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**SPORT LABOR MIGRATION, GLOBALIZATION AND DUAL-CAREER**

Case Study of International Student-Athletes in University of  
Colorado at Boulder

University of Jyväskylä  
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#### ABSTRACT

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Sport, education, labor migration and globalization are all current areas of research worldwide. The U.S. has a unique system of making the dual-career option possible by having the college sport league organized by the non-profit association National Collegiate Athletic Association. The labor migration has increased in the past years.

The primary research question in this study is, in which ways sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career are illustrated in the case study school of University of Colorado at Boulder by concentrating on the international student-athletes. The purpose of this study is to find out more in detail the numbers of international student-athletes in CU, in which sports they have been mostly involved in, and how the numbers of athletes have changed over the years. In addition some of the reasons why international student-athletes choose to go to the university in the U.S., the impacts of globalizations, the possibility for dual-career and the positive and negative effects of international student-athletes are discussed.

This is a case study. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. Document analyses were completed by investigating the athletic player rosters of CU to find out the exact numbers of international student-athletes in each sport, the years they have attended and the nationalities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out more in-depth information from the school's point of view about the international student-athletes reasons to come to CU, the impact of globalization, and some of the changes happened over the past 20 years.

The results revealed that there are certain sports, which have been more favored by international student-athletes over the history. The location of Colorado attracts many northern European nationalities as well as Canadians, additionally certain sports for i.e. tennis and skiing are popular among international student-athletes. The overall results proved that the amounts have been increasing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As the interviews revealed globalization, the increased sport labor migration and seeking for dual-career option are all important aspects in college sports. International student-athletes are attracted by the dual-career option, the impacts of globalization and improved technology have made the communication easier, and people tend to have easier time moving to another country than before.

**Key words:** globalization, labor migration, dual-career, international student-athletes, NCAA

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## **1 INTRODUCTION – A PERSONAL INTEREST IN SPORT AND GEOGRAPHY**

Global migration of athletes has been on the rise the past decade. The number of international athletes going to the United States for colleges with the purpose of attending in intercollegiate sport has almost tripled. With the increasing internationalization moreover the study of sport labor migration in different sport contexts has become a popular research area. (Love & Kim 2011, 90.) Combining a sporting career at a high level and higher education is an important issue in many countries. The schooling systems are arranged differently in almost every country and for that reason the ways athletes are able to combine their education with their sporting career differs significantly. The U.S. college system has a unique way of combining the high level sport with college education.

It is important for young athletes to have some other motives and goals in their life than just a possible professional sport career. Education is one of the most important issues for a retired athlete to build a balanced life after finishing their sporting career. After completing compulsory school, athletes are confronted with many different choices in their lives. The options include to abandon their studies and concentrate on the training and competing, or to continue training and in addition to continue their professional education through the ways available in their own country or some other country. (European Commission 2007; Caput-Jogunica et al. 2012, 21.) There are only about 950 professional athletes in Finland, about 150 of these are foreigners and about 500 Finnish athletes are playing in other countries (KIHU 2007). Only a few of these athletes can support themselves and their families after from retiring the professional sport career (Metsä-Tokila 2001, 19). That being said, it is very crucial for athletes to have a second option and some backup plans in their lives, and proper education is one of the most important one securing their lives after the sport career is over.

While the expectations for elite athletes have increased also the demand for education has additionally become significantly important. Without a proper education it is almost impossible to get a highly valued job in today's world. It is very hard for many talented athletes to find a good way to combine their education with their training, when the

training hours are exceeding over 20 hours per week and traveling for competition taking all the weekends and some of the weekdays as well. Many times young athletes have to make the choice between school and sport; whether to quit the competitive career or struggle with good grades at school or drop out of school completely. To concentrate entirely on being a full time student and a full time athlete might end up increasing the risk of having to give up one of these important areas in life, and in that way cause some serious problems both in school and in sport. (Patrikkson 1987.) The problems concerning combining both education and being elite athletes have been noticed in many countries. Different kinds of methods and models have been created in order to try to make it function better. Based on the experiences and in order a country to produce top-level athletes, the country has to develop an education system, which supports the dual-career choice. (Johansson 1981; Patriksson 1987; Carlson 1991; as cited in Leivo 1999.)

In addition to the education in the international atmosphere also moving around the globe is common in today's world. Just as people in general, additionally athletes are moving from one place to another considerably amount more nowadays than they did before. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the development of athletic labor migration has taken a big step forward like any other workers movement. One important feature of the modern industrial society is a socially and geographically mobile workforce, and athletes can be seen as part of this same global process. (Maguire & Bale 1994, 1.)

This thesis will look at one specific university in the USA, University of Colorado at Boulder with the focus on its international student-athletes in the past 20 years. Investigating closer the amount of international student-athletes in different varsity sports in school's history will give some relevant information about the patterns occurring in athletes' labor migration in this case study school. The reasons behind the changes, internationalization of college sports, dual-career and globalization processes will be additionally discussed. Furthermore, the governing body of the intercollegiate sports NCAA will be introduced. The literature review will touch on athletes' motivations to come to the U.S colleges and their ways of adjusting to the different culture based on some previous studies done on this academic field.

One of the reasons why I wanted to research this particular topic is related to my own personal background. Being an international student-athlete in the U.S. from 2004 to 2008, and completing my undergraduate degree in the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2008, gave me a lot of new perspectives and information about education and sport system in the USA. Since I have personal experience of being an international student-athlete, playing tennis in varsity team and studying with a full scholarship in CU, made me want to concentrate on this topic more deeply. Moreover, having Bachelor's and Master's degree in cultural geography made me want to focus on sport geography since both are being close to my passion. Sport and geography together provide countless opportunities for research and this thesis will discuss the topic of sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career in the U.S. university context.

Why I chose to go to the USA for college to study and to play tennis was mainly that I was able to combine both studying and still competing in a high level in tennis. The full-scholarship I received and the opportunity to go abroad, to learn the language, meet new people and to grow more independent were also among some of the reasons why I chose this option after completing high school in 2004. Our tennis team was very international and multicultural during all four years I spent there. Girls coming from Australia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Canada, Germany, UK, etc. all brought some of their own culture to the team and taught something to each other. Everyone had their struggles and different ways of adjusting to the new culture and environment, but additionally surely everyone had a good and once in a lifetime experience while being in college. After spending four years in Colorado and being part of the whole campus atmosphere and the community feeling they had in the school, it was interesting to see how the Finnish higher education system differed from the one in the U.S. In CU the city of Boulder was closely attached to the school and almost everyone was somehow part of the school spirit. As seen in Hollywood movies nearly every student is out there supporting the athletic teams and wearing gold and black on the football game days. This special college atmosphere and school spirit is something I have really missed after coming back to Finland first to Helsinki and later on to Jyväskylä.

This thesis will concentrate on the topic of how international student-athletes in the U.S. colleges and how high-level international athletes are able to combine their education while still competing and putting full effort to sports as well. Some of the best practices

used in certain European countries are introduced, which help the student athletes to have a “dual career” in sport and in education. However, the main area of concentration will be in the U.S. college sport system, which is coordinated and regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This research introduces how the college sport system is organized and how it differs from most European countries’ higher education systems. The primary interest is to explore the international student-athletes in the U.S. colleges using the case study school University of Colorado at Boulder.

The amount of international student athletes in the U.S. universities playing intercollegiate sports has been increasing in past years. Based to the a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) study, “individuals from outside the USA comprised 5.5 % of all male athletes and 6.9 % of female athletes in Division I schools in 2007-2008, up from 2.4 % of male athletes and 2.4 % of female athletes in 1999-2000” (Popp et al., 2010, 163.) There are many reasons behind that, and I would like to find out what kinds of changes have happened in the past 20 years in this one specific school. Nowadays people are moving around a lot more, borders have been opening in certain countries, world has gotten smaller in a sense that people are more connected to each other as well as searching for new opportunities. In addition, the development of technology has been remarkable in the past 20 years. These might have some influences on the student-athletes’ interest to enter the U.S. universities as well? The case study school CU will be introduced more closely on the next section.

The U.S. higher education sport system is very unique and it has some interesting characteristics, which many other countries could apply to their higher education institutions as well. Globalization and people moving across the borders have also increased the amount of international student-athletes in the U.S. universities. Sport migration is very interesting and up to date topic in research, and the U.S. college sport system fits well to this current theme. My own experiences being an international student-athlete led me to want to research this specific topic a little bit more deeply and to find out some answers to the questions regarding the sport labor migration, sports combined with education, globalization and if some changes can be seen happening over the years. This particular topic has not been studied in JYU and in Finland before.



The issues related to sport labor migration; globalization and dual-career are relevant and contemporary in academics. The information gained from this research will be valuable for the field of research. The study will be beneficial and interesting for the institution, University of Colorado at Boulder, as well as for the Finnish people who are interested in going to study abroad to the USA as student-athletes or who have some personal experiences on being student-athletes in the U.S. universities. Furthermore, sport migration, globalization and dual-career being current topics in the sport research field, makes this study topic beneficial for the University of Jyväskylä and for the global audience in academics.

Following the introduction, the state of Colorado and University of Colorado at Boulder will be introduced more in detail. The literature review will concentrate more deeply on the issues of sport labor migration, globalization and international students as an economic value tool. Moreover, the USA sport system is explained and the dual-career of young athletes is discussed. The methodology part will outline the research question and introduce the case study research design. Additionally, the data collection and analyzing processes will be demonstrated in the methodology section. Following the methodology the results will be displayed, first concentrating on the quantitative part from the document analyzes following the in-depth information gathered from the experts' interviews. The discussion and conclusion part will introduce the SWOT-analyzes based on the interviews and the results, which function as a summary and the discussion part will be outlined and concluded the research.

### **1.1 State of Colorado**

The state of Colorado is located next to the Rocky Mountains in Western part of the USA. Colorado is surrounded by the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma. The population of Colorado in 2013 was estimated 5, 187,582 inhabitants (World population statistics). The city of Boulder had the population of 101,808 in 2012 (Boulder Economic Council). Because of the location of Colorado next to the Rocky Mountains, the place is popular for skiing and outdoor activities. The state attracts a lot of international visitors because of the great outdoor activities and beautiful sceneries. Interestingly Boulder has been selected the healthiest city in the USA in 2010 (Daily Camera 15.2.2010) and the least obese city in 2014

(Today Health 5.4.2014). Colorado and especially Boulder is considered as a health conscious place in many ways if you look at the U.S. in general. There are good bike routes, healthy food stores, Farmers Markets and variety outdoor activities people can do and enjoy.

## **1.2 University of Colorado**

The focus school, University of Colorado at Boulder (also referred as CU), is a school with total nearly 30,000 students (24,757 undergraduate students, 5,127 graduate students) in 2011. Out of this student body, 46 % are women, 54 % men and 4,9 % were international students (University of Colorado, A.) University of Colorado at Boulder is a Division I school and belongs to the Pacific 12 Conference (University of Colorado, Athletics.) CU was founded in 1876, the same year as the state of Colorado was established. There were forty-four students and three teachers forming the first class. Over these 135 years CU has grown with the size and also with the quality. Today CU has academic programs in sciences, engineering, business, law, arts, humanities, education, music and many other fields. CU has also received several Nobel laureates and other remarkable prizes. The official colors of CU have been silver and gold since 1888. These colors symbolize the mineral mines of Colorado. University of Colorado at Boulder is part of Association of American Universities (AAU), which comprises only 34 public universities in the U.S. “International student enrollment has grown 68 percent during the past 10 years, from 1,014 in fall 2001 to 1,481 in fall 2011“ (University of Colorado, Boulder, B). International students represent over 95 different countries. Out of the international student body 67 percent of these international students study at the graduate level and 37 percent at the undergraduate level (University of Colorado, Boulder, A).



Figure 1. Map of the USA - State of Colorado and location of Boulder (Source: eachTown)



Figure 2. The logo of CU - Buffalo

The logo of the CU also referred as “The Buff” can be seen all over the campus and athletic department. The University of Colorado has very unique mascot, which is a real buffalo named Ralphie. A special feature for CU is that the real buffalo Ralphie runs to the football field every beginning of the whole game and also in the second halftime. The real buffalo has been the tradition in CU already from the year 1934, thus the tradition has been kept alive for already 80 years. (University of Colorado, Athletics.)

## **2 SPORT LABOR MIGRATION, GLOBALIZATION AND DUAL-CAREER**

Sport and geography are not often times neither thought to function together nor studied together. However, there is a separate field of study in geography, which is called sport geography. The main ideas of sport geography are to consider issues such as material landscapes, mind maps, cultural and power differences, areal differences and issues like sport labor migration (Itkonen & Nevala 2007, 71). Already in 1960's American John Rooney was interested in the areal differences of different sports as well as the departure areas, migration and recruitment of elite athletes. He found that there are great differences what it comes to the home areas of the elite athletes. Some areas function as producers of good athletes and some as recruiters of these athletes. (Itkonen & Nevala 2007.) Kortelainen has done research about football culture in Finland. He researched, which are the main concentration areas where most of the top players are originally from and what kind of areal differences can be found in Finnish football culture (Itkonen & Nevala 2007, 74).

This thesis study of international student-athletes in University of Colorado at Boulder can be seen as partly sport geographical research because it looks at the areal, cultural and nationality differences of international college athletes who are migrating to the U.S. colleges.

### **2.1 Sport labor migration**

Sport labor migration has been a topic of multiple studies completed by various researchers in the past years ranging from soccer, basketball, cricket, ice hockey and migration of athletes to Finland (Love & Seungmo 2011, 91). In addition to that in intercollegiate sport the trend of internationalization can be seen. As stated "The number of international student-athletes participating in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has increased and nearly doubled from 8,945 in 2001-02 to 16,440 in 2007-08" (Trendafilova et al. 2010, 348). In certain sports the numbers of international student-athletes are especially very high. For example 36.8 percent of women's tennis teams' players and 35.5 percent of men's tennis teams were from outside of the U.S. in 2008-09. The increased numbers of migrant athletes and also their concentration in specific few sports have developed new interests areas to study.

(Seungmo & Love 2011, 91.) John Bale's work of migrant athletes to the U.S. colleges concentrated on the questions such as what are the numbers of international athletes attending to college sports, where these athletes were from, how the athletes were recruited in the first place, and how easy it was for them to adjust to American way of living. (Seungmo & Love 2011, 91.) Also some motivational studies about why international athletes are common in U.S. college sports have been done. Some key findings from these studies were that most athletes were attracted to receive a scholarship to the college; the strong competition atmosphere in college sports was something special, the high-level training opportunities, and the motivation to move to the USA. (Seungmo & Love 2011, 92.) All of these same issues and questions can be applied to this study relatively well.

In today's world free movement of migrants between countries has increased. In the sport world, the athletes moving from one country to another to search for better financial benefits, or in some cases better coaching or other services, can be referred as migration of athletes (Thibault 2009, 7). In the USA, the level of international student-athletes in NCAA schools has increased in recent years. According to Weston (2006), "in NCAA tennis, 63 of the top 100 men's single players, and 47 of the top 100 women's players were international student-athletes" (Weston 2006, 841; Thibault 2009, 9). The large amount of international student-athletes in the American colleges has raised some concerns among the Americans, and some of them feel like their opportunities to participate in college sports have diminished due to the international student-athletes (Weston 2006; Thibault 2009, 9). According to Weston (2006, 835) the college coaches are facing pressures on producing winning teams and by recruiting international student-athletes they are trying to build the best team they are capable of. The problem with many of the schools is that most of the American top-recruits only want to go to the nationally recognized top schools (Weston 2006).

The literature concerning international student-athletes is still not very extensive. International-student-athletes have been taking into consideration when studying the motivations of coming to the U.S. by Berry (1999), Jones et al. (2008), and additionally Ridinger and Pastore (2000b) have studied international student-athletes adjustment to college (Berry 1999; Jones et al. 2008; Ridinger and Pastore 2000b as cited in Trendafilova et al. 2010). According to Brown and Mazzarol (2008), it is important to

know what will affect the high level of satisfaction among the international student-athletes, because university education in the U.S. is a big product and attracts numerous elite athletes from foreign countries (Brown & Mazzarol 2008; Trendafilova et al. 2010, 352). Based on the study by Trendafilova et al. (2010), international student-athletes are overall quite satisfied with their academic and athletic experiences in NCAA Division-I schools. The budget of a student-athlete additionally has an effect on the satisfaction level. If an international student-athlete is receiving a full or partial scholarship compared to no scholarship at all, that has impact on the satisfaction level of an athlete. (Trendafilova et al. 2010.) International student-athletes' motivations to come to the U.S. (Bale 1991), as well as the migration decision making processes (Bale 1987) and how international student-athletes react to their experiences as being college athletes (Bale 1991) have additionally been studied. (Bale 1987; Bale 1991 as cited in Trendafilova et al. 2010.)

Ridinger's and Pastore's (2000a), theoretical model of adjustment of international student-athletes coming to U.S. colleges consists of three parts; adjustment factors, antecedent dimensions to those factors, and outcomes. Their model consists of four antecedent dimensions divided to a) personal, b) interpersonal, c) perceptual, d) cultural distance. Important findings in the personal dimensions were that the athletic aptitude was not the issue among international student-athletes. They were quite confident about their athletic abilities when coming to the U.S. An important point found in the study was that many international student-athletes chose to come to the U.S. colleges in a hope of getting a university degree and continuing elite training at the same time as having future professional career in their minds (Popp et al. 2010, 169). Also international student-athletes were often more academically well prepared for college than were the Americans (Popp et al. 2010, 169). The most difficult barrier for international student-athletes was found to be the foreign language, however it was also found to be a huge motivator to move to the U.S. with the hope of learning the new language fluently (Popp et al. 2010, 170).

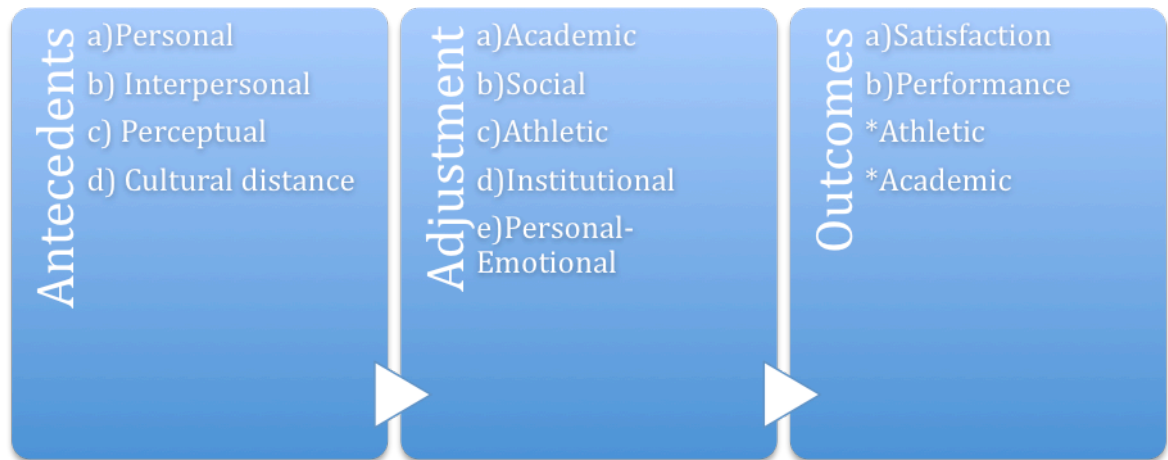


Figure 3. A model of adjustment for international student-athletes modified from (Ridinger & Pastore 2000a, 166).

Another theoretical model used when studying migrating athletes involves typologies of migrant athletes. Maguire (1999) and by Magee & Sugden (2002), have developed typologies of migrant athletes by interviewing athletes from various sports. In the recent one international athletes were divided into seven different categories based on their motivation to come to the U.S. college as student-athletes. These categories were: (1) Mercenary, (2) Nomadic Cosmopolitan, (3) Settler, (4) Returnee, (5) Exile and Expelled, (6) Ambitionist, (7) Pioneers. To open up these a little bit, Mercenary's (1) main motivation is to seek for improved financial situation and economic reward. Nomadic Cosmopolitan (2) wants to explore and learn more about the new culture and language. Settlers' (3) motivation is to stay in the USA during and maybe after completing the college. Returnees' (4) often leave the country right after their college careers or even during the college by quitting the school. Exile (5) had to leave their home country in order to be able to combine their sport career and higher education full-time, and Expelled (5) were forced to leave their country for one reason or another. Ambitionist's (6) main motivation is to play sport and compete in a high level as well as receive a college education at the same time. Pioneers (7) wants to convert the natives to their own sport culture, however this category is not that significant what it comes to individuals' experiences in the U.S. colleges. (Seungmo & Love 2011, 92-93; Maguire 1999; Magee & Sugden 2002.)

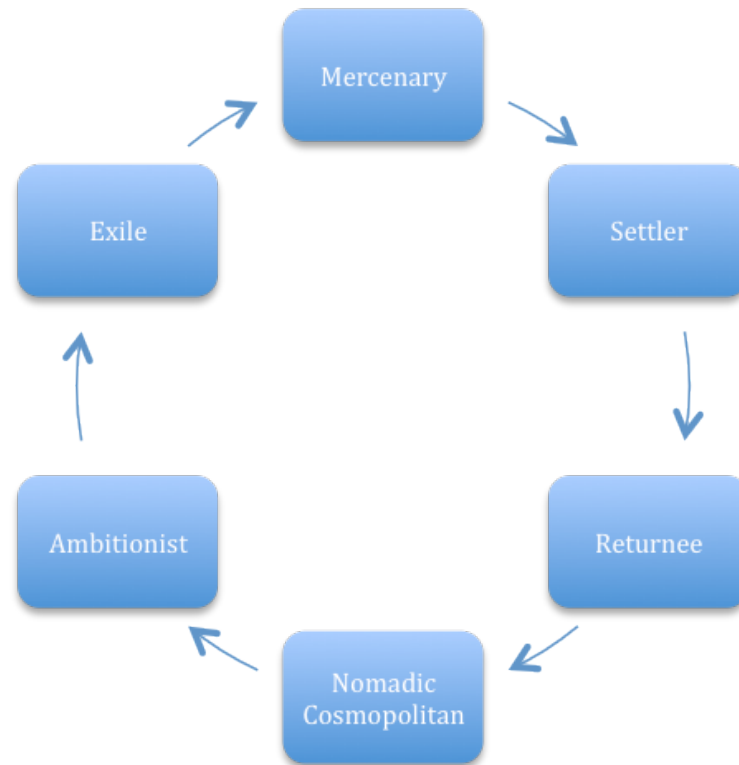


Figure 4. A typology of International Migrant College Athletes (Love & Kim 2011, 98).

Maguire and Bale (1994), concentrated on athletes labor movement in their book *“Athletic talent migration in an interdependent world”*. There are three kinds of labor migration occurring. Migration can be occurring between countries in the same continent, within countries or between countries in different continents. Labor migration between countries within the same continent for example can be inter-state migration of athletes in the USA, or the labor migration in Europe between the countries. (Maquire & Bale 1994, 2.) The opening up of the borders in some of the Eastern European countries have increased the amounts of Eastern European athletes to migrate to other countries to play sports (Maguire & Bale 1994, 3). Scandinavian athletes have moreover been traditionally much recruited by the North American professional leagues as well as universities in variety of sports (Maquire & Bale 1994, 3).

Sport labor migration can be seen as closely tied with the whole process of globalization, which has been occurring since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Maguire and Bale (1994, 5), there are certain features, which are significant. First, the numbers of international agencies have increased; secondly the communication globally



has grown; thirdly international competitions have developed; and finally rights and citizenship have been standardized globally.

In sport geographic studies on sport migration one important step is “to map the information to show the patterns of migration flows between origin and destination” (Maquire & Bale 1994, 10). This will then show which areas can be seen as talent-deficit and which talent-surplus regions. Bale (1991), has used behavioral approach, which looks the movement of migrants between two places connected to decision-making outcome. This model uses internal stressors such as needs and expectations of migrants as well as external stressors such as the sport environment to evaluate the place utility. The decision to migrate is made of based on the threshold level of the utility. International student-athletes migration to U.S. colleges was studied by Bale (1991) by using this model. (Maquire & Bale 1994, 10; Bale 1991.)

According to Kwon (2009), The U.S. economy benefit greatly of the international students coming to study in the higher education institutions. They spend over 12 billion US dollars a year for their tuition and other costs in the USA. Adjusting to a new environment is another important aspect when studying international students as well as student-athletes in the U.S. colleges. The amounts of international students in the U.S. colleges have been increasing and they not only provide economic benefits to the country but also enhance the cultural diversity in the area. As stated by Kwon (2009), the language proficiency has a great impact how international students adjust to the environment. Based on his study, Asian international students are perceived to have the lowest English proficiency compared to the other groups studied. Another important factor affecting international students’ adjustments and transition were the financial pressures they are dealing with. The current economic insecurity in the world and changes in the exchange rates might have a strong impact on the tuition fees in the schools. (Kwon 2009.)

Furthermore, important aspects of international student-athletes coming to the U.S. are the legal issues related to the athletes’ immigration and worker migration. These issues are more closely related to professional athletes coming to the U.S. to play in professional teams but the concerns are also applicable in the college level. Some people might consider international athletes as threatening, and American citizens might

feel that they are coming to steal their jobs. In the college level the concerns have been related to the recruitment of college coaches internationally especially in Division I schools. Immigration laws have made it more difficult to recruit the best coaches possible to come to the U.S. (Borgese 2009.) Not only coaches but also student-athletes have been facing more difficulties in recruitment after 9/11. College level athletes are non-monetary immigrants, because they are not receiving any direct monetary salary from playing the sport. Post 9/11 the U.S. have tightened the visa markets and the entering of international-student athletes to come to the country to play college sports especially in the case of certain countries. (Borgese 2009.)

## **2.2 Globalization**

Before moving on to talking about the U.S. college sport system, it is important to talk about globalization in general. Kienle and Loyd (2005) discuss about globalization and higher education institutions. Higher education plays a significant role in shaping the culture of societies and is additionally affected by the increasing globalization. The educators of these institutes must also be trained to think in a global way, because the amounts of international cooperation and number of international students have been increasing. American undergraduate students may realize that future employers will expect a new level of international thinking and competence in the global marketplace. There are new fields of study in many universities emerging, such as multicultural education, women's studies, ethnic studies etc., which increases students' awareness of the multicultural environment surrounding them. The international cooperation between the universities and the global partnership has become more popular in the schools; this offers students opportunities to receive some international experience and networks around the world. (Kienle & Loyd 2005.) In that sense, it is important to educate professors, student and staff members about the impacts of globalization. Nowadays also the increasing number of international students in the U.S. colleges makes the college environment more multicultural.

The word globalization is word used in variety of contexts. Globalization has had a huge impact on the world's sport economy in the past decade. The markets of sporting goods and services, the broadcasting rights, sport events and sport sponsorship have all become huge billion Euros businesses. Not only has the markets of sport business but

in addition to that there has been a trend towards more globalized sporting talent markets where highly skilled athletes are transferred internationally from one place to another. International professional football player labor market is the most researched area what it comes to athlete's migration. These studies have awakened some concerns related to underage players transferring and also to the human rights. (Andreff 2011, 31.)

Lucie Thibault's (2009) study about globalization of sports deals with the issues related to sport management. There were four main issues presented. One is the division of labor; transnational corporations use the developing countries' workforces to manufacture sportswear and equipment. Second is the increasing flow of athletes to play and to compete in other countries. Third, the global media's influence is increasing and fourthly, the impacts of sport on the environment have become more important. Globalization issues are also relevant when it comes to the increasing amount of international student athletes in the U.S. colleges. Weston (2006) discusses about globalization in National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) international student-athletes recruitment issue book. According to Weston (2006),

*"Player movement in international athletics is essentially sports' version of free trade. The global connection through sport and the increasing presence of international athletes are generally welcome and beneficial. The expanded market of talent increases the quality of competition for the consumer fan and the strength of athletic programs at colleges and universities" (Weston 2006, 831).*

In the American universities there has been increasing level of international student-athletes participating in many NCAA tournaments (Thibault 2009, 9). As mentioned before sport such as tennis is highly international in today's college sport. This has led the Americans to be concerned about their own possibilities in receiving scholarships in the universities. In some cases this can even lead to some resentment towards the international athletes. The increasing globalization has made it possible for many athletes from all over the world to move to the U.S. because of the opening of the borders and the possibilities to play, compete and receive an education abroad.

According to Thibault (2009), the benefits of globalization for sports have been huge. Some of the benefits include that different sports have been spreading throughout the world across national borders. Moreover, the professional leagues as well as college sports have received athletes from all over the world in increasing numbers. International sport events have considerably amount of more countries participating nowadays, for example in Olympic Games both winter and summer. In addition to that, more individual athletes are crossing some old traditional lines what it comes to gender and religion and participating in variety of different sports. Overall, globalization of sports has increased the opportunities of athletes, coaches and managers to move around and access to diverse of new and different arenas in the world of sport. (Thibault 2009, 3.)

John Bale and Joe Sang (1996) concentrated in their studies on the Kenyan athletes who have migrated to overseas to pursue their athletic careers. There has been two kind of migration occurring, another one to take part in athletic competitions occasionally and then returning back to their homeland, and another one, which involves some temporary or longer-term residence in a new country. Kenyans are used as examples of this global migration of athletes; however there are two kinds of groups of athletes inside the athletic society of Kenya. The well-known elite athletes often times earn enough to be able to have the residence outside of Kenya and travel freely with the help of their agents and managers. On the other side, there are so-called “journeymen” athletes (Bale & Sang 1996, 120), they are in the situation where they have to travel globally in order to achieve a better life and to earn enough for living. Examples of these types of Kenyan athletes are the college athletes, who migrate to the USA colleges in order to pursue their dream of a new life and better education. There was a significant increase of Kenyan athletes in the U.S. colleges in the late 1960’s. (Bale & Sang 1996, 119-120.)

The amount of foreign student-athletes in the U.S. colleges went up in the 1950’s, before that there were mainly American athletes attending and receiving athletic-scholarships. Especially Canadians and Western-Europeans were common in the track and field teams, and since the late 1960’s and 1970’s also Kenyan distance runners were recruited in growing numbers. Interestingly, there were Kenyans distance runners taking part of the NCAA championships in 1976 more than any other foreign athletes. Since the 1985 the Kenyan athletes in the U.S. colleges began to decline, because of the

changes in NCAA rules. From around that time receiving prize money was acceptable. (Bale & Sang 1996, 124-126.) When looking at the University of Colorado at Boulder as a case study, it is interesting to notice that there have not been any foreign track and field athletes over the history even though Kenyans were the biggest group of international student-athletes in track and field in the 1970's. One reason for that is the recruitment method of the head coach who prefers American athletes to foreign born ones. This will be covered in the results part where the case CU is analyzed.

### **2.3 International students as an economic value tool**

NAFSA, which is an Association of International Educators, published statistics about the values of international students coming to the U.S. colleges. The statistics showed some interesting numerical information about the economic value of international students in the U.S. According to 2013 findings of NAFSA, in the academic year 2012-2013 altogether 819,644 international students with their families contributed \$24 billion to the U.S. economy and created 313, 000 jobs across the continent. Detailed data is published by NAFSA every year to illustrate the economic benefits created by international students to the U.S economy. (NAFSA 2013.)

The economic contribution data is calculated by using International student enrollment figures, which are from the Institute of International Education Open Doors 2013 report. In addition to that the tuition data is taken from the U.S Department of Education's National Center of Educational Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and the living expenses are derived from the same data. (NAFSA 2013.)

The calculations of number of jobs created and supported data are done by using the same data as above, and then combined that with the U.S Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration and Bureau of Economic Analyses data as well as the research done by the economic professor Dr. Enrico Moretti from University of California, Berkeley (NAFSA 2013).

According to NAFSA (2013),

*“International students not only contribute economic value, they build bridges between the United States and other countries; bring global perspectives into U.S. classrooms and research labs; support U.S. innovation through science and engineering coursework, making it*

possible for U.S. colleges and universities to offer these courses to U.S. students; and support programming and services on campus for all students by paying out-of-state tuition, funded largely by non-U.S. sources” (NAFSA 2013.)

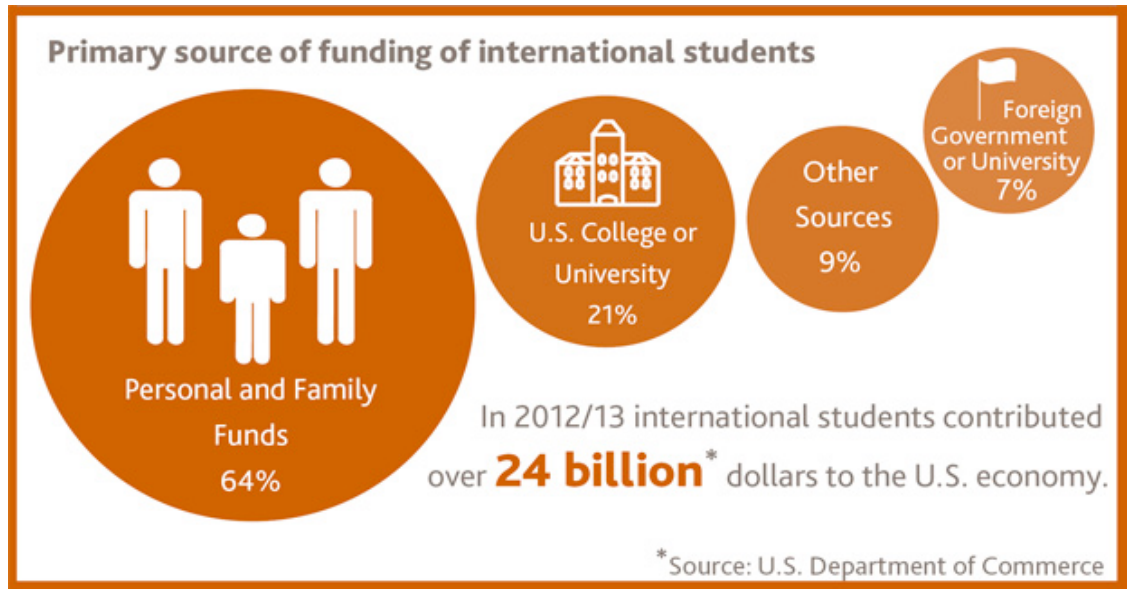


Figure 5. Primary source of funding of international students (Source: Institute of International Education)

Almost 64 % of the funds international students receive come from their personal and family funds and sources. When added the other foreign fundings such as the assistance from their home government and their universities, thus over 70 % of the funding is coming outside of the U.S. (Institute of International Education).

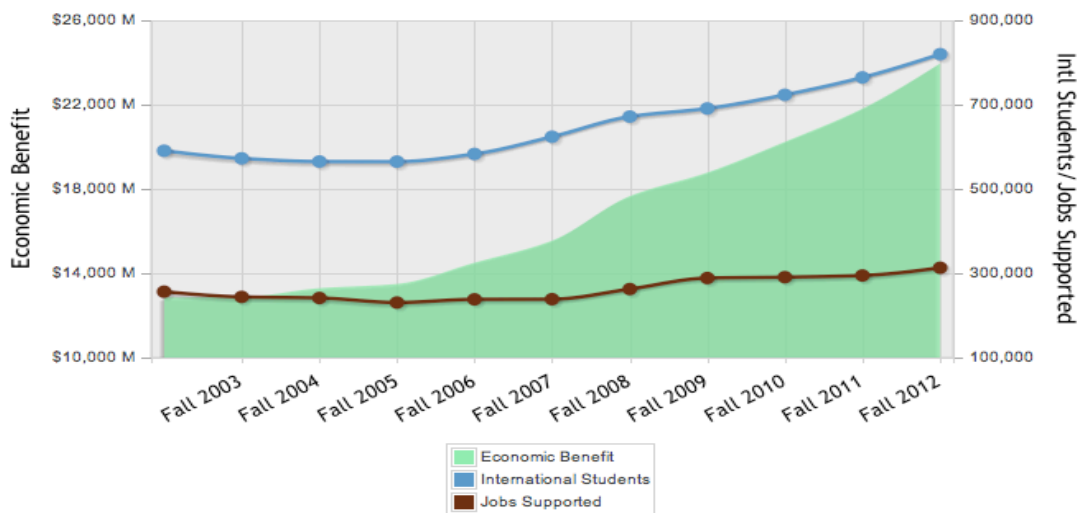


Figure 6. The trend of the economic benefits of international student enrollment to the United States (NAFSA 2013)

The figure above illustrates the enrollment of international students and economic benefits they bring in ten-year period in the U.S. The trend in enrollment of the international students in the national level has been increasing in the past ten years. In 2012 the number of international students in the U.S. universities was over 800,000 compared to the year 2003 when it was less than 600,000. If the numbers of international students have increased, the economic benefits have increased significantly in the past ten years. In 2012 it was over \$24 billion compared to the less than \$14 billion in 2003. (NAFSA 2013.)

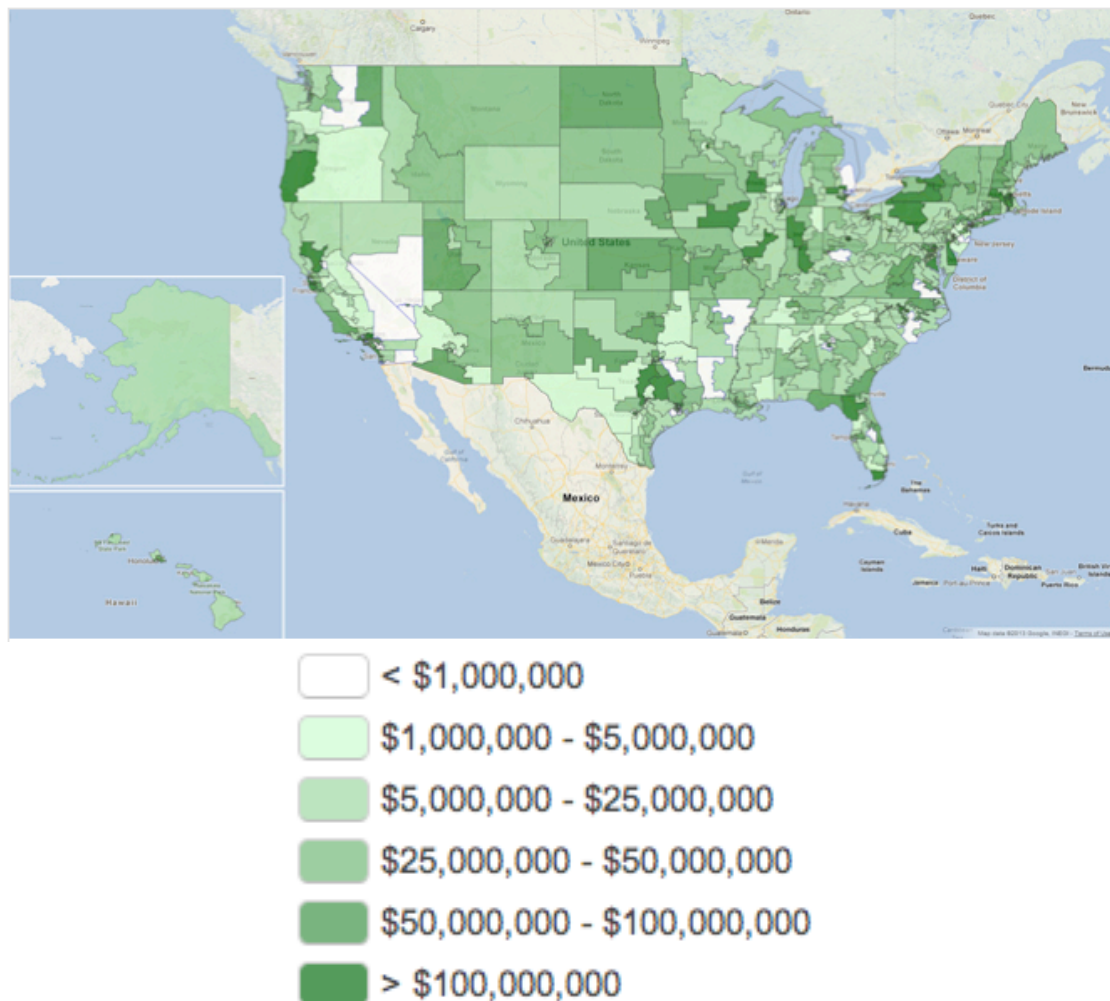


Figure 7. Economic benefit of the international students by U.S Congressional district (NAFSA 2013)

In the map above the economic benefits are illustrated in the national level divided in to the Congressional districts of the U.S. The dark green displays the areas where the economic benefits of the international students are over \$1 billion. Especially in the

East coast and in the West coast as well as in the South (Texas and Florida) and Great Lake area there are areas where the economic benefits are the highest. (NAFSA 2013.) However, there are areas in Nevada, in Northern Washington, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana area where the economic benefits are relatively low.

This figure below illustrates the trend of the economic benefits of the international student enrollment in the state of Colorado. Colorado was chosen because the case study school University of Colorado at Boulder is one of the biggest universities in the state of Colorado. Based on the NAFSA (2013) report in 2012-2013 CU had 1910 foreign students. They received \$48,960.9 in tuition and other fees. The total contribution was \$58,024.5 and the number of jobs created/supported was 988. Only University of Denver has higher numbers in each of these categories in state of Colorado. (NAFSA 2013.)

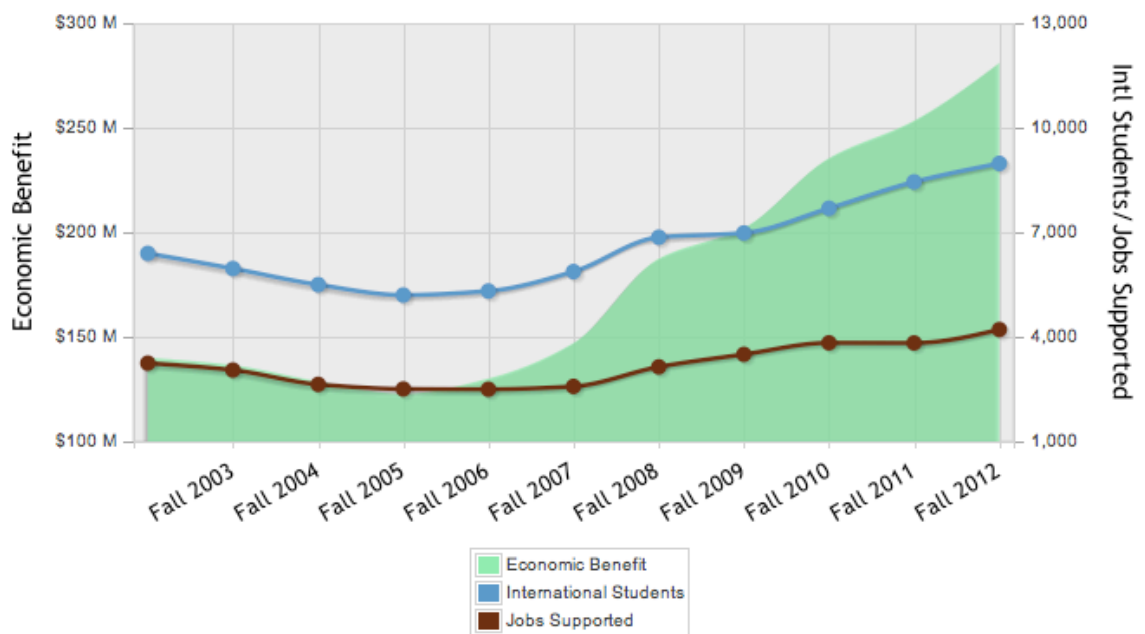


Figure 8. Trend of the economic benefits of international student enrollment to the state of Colorado (NAFSA 2013)

Looking at these figures you could say that international students have a significant contribution to the U.S. economy. However, these are only numbers and it would be interesting to know how many of these international students actually stay in the U.S. after completing their studies and enter to the labor market. Moreover, how many of the international students actually pay taxes in the U.S, and in that way additionally



contribute the U.S economy? These questions have significant effect on the long-term economic impact of the international students in the U.S.

The Report of the University of Sheffield in 2013 in Oxford Economics analyzed the international students and their economic costs and benefits in the Sheffield-based universities (The Economic Costs and Benefits of International Students 2013). Similar issues can be considered when thinking of the international students in the U.S. universities. The international students contribute and benefit the U.S economy in different ways. The direct tuition fees paid to the universities, the overall spending on good and services, and then the visits by families and friends coming from abroad. On the other hand, the costs include the consumption of public services such as health, transport and waste removal but also increased traffic congestion. In addition, reducing social capital can be seen as a cost for the economy. (The Economic Costs and Benefits of International Students 2013.)

If international student-athletes would be analyzed in similar ways the figures would not maybe look exactly the same. Most of the international student-athletes have a scholarship of some amount, thus they do not spend directly that huge amount of money to the higher education, as do most of the other international students. Still international student-athletes also contribute to the U.S economy in many other ways such as spending on good and services and are counted in to these statistics.

## 2.4 The USA sport system

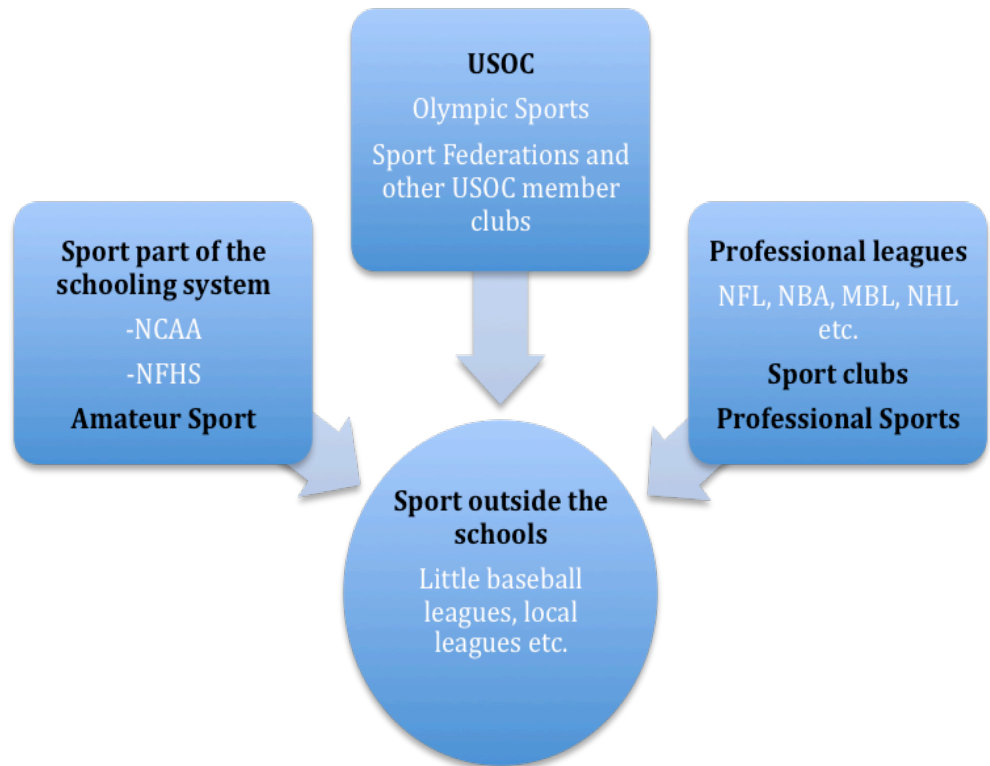


Figure 9. The main sport organizations in the U.S. (Metsä-Tokila 2001, 42)

The structure of the U.S. sport organization system is quite unique and different compared to many other developed countries. Sports have a major role in American culture, and there are varieties of possibilities to be part of that culture either by actively participating or passively as spectators (Ruseski & Razavilar 2013, 311). The structure of an organized sport in the U.S. is divided in three separate parts: 1) Sport as part of schooling system, 2) The USA Olympic Committee (USOC) concentrating on Olympic sports, public and private sport clubs and recreational facilities and 3) Professional leagues (Metsä-Tokila 2001). In this thesis the concentration is on the ‘Sport as part of the schooling system’ and more specifically on the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The intercollegiate athletics especially if considering the men’s football and basketball leagues are relatively close to the major professional leagues nowadays what it comes to the dominance (Ruseski & Razavilar 2013, 313).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has a long history. The starting point of the organization was to regulate participation and eligibility of students. ‘The Big Ten’ conference called ‘The Intercollegiate Conference of Faculty Representatives’ was the first conference to apply these rules. After their actions many other parts of the U.S. followed with similar rules and regulations in their own conferences. NCAA was established in 1905 (the name NCAA has been used since 1910), first mainly because of the issues in football, but eventually for the purpose to guide all the sports. (Chu et al. 1985, 7-8.)

What is the value of college sports in the U.S? According to NCAA, there are more than 450,000 NCAA student-athletes participating in college sports in every year. What it comes to studying and classroom performance, the results show that eight out of ten student-athletes complete their bachelor degree in college and almost 35 percent continue with their postgraduate degrees. The graduation rates are higher for student-athletes as a group compared to the general student body in under graduation degrees. An important regulation in NCAA college sport is that student-athletes have to be able to maintain a certain grade point average (GPA) in each semester and pass certain amount of courses in order to be able to compete. The amount of money NCAA schools give out each year for athletic scholarships is over 2.4 billion dollars and the number of student-athletes is over 150,000. The number of student-athletes is at its highest at the moment. The NCAA championships event host cities have experienced some positive economic benefits and the surrounding communities have benefitted through student-athletes doing community services. Over 54,000 student-athletes compete in 89 NCAA championships each year and this creates some high-level competition and unites the communities to support their own teams. (NCAA.)

The NCAA consists of four divisions. Football is played in four divisions and other sports are played in three divisions (Noll 2003). The intercollegiate athletics have become huge businesses in many of the universities both state-funded and private institutions (Eitzen 2012). In the U.S, intercollegiate sports offer many athletes the opportunity to go professional after the college years. Especially in big team sports such as in football and basketball this is often time the way to turn professional and to be recruited by the major league teams. Colleges and universities also offer some intramural and club sport activities for students who are not part of the varsity teams but

still wish to compete and participate in organized sports. (Sparvero et al. 2012.) According to report by Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, somewhat concerning is that many of the universities are spending on their intercollegiate sport teams increasingly more funds than they are spending on their academic programs (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics 2010). Many of the schools are mainly state-funded public universities. Addition to state-fund there are also other revenues coming from ticket sales of the games, sponsors, donations, student fees, broadcasting and many other sources (Mahony & DeSchriver 2008).

## **2.5 Dual-career**

The term dual-career can be defined as elite athletes being involved in the sport domain as well as in the work or the education domain. The individuals have certain responsibilities toward these domains depending on the policies made by the state. (EU Guidelines on Dual Career of Athletes 2012, 8.) Almost one third of young athletes between the age of 10 and 17 quit their sporting career every year due to the fact that they think that sport is too time consuming and affect strongly their other choices in life such as studying (EU guidelines on Dual Career of Athletes 2012, 7). Larger transitions are often taking the place at the time when the high school is over and it is time to continue to the higher education institution. In many countries the opportunities for pursuing a dual-career in higher education institutions are not very well planned.

Timo Metsä-Tokila's doctoral thesis "Koulussa ja kentällä" is one very important literature source for my study. Metsä-Tokila introduces and analyses the different schooling systems and how they are combining elite sports in eight different countries; in the U.S, in UK, in Belgium, in Kenya, in the Soviet Union and Russia, in China, in Sweden and in Finland. In the country analyses the differences between the schooling systems in each of these countries are illustrated. According to Metsä-Tokila (2001), only few athletes actually stay on the spotlight of sports after completing their professional career. However, most of the athletes will be doing something not sport related after the career is over. Studies show that most of the retired athletes who have completed their higher education degree before or during their sporting career, will be working in the fields, which are related to their degrees. However, athletes who did not complete or even start their higher education studies will most likely be working in the

fields, which require high school knowledge or no degree. (Metsä-Tokila 2001, 21.) The sport system in the U.S differs greatly from the other countries. As introduced in the previous chapter, the concentration in this study is on the U.S college sports organized by the NCAA.

Metsä-Tokila (2001) illustrated the expectations and life choices of a young athlete in the Figure 10. Young talented athletes are facing many choices in life at certain age. Especially at the age of 15-18 when young athletes have to choose whether he or she is going to continue with the competitive sporting career, to concentrate on studying or in an ideal case to do both successfully. Often time young athletes are facing some expectations coming from outside, such as from parents and coaches who are pushing them to continue with the sport, but at the same time hoping that the youngster is also doing well in school. Young athletes are also facing expectations coming from the educational institutions and from the sport organizations. All of these agencies have their own expectations, which might push the youngster to do his or her choices in life. Often the case is that youngsters have to choose whether he or she is going to invest in sports or in school. In the worst case, he or she puts all the efforts towards sports and quit the school and then retires the sporting career soon after. In this case he or she has neither education nor sporting career. The primary idea of the schooling systems where young athletes can combine both sports and education is to ensure that the young athletes have many good choices in life whether it is a sport career or academic career and later on a working life. (Metsä-Tokila 2001, 12.)

In European countries there have been discussions about how an elite athlete would be able to combine their “dual career” as being a full time athlete as well as a student, and what the role of the universities is in order to make this possible. Caput-Jogunica et al. (2012, 21) in their comparative analyses introduces some of the best practices European countries have done to balance student-athletes athletic performance and their education. Their comparative analysis is based on five different studies conducted by European countries. Important provisions in higher education institutions were identified in the study; 1) universities offering flexibility and distance learning, 2) schools offering sport scholarships or elite sport development programs, 3) post-athletic career development assistance by universities such as study grants. European countries have multiple different ways of dealing with this issue. In most of these countries the

sport system and the schooling system is organized in the same way due to the somewhat similar cultural tradition and history. Among all the studies presented in the analysis, the key factor for the top-level athletes to be able to combine sport, education and their personal development, was the need of flexibility from the institution. (Caput-Jogunica et al. 2012, 22-24.)

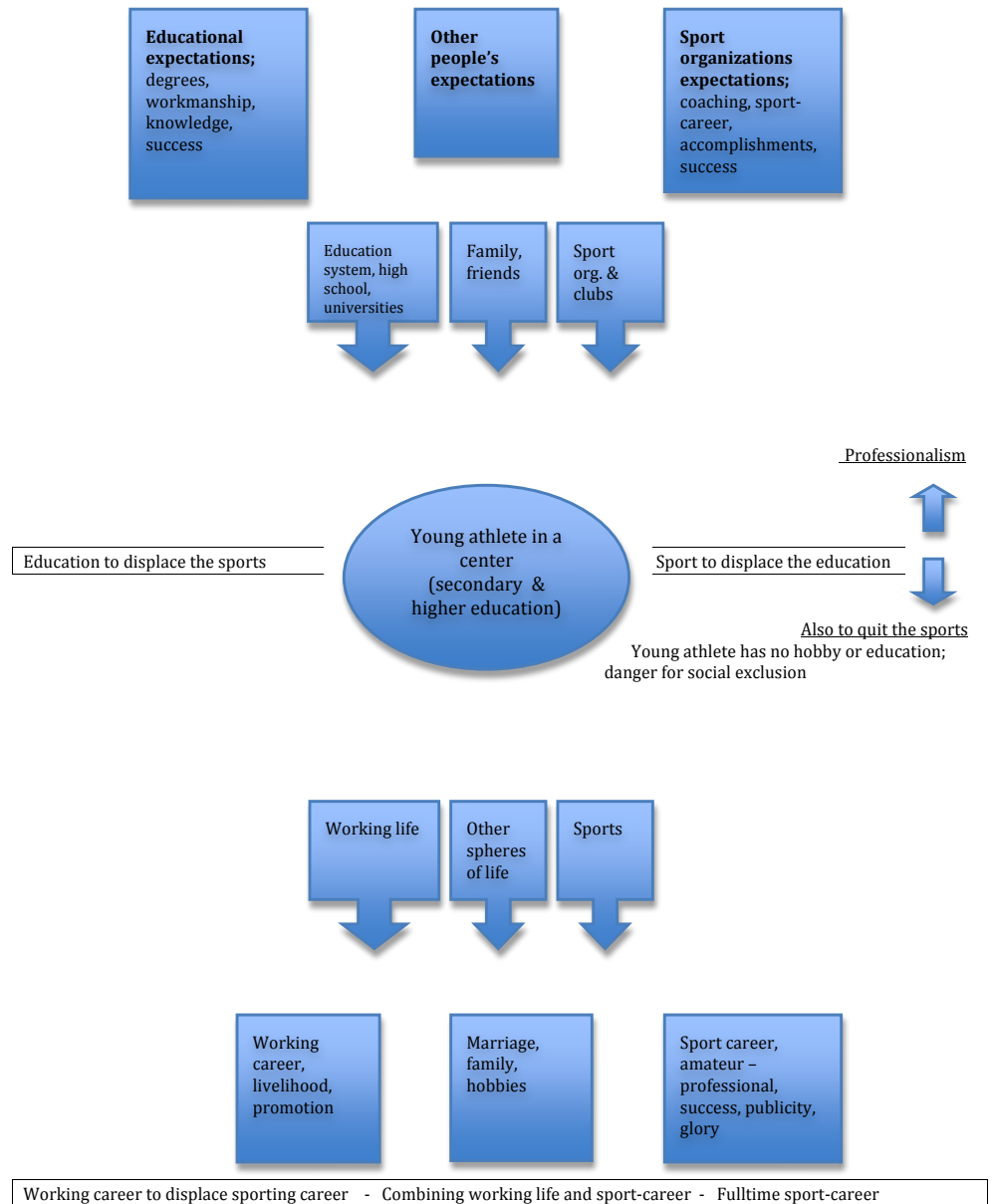


Figure 10. Expectations towards a young athlete and his or her choices in life (Metsä-Tokila 2001, 13)

### **2.5.1 International student-athletes in the U.S. colleges**

Being a student-athlete can be quite demanding, stressful, time consuming but at the same time also very rewarding. Paule and Gilson (2010, 333-345) in their study examined the benefits and challenge the college athletes' experience when participating in nonrevenue college sports. The results showed that the types of benefits athletes face while attending college were for example academic benefits, being in a team, learning life skills, improved time management, and tangible benefits such as equipment, facilities, scholarship and traveling around. On the other hand among the challenges the athletes mentioned topics such as missing out on things in college, lack of free time and being stereotyped. These findings are interesting because it is important to know what kind of challenges and benefits the student athletes will experience and gain in the college in general. These benefits and challenges play role in the international athletes' experiences and their recruiting as well. Being a Division I athlete, students might face multiple identities since they have to be normal students as well as high-level competitive athletes. This is often the difference compared to professional athletes who can often concentrate only being elite athletes most of the time. An interesting finding according to Sturm et al. (2011) was that, the female athletes hold a lot stronger student identity compared to the male student-athletes who tend to have stronger athletic identity.

### **2.5.2 International student-athletes and their adjustment and satisfaction to U.S colleges**

Article written by Popp et al. (2010) "Cross-Cultural Adjustments and International Collegiate Athletes" is very relevant for my research. The article examined how well international student-athletes adjust to the college environment and culture. It is becoming increasingly important to understand what kinds of adjustments the international student-athletes go through and what kinds of experiences they have. These have helped some schools to create special programs to help the international student-athletes to meet their needs. It was suggested that there are five main areas for international student athlete's adjustment: academic, social, athletic, personal-emotional and institutional. The study revealed that additionally to the antecedent dimension, also three new factors were found; sense of adventure, previous international travel experience and family influence. (Popp et al. 2010, 163-164.) This can be one of the



reasons why more international student-athletes are entering to U.S. colleges. Nowadays people and especially young people are seeking adventures and new travel experiences. Going to study abroad, getting an international degree and maybe receiving a scholarship is a good opportunity for many to explore the world. People are more aware of the opportunities nowadays and for many it is easier to take the step and move to another country to pursue the dream.

An interesting article was written by Popp et al. (2009) about how Division I level international student-athletes versus American student-athletes view the purpose of the college sports. Many international student athletes come to the U.S. from very different sporting backgrounds compared to many American student-athletes. The findings show that the international student athletes rated the competition aspect significantly lower than the American student athletes. The students coming from Western Europe rated citizenship as a purpose of a collegiate sport a lot lower than student athletes from Eastern Europe and Central and South America. This study could have implications for the college sport coaches who are increasingly recruiting international athletes. According to the study, the international student athletes are less motivated by the competition aspect and winning their conference. (Popp et al. 2009, 93-110.) This specific study is very relevant and exactly related to this research study. It is interesting to notice for example that the citizenship aspect is more important for students coming from Eastern Europe and Latin America than for the Western Europeans. Seems like the amounts of Eastern Europeans have been growing in the past years, and getting citizenship and looking to get a so-called “better life” could be one of the reasons for that. Based on the research of University of Colorado at Boulder the biggest nationality groups were mainly Scandinavians and Canadians and less South Americans and Eastern Europeans have been attending to CU over the years.

Because of the growing number of international student-athletes it is important to understand whether they are satisfied with their experiences as being NCAA division I student-athletes both in academics and athletics. According to Trendafilova et al. (2010, 348-349) their study about satisfaction in the areas such as academic support services, medical support, and team bonding etc. among the international student-athlete football players revealed that the athletes were satisfied with their overall experiences. This study showed that it is very important to acknowledge how international student-

athletes perceive their stay in the U.S, as well as also crucial for the coaches and administrators to understand better what might be the reasons behind the satisfaction among the athletes (Trendafilova et al. 2010). In this study also international student-athletes will be investigated, and the study about the motivation factors will give some background information why they might have chosen to come to the U.S, and how they are experiencing their time over there. These factors are important for the prospect international student-athletes who might be thinking about coming to the U.S to study and to play college sports.

### 3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

There is one primary research question in this study, which is divided into three smaller sub-questions and supporting questions. The sub-questions amplify the main research question. The first two sub-questions are based on the document analyses from roster data and the third question is based mainly on the interviews. With the help of these sub-questions the main research question can be discussed. Document analyses and semi-structured interviews were suitable research methods for this particular research in order to analyze the international student-athletes in CU over the history to answer all the three sub-questions.

#### 3.1 Research questions

The main research question is:

In which way sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career are illustrated in the case study school University of Colorado at Boulder and in college sport context?

The following sub-questions and supporting questions amplify the main question:

- A) How has the numbers of international student-athletes changed since 1980?
- Which sports have the most international student-athletes?
  - How many international student-athletes in each year and in each sport?
- B) What is the nationality distribution of the international student-athletes?
- What is the nationality distribution in different sports?
  - Does the nationality distribution vary over the years?
- C) What are some of the reasons why international student-athletes are coming to CU from the school's point of view?
- Any changes happened over the year from the school's point of view?
  - What are some reasons behind the changes in numbers and nationalities?
  - What are some of the impacts of international student-athletes coming to CU?
  - How are international student-athletes recruited?

- How do international student-athletes adapt to CU from the school's point of view?

### **3.2 Case Study**

This research is based on a case study of one particular school in the U.S, University of Colorado at Boulder, and more closely concentrating on the international student-athletes of the school over the history. In this research one case is studied in detail by using the most appropriate methods; document analyses and semi-structured interviews. The main objective is to get a full understanding of that specific case. Typical aspects of a case study research are the problems studied, the issues related to the case, the context of the research and what we have learned during and from the study. Typical for a case study is also to add some personality to the research by creating tables and figures based on the data collection. (Asmussen & Creswell 1995, 36.) Case study is often times thought as a bounded system, meaning that it is bounded by time and place such as being one program or an event for example. This is a multi-site study because multiple different sport programs are examined at the same time. The case is often times situated in a special context and a setting, which can be for example a physical setting. (Cresswell 1997. 61.) According to Yin (2003), also archive records may be useful in case study research such as organizational records, maps and charts. Case study can also be defined as an empirical inquiry meaning that contemporary phenomenon is investigated in the real-life context.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used in this research in order to answer the main research question. The data consists of document analyses and semi-structured interviews. The completed document analyses were able to give some detailed quantitative information and were suitable methods to answer the first two sub-questions. However, the semi-structured interviews were appropriate data collection method in order to answer the sub-question three and receive some more detailed information from the school's point of view.

### **3.3 Data collection**

In this case study the main objective is to get an understanding of the history of international student-athletes in the University of Colorado at Boulder and also to find

out why international student-athletes are coming to CU. The specific school University of Colorado at Boulder function as a setting for this research and it is used as a case study school. The time frame is the past 20 years, but also some history before that is examined. Multiple different sport programs are studied to get more in-depth information about the school's history. For case study it is typical to use multiple different types of data collection to get a better understanding of the entire case. In this case study two different kinds of data collection methods were used together; document analyzes and semi-structured interviews. Using multiple sources of information in data collection process is important in order to be able to provide in-depth picture of the whole phenomena. Quantitative data collection and analyses form the first part of this research. However, semi-structured interviews can be additionally applied to this case study in order to receive more in-depth information and experiences rather than to analyze pure numbers. These two data collection methods together were the most suitable methods in order to receive valuable information to answer the main research question through the three sub-questions.

### **3.3.1 Player roster analyzes**

The data collection was conducted by first collecting the documents, which were the old player rosters from the school in this case. The documents were sent to me by the media department of CU. The challenge with the player rosters data I received was that they were in different form in nearly every sport. In some sports such as in women's tennis there was a clear data of all the international student-athletes who had participated in CU's athletic program throughout the history. Additionally the nationalities and years attended were clearly marked. Whereas in some sports for example in skiing they only had one data of all the student-athletes attended year by year over the whole history. In this case it was more difficult to identify and pick out all the international student-athletes, their countries and the years they had attended. Altogether ten different sports were investigated through.

The reduction of the data means that the data is checked over and all the unnecessary information related to the research is cut off. The reduction of information can be either condensation of the information or splitting the information into smaller pieces. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 109.) In this case the relevant information was selected and then

categorize based on the sport, nationality and years attended. From this part of the data collection, some numerical information was formulated and figures and graphs were created. The figures and graphs helped to illustrate the phenomena. These figures provided valuable information and illustrated some trends in the numbers of international student-athletes in CU over the years, in which sport they have been attending and from which countries they have been coming from. Also some variations and differences between sports were noticed by looking at the figures more closely. Personally this was the most interesting part of the data collection and analyzing. This part of the data collection allowed to get some actual numerical information and to answer the research question number one and two.

### **3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews**

The second part of the data collection consisted of the semi-structure interviews. (Appendix 1.) Semi-structured interviews were chosen in order to receive in-depth information from few people from this specific case study school CU. Semi-structured interviews were suitable methods in order to receive the information, that was needed in order to answer the sub-question question three and to receive more information from the school's point of view. The experiences and in-depth knowledge cannot be purely answered through the numbers and figures. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone in December 2013. Semi-structured interviews were qualitative in nature and form the qualitative part in this research.

Essentially important for the research are the people who are part of the research, and that they know enough about the studied phenomena. In this case study these are the people who are being interviewed. In this research the people who were chosen for the interviews had important role what it comes to their empirical experiences and expertise of the phenomena. The purpose of the research data is to describe the phenomena, which is researched and by analyzing the data more information is added to the study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85). Because of the long distance between the interviewees and the interviewer, face-to-face interview was not an option. If direct contact with the interviewees is not possible, phone interview provides the best source of information in most cases (Cresswell 1997, 124). The downside of the phone interviews is that the interviewer is not able to see the facial expressions of the interviewees and the

communication between two individuals can be harder via phone compared to face-to-face. The advantage of interview as a data collection method is that it is relatively flexible. The interviewer has the possibility to repeat the question, clarify the question, correct some misunderstandings and discuss with the interviewee. This is not possible for example in questionnaires, which are sent via post and all the respondents get the same questionnaires. In interviews the interviewer has the possibility to ask the questions in the order she or he wishes and thinks suits the best. The main point of the interview is to get as much information as possible. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73.)

In this research a coach and an administration person from CU were chosen for the interviews. The interviews are based on their point of views and not necessarily concentrating on the athletes' experiences as being international student-athletes. The opinions of the interviewees might be different from what the student-athletes would have had, but in this case study it is more important to receive an overall picture of the international student-athletes in CU and not to concentrate purely on the experiences of the student-athletes themselves.

A theme interview or semi-structured interview is close to the in-depth interview what it comes to the openness of the questions. In semi-structured interview the questions are formulated so that there is some premade structure, which guide the conversation. The interview is following some themes, which are created beforehand by the interviewer. However, the interviewees have the possibility to answer the questions in their own word, and the interview does not have to follow a strict order. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 48.) In this case, the questions were formulated so that they gave room for some discussion between the interviewee and interviewer. Also some questions were emerging during the discussion.

In the interviews I used the so-called elite sampling, which means that the sample size is very small and the persons who were interviewed were chosen because of they had personal in-depth knowledge of the this specific topic. Thus, from the research point of view the interviewees chosen had some significant knowledge about the research topic, which provided important information in order to answer the research question. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 76.) Two individuals were chosen for the interviews. These two individuals were chosen because they had some important and valuable information to

add to the research. Both of these interviewees have a lot of empirical experience on the research topic. These two individuals were the most suitable in this case to get the data that was needed. Both of the interviewees were representatives of University of Colorado at Boulder. The other individual is in a leading position in Athletic Department with the experience also in a coaching position. The other one has 16 years of experience as a head coach in a women's varsity team in CU. She is personally also a former international student-athlete in the U.S. The interviewees are treated anonyms in this research and no names are used. In this case the names could have been published but I chose to treat them anonymously. In order to get as much information from the interviewees it is often times recommended to give the individuals the questions beforehand thus that they can be prepared in best possible way (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73). The questions were sent to the individuals few days before the date of the interview. The telephone interviews were each approximately 20-30 minutes long. The interviews were audio taped and later on transcribed.

### **3.4 Data analyses**

The first part of the data collection was based on the roster analyses. The player rosters were investigated and the relevant information was selected. The data was categorized based on the sports, the nationalities and the years. After that numerous figures were formed with Excel program out of the data. The first figure consisted of countries and the number of athletes in CU overall. The second figure was formed based on the continent distribution of the student-athletes. In the third one the continent distribution was broken into smaller areas such as Scandinavia, Eastern Europe etc. The fourth figure illustrated the number of athletes before and after the year 1980. The fifth figure portrayed the number of international student-athletes in different sport teams. The yearly variations in numbers were illustrated through one separate figure. Eventually, few examples of different sport teams were highlighted for example skiing team and men's and women's team. From the figures it was easy to see some important patterns and changes between the years. Moreover the differences between sports and nationalities were illustrated through these figures and graphs.

In the second part of the data collection the interviews were audio taped and transcribed soon after. Doing the transcribing soon after the actual interviews is often times



beneficial because the interviewer has them freshly in her or his mind (Hurme & Hirsjärvi 2010, 135). The interviews were conducted during the same week, in two different days. The point of the interviews was to give answer to the research question number three; what are some of the reasons why international student-athletes are coming to CU from the school's point of view? The semi-structured interviews were divided into eight different themes. The themes were 1. Reasons, 2. Changes, 3. Globalization, 4. Impacts, 5. Nationality, 6. Sports, 7. Recruitment, 8. Adaptation. The questions were falling under each of these themes. (Appendix 1.) The interviews were asked questions related to the changes over the years, what are some of the reasons behind the changes, what are some positive and negative impacts brought by the international student-athletes, the recruiting methods, and something about the adaptation to the school.

In the transcribing process all the information was written down, but only concentrating on the most relevant messages, themes and information. Small words and other linguistic expressions were not relevant in this case study. The interview questions were divided into eight different themes; reasons, changes, globalization, impacts, nationalities, sports, recruitment and adaptation. All of these themes consisted of few sub-questions. Also some additional questions were asked during the interviews. After transcribing the interviews the answers were clustered based on these eight themes mentioned above. In this way the data was easier to handle and was reduced to cover only the relevant information. The data was analyzed by using these different themes and connected to the relevant previous literature concerning the topic.

## 4 RESULTS

In which way sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career are illustrated in the case study school University of Colorado at Boulder? First some numerical information about the international student-athletes in CU in the past 20 years has to be demonstrated in order to be able to answer to this main question.

The aim of the first part of the research was to find out the answers to the questions:

- 1 How have the numbers of international student-athletes changed since 1980?
  - a. Which sports have the most international student-athletes?
  - b. How many international student-athletes in each year and in each sport?
- 2 What is the nationality distribution of the international student-athletes?
  - a. What is the nationality distribution in different sports?
  - b. Does the nationality distribution vary over the years?

To answer these questions old player rosters from CU were investigated and analyzed to find out the exact numbers and nationalities of the athletes. The player rosters are published every year and each sport to demonstrate and to introduce the athletes who are competing in the team in that year. The rosters were provided by the media department of CU via e-mail. Most of the rosters were covering the whole history of certain sport in CU; however some of the rosters only covered the years from 1980. That is one of the reasons why I chose to concentrate on the years after 1980, so that there will be equal representation of every sport covered. I went through the player rosters of 13 different teams, both men's and women's teams were included if they were applicable. Seven different sports were represented. Alpine skiing and cross country skiing were counted as one team because they had player rosters combined in almost every year. There were total 13 different teams; Women's Volleyball, Women's Basketball, Men's Basketball, Women's Golf, Men's Golf, Women's Tennis, Men's Tennis, Women's Soccer, Women's Alpine Skiing, Men's Alpine Skiing, Women's cross country, Men's cross country, and Football. Surprisingly, sports such as track and field had no international student-athletes in their rosters, thus that sport was not taken into account in the data. There have been some changes over the years with the team

distribution, for example men's tennis team was cut out of the program in 2006 because of financial reasons. However, men's tennis team was one of the most international teams in CU's history so in that reason it was included in the data.

There were all together 188 athletes and out of these 179 were participating after 1980 (for skiing team I received rosters starting from the 1980). Only a small number of international student-athletes took part in the athletic programs before 1980's. For that reason it was not necessary to include these in the final analyzes. There were some limitations with this because for example alpine skiing and cross-country rosters were only investigated starting from the year 1980.

There were all together athletes from 40 different countries and from all of the continents. The most international teams were alpine-skiing combined with cross-country skiing team. Men and women's skiing teams had all together 58 international athletes starting from 1980. Men's and Women's tennis teams were also very international. Men's tennis team had 37 international athletes after 1980 and women's tennis team had 28 international athletes after 1980. Men's golf had 15 international athletes since 1980. Most American teams were football and track and field with hardly any or none international student-athletes. Interestingly there were not any Asian countries represented during these years or in these sport teams.

#### **4.1 Nationalities and Sports**

There are all together 40 different countries represented. Three out of these countries stood out the most Canada, Norway and Sweden. Canada carried 35 athletes, Norway 31 and Sweden 25 athletes. After these northern hemisphere countries came Australia with 9 athletes, Germany with 8, Czech Republic and Denmark with 7 athletes. There is quite a variety of countries represented ranging from Canada to Lebanon. Nordic countries and Canada were the most represented most likely because of the location of Colorado. Furthermore, the winter sports such as alpine and cross-country skiing attracts a lot of Scandinavians and Canadians based on the results.

At the figure 11 below a clear presentation of all the countries, which were represented in the player rosters is displayed. Canada, Norway and Sweden are by far the most

represented countries throughout the school's history. Australia, Germany, Czech Republic and Denmark are following with under 10 athletes per country.

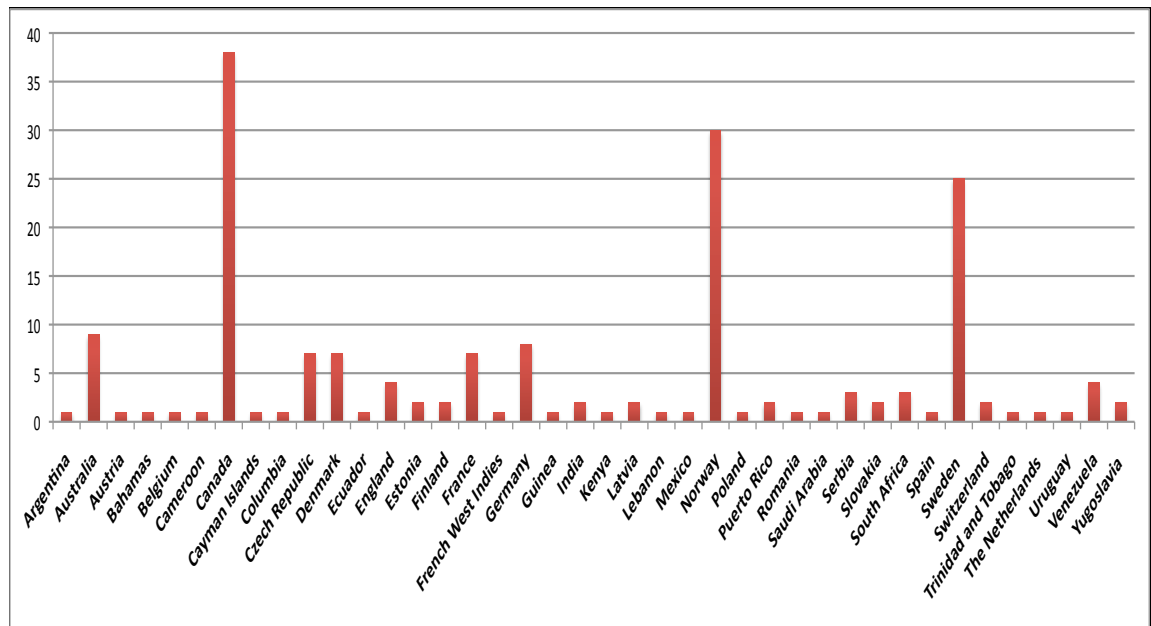


Figure 11. Countries and number of athletes since 1980

#### 4.2 Continents and Athletes

There are two different figures representing the continent distribution of the international student-athletes since 1980. Most of the international student-athletes were coming from Europe with all together 109 student-athletes. Canada was at the second place with 38 and South American countries following with 9 athletes.

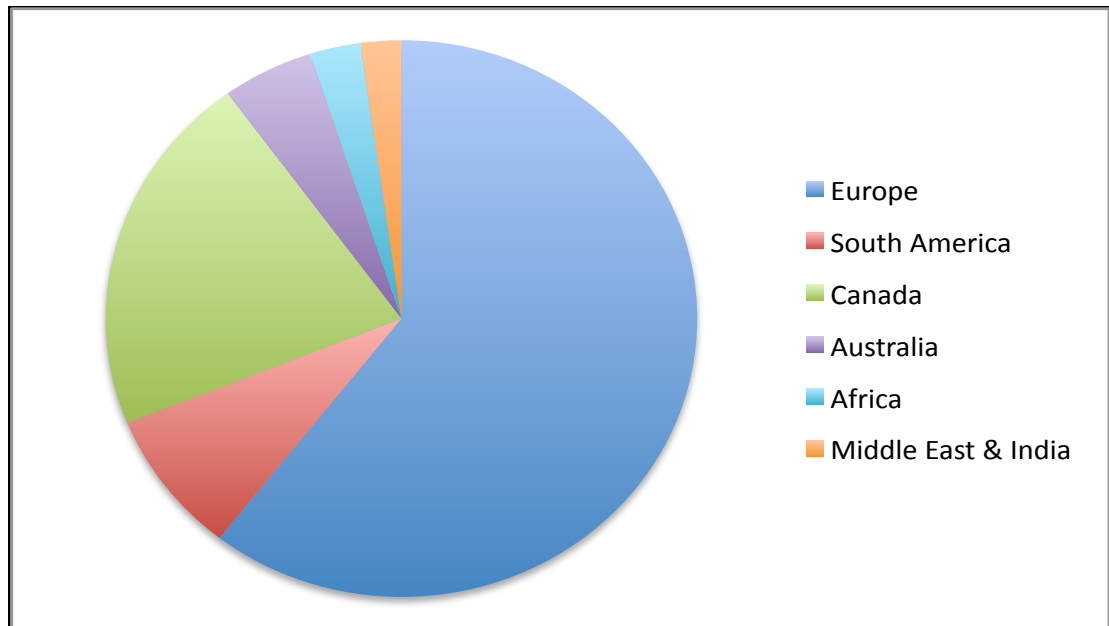


Figure 12. Continents and international student-athletes

To look at the continent distribution even more closely, we can see that by far the largest parts of the student-athletes are coming from the Scandinavian countries (including Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark). Canada is still holding the second place and Middle European countries following. Surprisingly small amount of athletes are coming from Eastern European countries, which is in general one of the fastest growing geographical area in college sports.

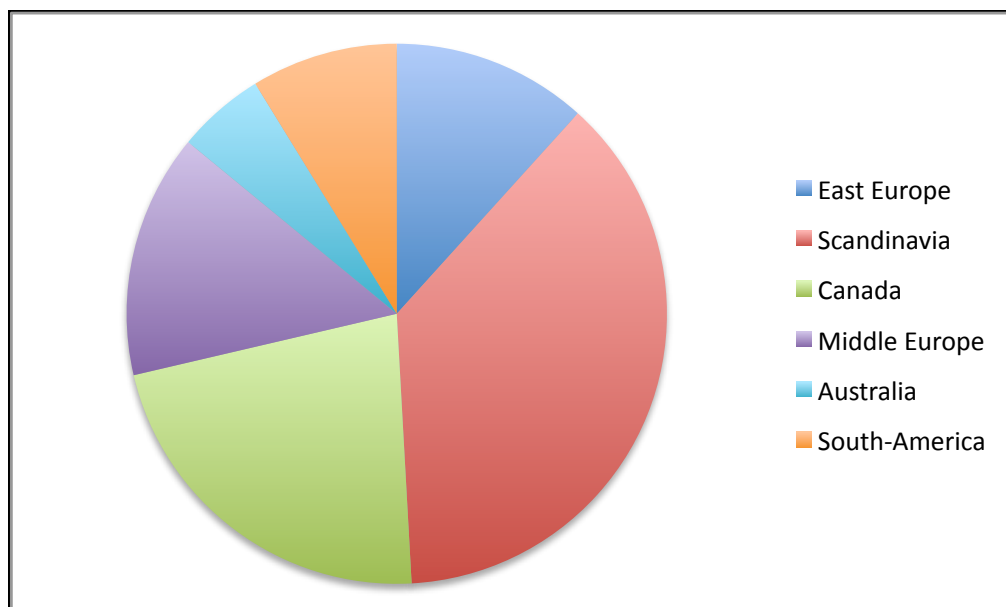


Figure 13. Continent distribution broken into smaller areas - Scandinavia, Middle Europe, Eastern Europe

### 4.3 International student-athletes and sport teams

Figure 14 represent sports and international student-athletes before and after the year 1980. The figure 14 illustrates that there is not a major differences in numbers of athletes before and after the year 1980. Most of the international student-athletes have participated in CU after the year 1980 and only few athletes were part of the athletic programs between 1940 and 1980.

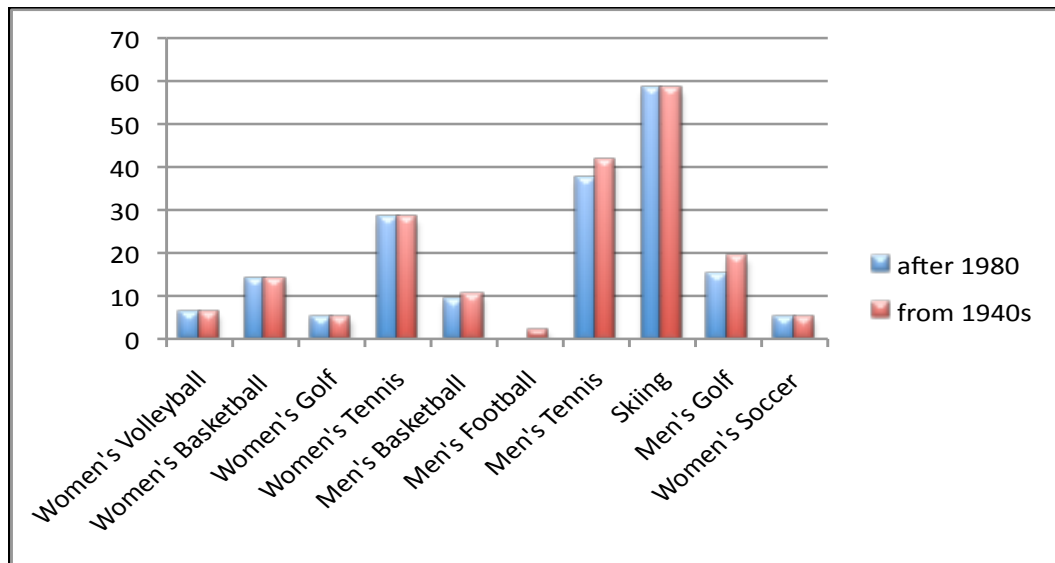


Figure 14. Sport and international student-athletes before and after 1980

The figure 15 represent the amount of international student-athletes after 1980 divided into each sport teams. Skiing and cross-country skiing (both men's and women's teams) had by far the most international student-athletes, men's and women's tennis teams following with under 40 student-athletes. Skiing is little bit over represented in these figures, because both men and women's teams were combined as well as alpine skiing and cross-country skiing. Tennis teams were separated into men and women's teams. Tennis is one of the most international sport in college thus it is not surprise that also in CU has a high representation of international student-athletes in that sport.

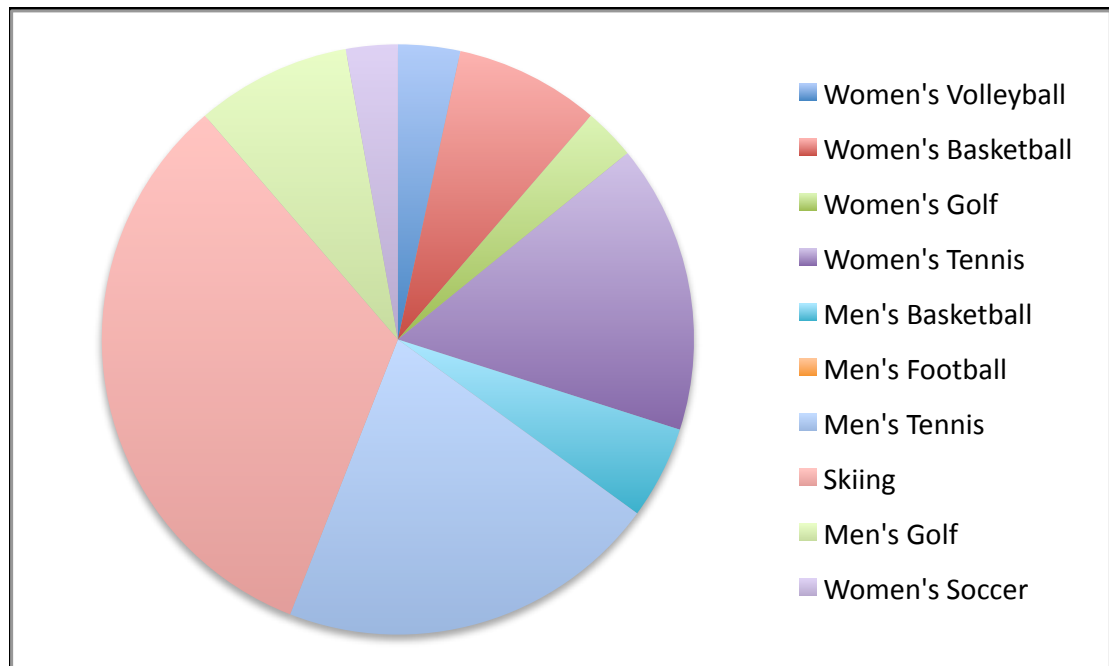


Figure 15. Sport teams and international student-athletes after 1980

There are not really any noticeable differences when taking into account the whole history of the school's athletic programs. Alpine skiing and cross-country have the most international student-athletes over the history and tennis teams both men's and women are coming after that. Most of the teams have international-athletes only attending after 1980. Football is the only team, which has international athletes only before 1980.

#### 4.4 International student-athletes by year and sport

In the figure 16, all the sports are represented since 1980. There is one peak point in this chart where we can see the highest amount of international student-athletes attending to CU. The years 2004-2006 are all above 30 athletes per season attended. There is a clear pattern occurring that at the beginning of 1980's there were only few international student-athletes in CU, and most of them in skiing teams. Slowly in the middle of 1980's the amount of international student-athletes began to rise and more sports were recruiting international student-athletes to their teams. Men's golf and men's tennis teams were following the skiing teams and started to recruit players overseas. In addition, women's basketball and women's tennis teams were attracting international athletes to their teams. Not only until 1996 there were close to 20 international-athletes attending to athletic programs per season. After that the amounts of international

student-athletes in CU have been on the rise with few drops for example in 1998 and 1999. The highest peak was in 2006 with over 30 athletes. There was a dramatic drop after 2006. One explanation for that is definitely the cutting out of men's tennis team, which was one of the most international teams in CU. Quitting the program meant that numerous international student-athletes had to find a new college in order to continue their tennis and education in the U.S. Additionally, skiing team lost quite a few international student-athletes after 2006, which makes large difference in the total number of athletes.

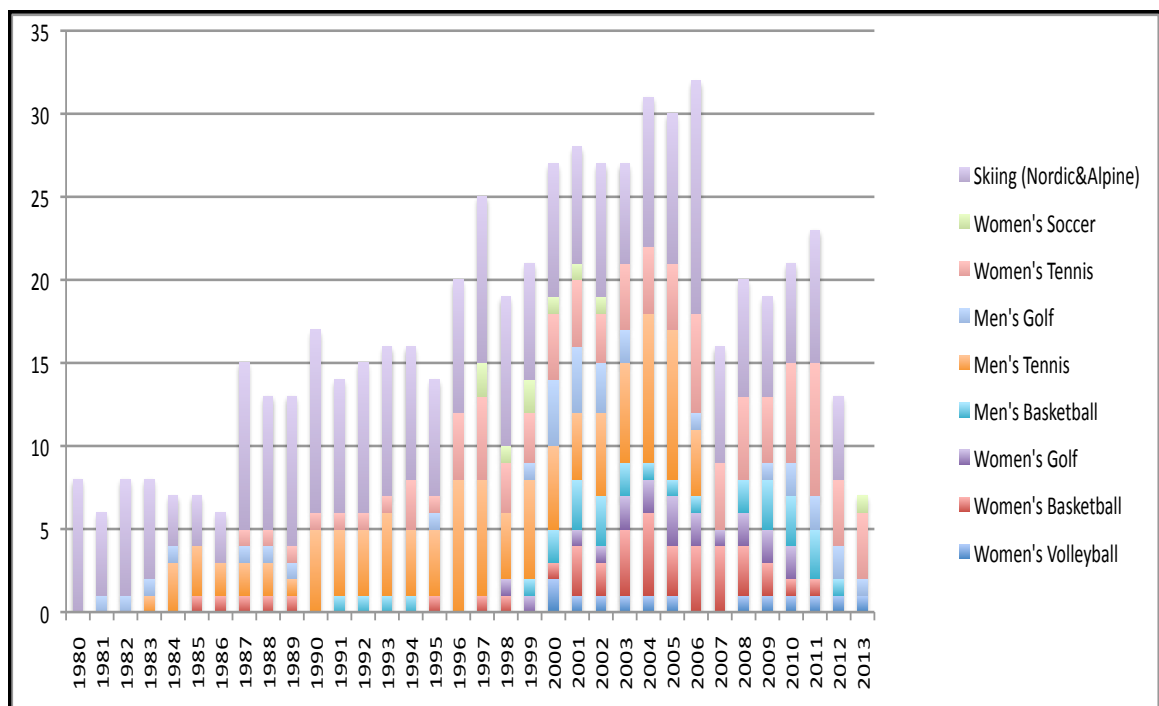


Figure 16. Number of athletes in each year and in each sport since 1980

After 2006 women's tennis team has had many international players and in the recent years women's tennis team has been one of the most international team in CU. The year 2013 does not show the total number and variety of international athletes in CU because the data was not received from every team. For example the skiing team is not represented in 2013, which would make the bar a lot higher if the skiing team was included.

Referring to the Bale's and Sang's (1996) study of Kenyan athletes in the U.S colleges, it is interesting to notice that in CU there has not have any Kenyan track and field



athletes over the history. Track and field team is one of the few teams with not any foreign-born athletes. Traditionally and historically Kenyans, Canadians, British and some other African nations have been common in college sports especially in track and fields (Bale & Sang 1996).

#### 4.4.1 International student-athletes by year and nationality– skiing team

Skiing team in CU is a good example of a significantly multicultural sport team. In this case the term ‘skiing’ team includes of both men’s and women’s alpine skiing and cross-country skiing. The year 2006 was the peak year in overall amount of international student-athletes in CU, and as represented in the figure 17 also in skiing team it was the year of most international skiers. In 2006 the team consisted of Norwegians, Czechs, Slovenians and Slovaks. Prior 2006 there were altogether over or at least 10 international athletes in the skiing team at the end of 1980’s and 1990.

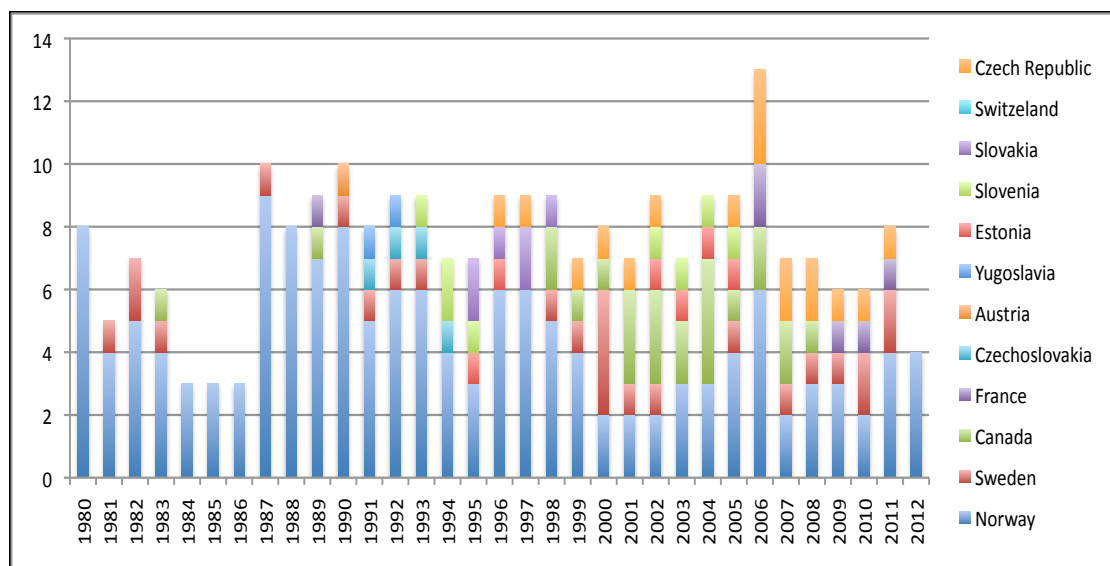


Figure 17. Skiing (Alpine & Nordic) - athletes and countries by year

Moreover, after 2006 the amount of international athletes in skiing team has dropped relatively much. Overall if we look at the nationality distribution in skiing team it consists of mainly Norwegians. There is not a single year after 1980 without at least one Norwegian on the team. In addition to that, Canadians and Swedish are highly represented over the years. In the recent years also the amount of Czechs has increased as well as Slovaks. Skiing is very popular in Colorado and the environment provides good possibilities for that particular sport. That is one of the reasons why Scandinavians

are so well represented in CU. If you would look the statistics from some other university in the U.S, the distribution of nationalities would most likely look slightly different.

#### **4.4.2 International student-athletes by year and nationality – men’s and women’s tennis teams**

Two other examples of multicultural teams represented are men and women’s tennis teams. Tennis is over the continent of the U.S. one of the most international sports in college level. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, according to Weston (2006), “in NCAA tennis, 63 of the top 100 men’s single players, and 47 of the top 100 women’s players were international student-athletes” (Weston, 2006, 841; Thibault, 2009, 9). This has been close to the case in CU as well over the history. Tennis has been very popular sport among international student-athletes in CU. In men’s tennis team there were 19 different nationalities represented over the history of the program. The peak year was 2005 with nine international players, meaning that basically the whole team was coming outside of the U.S. Sadly, the men’s tennis program was eliminated in 2006 because of some financial issues the CU’s athletic department was facing. The year 2005 was also interesting because the team had eight different nationalities at the same time. Eastern European countries were well represented in men’s tennis, players coming from Czech Republic, Serbia and Poland. Also other European countries such as Sweden, England and Germany have been frequent. In addition to that, there have been players coming from India, Argentina, Ecuador and Kenya. All of these countries have been less common over the history of college sport in CU.

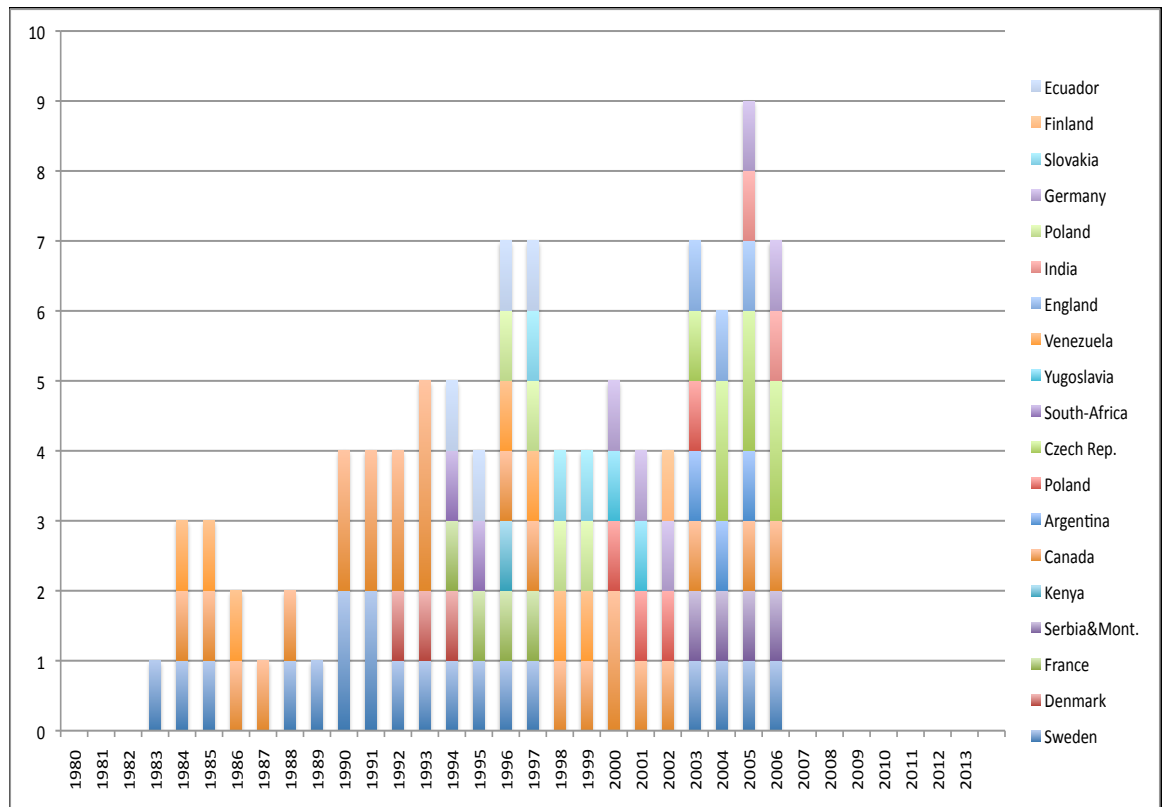


Figure 18. Men's Tennis Team - international athletes by year and country since 1980 (Men's tennis program was cut out in 2006)

Another interesting team is women's tennis. As men's tennis team, women's team has been almost as international and multicultural over the history. Altogether 14 different nationalities were represented since 1980. However, at the beginning of 1980's there were not any international players on the team. Starting from 1987 with a player from England and later on a player from Canada and Germany, the team slowly became more multicultural. The current head coach from Australia has been in CU since 1997, and as we can see from the figure 19 around that time also the amounts of international players on the team increased. The peak year in women's tennis was in 2011. The team had eight international players coming from seven different countries. Over the years there has been a great variation of nationalities and every season after 1996 there has been at least three international players on the team.

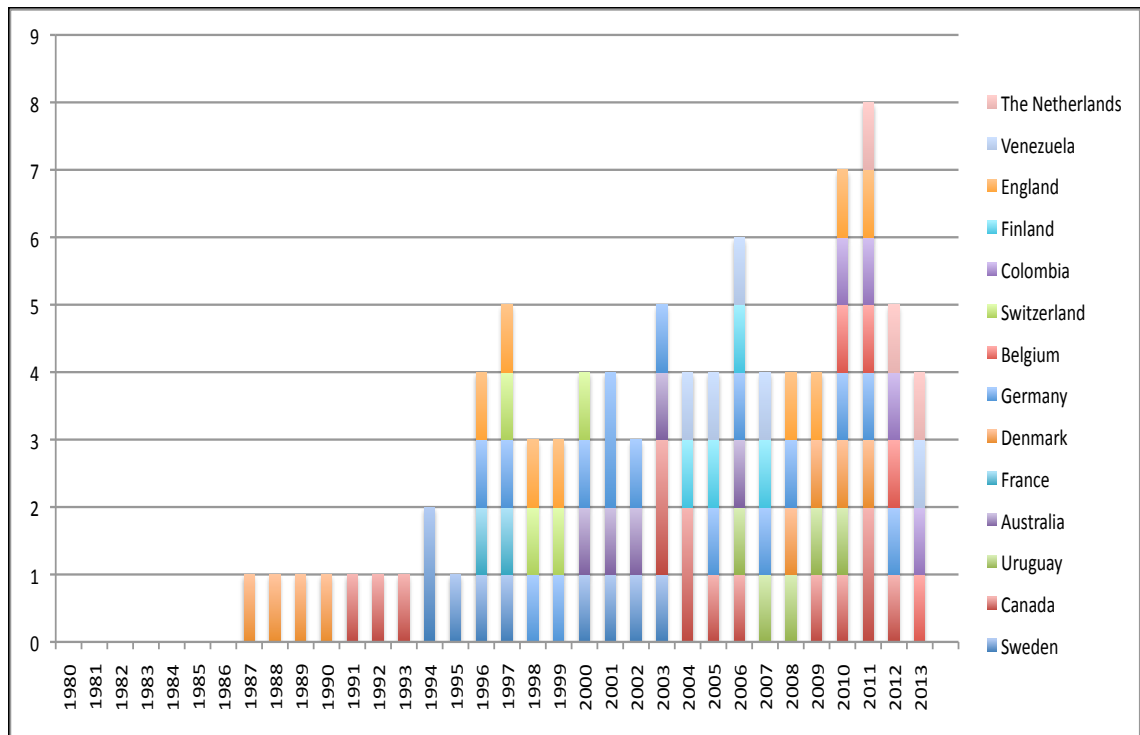


Figure 19. Women's Tennis Team - international student-athletes by year and country since 1980

#### 4.5 International students in CU Boulder overall

If we look at the statistics collected by the University of Colorado at Boulder about the overall amount of international students from the past ten years we can see some increasing patterns. The trend has been rising basically every year since 2003 with a little drop in 2004-2006. On the contrary, the data collected of the amount of international student-athletes the peak year was exactly 2006. From the year 2003 the amount of international athletes in CU has increased nearly by 700, which is relatively large amount of students. In the fall semester 2013 the amount was already 1879 nearly 200 more than a year before.

##### 4.5.1 Trends in CU-Boulder Student Enrollment from 2003-2013

The figure 20 illustrates the growth of the international students in CU Boulder from 2003-2013 in general. In this figure all the international students of the school are counted and not only international student-athletes. From the figure we can see that the numbers have been growing nearly yearly. In the fall 2013 the number of international students in CU were the highest during the school's the history.

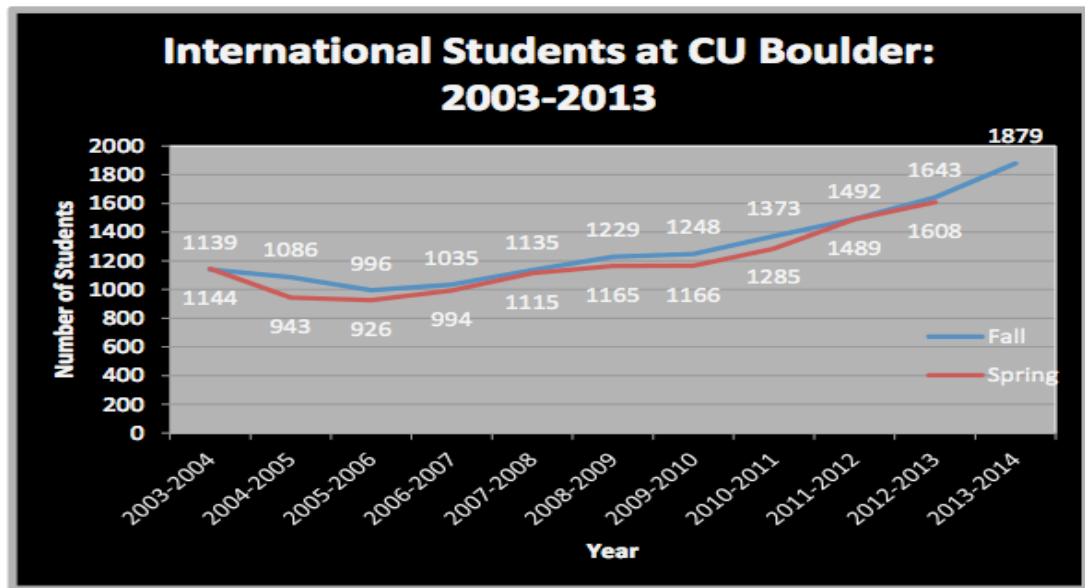


Figure 20. Trends in CU-Boulder Student Enrollment from 2003-2013 (Source CU-Boulder website, international student)

#### 4.5.2 Where CU-Boulder International Students come from by region

The figure 21 illustrates the international students by region. By far the largest amounts of international students are coming from the Asia (57 %) and Middle East is following with 17 percent. Surprisingly only 13 percent of international students are coming from Europe. Altogether from seven different regions are counted in to this statistic.

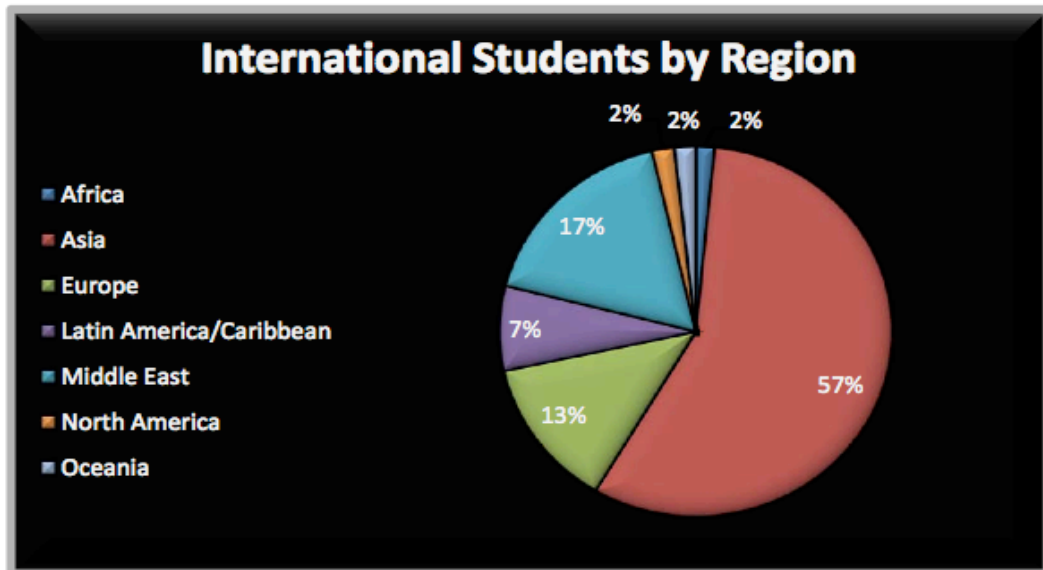


Figure 21. Where CU-Boulder International Students come from by region (Source CU-Boulder website. International students)

When looking at the statistics of international student-athletes, Europe was the number one continent where student-athletes were coming from over the history. However, if we look at the overall statistics of international student-athletes in CU, Asia region is highly above every other part of the world. There are over 1000 students coming from Asia and there were no single student-athlete from the Asia region. At the second place is Middle East, which was not either in a very high position what it comes to student-athletes. According to Borgese (2009), the largest amount of money is funded by Japan what it comes to international students in the U.S. universities (Borgese 2009). This does not apply to CU, since China being by far the leading nation of international students in CU. Surprisingly there is not that many athletes coming from that region.

### 4.5.3 Countries with more than twenty students present at CU-Boulder

Looking at the figure 22 we can see that there are over 500 students coming from China in CU. India and Saudi-Arabia are occupying the second and third places. The statistics of student-athletes looked significantly different. Over the years Norway has had the most international student-athletes, but looking at this ranking Norway is not even close to the top. Additionally, other European countries such as Germany, France, and UK do not reach to the top positions. Sweden and Eastern European countries that have had quite many student-athletes do not even qualify to the list.

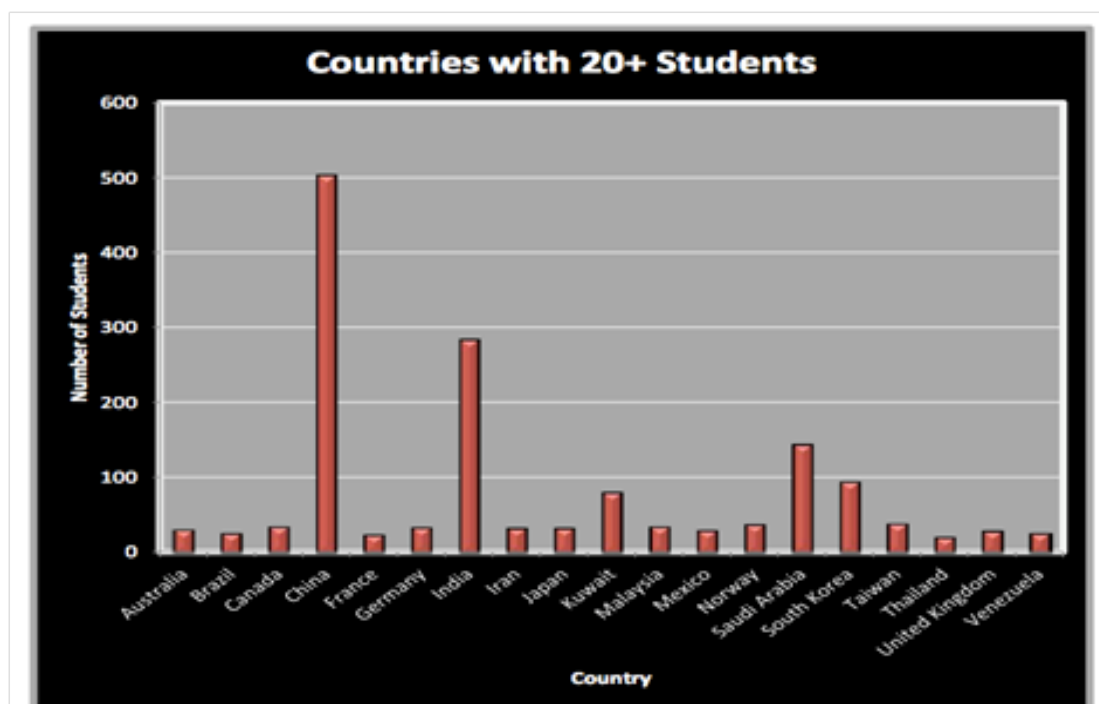


Figure 22. Countries with more than twenty students present at CU-Boulder (Source CU-Boulder website. International students)

### 4.6 The impacts of Globalization, Labor Migration and Dual-Career on the international student-athletes in CU

The second part of the research was to find out the answers to questions:

- 3 What are some of the reasons why international student-athletes are coming to CU from the school's point of view?

- a. Are there any changes happened over the year from the school's point of view?
- b. What are some reasons behind the changes in numbers and nationalities?
- c. What are some of the impacts (positive and negative) of international student-athletes coming to CU?
- d. How are international student-athletes recruited?
- e. How do international student-athletes adapt to CU from the school's point of view?

The interview questions were divided into eight different themes; reasons, changes, globalization, impacts, nationalities, sports, recruit and adaption. These themes were used to clarify and structure the research. The main point of these interviews was to find out more in depth information and to strengthen the numerical information, which was drawn from the roster analyzes. When looking at the numerical information exact numbers and facts are illustrated, but semi-structured interviews give even more information. There are multiple issues and questions behind the numbers and figures, which could be discussed. The interviews also take into account personal experiences of the participant and moreover, the point of view of the athletic department for this specific topic.

#### **4.6.1 The unique schooling system and dual-career possibility**

The first theme in this second part of the research based on the interviews is the reasons of student-athletes for coming to the U.S. and to CU. The interviewees were asked few questions regarding the main reasons. To keep in mind the actual student-athletes were not interviewed in this research, thus the answers are from the athletic departments point of view and not necessarily from the actual athletes' point of view. There are multiple different reasons why international student-athletes are coming to the U.S. colleges, which were also clearly noticed from the interviews. The unique schooling system in the U.S. gives athletes and students from all over the world the possibility to combine both studying and practicing their desired sport at the same time. This is something, which is not possible in many other countries at least not at the same level and with the same scale. Interviewing the representatives from the University of Colorado's Athletic Department some important issues were mentioned. One of the



most important points was the fact that international student-athletes have the opportunity and possibility to receive a full scholarship to the U.S. colleges. The amount of money they would have to pay without a scholarship is extremely high. This is often one of the most important reasons why there are so many student-athletes from outside the U.S. joining the teams.

*“The Universities in the USA educate 18-23 year old for free, pays their room and board, and offers them a full schedule of competition against other athletes their age”*

In most of the European countries the education is free as in Finland, but in the U.S. the students have to pay high tuition fees for getting an education. Often time American youngsters are raised with the mentality that they will have to afford to pay for their higher education. With the possibility to get a good education for free in an American university is most often only available through the athletic scholarships for the international student-athletes.

Another interesting point made by an interviewee was additionally the fact that being a student-athlete and going through the whole four years of college as a student and as an athlete teaches the person quite a lot about life. Moreover, they will most likely grow as persons over the years. In many schools it requires a lot of time commitment to be a student-athlete. Dealing with the full load of classes and being almost an elite athlete is not necessarily the easiest task. Being a college athlete and especially coming from outside the U.S. will also be a great learning experience for the young person, which additionally might be one of the reason why young international athletes want to go to the States.

The level of education in many countries in Europe especially, has traditionally been very high. According to the interviewee one interesting point was mentioned, which could be one of the reasons why many international athletes are seeking for scholarships to the U.S. colleges.

*“So many education systems outside of U.S. are little bit tougher so there are lots of good students who may not qualify to the higher education system in their home countries but they definitely qualify to the education system in the U.S.”*

As in Finland in many other countries as well, you have to pass the entrance exams in order to get in to college and in worst cases you have to apply multiple times in order to begin your studies in a desired school. In Finland everyone has equal possibilities to get in to higher education institution compared to the U.S. system, where money and income level of your parents will have a huge effect. However, with the athletic scholarships also many young talented students from outside the U.S. will have the possibility to study regardless of their heritage and family's income levels. This also applies to the not so better off American young athletes, who wish to receive a higher education degree but who would not have the possibility to attend college without an athletic scholarship.

*“Once someone gets through the college system in America then education system across the world even out quite a bit”*

This quote above comes from the head coach meaning that when someone survives the whole four years as a student-athlete and receives a Bachelor's degree, she or he has all the same possibilities after that to continue in the direction of their life they wish for. They still have almost the same possibilities to continue their education after that, and in addition to that they have gained an experience, which many other students in their home countries have not. Some student-athletes might even pursue their dream of becoming a professional athlete after college. In this case they have at least completed a degree in a college level compared to going professional right after high school or quitting the primary school.

Why would an international student choose the University of Colorado at Boulder among all the thousands of schools in the U.S.? The representative of the athletic department gave one interesting answer why students outside of the U.S. come to Boulder.

*“Boulder is a town that has a European charm and feels to it, so European students feel comfortable in Boulder.”*

This quote above illustrates why CU has and has had so many European student-athletes over the years. The smaller the transition international athletes face the easier it is for them to make the decision to come and move overseas. As seen earlier from the figures, Europeans have been by far the biggest group of international student-athletes

in CU over the history. Furthermore, the environment and weather conditions have much to do with that. It might be easier for a Swedish golfer or a Norwegian skier to move to Colorado than to move to Texas or Florida mainly because of the more similar environmental and geographical conditions these two places have. Based on the earlier research, ethnicity of an international student has a huge impact on the adjustment differences and level. Overall, European students have easier time adjusting to the U.S. culture than for example Asian students or other non-European students. Not only the culture but also the language fluency is playing a key role what it comes to the adjustment to the new culture. European students most often have a greater English knowledge compared to Asian students. (Borgese 2009, 4.)

#### **4.6.2 The improved technology has opened up new potentialities**

Second theme is about the changes in numbers and nationality distributions in CU over the years. In addition to that, some other changes related to technology and globalization in the past decades is discussed. The point was to ask questions related to the changes the personnel in CU have noticed over the past 20 years and why do these changes have occurred if any? This section was partly answered through the first part of the research and through the tables and figures created from the data of the player rosters. There were clear yearly changes in the amount of international student-athletes and the nationalities and sports they have been involved in. Europeans were the highest group overall and skiing and tennis were the most international teams over the history. However, through the interviews more in-depth answers were collected regarding the changes happened over the years and why these changes might have happened. Also interesting was to find out, which other global changes might have affected to the variations in actual numbers.

One difference really stood out and seemed to be one of the most crucial over the years; the improved technology. The growth of internet and improved technologies in the past 20 years have really made it easier to search for information, to contact people via e-mail, to send and view videos and pictures of athletes and schools.

*“Back in the 80’s and back in the 90’s that was really the worth of mouth that mattered”*

Before these new innovations and technologies it was most often some friends, other acquaintances or connections through which it was the only way to get into contact with coaches and schools. Nowadays all you have to do is to send e-mail or make a Skype call and you are already in close contact with some important people.

Coaches also recruit more frequently Europeans and Australians nowadays than they did back in the days. The head coach also mentioned one important factor.

*“There are more agencies that are helping athletes from other countries to get here, and also helping us coaches so that we do not have to go searching. Often times those players are good quality and sometimes they are not”*

There are increasingly more different kinds of agencies who are helping both the athletes to get in contact with the schools they wish for but also helping the coaches to reach the players they might need and want to recruit. The coaches do not necessarily have to travel around to different national and international sporting events to find players, which would suit to their programs rather the agencies are bringing these athletes right in front of the coaches through different kinds of media tools and technologies. It is always a risk for a coach to take an athlete without talking to her or him face-to-face or seeing him or her to compete, but often times the coaches just have to take the risk. Most often they are lucky sometimes they are not. Not only coaches but also players benefit from the agencies and get help from them when they are looking for a good level school and a scholarship. Additionally, mentioned by the coach was that international students do not hesitate to come to the U.S. for college anymore. Nowadays people move around more than they did just couple of decades ago, and especially younger people are willing to experience new and take risks. Furthermore, as mentioned by the coach, air travel is less expensive today and cheaper airlines and flights are emerging making it economically also easier to travel around long distances.

Title IX law in 1972 ensured that women's programs were to be as equal as men's programs (Abbot & Smith 1984). Moreover, mentioned by the coach and the representative of Athletic Department, more opportunities for female athletes have appeared since then. Often time women have better possibilities to receive a full athletic scholarship in many sports than men, because of this law. This has also given more international female athletes the opportunity to come to the U.S. colleges.

*“NCAA is also helping international student-athletes with SAF (Student Assistant Fund) for health insurance and other financial issues if needed”*

According to Borgese (2009), the most important fear that many international students are facing is the financial issues and insecurity in the global money markets. It is important that they get some sort of financial support and have the possibility to apply for an extra fund even though some or most of the student-athletes might have the full scholarship.

#### **4.6.3 The increased security and immigration issues post 9/11**

World has been changing in fast speed in the past 20 years. Third theme is about connections to globalization and if there are any same patterns occurring in the college sport as in the world in general. Furthermore, if there are any political connections in college sport was asked. Globalization is determined by the Finnish dictionary to mean universal and global (Haarala 2001, 149). The word globalization has additionally been determined that it is a peaceful process in which a world becomes one common place (Maguire 1999, 4). There are multiple ways to define the word globalization. One important aspect of globalization in the world of sport is the increased competition and selection of the most talented athletes (Väyrynen 1996, 17). In the U.S. college sport world this could be applied as well. The coaches are competing and selecting the best athlete available worldwide in order to produce teams, which have the possibility to win the NCAA championships.

Overall, globalization could be referred to the harmonization of the world. The world gets smaller as the cultures and habits of different parts of the world collide and get more standardized and unified. People are closer to each other and it is easier to travel and move around the globe. According to Bale and Sang (1996, 131) the best example of the globalized sport world are the athletes who have moved to practice their sport to other countries.

In the earlier section few examples of the changes in the college sport were mentioned. Globalization is closely touching the same issues and possibilities. The most important that was mentioned is the development of Internet and technology. Internet creates the

possibility to access the information faster and quicker as well as to contact people from all over the world. This is how the college head coach expressed the possibilities that Internet has created.

*“World is so much smaller and quicker with the e-mails and Internet and the way to connect to people is so much easier nowadays. This would not happen in the 90’s; someone would have handwritten a letter. Everything would have just taken so much more time.”*

In addition to that, one important aspect of globalization in a world of college sport is the political questions related to the globalization and today’s world.

*“With the increase of athletes from other countries, there is a book and the book is as big as a phone book, with all the different countries and what are the minimums to qualify.”*

There are restricted rules governed by the NCAA and the government to supervise who are eligible and who are not. Not all the countries have the same possibilities to qualify to enter to the U.S. colleges as student-athletes. There are different qualification systems for the education requirements for people coming from different countries. Moreover, certain countries have more difficult time to access to the country.

*“It was probably a lot easier to come over about twenty years ago compared to now, there are a lot more steps to be taken in the process in order to become eligible, but also in the process of getting a Visa.”*

There has been a big question in the air for already some time regarding the athletic immigrations in the U.S, whether they are professional athletes or college athletes. There has been some discussion if the talented athletes should be allowed to move to the U.S. because of their sport talent or whether they should be forced to follow the same steps in the process of applying their immigration status as any other immigrants (Kwon 2009). In the U.S. there has been this Immigration Act of 1990 for over 20 years now. It is in government’s responsibility to protect the nation and its citizens. One part of this Immigration Act of 1990 was to categorize people coming from outside of the U.S. borders to seek for work to different groups. Athletes and entertainers were created a specific group P, which they have to qualify. One important part of the Visa status is

that they must have the intention to return to their home countries after they have ended their contract and their “job” in the U.S. (Kwon 2009.)

*“After 9/2011 there has been a lot more security and difficulties with the immigration statuses and visas”*

Not only in professional sport field but also in the college sport the effect of 9/11 can be seen. College coaches seek to find the best possible players from all over the world. College athletes are in a similar position with all the other immigrants seeking to enter the U.S. According to Gardner and O’Toole (2002), this has become harder after 9/11. There are some problems when recruiting international student-athletes to play college sports. Some of them might be stopped at the security checkpoints at the airports and their passports and visa statuses and validities are verified. There have been tightened rules at the visa markets, which at some points were a lot looser also for college athletes. (Gardner & O’Toole 2002.) This might have an effect to the college coaches as well, who might not want to take the risks to recruit athletes from certain countries who might not have the possibility to enter the country.

#### **4.6.4 The internalization of the college environment**

There are many impacts of international student-athletes coming to the U.S. colleges both positive but also few negatives. Based on the interviews the most important aspect of international student-athletes coming to the teams is the multicultural atmosphere it creates. The international students are exposing the American teammates to other cultures and teaching them a lot about different cultures and ways of living.

*“American kids are fostered to be in that situation of understanding, education, openness so that they don’t have resentment”*

It is very teaching experience for the American teammates as well and it will open up their eyes to new cultures and educate them to become more multicultural at the meantime. At the same time it will additionally teach the international student-athlete features about American ways of doing things.

*“It is about the whole idea of education. I think any coach wants their team however big it is to be a family and to be a good positive influence to each other.”*

College sports are very intense and the seasons are long. Teams spend numerous hours together practicing, competing, traveling and bonding like a family. It is very important them to work as a team and get along as a team very well in order to get the most out of it. Sometimes it might be difficult if you have people coming from multiple different cultures and various parts of the world and everyone has been raised to follow different rules, norms and values. The goal of the coach is to make them work together and in the perfect situation it might be very beneficial to have such a multicultural mix of people but in the worst case it might become quite difficult.

*“Most of the times you end up recruiting them without even meeting them in person, so it is a gamble there if they fit to the team and if you think of their level of play or competition”*

One big risk is often that the coaches might not have even met the athletes who they are recruiting in person. You have no idea how good they are, what kinds of personalities they have, how do they fit to the overall team, how do they act in certain situations and many other things. Most of the coaches are still willing to take those risks if they think the athlete is good enough to benefit their team and qualify to the college.

*“The positive come down to in the situation of perfect world, the opportunity for a young girl or a boy who can become a leader a positive leader, and they are going to understand how to work in a team in a different environment.”*

The whole experience of being a college athlete and working as a full-time student and an athlete is very teaching experience for a young person. Afterwards it might be very beneficial for the person because he or she has had the opportunity to work in a multicultural environment under a lot of pressures. This is what today's working life is about. The college sport system in the U.S. assists international students to receive an education and experience the college life they would most likely not have the possibility without their athletic abilities.

Even though there are lots of positive impacts of internalization of the college sports, there are also some negative aspects as well. Not everyone is welcoming the international students to the U.S. as warmly. Some might think that the international student-athletes are “stealing” jobs and scholarships from the American students. Some might also think that the international student-athletes use their athletic abilities as a



vehicle to get into the country and receive an immigration status in that way (Borgese 2009).

*“There might be some resentment within a American community, maybe not the players on the team but the outside the team, because they might think why doesn’t this coach have more American players.”*

There might be some severe resentment coming from the outside community and sometimes additionally the teammates might think the international student-athletes as a threat to them. Another problem might occur between the international athlete and the coach, who might just clash, which could end up being volatile. There might be some cultural differences and expectations, which might cause some extra problems inside the team as well.

#### **4.6.5 The mountainous location of Colorado**

As already been discussed earlier in the result part one of the research, the location of University of Colorado at Boulder being at the state of Colorado might have some effects on the nationality distribution. Based on the results, which were drawn from the player rosters data of student-athletes in CU, the largest nationality groups are from Europe such as from Norway and Sweden. Canada has historically had many student-athletes attending to CU as well.

*“Location of CU, being in Colorado, so skiing is big in that reason”*

The mountainous location of Colorado obviously attracts many Scandinavians and Canadians and skiing is very big and successful sport in CU. It is not surprise that there is not that many student-athletes coming from the southern countries, mostly because of the weather. Colorado has a tough and cold winter months and for many students coming from the southern hemisphere that would be very extreme change for what they are used to. However, for the Scandinavians and Canadians the weather conditions are very much familiar and they do not necessarily experience such a big cultural shock coming to CU.

As being mentioned by the head coach, CU has a clear vision in their mission statement for 2030 to increase the amount of international students. According to the strategic

plan for the University of Colorado at Boulder, the so-called “Flagship 2030”, one of the core initiatives includes the building global crossroads. The idea is that CU will open up their doors to the world and also that CU would get their name out in the world. This would be done by increasing the amount of international students, faculty members and global studies and also by increasing the exchange programs around the world. (University of Colorado at Boulder, Flagship 2030, 52.)

Another issue, which might affect the nationality distribution of the sport teams, is the head coach. As the interviewee mentioned, teams such as track and field, has been fully American for the whole history of the program. The biggest reason for that might be the mind set of the team’s head coach.

*“The head coach of the track and field team just has the belief of that just going with Americans. That is his choice and his probative.”*

The head coach has a lot of power to choose where he or she wants to recruit the athletes. Some teams might be just fully American and some teams are full of international athletes. In CU the skiing team has traditionally been very multicultural such as tennis teams as well. One reason for that is the choice of the head coach, who wants to have a multicultural team with athletes coming from different nationalities. Looking at the statistics of the international students in the whole University of Colorado at Boulder one interesting point was noticed. Overall there a lot of Asians in CU, but there are none on the sport teams. Why this is the case? The most important reason for this according to the interviewee is the culture in general and different kind of academic system and tight family units.

*“We were recruiting a girl from Vietnam and she was ready to come but academically it did not work out.”*

*“Asians, they have such a tight family unit, that they do not really easily relive and they have hard time leaving.”*

The location of Colorado also affects differently in different sports. For example in tennis, which has traditionally been very international sport, the location of Colorado, is not necessarily the best option.

*“I don’t know if that comes in to the Colorado as location or because of the environment together, that leads to tennis being an outdoor sport and now it is 30 or 40 degree of Fahrenheit, that is not really optimal environment for someone to work on their game in an outdoor sport.”*

This is interesting because for tennis Colorado is not necessarily an optimal location because of the cold weather and high altitude, still the team has for years been full of international athletes. In other sports such as in skiing, the environment and facilities are very good in order to improve yourself as a skier. In indoor sport such as in basketball or volleyball the location does not necessarily play such a huge role as in most of the outdoor sports. Another good example is golf, which is a yearly round sport played in outdoors. Not necessarily some talented golfers from southern countries choose to move to Colorado to improve their game, because they might have a change to get in to a university somewhere where the weather conditions are much more suitable year round. Tennis has the same issue. If you look at the NCAA rankings in men and women’s tennis, most of the top teams are from the southern states (California, Texas, Kentucky, Ohio, Florida etc.) with just few northern states in the top 10.

Also skiing has traditionally been very multicultural not only because of the location but also because of the head coach they have had. The head coach being international will most likely attract more international student-athletes to CU as well, and the connections he has around Europe will provide good athletes to join the team.

*“Skiing is probably the most internationally represented with a lot of Europeans based upon the skiing coach is from Czech Republic and with the connections he has.”*

Skiing is also a special case in college sport because of the college rules set by NCAA. College skier can be a lot older than for example a college tennis player.

*“Many skiers have skied in their national teams before coming to participate in college sport.”*

The mindset of the coach is important. As the head coach I interviewed expressed it well. It is not only about recruiting talented players from different countries, it is about the whole education process during the time in college. It is important for young people to work in a multicultural environment and learn how to work with people coming from

different backgrounds and speaking different mother tongue. This is a great opportunity for many young people from outside the USA and also for the American kids to have this kind of experience before stepping into the working life, which requires many similar skills nowadays.

*“The education there, I feel like, the environment, education, on the court off the court, and also learning about yourself. The opportunity to have like a mini United Nation within the team is also an opportunity for people to learn how to communicate and work together with people from different countries and cultures.”*

#### **4.6.6 Transition to the new culture**

When a young person moves from a far away country to a totally new environment having completely new people around, new language, culture and habits, it is not always easy to adjust to the new situation. Few questions about the international student-athletes adaptation process to CU were asked from the interviewees. Overall the adaptation of international student-athletes to CU has been quite good. CU recruits international student-athletes because they want to have a multicultural atmosphere and they want them on campus, which makes it easier and more welcoming for the foreigners.

*“There are a lot of services in place now that we haven’t had previously. We have sport psychologist/councilor, which is also called as transition specialist. They work with freshman and they also work with any transfers. Also International student-athlete orientation is held every year.”*

A lot of services are arranged to make the transition easier for the international student-athletes. It is very important that they have a strong support system, which they can rely on if any help is needed. One interesting point was also that an international student-athlete is paired up with some older student, so that she or he can work as a mentor for the new student. There are variety of different activities around for international student-athletes to make them feel welcome and to help them to connect other people. CU wants them to feel that they have a community around them, which is supporting and helping them when needed.

*“Everyone has their own cultures. It is like when someone arrives here it doesn’t matter where she/he’s from whether it is Florida or California, whatever country you want to say, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy...everyone is going to come over with 18 years of life experience, so it is going to come down to the culture but also the family environment. Everyone is going to be different.”*

After all it does not really matter whether the new student is coming from a state from the U.S. or some country from Europe or Asia. Everyone is at the same starting point and everyone has his or her own past experiences, which have to be taken into account.

*“I think it doesn’t matter where somebody comes from, they all are going to have their own packages, ideals and opinions.”*

To conclude the conversation the interviewee stated; after all, it does not really matter where you are coming from, what language are you speaking, what schools you have gone, what sport you play or anything else. Everyone is individual and has their opinions, goals, ideals and values, which all have to be considered.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 SWOT-analyses of international student-athletes in CU

In this research the SWOT analyses is based on the interviews and the document analyses data, which were collected and analyzed in this research. The interviews were conducted for a head coach of one sport team and for the personnel in Athletic Department. The actual student-athletes were not interviewed in this research. In addition, this SWOT analyses is based on my personal experiences as being a student-athlete in 2004-2008.

SWOT analysis is a tool used for investigating the strategic environment of an organization, in this case University of Colorado at Boulder, by evaluating its internal factors including strong and weak points, and external factors including opportunities and threats. In this SWOT-analyses strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of international student-athletes coming to the U.S. universities and more specifically to CU are summarized and analyzed. Most of the issues, which are represented, can be applied to the whole college sport system rather than just this one specific school.

Many of these points are difficult to categorize to just one box rather many of the issues can be looked at various different points of view. The SWOT-analyses is a way to summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the college sport system in the U.S. has, and especially what the system has to offer for international student-athletes.

Table 1. Research's outcomes in the form of SWOT-analyses

#### **STRENGTHS**

- The unique schooling system in the U.S. colleges to combine sport and education
- The possibility to receive an athletic scholarship
- Overall very teaching experience to be a student-athlete
- To receive a Bachelor's degree
- After Bachelor's possibility to continue with Master's degree, continue with their sporting career or working life

- Improved technology – Internet, Skype, media
- Title IX 1972 – equal opportunities for women
- Multicultural atmosphere in the teams
- International students exposing American students to other cultures
- Learn the language (English)
- Optimal location for skiing and outdoor sports (CU)
- Lots of support services offered for international student-athletes to help them to adjust and for transition

### **WEAKNESSES**

- The high tuition fees of the U.S. colleges
- Without a scholarship almost impossible to attend to college
- Require a lot of time commitment to be a student-athlete
- The academic level in the U.S. colleges compared to i.e. many European universities
- Coaches not necessarily get the opportunity for face-to-face contact with the athletes in recruiting process
- Increased rules and regulations in the college sports (NCAA)
- After 9/11 restricted immigration laws
- The power of the head coach in recruiting (mind set)
- None Asian student-athletes in CU (the biggest group of other international students in CU)
- CU not necessarily optimal location for summer sports (tennis, golf, soccer)

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Overall learning experience for a young person
- CU and Boulder has European charm and feel
- The weather conditions in Colorado attracts many Europeans
- Globalization in general
- Agencies helping international student-athletes as well as coaches
- Easier to contact people around the globe nowadays

- People do not hesitate to move around that much anymore
- Cheaper air travel
- Living and working in a multicultural environment might be beneficial for the future working life
- “Flagship 2030” building global crossroads in CU
- Internalization of the college sports

### **THREATS**

- Language problems
- Adjustment problems
- Cultural differences; different values, norm, and habits
- The income level affects people’s possibilities to attend colleges
- Taking a risk when recruiting international athletes
- Financial issues and changes in global money markets
- Eligibility issues for different countries and sports
- Certain countries have difficulties to enter the country
- Immigration status issues
- Visa application
- Resentment coming from the American community
- See international student-athletes as threats – stealing jobs and scholarships from Americans
- Collapse between coach and players
- Quitting college or transferring to another school
- Cutting down some sports – financial issues (i.e. men’s tennis in 2006)

#### **5.1.1 Strengths**

One of the strengths is the unique schooling system in the U.S. where student-athletes are able to combine both studying and education. This is definitely the most common reason why international student-athletes want and choose to come to the U.S. This kind of opportunity in a same scale and level is not existing and available in other countries. The possibility to receive a scholarship, either partial or full scholarship, enables also



international athletes to join the athletic teams. Without the scholarship system there would not be that many international athletes in college sport. As mentioned in the interviews, being a college athlete is overall very teaching experience. It requires commitment, passion, dedication and flexibility to be able to handle all the pressures and deadlines, and to be successful both in the classroom and on the court. The ultimate goal for nearly all the student-athletes whether he or she is an American or international is to receive a Bachelor's degree in four years. After completing the Bachelor's degree the doors are open and the student-athletes have the option to either continue studying with their Master's degree, jump in to the working life or in some cases try to go professional in their sport.

One of the strengths in the past decade has definitely been the improved technology. Access to Internet, Skype calls, social media, smart phones, and other technological innovations have created so many new possibilities to contact people and search for information. Improved technology is important both for the coaches as well as the players looking for schools.

The Title IX in 1972 has given numerous more opportunities for women to participate in college sports. In many schools women have better possibilities to receive full-scholarships because of the Title IX law, which means that there has to be equal amount of money distributed for both men's and women's sports. Multicultural atmosphere in the teams is strength and a great possibility to moreover teach American players more about other cultures. On the other hand, multiculturalism can also create some problems in the teams but in most cases it is still an advantage.

If receiving a scholarship and combining school and sport is often time the main motivator for international student-athletes to come to the U.S, additionally one important aspect is to learn the language, in this case English. In today's world it is very important to be able to communicate with foreign languages (English). In that sense, learning a foreign language is a good reason to move to the U.S. If looking at the location of Colorado, the place is optimal for skiing and winter sports. For that reason skiing team has traditionally been very international in CU. One improvement over the years has been that CU is offering variety of support services for the international student-athletes to help them to adjust to the new environment and make them feel

welcome to the new school. It is not necessarily easy for a young person to move to a new country without knowing anyone, barely speaking the language, living alone, thus it is important to have people around helping him or her in this life transition.

### **5.1.2 Weaknesses**

Without scholarships it would be almost impossible for many international student-athletes go to the U.S. colleges. The tuition fees are extremely high especially for the out of state students. If it is a strength that being a student-athlete is a teaching and learning experience, it could be also seen as a weakness that being a student-athlete is very time demanding. Especially for foreign athletes this might cause some problems at the beginning because of the new language and missing out a lot of classes because of traveling for the tournaments. It requires a lot of organizing skills to be able to combine both school and sport successfully.

It has been often criticized that the academic level in the U.S. colleges is not that high compared to for example most of the schools in Europe. As in Europe there are countless of universities with different qualities in the U.S. as well. The schooling system is stricter and there are more mandatory classes to attend compared to the academic freedom we have in Finland for example. One weakness with international student-athletes is definitely the fact that in most cases the coaches have not the possibility to see the athletes face-to-face before recruiting them. They might talk on the phone and see some videos of them playing, but in most cases they just have to take the risk and recruit them based on the results and other information. The coaches want to build the best team possible in order to be able to win the NCAA championships, and recruiting international players might be solution for that.

Since the amounts of international student-athletes have been increasing in the college sport, there are also more rules and regulations emerging from the side of NCAA. Additionally, the immigration laws have become stricter since 9/11 and getting the Visa might be difficult for certain nationalities. The power of the head coach can be seen as a positive or a negative. In some cases the head coach might have the mind set that recruiting international athletes is problematic and in other cases they see it as a positive aspect. Interestingly in CU there has not been any Asian student-athletes attending their

athletic programs, which is quite interesting since Asian students are the biggest group of international students overall in CU.

If CU is an optimal location for skiing and for winter sports, it is not necessarily optimal for the outdoor and summer sports such as tennis and golf. The weather conditions can be quite unpredictable and the winter season is relatively long compared to many other states in the U.S. Even though the weather and location are not optimal for tennis, it has been one of the most international sports over the years in CU.

### **5.1.3 Opportunities**

Many opportunities exist in recruiting international students to CU and to U.S colleges. The overall learning experience of college sports can be in most cases as a good thing. It can create many possibilities and opportunities for the young athlete during the college years and after the college. CU and Boulder as a city has a European charm, which attracts numerous European student-athletes to Boulder. The more international students there are the more multicultural and international the city becomes. The globalization process has created many opportunities for international student-athletes to come to the U.S. Even though there are maybe restricted immigration laws in the U.S. in some cases, there are also more opportunities for people around the world to move to new places. The internationalization of the college sports has created various new opportunities for international student-athletes to attend. There are many more sports, which are recruiting increasingly amount of international players. This can be seen as a great opportunity for the international athletes and is a good option for many.

### **5.1.4 Threats**

In addition to strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, there are always some threats involved. When thinking of the international student-athletes one of the biggest problems in many cases is the language issues. The language might create some problems in the classroom, inside the team and moreover affect the social life. Another big issue is the adjustment problems international athletes might have. The cultural differences with values, norms and habits, might create problematic situations and in some cases the student-athletes might just give up and move back to their home countries. The big problem in the U.S. colleges in general is the high tuition fees. The

different income levels of people affect their possibilities to attend colleges. This is also the case with international students if they are not receiving a scholarship. Even partial scholarship might not be enough and for that reason some talented athletes are not able to attend and they are not recruited.

Threat is furthermore the fact that the coaches are most often taking a huge risk when recruiting international athletes without seeing them in person and talking to them face-to-face. Other financial issues and changes in global money markets might create some threats for the international student-athletes who are attending the school or are planning on that. The restricted laws and regulations with eligibility might affect to certain countries, and the athletes might not be able to qualify to attend the college. In addition to that, because college sports are an amateur league the student-athletes are not allowed to receive any prize money or salary when practicing their sport. In some sport this might create some problems, such as in tennis where some student-athletes have played or play some professional tournaments and win some money. The regulations related to amateur status are additionally different in nearly every sport, thus it might cause some confusion among the athletes.

The receiving of immigration status might become even harder in the future and it might be even more difficult for student-athletes to get into the country. In addition to that the same issues are applicable in the Visa application system. One of the threats mentioned by the interviewee was the resentment coming from the American community. Some people might think that international student-athletes are taking the places and scholarships out from the American athletes. The international student-athletes can be seen as threats. The cultural differences between the coach and the athlete might create some volatile problems. Furthermore, there might be some issues inside the team arising because of the different cultural backgrounds.

Not everyone is going to finish the college in four years and receive a Bachelor's degree. There are many cases where the student-athlete either quit the school and move back to their home country or transfer to another school in the middle of the year. The economic issues can also be seen in college sports when schools have to cut down some of the sport programs. For example in CU men's tennis program was cut out in 2006 because of the financial issues. This affected negatively moreover to many international

student-athletes who were in the team because they had to find another school where they could play and finish their studies. Otherwise they might just have to move back to their home country.

## **5.2 Discussion**

Sport labor migration is often seen as an unproblematic issue, where an individual person has his or her freedom and human rights to move from one place to another. However, as Maguire & Falcons (2011, 5) state, sport labor migration is part of the industrial complex of global sport system where power differences predominantly exist. The political, geographical, economic, and cultural issues are all part of the global sport system. The administrators, media personnel, agents, owners, coaches and other players from the global sport arena are all part of shaping the sport migrant's life in a new country. This can be applied to the migrant college athletes as well. The international student-athletes are part of that global sport system and they are highly dependent on these political, economic, cultural and geographical forces, which have a strong influence on their possibilities and opportunities.

The amounts of international student-athletes have grown increasingly in the past years and most likely will be growing in the future as well. In the U.S. there are many studies done related to the international student-athletes and their experiences, satisfaction and motivation. However, in Finland this topic is not researched. Globalization is based on the generally prevailing thought that new era has arrived (Väyrynen 1998, 11-13). In this case study it means that since 1980s there have been more international student-athletes attending to intercollegiate sports in the U.S. based on the results of the case study school University of Colorado at Boulder. Intercollegiate sports in the U.S. are very huge phenomenon. Moreover, college sports are not only big inside the U.S. but currently internationally as well. Increasing amount of talented athletes are making the decision to leave their home countries behind and dreams about professional sport and move to the U.S. to study and to play sports. For some surviving through the college years as a student-athlete might be even the road to becoming a professional sport star. In many ways this is a good decision for many young athletes. The rocky road they might face when trying to make living by competing in their desired sports might become reality quite soon after finishing the primary school. Not everyone is going to

make it to the NHL, NBA, ATP or WTA Tour or become an Olympic winner in athletics. It is only the very few most talented and lucky ones. Still many athletes wish to continue to play their sport after the junior years are over and still keep up with their studies and get a university degree.

In many countries this is not very easily organized, most often you have to give up either competitive sport or studying in higher education institution. However, in the U.S. the system is organized in very unique way and the structure might be a solution and good opportunity for many international students to pursue their dream of playing like professional athlete but still receiving a university degree in the meanwhile. In many countries including Finland, studying in higher-level institution is free. Theoretically everyone has an equal opportunity to get in to the university and to graduate with the degree they wish for. If you think of the system in the U.S., the tuition fees are extremely expensive even in smaller schools. Many parents are saving for years in order to give their children the possibility to attend college later on. If you are lucky one and you are good enough athlete, you might have a good chance to receive an athletic scholarship to cover your tuition expenses. Additionally, many international student-athletes have a good possibility to receive an athletic scholarship, which usually covers the tuition fees and also some living expenses. Some sports such as tennis, skiing and golf are among the most international sports in the U.S. college sport. It is often times based on the mindset of the head coach from where is he recruiting his athletes and whether he prefers American or international athletes in his team. Tennis for example is a global sport and there are many talented players in worldwide. In some cases the international athletes might have the capability to raise college sports to a new level and might benefit the teams in many different ways both in athletic terms and culturally as well.

If we look at the results of the case study school University of Colorado at Boulder, which is located almost in the middle of the U.S. right next to Rocky Mountains, we can see the clear patterns in the popular nationalities and sports among international student-athletes. Because of the location, skiing is relatively big sport in Colorado and for that reason brings numerous Scandinavians mostly Norwegians and Swedish as well as Canadians and Eastern Europeans to CU. On the other hand, tennis both men's and

women's teams have traditionally been very multicultural due to the contacts and mindset of the head coaches. Furthermore, the tradition of tennis being one of the most international sports in college for many years attracts many international players to the U.S. colleges. The years 2004-2006 were the peak years what it comes to overall amount of international student-athletes in CU. Before and after that the trend has been varying great amount of, some years being more multicultural than others. Overall the trend has been rising and since 1980s the amounts of international student-athletes have almost tripled and the nationality distribution has become way more diverse.

Countless of development has happened over the past 20 years what it comes to the improvement of technologies and international politics in the world. The advanced technologies today make it so much easier for people to contact each other over long distances via e-mails and Skype calls. The information is available for everyone and there are more agencies helping young athletes to contact the coaches overseas. The security issues 9/11 brought have also affected the immigration issues in the U.S. Even though there have been more international student-athletes going to study in the U.S, the immigration and security processes have become more strict. It seems like presently people tend to have higher motivation to leave their home countries, travel around, experience new and receive a higher degree education. Many employers seek employees who have these kinds of experiences and are able to work in multicultural environment. Not only the opportunity young athletes receive via scholarships and joining the team, additionally the overall education process they receive by moving to a new country, getting a degree and working in a multicultural environment is something very valuable.

Usually the college years in the U.S. last approximately four years. The system differs from the Finnish university education and is often times more "high-school-like". The freedom of study we have here in Finland enables people to create their own study plans more loosely, but in the U.S. system it is stricter and four years is the normal length of the Bachelor's studies. There are many options these international student-athletes might choose after completing the mandatory study years, after using their eligibility in varsity sports and receiving their Bachelor's degree. Most often international students will return to their home countries and continue studying there or step into the working life. Another option is to try to get a working Visa in the U.S. and stay in the country, or

continue with their master's studies in the U.S. Some athletes might still dream about going professional especially in some sports such as in basketball, football, tennis, golf, athletics and skiing. This is rarely the case but few athletes might still have that possibility and try out for professional career after the college years.

Since I have my previous studies in geography, I wanted to be able to combine the current sport studies with the geography background. Thus, sport migration, globalization and dual-career were all topics, which fit well to this college sport context. Based on the rosters data and the interviews it comes clear that CU is relatively multicultural school with quite a few international student-athletes over the history and additionally numerous other international students attending the school. The mission statement 2030 states that one of the goals of CU-Boulder is to increase the multiculturalism in the future years on campus. This is an important goal and mission and hopefully they are able to accomplish that one. University of Colorado at Boulder has stated in their "Flagship 2030" that they want to build global crossroad, which means that they want to increase the amount of international students in the school as well as make CU more known out of the USA as well. Bringing more international student-athletes in to the school is important and will also give CU more publicity internationally. Good example is that there were three CU athletes competing in the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 (University of Colorado at Boulder 2014).

As a conclusion the numbers of international student-athletes have been increasing in the past years. There are multiple reasons for that, one might be the globalization effect, which has been attracting more people to move and to study abroad as well as made it possible for people from various countries to move out from their home country. At the present time it is relatively easier, faster and a smaller step to move around and explore the world than it was earlier. Education is highly valued in today's world, and being able to combine both education and practicing high-level competitive sport is not made easy in very many countries. In the U.S. the schooling system differs from many other countries and this attracts many international students as well. It was interesting to see what the situation has been in University of Colorado what it comes to the amount of international student-athletes. There was some variation during the years. The sports where international student-athletes have been involved in were tennis (men's and women's), skiing, golf and few international athletes in volleyball and soccer. The most



American teams with the least international student-athletes are track and field, football, basketball and women's soccer. Unfortunately in CU the numbers of sports have been decreasing during the years, for example men's tennis was cut off from the program in 2006 due to the financial issues. (University of Colorado, Athletics 2013). This and some other reasons might have had some effects on the varying number of international student-athletes over the years.

The dual-career issue is present in every country let alone Finland. As mentioned earlier the education system in Finland differs considerably from the U.S. higher education system. In Finland there is not any similar organized league in universities rather the athletes practice their sport in the sport clubs, professional teams or they have private coaches. The athletes are allowed to have a sport as a profession in comparison with the amateur status the college athletes must have. However, there are models that could be applied to the Finnish system in a smaller scale but since the base for the whole education institution structure is remarkably different, these countries are nearly impossible to compare. There are pros and cons in both institutions as I have experienced in being part of both of the systems. The Finnish higher education system should offer some flexibility and alternative methods for the elite athletes in order them to be the able to combine their sporting career with the education better and in more effective way. However, the Finnish universities should be able to maintain the high level and reputation in academics. The U.S. universities have been criticized because of the exploitation of the college athletes with the overload of practicing, competing and not caring about their academic success, future career plans and wellbeing.

### **5.3 Limitations and Future Implications of the study**

This whole research project has been very valuable experience for me. Now that I was completing my second Master's thesis, I had a better understanding what the whole process is going to be like and what it requires. Reflecting back to the time when I was trying to choose a topic for my Master's thesis I had some difficulties on which areas to concentrate on and what the topic should be. I have always been interested in the issues related to combining education and high-level competitive sport, since I have some personal background being a competitive athlete ever since I was a young girl. During my career I chose the option to go to study and to play tennis in the U.S. following my

brother's footsteps. I thought it was the right choice for me in order to be able to compete but still receive a university degree in the meanwhile. I wanted to study international student-athletes because I think through them I was able to discuss about some important issues related to sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career. I was happy to use my old connections to the school and get some valuable information from them both through the old player rosters and also through the interviews.

I believe the player roster analyses gave me some relevant information about the actual numbers, nationalities and attended years of the international student-athletes. The player rosters would have been easier to analyze if the format would have been the same in each sport. In this case the formats of the rosters were quite different in each sport, and in some cases it was difficult to find out the international athletes and the years they have attended. Furthermore, the fact that I did not receive the rosters starting from the 1930's in each sport set some limitations to the document analyses. For example in some sport such as in skiing I only received the rosters starting from the year 1980. Then on the other hand in women's, men's tennis and basketball I had a clear list of all the international student-athletes throughout the history.

If reflecting back to the interviews process of my research I could have done them more carefully and concentrate on some specific issues more closely. On one hand, the fact that I knew both of the interviewees personally could be considered positively, on the other, it could be considered negatively. I think that the interviews were more open and relaxed because of the fact that we had some previous knowledge and contact with each other. Furthermore, the interviewees might have given me more information because they knew me personally. On the other hand, sometimes it is better to interview a person who you have no personal connections to. In this case the interviews might give some more relevant information and that the results will not be that biased. If I would do something differently now, I would want to have a personal face-to-face interview with the individual I am interviewing. I think in this case it was impossible, but overall face-to-face interviews might give some deeper information and it is easier to react to the answers and add some more questions based on the discussion. Another issue which I would like to highlight is that the topic of my research is quite wide. It would have been good to maybe concentrate on only one of these main concepts of my research; sport labor migration, globalization or dual-career.

For further research there are a lot of issues and topics to cover. Sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career all offer a great number of interesting and current research possibilities. One interesting topic would be to research the actual international student-athletes and their motives to come to the States to study and to play sports. Moreover, another important topic and something, which I am also very interested, would be to find out what these international student-athletes have done after completing the Bachelor's degrees in the U.S. Most of them have most likely returned to their home countries but some of them might have stayed in the U.S. and continued with their Master's studies or jumped in to the working life. Furthermore, valuable would be to hear the opinions and experiences of the international student-athletes and what kinds of experiences they have had during their time in college.

This research has taught me a lot about sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career. Being a student-athlete myself and spending four years in Colorado, I did not really realize how important that experience would be to me and benefit me later in my life. Neither had I really valued the experience at the time being there as I do it now six years later. That experience has opened up so many doors to me, given me lifelong friends and connections and taught me a lot about life and other cultures. In addition to that, the whole experience of being a student-athlete was very valuable. This research gave me some new perspectives to look at the issues of sport labor migration, globalization and dual-career in the context of college sports.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Theme interview questions**

### THESIS INTERVIEW

#### **1. REASONS**

- What do you think are some of the main reasons why international student athletes are coming to CU?
- To the USA in general?

#### **2. CHANGES**

- Have you seen any changes happening in the past 20 years? After 1980s?
- Why do you think these changes occurred? If any?

#### **3. GLOBALIZATION**

- Do you see any connections to globalization overall? Any same patterns?
- Do you see any political connections?

#### **4. IMPACTS**

- What are some positive impacts of international student-athletes coming to USA colleges?
- Any negative impacts?

#### **5. NATIONALITY**

- How do you see the nationality distribution?
- Where these student athletes are mostly coming from?
- Do you think the location Colorado plays a role in nationality distribution?

#### **6. SPORTS**

- What are the main differences between sports?
- In which sports are the most international? Which are not?
- What do you think is the reason between the sport differences?

#### **7. RECRUITMENT**

- How are the international student athletes recruited?

#### **8. ADAPTATION**

- How do you see the adaption of international student-athletes to CU?
- Any differences between the nationalities?