



WHAT SHOULD I WEAR? THE CHOICE OF THE NATIONALITY OF MIGRANT MEDALISTS IN ATHLETICS IN TOKYO 2020

Abstract - Competitions in athletics at the Olympic Games are between athletes, not nations. The national character is present through the use of national symbols and the medals won by the competitors are counted in the table as national. Most of the competitors who reached the podium in the athletics disputes in the 2020 Olympic edition were migrant athletes and/or those who held plurinational ancestry. This article presents those life trajectories to discuss the criteria for defining nationality adopted by different athletes. This qualitative study, based on research carried out using official data from the International Olympic Committee and with the support of information obtained from journalistic sources, in addition to theoretical analysis. As conclusions, it appears that there is a relationship between migration and sports phenomena and that the definition of nationalities follows individual but also social criteria.

Keywords: Olympic Games; Olympic studies; emigration and immigration; sports nationality; ethnic identity.

COM QUE ROUPA EU VOU? A ESCOLHA DA NACIONALIDADE DE MIGRANTES MEDALHISTAS NO ATLETISMO EM TÓQUIO 2020

Resumo - As disputas no atletismo em Jogos Olímpicos são entre atletas, e não nações. Apesar disso, o caráter nacional se faz presente, pelo uso de símbolos nacionais e, obviamente, as medalhas conquistadas pelos competidores são contabilizadas no quadro como nacionais. Grande parte dos competidores que chegaram ao pódio nas disputas de atletismo na edição olímpica de 2020 era formada por atletas migrantes e/ou que possuíam ancestralidade plurinacional. Este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar as trajetórias de vida e discutir os critérios de definição de nacionalidade adotados por diferentes atletas. Trata-se de um estudo qualitativo, baseado em pesquisa realizada em dados oficiais do Comitê Olímpico Internacional e com o apoio de informações obtidas em fontes jornalísticas, além de análise teórica. Como conclusões, nota-se que há uma relação entre os fenômenos de migração e esportivo, e que a definição de nacionalidades segue critérios individuais, mas também sociais.

Palavras-chave: Jogos Olímpicos; estudos olímpicos; emigração e imigração; nacionalidade esportiva; identidade étnica.

¿QUÉ ROPA DEBO USAR? LA ELECCIÓN DE NACIONALIDAD DE MEDALLISTAS MIGRANTES EN ATLETISMO EN TOKIO 2020

Resumen - Las competencias de atletismo en los Juegos Olímpicos son entre atletas, no entre naciones. El carácter nacional está presente mediante el uso de símbolos nacionales y las medallas ganadas por los competidores se cuentan en la tabla como nacionales. La mayoría de los competidores que llegaron al podio en las disputas de atletismo en la edición olímpica de 2020 fueron atletas migrantes y/o de ascendencia plurinacional. Este artículo presenta esas trayectorias de vida para discutir los criterios de definición de nacionalidad adoptados por diferentes atletas. Este estudio cualitativo, basado en una investigación realizada con datos oficiales del Comité Olímpico Internacional y con el apoyo de información obtenida de fuentes periodísticas, además del análisis teórico. Como conclusiones, parece que existe una relación entre la migración y los fenómenos deportivos y que la definición de las nacionalidades sigue criterios individuales, pero también sociales.

Palabras-clave: Juegos Olímpicos; estudios olímpicos; emigración e inmigración; nacionalidad deportiva; identidad étnica.

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Introduction

More than 11,000 athletes, divided into 206 delegations, were the protagonists of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The biggest sporting competition on the planet had representatives of 204 national Olympic committees under its banners, members of the Russian Olympic Committee, suspended for violations of the world anti-doping code, and a team of refugee athletes.

Despite being a competition between athletes and not countries, as the Olympic Charter¹ preaches, there is no denying the character of national representation involved in a dispute such as the Olympic Games. The relationship between competition and the National States has existed since the first Olympic editions of the Modern Era and has already been the subject of study in several works²⁻⁵.

However, when dealing with a social and cultural phenomenon, it is necessary to consider that the criteria for granting nationalities are not universal, varying according to the legislation of each country. Some have *jus soli* as primacy, automatically permitting citizenship to those born in the national territory. Others found on *jus sanguinis*, in which the primacy is ancestry. The athlete becomes a national representative during a sporting competition in whatever way citizenship was granted. The colors of the uniforms and flags, and the performance of the victors' anthems make such connections evident.

Between all the sports modalities present in the Tokyo Olympic Games, athletics was the one with the most athletes: 2017 competitors, distributed in 48 events. The great diversity of events and athletes was also reflected on the podium: in all, 43 nations had at least one athlete among the top three in the athletics events in Tokyo.

Among the victorious athletes, it is possible to observe that the issue of nationalities is displayed, since there are different profiles, with a massive presence of migrants and or children of international migrants. This work aims to analyze the life trajectory of migrant athletes who won medals at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, pointing out the connections and singularities between their migratory processes and social factors, promoting a dialogue between the themes of sport and migration.

Methodology

This work rests on a qualitative reading based on data published on the official website of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and made available to those

accredited to cover the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games by the My Info system, which gathers information about athletes and Olympic events. As a complementary source of information, information about the life and athletic trajectories of migrant athletes was sought in news portals and newspapers. The proposed analysis has a transdisciplinary character, contemplating a theoretical review of concepts about migration and sport.

Migration and sport, connected phenomena

At the moment of the dispute, the athlete is no longer just an individual and becomes a symbol, a metaphor of the nation, in a touch of social magic, using a term by Bourdieu⁶.

The mystery of the ministry is one of those cases of social magic in which a thing or person becomes something other than what he is, a man (minister, bishop, delegate, deputy, secretary-general, etc.) and be identified as a group of men, the People, the Workers, etc. or as a social entity, the Nation, the State, the Church, the Party (p.158)

Bourdieu analyzes the politics and the power attributed to an individual due to the position to which he is appointed. Taking the liberty of transposing the same reasoning to the Olympic dispute, what makes an athlete 'Olympic' is precisely the moment of representing a country in an edition of the world's main sports competition. From that moment on, the athlete – protagonist of the event⁷, becomes associated as a representative of a country.

The media speeches reinforce that whoever participates in the dispute is not an individual, but a 'nation', and the very speeches of the competitors during and after the events reinforce the idea of this new status. The appropriation of symbols strengthens these bonds. However, the right to represent a nation in an event such as the Olympic Games is not for everyone – after all, when being considered an 'Olympic athlete' the athlete receives a different taxonomy from other athletes, thus receiving a differentiated prestige among his peers. It is a privilege for the few, only the best in each modality.

Athletes who go through a migratory process, or who have identity connections with more than one place, due to the character of national representation that they assume during major events, end up being exposed to a process of discussion visibility that goes beyond the field of sports qualities as highlight Engh and Agergaard⁸.

Throughout the 20th century, the possibilities of migration through sport became increasingly common, and at the beginning of the 21st century, this process had an even greater speed. A survey carried out by Campbell⁵ found that between 1998 and 2007, the International Athletics Federation received the request for a change of nationality from more than 250 athletes.

In another study, Poli⁹ mapped 270 naturalized athletes among the competitors who participated in the Athens Olympic Games in 2004. When analyzing the migratory flows of the competitors, the author found that developing nations appeared more as exporters of athletic labor, while the more economically developed countries benefited from the importation of talents.

However, the analysis of sports migrations must be done observing some peculiarities related to sports, including those related to the power structures of the modalities. A clear example occurs in athletics, in long-distance events. Even with all the limitations caused by economic and social factors, sub-Saharan Africa is power and reference in the 'production' of athletes. According to Evans¹⁰, this occurs because the sport has its geography.

Citing the migration of athletes and the representation of nations leads us to dialogue with issues of national identification of subjects. For MacNeill¹¹ when working with issues related to sport and identity, it is necessary to observe a series of factors, such as social location, cognitive aspects, and the experiences of identifying individuals. Along the same lines, Rowe¹² lists main points that must be observed, such as the connections between the athletes' places of origin and destination.

One of the characteristics of a transnational society was the increase in the flow of people across the planet, promoting an increasing hybridization, which leads, in some situations, to the possibility of choosing which society the subject best identifies with, as explained by Ianni¹³. The identity definition, instead of being something ready and presented externally, ends up being constructed by the subject, who makes such decisions based on different aspects: some value and make their decisions based on aspects of everyday life and the present, others evoke their ancestors and social constructions. It is important to note that, as it is an intimate construction, this is not an excluding process and there are fluid and mixed identities, as Houlihan points out¹⁴.

When carrying out studies on migration, it is valuable to note that this is a multifaceted phenomenon and in which there is no single standard for all individuals. Engh and Agergaard⁸ indicate that there are differences, for example, between sedentary migrants, those who end up settling in one place, and highly mobile ones, who end up changing places constantly, according to the opportunities that arise. Therefore, it is not enough to see that people move, but also the reasons that lead to migration and the creation or not of an identity related to a place.

Born in one nation, representatives of other

The granting of nationality varies according to the legal system of each country. The sports field usually works with the figure of the uniqueness of the sports nationality: that is, the athlete can only represent one nation¹⁵. There are possibilities for changing nationality, following criteria established by international federations, but at the time of the dispute, the athlete becomes associated with only one nation.

An interesting cut can be made by the birthplace of the Olympic medalists in athletics at the Tokyo 2020 Games. Several were born in territories different from the countries they represented - some were naturalized, others were supported by ancestry factors when deciding on their nationality's sports. There was also the case of three athletes born in overseas territories who had ties to more than one nation by ancestry:

Bashir Abdi: Born in Somalia, he moved to Belgium at the age of thirteen as a refugee, accompanied by his father, sister, and brother. Although his country of birth is considered a power in track and field events, he only started to practice track and field in Belgium. He was a bronze medalist in the marathon race – breaking a 45-year fast without podiums by Belgian athletes in the Olympic marathon¹⁶.

Mohammed Ahmed: After fleeing Somalia for Kenya, Mohammed Ahmed's family managed to migrate to Canada when he was 11 years old, settling in the Ontario region. He started to practice athletics as a teenager, in the new country. He participated in the Olympic Games in London in 2012 and in Rio de Janeiro in 2016¹⁷. In 2020, he won a silver medal in the 5000 meters.

Sifan Hassan: Born in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray, Sifan Hassan migrated to the Netherlands when she was 15 years old as a refugee. It was in the new country that she began to dedicate herself to athletics. At the Tokyo Olympics, she won three medals (gold in the 5,000 meters, gold in the 10,000 meters, and bronze in the 1,500 meters)^{18,19}.

Abdi Nageeye: Born shortly before the Somali Civil War began, in 1996 he moved from Somalia to Den Helder, Netherlands. There he and his two brothers stayed with his half-brother, who had already emigrated from Somalia. At age 10 his half-brother took him to the Syrian Arab Republic, where he spent three years before returning to live with his parents in Somalia. At age 15 he decided to try and return to the Netherlands. There was no Dutch embassy in Somalia, so he travelled in various cars and trucks to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with his money hidden in his sock. The Dutch embassy in Addis Ababa initially did not believe he had previously lived in the Netherlands until his old school teacher sent some of his notebooks as proof. He was then allowed to return to the Netherlands and went on to obtain Dutch citizenship. In Tokyo 2020 he won the silver medal at marathon²⁰.

Armand Duplantis: Born in the United States, Duplantis has always had dual citizenship, as his mother is from Sweden, a country that adopts *jus sanguinis* as a criterion for granting nationality. The choice to represent Sweden was based on the athlete's career planning, as his coach, Jonas Anshelm explains. “He has got the best of two worlds. To grow up in an environment where he has completely devoted himself to what he loves. And since he has grown older, he has been here (in Sweden) in the summers and belonged to a club and got the goodies from it (w.p).”²¹. At the Tokyo Olympics, Duplantis was a gold medalist in the pole vault event.

Jasmine Camacho-Quinn: Born in Charleston, USA, Jasmine chose to represent Puerto Rico. Her parents met at Charleston Southern University, where they were both track scholarship students, and older brother Robert is an American football star who plays defensive end for the Miami Dolphins. Her mom, Maria, is from Puerto Rico, which gave Camacho-Quinn a choice about whom to represent internationally²². In Tokyo, she was a gold medalist in the 100-meter hurdles. Former Spanish colony, Puerto Rico is an island

in the Caribbean, considered a territory of the United States since the end of the 19th century. However, Puerto Rico has not been considered a US state. Since 1948, the island has had its own Olympic Committee and participates in the Olympic Games with a different delegation from the United States²³.

Lamont Marcell Jacobs: Born in El Paso, in the United States, the athlete is the son of an Italian mother and an American father. Because of this, since he was born in the United States, he has dual citizenship. Jacobs lived only the first month of his life in the United States, migrating with his mother to Italy, where he developed his entire sports career²⁴. In Tokyo, he won two gold medals: in the 100 meters and the 4x100 relay.

Wadeline Jonathas: Born in Haiti, she moved to the United States at the age of 10, along with her family, searching for better living conditions. It was only in the new country that she had her first contact with sports training, having passed through basketball before reaching track and field. Wadeline's entire sports career was in the United States, where she attended the universities of Massachusetts Boston and South Carolina²⁵. In Tokyo, she was part of the US gold medal team in the 4x400 relay.

Briana Williams: Born in Coral Springs, Florida, Brianna Williams is the daughter of a Jamaican mother and, using her ancestry, decided to represent the Caribbean Island, despite having built her entire athletic career in the United States. “In 2017 I told my mom; I want to run for Jamaica. When she signed me up, I went to Carifta and got third and from then on, I loved running for Jamaica [...] I love the support and all the love that they've given me and I just feel welcome every time go there. The track and field support is phenomenal and I love it (w.p)”²⁶. In Tokyo, she was part of the gold medal team in the 4x100 relay.

Kelsey-Lee Barber: Born in East London, South Africa, Kelsey-Lee migrated to Australia at age 8 with her entire family. It was in the new country that she developed her sports career. In Tokyo, the Australian athlete won the bronze medal in the javelin throw²⁷.

Jerome Blake: A native of Buff Bay, Jamaica, Blake even participated in student long jump and high jump competitions in his home country. In 2013, after a vacation trip, the family decided to settle in Canada²⁸. As part of athletics programs, Blake started to stand out and, five years later, in 2018, he obtained Canadian citizenship²⁹. At the Tokyo Olympics, he participated in the bronze medalist team in the 4x100 relay.

Paul Chelimo: He grew up racing his older brothers in Kenya and began running seriously at age 19. He pursued a career in running as he wanted to receive a scholarship in the United States of America. He was a Kenyan citizen while competing for Shorter University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the United States of America. He gained US citizenship after he enlisted in the US Army and served as a water treatment specialist from 2014-2018. He competed as part of the US Army's World Class Athlete Program^{30,31}. In Tokyo, he was a bronze medalist in the 5,000-meter dispute.

Kalkidan Gezahegne: Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, she represented the country in international athletics competitions until 2013, when she was invited by Bahrain to change nationality. “In Bahrain was good pay, and good treatment. There's so many strong athletes in Ethiopia so it's a challenge to compete, so that's also why I changed (w.p)”³². She won a silver medal in the 10,000 meters at the Tokyo Olympics.

Pedro Pichardo: Born in Cuba, he started training in the country. He represented Cuba earlier in his career, competing at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and the world championships in 2013 and 2015. In 2017 he decided to leave Cuba to start a new life in Portugal, where he joined the Benfica athletics club. He made his international debut for Portugal the following year. “I left Cuba for my family and to be able to train with my father. I think the objective was reached and is being reached (w.p)”³³. In Tokyo, Pedro Pichardo was the Olympic triple jump champion.

Choices and definitions of sports nationalities

Knowing the personal, and not just sporting, the trajectory of athletes is a fundamental element in creating connections and better understanding the migratory

phenomenon and its relationship with sport. Looking at the different profiles gives the dimension of how complex migration is and has many variables.

Nicolau¹⁵ recalls that the uniqueness of nationality is one of the essential criteria of sports competition. However, as pointed out by Guillaumé³⁴, there are cases in which the sporting nationality does not accompany the subjects' civil nationality. For example, this is what happens with athletes with dual citizenship (Armand Duplantis, Marcell Jacobs, Briana Williams, and Jasmine Camacho-Quinn) who, due to the necessity to represent only one nation in sports, had to choose, even having, civilly, connections with more than one country.

There are also other crucial elements to be observed, such as migrations carried out for reasons to refuge. Bashir Abdi, Mohammed Ahmed, Sifan Hassan, Wadeline Jonatas, and Abdi Nageeye left their countries of birth during childhood and or adolescence not for professional motivation, but due to the precarious conditions in the places where they lived. The construction of the sportive trajectory of these athletes was carried out in the countries in which they settled. Despite having a refugee delegation at the Olympic Games, these athletes already had the citizenship of the destination to which they migrated, and were part of the national sports system, which gave them the right to compete in international events. To the countries receiving migrants, it is possible to observe that the granting of nationality to these people, who later became high-level Olympic athletes, ended up contributing to the conquest of medals and visibility for these nations.

Not out of refugee reasons, but out of personal choice, the families of Kelsey-Lee Barber and Jerome Blake also switched countries when these athletes were teenagers. With the construction of a sporting career in the territory where they migrated, they chose to represent the new homeland.

Regarding the 14 athletes mentioned above, who were born in one land but chose to represent another nation, it is valid to observe that this movement helped in the composition of eleven delegations: the United States, Netherlands, and Canada (two competitors each), Belgium, Sweden, Puerto Rico, Italy, Jamaica, Bahrain, Portugal, Australia (one). On the other hand, the United States also has the largest number of athletes born in its nation but represented different countries in athletics competitions

(four athletes). They are also ‘exporters’ of athletes to Ethiopia (three), Somalia (two), and Haiti, Kenya, Cuba, South Africa, and Jamaica (one).

Choice of place of birth

In addition to athletes born in foreign territory, the Olympic athletics delegation at the Tokyo Games was composed of several competitors who had identity connections with more than one country for reasons of ancestry, but who chose to represent the nation where they were born. Mutaz Essa Barshim, the gold medalist in the high jump, was born in Qatar, but his mother is from Sudan³⁵. Another athlete with Sudanese parents is Athing Mu, according to the IOC: “She was born a year after her family immigrated to the United States of America from Sudan. She is the second-youngest of seven siblings and was the first to be born in the United States of America”³⁶. The United States delegation also included Rai Benjamin, born in Mount Vernon, in the United States, but with connections with Antigua and Barbuda. As a child, he lived in Antigua and Barbuda, a country he represented in some international competitions³⁷.

He originally competed in athletics for Antigua and Barbuda, including at the 2013 Youth World Championships in Donetsk, Ukraine. In 2015 he filed a request to Begin competing for his birth country the United States of America. However, the decision was delayed due to the International Association of Athletics Federations [IAAF] putting a freeze on athletes switching nations in February 2017. The ban was lifted in July 2018, allowing him to compete on the US team in 2019.

Also in North America, Canada has two athletes with family connections to Caribbean islands. Sprinter André de Grasse's father is from Barbados, and his mother is from Trinidad and Tobago³⁸. Despite being born in Canada, de Grasse has always kept in touch with his parents' countries of origin, despite never having considered representing the countries at international events. “As much as I love Trinidad, Canada has been really good to me. I grew up in Canada. I'm from there, I was born in Canada (w.p)”³⁹. Decathlete Damian Warner's father is also from Barbados; however, the athlete has not kept in touch with his father and his country of origin⁴⁰.

Even in the delegations of some nations in which the essential premise for granting citizenship is *jus sanguinis*, it is possible to find athletes with connections to other countries. Chijindu Ujah was born in London, the son of a Nigerian engineer who moved

to England searching for better working conditions⁴¹. He was part of the silver medal team in the men's 4x100 relay in Great Britain. The women's 4x100 relay team from the same country that was a bronze medalist at the Tokyo Games, counted on Dina Asher-Smith. She is born in London, but her parents are Jamaican⁴². Dina is not the first sportswoman in the family: her uncle, Garth Crooks, was a professional football player between the 70s and 80s, having played in several English teams. and even in England's youth team⁴³.

The Portuguese delegation had the presence of Patrícia Mamona, a silver medalist in the triple jump dispute. Born in Lisbon, she is the daughter of Angolan parents. During Patrícia's adolescence, the family moved to Great Britain, but she decided to remain in her country of birth, as she was already involved in athletics⁴⁴. In an interview, Patrícia recognized the identity connections with the African country

All my family is from Angola. My parents emigrated to Portugal, where I was born, raised, and where I train now. The most important thing is that I grew up with Portuguese culture outside the house, but with the Angolan one inside. I love both countries but unfortunately, I cannot represent both at the Olympic Games. Maybe in the future, I could represent Angola (w.p)⁴⁵

The gold medalist in the men's 4x100 relay, Italy had the athlete Eseosa Fostine Desalu. Born in Casalmaggiore, he is a Nigerian descent that only obtained Italian citizenship in 2012, at the age of 18. "I have never been to Nigeria and, right now [2019], I don't feel the need to go. I don't even know the national anthem of Nigeria. My roots are in Africa and I don't ignore them but I consider myself deeply Italian (w.p)"⁴⁶.

Olympic long jump champion in Tokyo, Malaika Mihambo was born in Germany, in the city of Heidelberg. Her mother is German and her father is Tanzanian. Her entire athletic trajectory was built in Germany. Despite her ancestry, Malaika has never lived in Tanzania and does not even have the citizenship of the country, which does not accept dual nationality^{47,48}. Another European athlete with ancestral connections in Africa is Nafissatou Thiam, of the heptathlon. Born in Namur, Belgium, she is the daughter of a Belgian mother and a Senegalese father. Her parents separated when Nafissatou was two years old, and she continued to live in Belgium, where she built her sports career⁴⁹. She is a two-time Olympic champion, having won the heptathlon at the Rio 2016 and Tokyo Games in 2020.

Among the eleven athletes mentioned above, who chose to represent their country of birth, but who had ancestral connections with at least one other nation, this phenomenon occurred with eight nations: the United States, Canada, and Great Britain (two athletes /each), Qatar, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Belgium (one athlete each). Regarding the ancestral nations, which were not chosen by the athletes, there are ten: Sudan and Barbados (two athletes), Tanzania, Angola, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Senegal, Nigeria. It is crucial to point out that the sum of ancestral nations that ‘export’ athletes reaches twelve, since André de Grasse, who represented Canada, is the son of a Barbadian father and a Trinidad y Tobago mother.

The overseas question

The Tokyo 2020 edition was the third contested by Liemarvin Bonevacia, who in 2016 had already represented the Netherlands. At the London Games in 2012, he competed under the Olympic flag, as the Netherlands Antilles Olympic Committee, to which the Curaçao athletes were linked, lost recognition from the IOC in 2010, as the former director of the Committee explained. Netherlands Antilles Olympian, Remco Tevreden, in an interview with the British newspaper *Standard*. “The Olympic Charter states that only ‘independent countries’ can gain full Olympic recognition. After the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles in 2010, it became clear that Curacao – as an autonomous country within the kingdom of the Netherlands – does not comply with the necessary IOC regulation (w.p)”⁵⁰.

Along with St. Maarten, Saba, Bonaire, and St. Eustatius, Curaçao formed the Netherlands Antilles, a nation that participated in the Olympic Games between 1952 and 2008. The dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles as a country took place in 2010, with St. Maarten and Curaçao becoming independent autonomous governments and the other special municipalities in the Netherlands^{51,52}. The non-autonomy of Curaçao as an independent Olympic committee is the subject of discontent, as is evident in an interview with the 1976 Olympic athlete and lawyer Roy Bottse to the *Curacao Chronicle*. “It is about the dignity of Curaçao. And it is also about the bigger issue: Although Curaçao is a country with a constitution, we are not internationally recognized as such. We are neither a Country nor a State (w.p)”⁵³.

Despite the arguments presented by Remco Tevreden being based on the Olympic Charter, it is possible to notice a contradiction between the case of the territories that made up the Netherlands Antilles and other Olympic ‘nations’. Drumond⁵⁴ lists a series of nations that participated in the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games in 2016, but whose political autonomy is questioned at an international level.

13 National Committees represented countries or territories with limited or dependent recognition, without international recognition: Chinese Taipei, Kosovo and Palestine (countries with limited recognition); Aruba (country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands); Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands (British Overseas Territories); Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China); Cook Islands (State in free association with New Zealand); Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the US Virgin Islands (US-dependent countries and territories) (p.19-20).

A latent issue in the 21st century, the participation of associated territories was addressed by Coubertin in the first Olympic editions. On the eve of the First World War, at a time when the establishment of borders and the question of national autonomy was latent, the creator of the Olympic Games of the Modern Era praised the decision to use, for example, a banner with the colors of Finland on the Russian flag, in case of victory of any Finnish athlete in the Olympic Games held in 1912⁵⁵.

Another athlete from a Caribbean Island, Zharnel Hughes, born in Anguilla, was a silver medalist in the 4x100 relay in Great Britain.

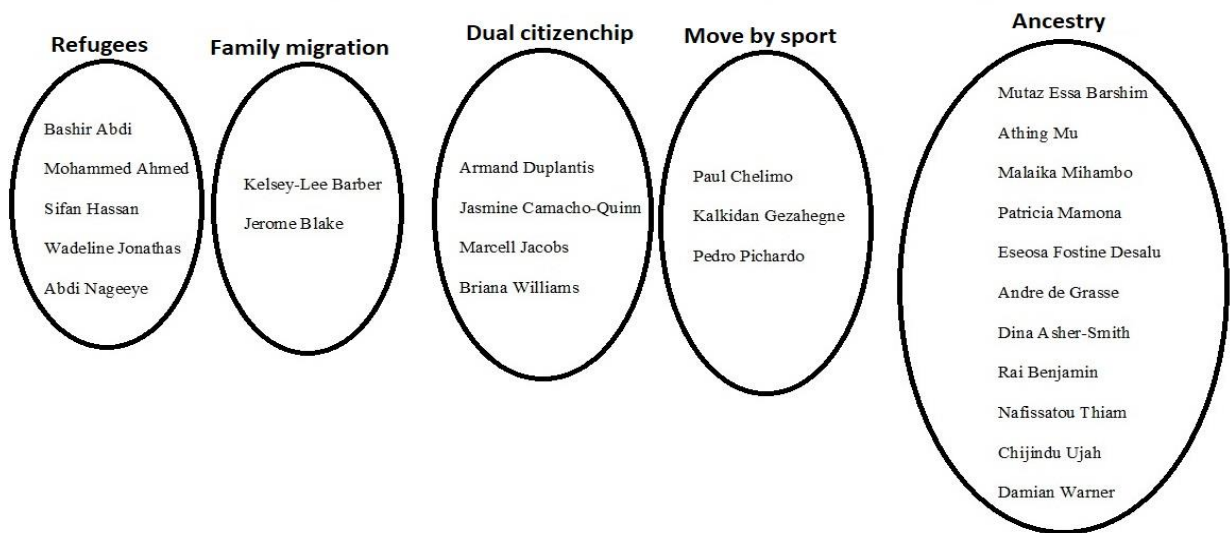
Final considerations

Even being a social phenomenon, migration is permeated by individual factors. However, this does not invalidate the possibility of making associations and understanding connections between different subjects. By analyzing the life trajectory of the Olympic athletics competitors who had won medals, and whose lives were permeated by migration, it is possible to form some groups.

Among the athletes analyzed in this study, for example, it is possible to construct five sets: those who migrated as refugees (leaving countries in complex socio-political conditions, who settled in a new nation), those who migrated together with family members, those who have dual citizenship (they were born in a territory that adopts *jus soli* and their ancestors are from a nation that adopts *jus sanguinis*), those who migrated

motivated by a sports career and, finally, athletes with at least one ancestor born in a different country which he represented, but who chose to defend the place where they were born (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Kinds of migration.



Source: the author.

It is also possible to observe that five athletes made the national option using ancestry criteria, despite having dual citizenship. Meanwhile, another eleven, even with ancestral connections in different countries, represented the place where they were born. Demonstrating, once again, that the definition of nationality is not something given ready-made to the subject but built throughout his life. Thus, some create more significant ties and connections with the territory in which they were born, and others choose to represent the country of their family members. This construction process takes into account several variables, including the condition of training/career-monitoring offered, but also the subjectivity of the athletes - considering the case of Armand Duplantis who opted for Swedish nationality at the time of sporting disputes even though having been born and trained all his life in the United States.

Except for Jamaica, which benefited from an athlete born in the United States (Briana Williams), countries with medalists born in other countries are considered economically developed (Belgium, Canada, Netherlands, United States, Sweden, Italy,

Bahrain, Portugal, and Australia). Among the countries that exported athletes, only the United States is considered economically developed, while the other countries are underdeveloped (Somalia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Cuba, South Africa, and Jamaica). Among the four athletes born in the United States, but who did not represent the country, Jasmine Camacho-Quinn, chose to represent a territory that has sports autonomy (Puerto Rico), two athletes represented other developed countries (Armand Duplantis competed for Sweden and Marcell Jacobs for Italy).

A similar phenomenon occurs when analyzing athletes who chose the nationality of the country of birth – and not for ancestral factors. In this case, all beneficiary nations are economically developed: Qatar, United States, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Canada, Great Britain, and Belgium. In contrast, the ancestral countries are all underdeveloped (Sudan, Tanzania, Angola, Nigeria, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Senegal, and Nigeria). When theorizing about globalization, Milton Santos⁵⁶ points out that in today's world there is an illusion of universal fluidity, in which all subjects and individuals can move between different territories. The theorist, however, warns that the speed of these changes and the possibility that they occur is linked to a series of factors and that it does not occur in the same way in different countries. Making an analogy with the life trajectory of the athletes presented in this study, it is possible to perceive that currently developed countries are the ones who manage to transform this potential fluidity into an effective one. It is not, therefore, mere hiring of talented athletes who stood out for underdeveloped countries and who moved to compose delegations from countries with greater economic potential. What can be seen is a use of the existing potential of migrants, and an adaptation of norms and rules - including those for granting nationality, as can be seen in the cases of athletes born in territories with the primacy of *jus sanguinis*, but who managed to obtain the new nationality.

Only three athletes started their migratory processes motivated by sports practice (that is, they already had an established career and/or significant results in large competitions). These cases, despite being a minority, end up drawing attention because, as defined by Engh and Agergaard⁸, the visibility given to migrants in the sports environment is different. The low number of migrants who moved to another country for sport, however, does not exclude the importance of the sporting phenomenon. It is noteworthy that five athletes went from refugee status to occupy a prominent role – that

of Olympic athletes, that is, national representatives in one of the most important events in the world. Even nations whose basic premise is *jus sanguinis* were benefited by having athletes who were born in their territories, but who had natural ancestors from other countries, in their delegations. This is evident, for example, with sprinter Eseosa Fostine Desalu, who only had access to Italian nationality at the age of 18.

With so many variables and possibilities, found only when analyzing the issue of nationality of Olympic medalist athletes in a modality, it is possible to affirm that studies in migration and sport are a fertile field, and that further studies are necessary for a theoretical deepening. More than a simple display of soft power, the sports field is an environment in which questions of nationality and belonging appear in a powerful way.

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