cape Verdeans have loyalties (and access) to Superliga teams and the Portuguese *Seleção* and have simply heard that anthem with more frequency.
- [42] Moniz, 'Exiled Home'.
- [43] During the Revs trip, there were Azoreans in the islands who knew the team better than most Americans in New England (Frank Dell'Apa personal communication, 2005).
- [44] The team chose New Orleans for its most recent training camp, another interesting wrinkle given the large number of displaced migrant refugees from the city who settled in New England post Hurricane Katrina.
- [45] F. Dell'Apa, 'Islands in the Soccer Stream'. *Boston Globe*, 17 March 2004, F8.
- [46] For one Benfica visit, several reporters illustrated the importance of soccer to the Portuguese by recounting the (likely apocryphal) story of Eusébio going to his preferred restaurant, Adegas Tia Matilde, with a group of diners, coincidentally at the same time as Portuguese President Mario Soares, both men desiring the one private dining room available. The reporters expressed delight with the fact that it was Eusébio who was given the private room over the President.
- [47] References to transnational identity are also consciously made. Alzira Silva, for example, the Azorean Government's Director of the Communities, once defined Azoreans in the following way: 'The Azores does not end within the borders of its Autonomous region much less within the borders of the Portuguese Nation. Also a part of the Azores are the spaces where millions of Azoreans have settled, far from their homeland, where they always keep a part of in a corner of their hearts' (Silva, *Anuário de Ouro*). With a resident population of over 240,000, the number 'millions' obviously does not include only those born in the Azores but also refers to those born abroad of Azorean descent.
- [48] Discussions of the financial goals of the Revolution would not be fair without making mention of the fact that the team's owner is a life-long resident of the region, and his owner-

ship of the both the Patriots and the Revolution have been marked by what appear to be a quite genuine affection for the community in which the teams play. Robert Kraft sacrificed millions of shorter term dollars on two occasions, in order to keep the Patriots in the community. First, he refused the previous owner's attempt to buy out the team's lease with the stadium (which Kraft held) losing millions in the process, and then setting the record for the most paid at that time in the US for a sports franchise to keep the team in New England. He then turned down a major deal to move the team to Connecticut, financing millions of his own dollars for infrastructural improvements in the Massachusetts stadium that would have been paid for by the state in Connecticut had he accepted the deal. This is mentioned to point out that although profit motivation clearly drives the teams' bottom line decision making, it is not necessarily the only factor.

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