

Migration in globalized sport
Finnish ice hockey players in Russia

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ABSTRACT

During the last five years the number of Finnish ice hockey players migrating to Russia has significantly increased. Despite this fact scarce research has been done in this field. Moreover, comparing to the progress that has been achieved in other areas of sociology of sport, much more work needs to be done, in sports transnational migration both at a theoretical and empirical level. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how the migration period in Russia is perceived by Finnish professional ice hockey players by exploring and interpreting their personal experiences. More specifically, it is asked in this study for which reasons Finnish ice-hockey players migrate to Russia. Moreover, dimensions related to the adaptation process and how it affects the performance of the athletes among with the perceived by the players' differences between the Finnish and Russian ice hockey cultures are examined.

A qualitative phenomenological research method is applied in this thesis. This particular method fits well for the purpose of the study, because it allows to develop a composite description and interpretation of the essence of the experience of the professional Finnish ice hockey players who have migrated to Russia. The data is collected by semi-structured interviews of athletes who have played in Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) for Russian clubs. Thematic content analysis was utilized to analyze the collected data.

The results of this study reveal, that it's important to focus on the experiences of the migrants themselves as well as on the complexity of the relationships in which they are involved inside and outside the play of field. Under this focus the personal and professional motives of Finnish ice hockey players for migration are examined and discussed. Moreover, issues of adapting into a new environment both on and off the ice hockey ring are addressed, considering the cultural differences between Russia and Finland. Finally, from the data derived it seems that although commingle of sport cultures has taken place, the notion that a global homogenization of ice hockey culture is occurring is not supported.

Implications for future research are also discussed, such as interviewing a larger number of players, immediately before their departure from Finland and right away after their arrival. Thus, deeper insights regarding the fulfillment of their expectations would be reached. This way, additional valuable information can be derived and applied by Finnish hockey players who intent to migrate to Russia.

KEY WORDS: ice hockey, migration, KHL, sport, globalization, Finland, Russia.

“Let us export our oarsmen, our fencers, our runners into other lands. That is the true free trade of the future; and the day it is introduced into Europe the cause of Peace will have received a new and strong ally”.

(Pierre de Coubertin, paper presented at the Union des Sports Athletiques, Sorbonne, 25 November 1892.)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sport nowadays is a fast-growing phenomenon, which has become an essential part of our global society. Sport has crossed the borders in the twentieth century, becoming truly worldwide in range and scope through the increasing numbers of international sporting bodies, competitions, tournaments, sport migrants and mass media, especially television and the internet. (Maguire 1999 as cited in Smart 2007, 7.)

The movement of sport labor has become a pronounced feature in the structures and development of sports during the late 20th century (Bale & Maguire 1994, 1). The migration of performers, coaches, administrators and sport scientists within and between nations and within and between continents and hemispheres is an important aspect of modern global sport. Several studies have been done focusing on sports migration in different kinds of sport such as ice hockey (Maguire 1996), cricket (Maguire & Stead 1996), baseball (Klein 1991) and soccer (Maguire & Stead 2000), (Maguire & Pearton 2000). (Maguire & Jarvie & Mansfield & Bradley 2002, 26.)

Several sensitizing questions can be utilized in the research of sports labor migration. These are: 1) what kind of sports are mostly involved and why? Moreover, how they have been affected by this process? 2) Which are the patterns of global movement, and what are the reasons they have emerged in this particular way? 3) How 'host' and 'donor' countries are affected by the movement of sports labor migrants? 4) What reasons lead professional athletes to cross the borders and what do they experience during their migration period (Maguire & Stead 2000 as cited in Maguire et.al 2002)? (Maguire & Jarvie & Mansfield & Bradley 2002, 26-27.)

This particular master's thesis covers the fourth question and focuses on the nature of the migration phenomenon. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how the migration period to Russia is perceived by Finnish professional ice hockey players, by exploring and interpreting their personal experiences. More specifically it is asked in this study for which reasons Finnish ice-hockey players migrate to Russia. Moreover, dimensions related to the adaptation process, taking into consideration the perceived by the migrants cultural differences between Russia and Finland, and how it affects the

performance of the athletes are explored. In addition, issues related to the perceived by the players' differences between the Finnish and Russian ice hockey cultures are examined. For that reasons, the research method applied in this paper is a qualitative phenomenological with a set of semi-structured interviews. This method fits well for the purpose of the study, because it allows to develop a composite description and interpretation of the essence of the experience of the professional Finnish ice hockey players who have migrated to Russia.

This thesis explores the phenomenon of the migration of Finnish ice hockey players to Russia, with regard to the previous studies that have been done in the field of sport labor migration and globalization of sports. A more general investigation of sport and processes of globalization is derived from the work done by Westerbeek & Smith (2003), Giulianotti (2005) Giulianotti & Robertson (2007), Robertson (1992), Slack (2004), Scholte (2000), Houlihan (2003) and Maguire et al (2002). In the sport labor migration section of this study a variety of issues are presented. Based on the information from the work of Bale & Maguire 1994; Maguire 1996; Maguire & Stead 1996 dimensions of sports labor migration that occur frequently in the lives of elite labor migrants are outlined. (Maguire 1999, 99.) Moreover, a typology of sports labor migration proposed by Maguire (2008), which sheds light on the personal motives which affect the recruitment and the travel preferences of the migrants is applied. Empirically, the personal and professional motivations and lived experiences are extensively examined by taking into account research that has been done by Botelho and Ageergard (2011) concerning the migration of female footballers to Scandinavian countries, Stead & Stead (2000) focusing on the migration of Nordic/Scandinavian footballers to England and Maguire & Stead (1996) probing the movement of overseas cricketers into English county. Moreover, the work done by Elliot and Maguire (2008), Olin & Penttilä (1994), Maguire (2008) and Maguire & Falcous (2011) are taken into consideration.

2. HISTORY AND GLOBALIZATION OF SPORT

“Throughout the twentieth century leading sporting figures, chairmen of economic corporations with direct and indirect interest in sport, think tanks, and social analyst preoccupied with making sense of the contemporary world recognized the unique local appeal and global significance of sport. At the beginning of the present century, in the context of a wide-ranging analysis of the consequences associated with the global implementation of neo-liberal free-market economic policies, sport was described as ‘the most important thing in the world’.(Beck 2000 as quoted in Smart 2007,6.)

What is then sport? It is a very important part of our modern life. Nowadays, even people who detest sport cannot escape from its intensity. In order to specify sport not just as a simple physical contest or game, there are six characteristics that should be taken under consideration for a more complete picture of sport today. First, sport has concrete rules: that is to say a competitor must behave within certain boundaries of “fair play”. Second, the organization of modern sport is on a very high level, has fixed structures and significant systems of infrastructure. Third, sport is still a physical activity that includes an element of simply enjoying the game. Fourth, equipment and facilities are vital attributes of modern sport. Fifth, sport always comes to a dead end: it is impossible to predict on which side you will be: the winners or the losers. Last but not least, contemporary sport depends upon (ironically) on both cooperation and conflict, within the scheme of competition. (Westerbeek & Smith 2003, 52-55.)

Back in the ancient Olympiad, sport games and rules were unique to the culture in which they were played. Sport took its start from the religious and combat rituals of primitive societies. The glorification of great hunters, soldiers, leaders and later, great athletes, was widespread throughout the ancient world. The ancient Greeks (1000BC to 100BC) organized games, sport events and festivals to honor their gods. Events such as the Olympic Games were hosted in honor of the most powerful of all gods, Zeus. Sport-like activities in Roman society (100BC to 500AD) were principally used by high commands to prepare men for war. In the interest of the expansion of the Roman Empire, physical activities were seen useful only if they were also practical from a military point of view. (Westerbeek & Smith 2003, 52-55.)

In the middle Ages (500-1400 AD) the nationwide spectacles of the Greeks and Romans were replaced by local games and competitions. The sport-like activities that were played reflected a society divided between the upper class and lower class. The ruling institution of the time, the Catholic Church, adapted various pagan rituals for worship. Most of these ceremonies carried a symbolic tossing of a ball back and forward to represent the struggle between good and evil. (ibid, 52-55.)

In the early 1400's Renaissance movement (1400-1600) totally changed the social, political and spiritual face of Europe. During the Renaissance, which started in Italy, intellectuals and artistes became more independent of the influence of the medieval Church and the nobility. The Italian Renaissance men adopted the ancient Greek ideal of a united body and soul, and became a jack of all trades including social, intellectual, artistic and sporting activities. For human beings, physical as well as mental development was important. Still, the Renaissance came later in northern Europe and had weaker outcome. Protestant reformer John Calvin, for instance, claimed that engaging in 'frivolous' activities such as sport could infect a person with the poison of sin. (ibid, 52-55.)

As a result sport-like activities and games were disapproved. Calvin and his followers were enormously influential in England. Despite that, after a short period of time they became a minority and their extreme views were not accepted and practiced by the common people. The forbidden public pastimes proved remarkably flexible, and, by the end of the 17th century, local, social activities and popular sports flourished as never before in England. This tendency continued during the Enlightenment period (1700-1800) in which competitors from different social backgrounds increasingly practiced sport-like activities. (ibid, 52-55.)

It was not only until the second half of the nineteenth century that sport really cut itself free from the tie of the church and army, in a process historians describe as 'sportification'. Sportification appeared when local sport-like activities developed into standardized, internationally recognized sports. Popular sports and regulated sport forms took their start in England where the initial development of 'modern' sport was a function of wider social developments, such as government and infrastructure. In other words, the civilizing processes that appear in the development of modern nation states

can partly explain sportification of the development of modern sport. (Westerbeek & Smith 2003, 52-55.)

TABLE 1. Periods of sport development. (Westerbeek & Smith 2003, 52-55.)

Period	Type of sport.
Before 1800	Horse racing, golf cricket, boxing, rowing, fencing
1820-30	Shooting, sailing
1840-60	Baseball, soccer, rugby, swimming
1860-70	Athletics, skiing, polo, cycling, canoeing.
1870-80	American football, lawn tennis, badminton, hockey, bandy
1880-1900	Ice-hockey, gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, judo, table tennis, bowling, weightlifting, speed skating.
After 1900	Korfbal, handball, orienteering, squash, netball, karate, aikido, tea kwon do.

What is then globalization? Globalization is a research area of sociology, and a subject of major public debate. Globalization is defined by a number of different social processes: rising global interdependencies between individuals, groups and societies; growing global circulations of people, commodities, images and ideas; increasing transnational links between states, corporations and non-governmental organizations; and intensification of the public's subjective awareness of global connectivity, of the shared interests, tastes, values and futures across humanity's different branches. (Giulianotti 2005, 190.)

According to Robertson globalization, 'in its most general sense, is the process whereby the world becomes a single place' (Robertson 1992 as cited in Maguire 1999, 22). Yet, he doesn't maintain that this notion of a 'single place' requires a condensation of a unite system. Moreover, he stresses, that globalization does entail the development of a global culture. However, he avoids the suggestion that this culture is homogeneous, but refers to a 'general mode of discourse about the world as a whole and its variety'. While discussing the development of a global culture, Robertson also expresses the opinion

that globalization processes do not lead to homogeneity because they are marked by heterogeneous trends and characteristics. Altogether, ‘globalization is best understood as indicating the problem of the form in terms of which the world become united but by no means integrated’ (Robertson 1992 as cited in Maguire 1999,22). Roudometof and Robertson (1995) have further developed these ideas. Arguing with the notion that the process of globalization is a stage of capitalist development, and that economic integration necessarily ends up in a cultural commingling, they come up with the following conclusion: (Maguire 1999, 22-23.)

“Cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity are consequences of the globalization process. Although cultural diffusion can transform a local, the recurrent ‘invention of tradition makes it possible to preserve, create or recreate cultural heterogeneity at the local level”. (Roudometof &Robertson 1995 as quoted in Maguire 1999, 23)

In order to outline the global condition and the process by which people have agreed on accepting the world system as a whole throughout history condition, Robertson (1992) identifies five (5) main phases (Maguire 1999, 23).

Historical elements of globalization: Robertson's five phases.

1) During the first or ‘*germinal*’ phase of globalization which lasted from the beginning of the 15th to the mid-18th century several important shifts appeared, such as: the expansion of Catholicism as a global religious system, the early development of national communities, the emergence of world mapping, and a notion towards emphasizing ideas related to the individual and humanity. (Giulianotti 2005, 191.)

2) The ‘*incipient*’ phase lasting from the middle of the 18th century to 1870’s displayed the rise of: the idea of a homogeneous unitary state, international relations and legal conventions regulating communication systems and international trade. Moreover, conceptions of citizenship and humanity were further advanced and issues of non-European involvement within the international society emerged. (Giulianotti 2005, 191.)

3) The ‘*take-off*’ phase lasting from the 1870’s until the mid-1920’s witnessed the

growth of global, manifest tendencies regarding national societies. Domestic and individual identities were seen as the most important ones. The growth of the global communication system, world-wide agencies and the emergence of global sport competitions are indicative of this phase. Additionally, despite immigration being still restricted, non-European societies have found their way into the international society, while military conflicts seized global measurements. (Giulianotti 2005, 192.)

4) The '*struggle – for- hegemony*', phase that took place between 1920's and late 1960's involved a rise of warfare and military tensions such for resource distribution and global power. In order to stop these conflicts and establish principles of national autonomy a formal globalized governance was established (United Nations). As a result, the Third World was designated. (ibid, 192.) Finally, the Cold War struggle between the West and the Soviet bloc also found expression in sport (Maguire 1999, 78).

5) The '*uncertainty*', phase which started in the late 1960's and is still ongoing involved an increasing amount of global institutions among with greater levels of global consciousness and emergence of problems of multiculturalism and polyethnicity within the notion of world citizenship. With the end of the Cold War, the global system became more 'fluid' and the Islamic religion became a 'de-globalizing' force. Moreover, the rivalry among international media systems emerged. (Giulianotti 2005, 192.)

The five phases of globalization identified by Robertson shed light on the understanding of the specific changes in the emergence of modern kinds of sport (Maguire 1999, 77). Modern sports like cricket, football, rugby, baseball and hockey have been globalized since their foundation in particular nations (ibid, 191).

Scholte (2000) gives five dimensions of the 'globalization' term applying them to the world of sports, specifically named as internationalization, liberalization, universalization, Westernization/Americanization and deterritorialization. (Scholte 2000 as cited in Houlihan 2003, 346.)

TABLE 2. Varieties of globalization. (Houlihan 2003, 346-347.)

Globalization as a process of	Examples from sport
<i>Internationalization</i> , reflecting greater cross-border exchanges, especially trade, but also people and ideas , between countries	Trade in athletes; an increase in the number of international competition circuits
<i>Liberalization</i> , whereby government restrictions on cross- border business are removed and to a large extent reflect the efforts of the World Trade Organization and at a regional level the European Union and the North American Free Trade Area	The impact of the European Union ruling regarding the transfer of players and the number of non-national players that a team may field (Bosman ruling) and also the liberalization of cross border TV media ownership and broadcasting
<i>Universalization of culture</i> , a synthesis of existing cultures producing a homogeneous cultural experience	The global coverage of the Olympic Games both in terms of the number of countries participating(more countries than are members of the United Nations) and the number of countries receiving television broadcasts, contributing to an increasingly homogeneous sports diet
<i>Westernization / Americanization</i> whereby the social structures of modernity, capitalism, rational – bureaucracy , industrialism and representative democracy, are spread throughout the world	Rational – bureaucratic sports structures (written rules, leagues and record of achievement), a scientific approach to talent identification and development, specialization both on and off field of play (physiotherapists, psychologists and dieticians, etc.), and commercialization
<i>Deterritorialization</i> whereby the spatial organization of social relations is altered as a result of a dramatic change in our perception of space, location and distance	The development of large fan groups for English and Scottish football teams not just outside the locality but outside the national state boundaries: the live transmission of international sports events

Studying the table above, adapted by Scholte (2000) it can be stated that each one of these dimensions is referred to the economic, political and cultural processes. Particularly, liberalization gives priority to economic forces. On the other hand, universalization focuses more on the role of culture in globalization. Finally, the rest

three dimensions (internationalization, Westernization/Americanization and de-territorialization) display a combination of economic, political and cultural factors. (Houlihan 2003, 346.)

As it was already mentioned the main directions of globalization are historical, political, social and economic. All these aspects are clearly demonstrated for example in modern sporting events like the Olympics. The Olympics have become a global event. From 14 countries-participants in the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896 to 199 in the Sydney's summer Olympics in 2000. This is the historical aspect. Economically, the Olympics make huge profits from world-wide television deals, corporate sponsorships and ticket sales. Culturally, the Olympics empower the worldwide interaction of different sport styles and techniques, models of dress and self-expression. Politically, the IOC (International Olympic Committee) is run by international elites, during the time that the events allow host nations social movements to communicate with global audiences. Socially, the Olympics attract spectators and athletes from all over the world, providing global television audiences with common debate topics. (Giulianotti 2005, 190.)

Nowadays, modern sport is bound up in a global network of interdependency chains that are marked by global flows and uneven power relations. People all over the world watch through satellite broadcasts English Premier League and European Champions League matches. These are the competitions where the best players from Europe, South America and Africa play. Nike and Adidas are the major sponsors of the equipment (balls, boots, uniforms) which teams use, is mostly designed in the West and in many cases hand-stitched by children in Asia. After that this equipment is provided to the mass markets in the biggest towns and cities of North America and Europe for a considerable profit. Many multinational organizations are involved in the production and consumption stages of global soccer. There are examples where some of them own the media companies as well as the shareholdings in the football clubs (Sky TV). This phenomenon has been named by the sociologists 'global media sport complex'. (Maguire & Jarvie & Mansfield & Bradley 2002, 4.)

Overall, two conclusions occur from the examination of globalization as a process. Firstly, we must acknowledge the importance of cultural shifts in terms of depth social

embeddedness and must be keen to avoid granting too much of significance to the changes in the popularity of specific clubs, sports or events. Secondly, economic processes and interests have become much more prominent in the sport in the last 25 years than political and cultural dimensions. Currently, major sports and sports events have turned their focus on increasing their private profit rather on the state subsidy. (Houlihan 2003, 350.)

Currently, global flows display a variety of dimensions: the migrant dimension, involves the circulation of individuals such as tourists, exiles and guest workers around the globe; the technology dimension, which is established based on the flow of supplies between countries, that are produced by national cooperations and agencies; the economic dimension, focusing on the accelerated stream of monetary processes internationally; the media dimension, displaying the flow of information and images which are created and delivered by newspapers, TV and most importantly, the internet; and lastly, the ideological dimension, which is characterized by the flow of shared values, related with state or counter state ideologies and movements. All those dimensions can be identified at the end of 20th century's sport development. Therefore, it comes with no surprise that the transnational migration of personnel within the sports world has been recently and will most likely continue to be in the future a pronounced feature in globalized sport. (Maguire & Jarvie & Mansfield & Bradley 2002, 5.)

3. MIGRATION IN SPORT

Migration is considered as an aspect of social change. It is a very important, developing social phenomenon. Hence, there are questions about what leads people to move from one country to another. Other questions that arise are what kinds of people are more liable to migrate and what are their motives to make this decision? Possibilities for migration have changed over the years and decades. Nowadays, the physical and technical conditions have improved, which makes the decision for migration much easier especially, if a migrant has financial motivation to make a move. New opportunities for migration have also appeared because of the development of modern society in more professionalized areas. (Olin & Penttilä 1994, 126-127.)

The world of professional sports seems to be a favorable environment for migration. Its roots extend internationally: well-established networks with similar social rules and norms for both national and international competitions and leagues create great opportunities for migration. Thus, the friendly environments which the institution of sport creates make easier the decision of moving from one country to another and starting a career as a professional athlete. (ibid, 126-127.)

Sport labor migration occurs at three levels: within nations, between nations located within the same continent and between nations located in different continents and hemispheres (Maguire 1999, 98). According to Bale and Maguire (1994) there are some recognizable national patterns identified in the recruitment of athletes in sports such as American football, basketball, cricket, ice hockey, track and field and soccer. (Maguire 1999, 98). Intracontinental migration has been studied by Maguire and Stead (1998), Stead and Maguire (2000), where the migratory experiences of Nordic/Scandinavian footballers in the English elite leagues are examined and Maguire and Pearton (2000) who focus on issues in European association football and the related developments of sports migration (Elliot & Maguire 2008,484). Another example of intracontinental migration is the study carried out by Klein (1991) where the movement of athletes coming from Dominican Republic into American baseball teams is investigated. Identical examples are identified among countries of the former USSR where sportsmen from countries as Ukraine and Georgia migrate within its former territory. Moreover,

there is evidence of athletic migration in sports such as American football, baseball, basketball and soccer on an intercontinental level, between North America, Europe, South America and Asia. (Maguire 1999, 98.)

Nowadays, portraying and focusing on the person's free right to move, people often consider sport migration as an unproblematic process. Nevertheless, athletic labor migration is placed within a series of power struggles representing the world of globalized sport. There are several diverse issues affecting the integration of the migrant into the new environment such as: political, cultural, economic and geographical. Moreover, pressures that come from owners, administrators, agents, officials and mass media play a major role in the 'new' migrant's life. (Maguire & Falcous 2011, 5-6.)

Sports migrants are consistently on the move, work in different locations and therefore might experience issues such as: dislocation, exploitation and cultural adjustment. In the figure 1 several other dimensions of sports labor migration that interconnect with on and off the field adaptation into a new environment are highlighted. Based on the evidence derived from the work of (Bale & Maguire 1994; Maguire 1996; Maguire & Stead 1996) these issues and dimensions occur frequently in the lives of elite labor migrants. (Maguire 1999, 99.)

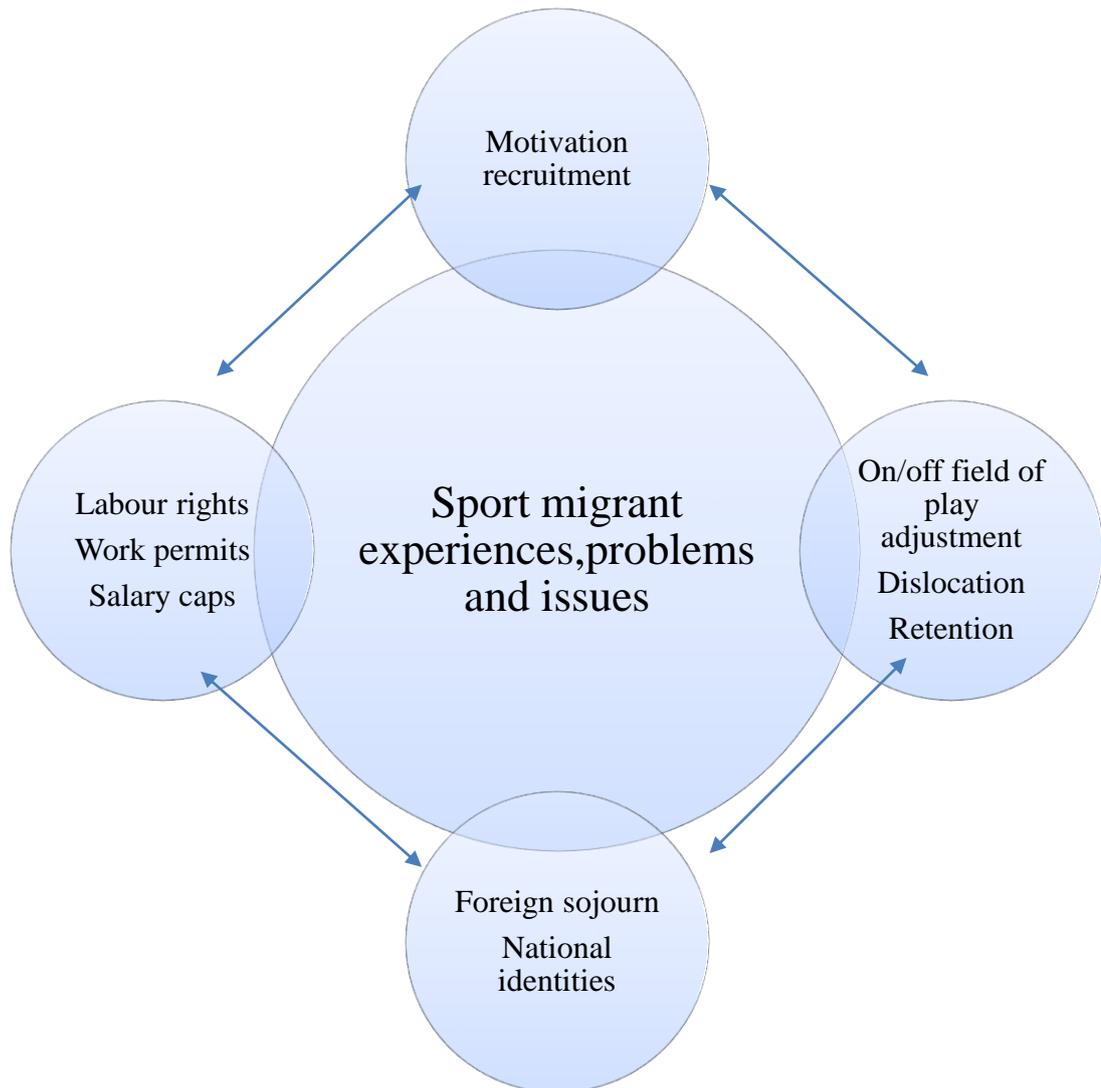


FIGURE 1. Sport migrant experience, problems and issues (Maguire 1999, 99).

There is a variety of personal motives which affect the recruitment and the travel preferences of the migrant. Therefore, a typology of sports labor migration needs to be defined. The typology presented in figure 2 sheds light on the decision making process of athletes within the transnational sport labor market. The type of migrants 'labeled' as sport 'pioneers' are occupied with passion and an almost evangelical zeal in advertising the virtues of 'their' sport. Their goal is to attract local people to a particular new sports culture. The study carried by Maguire (1996) focusing on the migration of Canadian ice hockey players to Britain serves as a good example of 'pioneer' activity. 'Settlers' are those migrants who eventually settle in the society where they perform. The motives of the migrants who are identified as 'mercenaries' are mainly short- term benefits and in

order to do so they use their agents to achieve well-paid contracts with several teams. Moreover, ‘mercenaries’ are characterized by little or no association with their migration place of work. On the other hand, the motives of ‘nomads’ lie within a more cosmopolitan engagement with migration. In their study focusing on the overseas migration in English cricket Maguire & Stead (1996) suggest that those migrants use their sports career to travel, experience other cultures and enjoy being the ‘outsider’, the ‘stranger’. Finally, ‘returnees’ are identified in the European process of sports labor migration and can represent either one of the rest typologies. Therefore, it can be stated that the personal and professional objectives of migrants are complicated and multifaceted. Therefore, the question which rises is what is it so attractive about moving and playing abroad? (Maguire 2008, 447.)

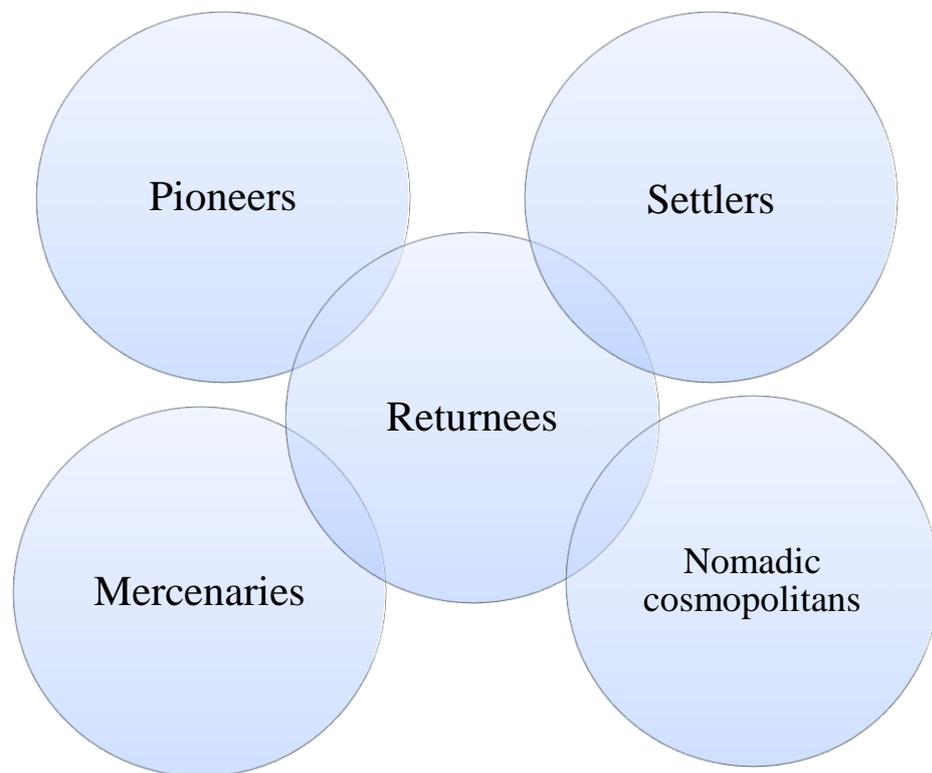


FIGURE 2. Typology of sport labor migration. (Maguire 2008, 448.)

Exploring the migration of Scandinavian footballers to England, Maguire & Stead (2000) raised several questions that can be utilized, while trying to identify the reasons and motives which lead athletes to migrate. These questions are: Is the migration valued by the football players as a ‘developmental’ period in their lives? Do they consider these

moves as necessities, as a ‘rite de passage’ that will improve them as individuals and develop as professional football players? Lastly, do their reasons for migration rely mainly on gaining instant economic rewards or on the desire to ‘be the best they can be’? Based on the evidence derived from their data Maguire and Stead conclude that despite being aware of the economically weak nature of Scandinavian leagues and the financial benefits available in England, the decision to migrate was affected by the players’ desire to challenge their skills against ‘the best’ and willingness to experience life in different cultures. Therefore, the particular sample of Nordic football players can be referred to ‘nomadic investors’ – whose reasons to migrate include a complex blend of cultural, professional and economic elements. (Maguire 2008, 448-449.)

Another emerging issue which further increases the complexity of migrants’ motivations, is considered the lack of opportunities for career development in some athletes’ home countries. In probing the movement of elite overseas cricketers to English county sides Maguire and Stead (1996) highlight that the lack of professional opportunities in the migrants’ mother countries was the main motivational factor for them. Moreover, a significant motive for migrating was the role of “finishing school” (Maguire & Stead, 1996, 10) that English cricket had for overseas players. Alike among soccer players, the ability to test their skills at the top level has been seen to affect the motivations of migrant cricketers. Therefore, it might be concluded that in both cases the economic awards are not the most significant motives for migrations. (Elliot & Maguire 2008, 486).

Botelho and Ageergard (2011) in their research concerning the migration of female footballers to Scandinavian countries took into account the concept of ‘labour of love’ in order to bring out new aspects and understandings of the subjective and sometimes ‘irrational’ reasons that lead players to cross the borders. A qualitative approach was used in order to identify the motives of female footballers to come and perform in Scandinavian countries. The focus of the study was women’s leagues of Norway, Sweden and Denmark where the variety of migrant players represent North America and Africa. 8 players from these two groups of migrants who played in Denmark were interviewed as well as the coaches and owners of the clubs. Moreover, questionnaires were sent to all the North American and African female players in Sweden and Norway. The findings of the research indicated that the main reasons for migration are: (1)

economic gains, (2) settlement, (3) the cultural experience (cosmopolitanism) and (4) football ambitions and experience. However, some of the answers of the interviews were related to the “love for the game” concept. Many participants of the research answered that the love for the actual game drove them to migrate, ignoring issues such as the low salaries, cold climate and new environment. (Botelho & Ageergard 2011, 806-819.)

As a term, migration demonstrates a movement of individuals and social groups between two societies. Opportunities offered by both locations are compared by individuals involved in the migration process. According to Jackson (1986) there are no big differences between sports migration and non-sports migration (Jackson 1986 as cited in Olin & Penttilä 1994, 127). (Olin & Penttilä 1994, 126-127.)

Elliot and Maguire (2008) also claimed that there are a lot of similarities between the migration of athletes and migration of highly-skilled workers. Following that statement, they suggest that by conducting a research outside of the sociology of sport, underdeveloped elements of this area could be understood more extensively. Moreover, they imply that both the researchers of athletic migration and sociologists of highly skilled migration could gain benefits by taking into account the literature of those two concepts. The authors inspire other researchers in the field of sports migration and labor migration to “think outside of the box”, extend their vision and investigate more deeply the fast-growing, global phenomenon of the world of sports- athletic migration. (Elliot & Maguire 2008, 482-497.)

Overall, based on the data derived from the typologies it can be stated that the motivations and experiences of sport migrants are multifaceted. Politics, history, economics, geography, and culture can all play a significant role in identifying the motivations of sports migrants and influence their experience during the migration process. For that reason, it is impossible to totally capture the complexities of sports labor migration and conclude that those movements take place, as a consequence of one single motivation. Instead, several interdependent processes such as the specific migratory experience, the typologies of sport labor migration and, the global sport figuration, should be taken into consideration in order to produce a more adequate account. (Maguire 1999 as cited in Elliot & Maguire 2008, 485).

In conclusion, sports labor migration is unquestionably gathering momentum and appears to be closely related with the broader process of global sports development taking place in the late twentieth century. In turn, sports development is interlinked with a process of accelerated globalization which has been unfolding at least since the late nineteenth century and includes growth in the number of international sporting bodies, competitions, tournaments and migration movement. (Bale & Maguire 1994, 5.)

4. PROFESSIONALISM IN TEAM SPORTS

The impact of the globalization can be seen not only in the economic aspect. Culture for example has been strongly affected by globalization. Even before the word 'globalization' became a trend music, art, literature and language have all crossed borders. Sport also hasn't "escaped" from the process of globalization. Professional sport, too, has crossed borders. The progress of sport throughout the past decades is most likely the furthest and fastest among all the elements of culture. Broadcasted and popularized by mass media professional sport has crossed even the so named virtual borders and has become a global world -widespread phenomenon. As it has become universal, sport drew the interest of people in a different way. They realized that professional sport can give them much more than fun and enjoyment of the game. It created great possibilities for men and women to gain huge profits. (Westerbeek & Smith 2003, 6.)

In the last 20 years, influenced by the commercialization process sport has been transformed into a big business. As a result, sport organizations have been focused on maximizing their profits and are utilizing this principle as the core of their strategies and activities. This process has led to the rise of sponsorships, television rights and players' salaries. Moreover, commercialization has also emerged within the state sport organizations. During the last decade, these organizations have experienced major cultural and operational shifts, as the business-like approach has occurred within their management. Finally, it should be mentioned that the growth of commercial activities has been triggered by the increased amount of professional sports and sport clubs. (Houlihan 2003, 166.)

The question is when did it all start? When did professional sport turn in a multi-million business? Some analytics consider that this moment came in the 1990's along with Michael Jordan, or even with 1984's ' McDonald's ' Olympic Games in Los Angeles. For others it began as early as 1975, when International Management Group (IMG) founder Mark McCormack boasted that: "We are by far the most powerful influence on sport in the world. We could turn any individual sport – golf, tennis, skiing -on 'its ear' tomorrow. The position we hold in some of these sports is the ability to reconstruct the

whole edifice". Some people claim that the beginning of sport business started even earlier. Philip Wrigley, the legendary baseball club owner, complained in 1956 that: 'Baseball is too much of a sport to be a business and too much of a business to be a sport'. Dutch football manager, Rinus Michels, was even less ambiguous: 'Football is a business now, and business is business'. (Westerbeek & Smith 2003, 1.)

Team sports have been in the core of the process named as 'professionalism of sport'. The development of what are called today professional team sports can be divided in three stages.

Stage One: Regulated Professionalism

The professionalization of team sports started in the middle of the 19th century. It was an outcome of the socio- economic developments during the Industrial Revolution. Industrialization formed an urbanized working class. The increase of salaries and decrease of working hours gave the chance to the employees to spend more time and money on leisure. As a result, there was a rapid growth in the demand for spectator sports involving highly skilled athletes. Consequently, the high skilled players had the chance to earn their living from sport and dedicate themselves on training and playing. That's how the term professional athlete appeared. The creation of teams and clubs required an essential financial investment, especially for those that wanted to buy land and build their own stadium. The necessity to raise finance meant that clubs had to form themselves into business companies, with initial investors taking equal shares of them. Professionalism led teams to turn into business companies with owners creating a split-up between team participation and team control. (Slack 2004, 247-255.)

Stage two: Deregulated professionalism

The transition of professional team sports from a highly regulated commodity to a free market commodity began in the post-war era. The growth of television as a mass medium played a major role in this transition. The live translations and edited highlights brought into the homes offered new opportunities to the professional team sports. The sofa fan was born. During the 1960's and 1970's, player associations in leading team sports required the abolition of the restrictions on their bargaining rights and the

introduction of free agency. Their demand was for the first time fulfilled in 1976 when the free agency and arbitration appeared in the major baseball league. Their goal was achieved in 1983 when full free agency was introduced in the NBA (National Basketball Association) in 1983. In English professional football, the regulation referring to maximum salary was abolished in 1961. The acceleration of player wage growth has had repercussions throughout the professional team sports industry. Overall the era of deregulated professionalism was the kick-off of a salary-price spiral in professional team sports. Teams were locked into a vicious circle of salary growth, which force them to charge higher prices for tickets and their image rights. On the other hand, players use their increased bargaining power to push over for even higher wages. Inescapably, deregulated professionalism weakened the sporting and financial viability of leagues as the regulatory mechanisms for protecting the collective interests of teams were gradually demolished. (Slack 2004, 247-255.)

Stage three: Commercialism

The commercialization of team sports from the late 1970' till today is the result of the interplay between the industry's internal dynamic and external environmental change. The changes in the telecommunications and media industries led to a boost in the demand for spectator sports. The improvement of cable and satellite broadcasting formed new delivery platforms. Professional sport has entered the era of the online subscriptions and pay-per-view TV. Commercialism indicates the fall of the athlete - owner effect. The owners of the clubs are more interested in investment funds than individuals. For instance, in professional soccer in England, the change in ownership has involved stock-market flotation of the team as a public company on the stock market. However, the focus on commercial operations has not ensured financial stability. The most talented athletes have also become profit-led businesses represented by legal and financial advisers in order to maximize their own profits. Free agency allows the star players to use their bargaining power to maintain and increase their share of team's revenue streams. The vicious circle of salary-price in the professional team sports industry has further increased. Alan Sugar, a former chairman of the English soccer club Tottenham Hotspur, named this phenomenon as the 'prune juice effect'. The revenues that flow into teams very quickly flow out again in player's salaries. Therefore commercialism has in many cases tended to further undermine the sporting and

financial viability of leagues by aggravating the imbalance between teams and increasing the number of conflicts between players and teams. (Slack 2004, 247-255.)

Nowadays, the main goal of the professional sport leagues is to gain profits by displaying sport as entertainment, as long as the main purpose of a professional athlete is to make a living from playing sport. For these reasons, professional sports are considered as the most obvious examples of the business in sport. Professional sport has its roots in Ancient Greece, where a group of professional sportsmen known as 'athletai' existed. They were well paid, recruited from mercenary armies and specially prepared for brutal competition. However, it was not until the 19th century when professional sport started to develop in earnest, with boxers and runners being consistently paid for their efforts. One of the first team sports which employed professionals and established a professional league was baseball in 1871. The king of all sports- football which is today a multi-million pound business started to pay players in the United Kingdom in the mid -1880's and in 1885 the Football Association has legitimized 'professionalism'. (Houlihan 2003, 173)

According to Chelladurai (1994) there are three main purposes which prove that professional sports have become an entertainment. The first reason which he outlines is the notion of 'the contest', which consists of the competition and the unpredictability of the results. These are the key elements of sporting entertainment. He suggests that an important ingredient in the 'contest' is the level of excellence achieved by the participants – the higher the excellence, the greater the entertainment value. That's a main reason why professional sport is more attractive to watch than amateur sport. Second, Chelladurai (1994) highlights how professional sport is a 'spectacle'. Despite the fact that, in the center of any sport event lays the contest, opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games and half-time shows in basketball, football and rugby are essential parts of modern professional sports. Sometimes these 'spectacles' are more important than the contest itself. For instance, the opening and closing ceremonies of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 were completely sold out and had the highest TV rating among the Games. The third argument that Chelladurai makes is that professional sport as entertainment provides a social venue where people can come together, not only for the contest and spectacle, but also for social purposes. This feature can be seen most in team sports (football, basketball, baseball and rugby), where

watching an event commonly creates a significant social occasion for spectators. (Chelladurai 1994 as cited in Houlihan 2003, 173.)

In conclusion, sport is no longer an activity, run and organized by amateurs: it is a big business that has grown rapidly over the last two decades, influenced by the commercialization process. Commercialism has been a major issue in sport since the expansion of professional sport in the 19th century. Today, all the sectors of the professional sport industry are concerned with business approaches to sport. Athletes, support personnel (managers, coaches, officials, media persons, lawyers, and agents), and club owners gain huge profits from the willingness of the spectators to pay to watch their favorite sports and to purchase the commodities endorsed by sports personalities. As a result, more athletes can make their living from sports, spending huge amounts of time on training in order to increase their skills, physical condition, and to be able to demand higher salaries. (Houlihan 2003, 182.)

5. ICE HOCKEY IN FINLAND AND RUSSIA

Today, ice hockey is more than simply a sport. In northern countries with a long tradition in the game such as Canada, Russia, Finland and Sweden, hockey is seen as a twist of religion, national pride, and business. Alike other globalized professional sports, the world of ice hockey presents a multilayered structure where language and personality intersect with financial benefits and movement. Practically, that implies the increased amount of ice hockey players' transfers around the world and the internationalization of national competitions. The movement of elite international players, linguistically diverse, elite players seeking economic profit also transcends the traditional ways in which locality, loyalty, and authentic language identity are understood, attracted and managed in the hockey industry. This raises questions of how this difference is managed, marketed, and consumed in local spaces historically constructed as monolingual and monocultural, but now seeking to profit from both the circulation of non-local players and the loyalty to local belongings. (Power Play 2015.)

Finland

Ice hockey is the only team sport where Finland regularly competes for medals at the Olympic and World Championship level. It is also undoubtedly the most popular spectator sport in Finland. It has the highest figures in attendance, the largest television coverage and the biggest sponsorships. Finland is the only European country where ice hockey has such a prominent place in the domestic sport scene. On international level only Canada can be a competitor. This explains why a small country like Finland has become a world power in ice-hockey. (NOC 2013.)

It is assumed that ice hockey was introduced in Finland by professor Leonard Borgstrom in 1899 as a mixture of hockey and bandy which included a ball instead of a puck and 11 players per team. However, it failed into gaining popularity along the country until 1920, when it made its first appearance as a sport in the Olympic Games. As a result, in 1929 the Finnish Ice Hockey Association clubs was

established. In the meantime, the Finnish men's national teams started competing in international events such as the IIHF (International Ice Hockey Federation) World Championships. (Jozsa 2009, 167.)

In the late 1960's several social changes took place in Finland. The country urbanized rapidly, and youths in the growing cities were eager to play team sports. In most other countries they chose football, but in Finland they picked up hockey. In 1962 the Finnish national hockey team, known as the Lions, won the silver medals in the IIHF European Championships and in 1965 the country successfully hosted an IIHF World Championship; in 1975, SM-Liiga- the first official, ice hockey league in Finland was founded. The first big success on the international stage came in 1988 at the Olympic Games in Calgary, where Finland earned the silver medals. The world ice hockey map was significantly affected by the collapse of communism in the 1990's when USSR and Czechoslovakia were replaced by Russia and Czech Republic. Starting from this moment the top four hockey nations in Europe (Finland, Sweden, Russia and Czech Republic) were of relatively equal power. In 1995 the Lions won the gold medals of the World Championship which was held in Stockholm against the hosts and their eternal rivals Sweden. The champions were welcomed home by thousands of people in the streets of Helsinki. Since 1995 Finnish men's and women's ice hockey national teams have been winning regularly Olympic and World Championship medals. It is worth mentioning that Finland was the first European and third country worldwide (after Canada and the USA) to take women's ice hockey seriously: in the first women's Olympic ice hockey tournament in 1998 Finland won the bronze. (Finnish Hockey Hall of Fame 2015.)

Russia / Soviet Union

Ice hockey made its first appearance in the Soviet Union in 1932, when a German labor team played a number of friendly games in Moscow. Thereafter and till the late 1940s ice hockey was played occasionally in the USSR. Having the full support of the political authorities, it took no time for the Soviet national team to turn into one of the greatest powers that international ice hockey has ever seen. Starting from the early 1950s and until 1990, the Soviets were able to win 22 gold

medals at the world championships and 8 gold medals at Olympic Games. The fall of the USSR, meant as well the end of the Soviet dominance in ice hockey.

However, Russia has been still ranked among the highest positions in the world in the men's game. Moreover, the Russian women's ice hockey national team is ranked among the top six countries in the world. At the end of 1990s, ice hockey has been going through changes within the borders of Russia. The Russian Hockey League (RHL) was firstly established in 1996 taking the place of the ex-interstate league, which consisted of clubs from the Soviet Union. Only three years after its establishment, the RHL was replaced by the Professional Hockey League (PHL). Finally, when the KHL was established in 2008 it absorbed all the 20 teams from PHL. (Stark 2012, 347-348.)

The Kontinental Hockey League

The Kontinental Hockey League was formally established on March of 2008 when the Russian Hockey Federation officially transferred to the KHL the rights to host the national championship for three years. Currently, the third similar agreement is in force. The national champion of Russia is determined by the KHL. A total of 28 teams, representing seven different countries (Russia, Belarus, Latvia, Finland, Slovakia, Croatia and Kazakhstan) contested in the seventh KHL Championship which was held from September 2014 till April 2015. (KHL 2015.)

According to Appel (2011) by the completion of only three years of existence the KHL was already considered Europe's strongest hockey league. During the second year of the league's existence, there were 35 former NHL players among the rosters of the KHL's teams, a sign which supports the notion that the long term objective of the Kontinental Hockey League is to challenge the domination of the National Hockey League by directly competing with it for talent.

Nowadays, a lot of Finnish ice-hockey players migrate to Russia, play for Russian teams and participate in the second most important club Championship of the World – Kontinental Hockey League (KHL). In 2011, among 23 teams, participated in KHL, Finnish hockey-players were the members of six ones: "Metallurg" from Magnitogorsk, "AK Bars" from Kazan, "Sibir" from

Novosibirsk, “Avangard” from Omsk, “Lokomotiv” from Yaroslavl and “Dynamo” from Moscow. Altogether, there were 14 Finnish sportsmen playing in Russia, who made up about 3% of all the League players. It should be also noted that two Russian teams were coached by Finnish specialists. The biggest Finnish support cast arrived to Kazan and Magnitogorsk: 4 Finnish players were part of the rosters of both “AK Bars” and “Metallurg”. Considering the fact that “Metallurg” was coached by the Finnish specialist Kari Heikilla, this team appeared to be the most “Finnish” Russian team. It is worth mentioning that some Finnish ice hockey players are the leaders of their teams. For instance, the forwards of “Metallurg” Petri Kontiola and Juhamatti Aaltonen were very important parts of the team. P. Kontiola, who is originally from Seinäjoki, was one of the team’s best players. According to the KHL’s ranking system he collected 45 points. J. Aaltonen also had a great season and was very helpful for his team by writing on his account 19 goals and 19 assists. Finally, during the season 2012/2013 26 Finnish legionaries played in 12 Russian teams participating in KHL. This number is the second biggest among all the foreign ice-hockey players in Russian clubs. (Finnish Hockey-Players in Russia 2013.)

6. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

6.1. Research method

In the field of social sciences of sports the two main research approaches utilized are the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Choosing the most suitable for a particular study helps the researcher to better accomplish the aims of his/her thesis. Quantitative approach consists of several different phases and has a variety of statistical probabilities. Qualitative research approach provides detailed descriptions of situations and events utilizing direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts (Patton 1980, 22). Moreover, methods used in qualitative research have been argued to provide also a deeper understanding of social phenomena compared to the methods obtained from quantitative data (Silverman 2001, 32). The aim of those methods is to focus and describe qualities that aren't quantifiable such as thoughts, experiences and feelings. It has been argued that, in the field of social sciences of sports qualitative research methods are more applicable for collecting information about values, beliefs, behaviours, motivation and needs as well as exploring perceived experiences. This kind of data is much more flexible and that's why it can be useful for sports managers. (Gratton & Jones 2010.) Taking into consideration the purpose of this study which focuses on a social aspect of the world of sports such as transnational migration and explores perceived experiences of professional athletes it has been decided that the qualitative research approach was the most suitable option for this research.

The research method applied in this study is a qualitative phenomenological research method. One of the most principal figures in the development of the phenomenological method is Martin Heidegger, Husserl's student, who has reinterpreted phenomenology and its methods. His focus is on 'being in the world' (desain) and how phenomena occur in lived experience, in human existence (van Manen 1990 as cited in Edwards & Skinner 2009, 375). Thus, Heidegger's phenomenology is an interpretation of the meaning of being. (Edwards & Skinner 2009, 375.)

In order to be able to explicate the being he used a method called hermeneutics (from the Greek word "interpretation") which he believed was one of the processes which

people utilize in understanding the sense of their everyday lives (Walters 1994 as cited in Edwards & Skinner 2009,375). Heidegger supported his point of view by claiming that hermeneutics presumes superior understanding from the side of the interpreter and that is possible to interpret something only by taking into consideration one's own lived experience (Walters 1995 as cited in Edwards & Skinner 2009, 375). According to Levesque-Lopman (1988) for a sport management researcher phenomenology is valuable as a theoretical framework because it favours participants lived experience. A research in the field of sport management done from a phenomenological perspective encourages the participants to speak about their own experiences without meanings being significantly altered by the researcher. (Levesque- Lopman 1988 as cited in Edwards & Skinner 2009, 376.)

Phenomenological hermeneutic research method has been already successfully used by sport management researches while studying human experiences. Several studies have been conducted focusing on the experiences of athletes such as Dale's (1994) research on elite decathletes during their most memorable competition and Johnson's (1998) investigation of athletes' experiences of being coached. In sport management research, the phenomenological method can try to find out the "what" of particular experiences, or how it actually feels to experience something. An insight understanding of athletes' experiences can serve as a useful tool for anyone who is interested in the sportsmen lives; be it sport administrators, coaches, sport psychology consultants or the media. (Edwards & Skinner 2009, 382-383.)

This same method is utilized in this particular research. The purpose of this study is to examine how the migration period to Russia is perceived by Finnish professional ice hockey players by exploring and interpreting their personal experiences. More specifically it is asked in this study for which reasons Finnish ice-hockey players migrate to Russia. Moreover, issues like the nature of the adaptation process, differences in the organizational club's structure between Russia and Finland, and players' gained experiences are examined. Therefore, a phenomenological research fits well for this thesis because it allows to develop a composite description and interpretation of the essence of the experience of the professional Finnish ice hockey players who have migrated to Russia.

6.2. Participants

The participants of the interviews are professional Finnish ice hockey players who have played in KHL for Russian clubs. The interviews were scheduled during the summer holidays when the ice-hockey tournaments were over and the players had more free time. The names of the players, clubs and cities have been replaced with numbers in order to secure anonymity. Below there is descriptive information about the participants of the interviews.

Player 1:

Before migrating to Russia player 1 has been playing his whole career in Finland mainly for his hometown's club. By the time he decided to leave Finland he had an ongoing contract which was bought out from the club 1. He was 31 years old when he migrated to Russia and he played for club 1 one season. His wife and two little kids followed him to Russia and spent in city 1 almost 5 months.

Player 2:

Player 2 have had already a lot of international experience before migrating to Russia. Before playing for club 2 in KHL he has spent several seasons in Sweden and one year overseas. Moreover, he has been a member of numerous Finnish teams. By the time he moved to city 2 he was 33 years old. As well as player 1 he spent in Russia one season. His wife didn't move with him for permanent staying, but was frequently visiting him.

Player 3:

Player 3 did have an international career before moving to Russia but a short one. Unlikely the rest of the participants' player 3 spent in Russia two seasons. However, he spent them in different clubs. After his first season with club 3 he signed another one year deal with club 4. Just before the end of the season club 4 has traded him to a non-Russian team. By the time he firstly migrated to Russia he was 28 years old. The very young age of his daughter didn't stop his wife from following him. They both migrated to Russia with player 3 and stayed there in both cities 4 and 5.

Player 4:

Player 4 have been spending some time abroad before migrating to Russia. He has been for 5 years in USA (four of them as an intercollegiate athlete) and one year in Sweden.

His second year of the contract with the Swedish club was bought out by club 6. By the time he moved to Russia he was 31 years old. His wife and son of a very young age didn't migrate with him to city 6.

6.3. Data collection

One of the most effective methods of data collection used in the field of sport management research are the face-to-face interviews. There are three generic interviewing approaches such as structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview. Semi-structured interviews are favored among sport management researchers due to the fact that they allow developing a meaningful understanding of the topic of interest. Usually, in this type of interviews the investigator has already analyzed the situation and is seeking additional information based on the assumption that the participant had a particular experience related to it. (Edwards & Skinner 2009, 102-107.)

The interviewer is directing the pace of the topics which are discussed. His focus is mainly on the participant's subjective experience. In this way the respondent is empowered to describe in detail his experience, as it makes sense to him. Additionally, the researcher is able to probe and ask follow-up questions. (Doyle, 1994 as cited in Edwards & Skinner 2009, 107.)

The data collection tool which is utilized in this paper is a set of semi-structured interviews with open ended questions. The interview questions were categorized by themes according to the research questions.

Main research question:

-How is the migration period in Russia perceived by Finnish ice hockey players who have played in KHL?

Sub-questions:

-What are the reasons which lead the players to make the decision to migrate to Russia?

- How much time did it take for the players to adapt into the new environment?

- What are the main cultural differences perceived by the player's between Russia and Finland?
- What are the perceived differences in the organization of professional ice hockey clubs and the game itself between Russia and Finland?
- What were the reasons for leaving from Russia?
- In which ways did the migration to Russia affect the players' career development?

6.4. Implementation of the study

The procedure for data collection started in April of 2014 with a pilot interview. The information gathered during the transcription of the interview wasn't utilized in the analysis of this study, but served as a tool for building up the structure and themes for the rest of them. The interviewee was an ex-ice hockey player who has played for one season in Russia.

The total number of interviews conducted was six (6). The length of the interviews was from 40 minutes to 1 hour. At the beginning of each interview there was an oral consent after informing the participants about anonymity and confidentiality of their participation to the study. Additionally, they were instructed to withdraw their participation in case they felt uncomfortable during the interview. All the interviews were transcribed but only four (4) of them used for the analysis of the study. In addition to the pilot interview which was used for training, another one wasn't utilized due to language limitations.

Chronologically, the first interview was scheduled for 27th of June 2014 due to the fact that the player 1 wouldn't be in Finland during the ice hockey season. The rest four interviews were scheduled during the end of the summer and early autumn of the same year.

All the interviews were held in quiet places in the city center of Jyväskylä in order to avoid external distractions. Moreover, they were all recorded and afterwards transcribed. All the interviews were held in English language.

6.5. Data analysis

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcription resulted in 30 pages of text. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the transcribed interviews. The process of data analysis used in this study was both deductive and inductive. First, data was organized deductively according to the predetermined aspects of interest that were specified prior to data analysis. This resulted in five (5) first-order themes: (1) reasons to migrate (2) adaptation process (3) perceived cultural differences between Russia and Finland (4) perceived differences within the ice hockey culture (5) summary of the migration period.

Secondly, within each first-order theme was performed thematic analysis inductively. The second order themes were strongly linked to the data because assumptions were data-driven. This process of coding occurred without trying to fit the data into pre-existing framework. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting pattern (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes data set in rich detail. (Braun & Clarke 2006, 79.) The steps taken are:

- 1) Familiarizing with data: The first step after transcribing the data focused on read and reread transcripts several times and write down initial ideas.
- 2) Generating initial codes: The second step was about developing interesting coding features from the data.
- 3) Searching for themes: In the third step the codes were sorted into potential themes and all relevant data was extracted and gathered in the themes.
- 4) Reviewing themes: After that the themes were reviewed and the less relevant themes were left out, generating a 'map' of the analysis.
- 5) Defining and naming themes: Step five consisted of clarifying and finalizing the specifics of each theme and labeling them.
- 6) Producing the report: In the final step the procedure of how to present the results in a report form has been decided. (Braun & Clarke 2006, 87.)

6.6. Trustworthiness

According to Patton (2015) there are not generally accepted criteria or strategies to assess qualitative research and its results. However, there are some techniques that are utilized in order to increase the trustworthiness of the study. The following strategies were applied in this particular paper:

1. Pilot interview: in order to increase the reliability of the interview data a pilot interview was conducted which served as a training and testing tool. The information gathered from the pilot interview wasn't utilized in the analysis of this master's thesis, but served as a tool for outlining and finalizing the interview topics and questions.
2. Member checks: collected data is returned to the original source of information. The transcribed versions of the interviews were sent back via email to the participants of the study and they have agreed with the content of their statements. That strategy allows to increase the credibility of master's thesis.
3. Thick description: describing in details what have been done throughout the whole process of conducting this study increases its transferability. If someone wants to replicate this master's thesis he/she can find all the information needed in this paper.
4. Prolonged engagement: a strategy for improving the validity of the study is prolonged engagement. In this particular study, the researcher is half Russian and therefore has a knowledge of Russian culture. Moreover, he has migrated from Russia to Finland and has been a member of basketball teams in both countries. Therefore, his knowledge of differences and personal experiences while adapting in a new environment and club were utilized.
5. Auditing: from the very beginning of the study till the presentation of the results there was external auditing with supervisors who are not involved in the research and with whom the whole process of writing this master's thesis was discussed and critically analyzed.

7. RESULTS

The analysis of the data collected revealed in five first (5) order themes such as:(1) reasons for migration (2) adaptation process (3) perceived cultural differences between Russia and Finland (4) perceived differences in the ice hockey culture (5) summary of the migration period. Below is a detailed description of the results presented in textual form and tables.

7.1. Money, status of KHL, quest for new experiences and challenge

The main findings concerning the motives of Finnish ice hockey players to migrate to Russia indicate that money, the status of KHL as the second strongest ice hockey league, and the quest for new experiences as a family or individually were the main reasons which influenced their decision to move to Russia. The players looked at their migration not just as a way of getting immediate financial benefits, but as a challenge for their careers and lives outside the rink as well. Performing well as an “import” and being an outsider in a cultural sense were seen as new life experiences. The pressure on imports in KHL is very high and in order to keep afloat players have to perform on the highest level every game. In addition, moving and living in Russia can be very challenging due to the cultural differences between Finland and Russia.

However, the analysis led to several more interesting findings. One of the participants (Player 1) mentioned change as a key reason for him to make the decision to move to Russia. After living and playing his whole career in his hometown he wanted to change something in his life both off and on the rink and Russia provided him with this opportunity. Player 3 mentioned that migrating to Russia and play in KHL became at some point his career goal. One out of two players who took with him his family for the whole migration period (Player 3) mentioned that to live in Russia seemed to him as an challenge that he wanted them to go through all together.

Finally, the opportunity to travel, see new things and learn different cultures (Player 4) while being a professional ice hockey player was highlighted as a reason to make the decision to migrate to Russia.

TABLE 3. Reasons to migrate.

1st order themes	2nd order themes	Quotes
Reasons to migrate	Money 5*	“And I am not going to lie... obviously good money was one of the reasons why I signed it and why I wanted to go to Russia...” (Player 3)
	Status of KHL 5*	“Russia is a really good chance because... hockey-wise it is the second best league in the world... The skill level in Russia...if it's not the highest the world... it's the second highest in the world...unbelievable. The amount of super skilled players... Russian and non- Russian in that league is just... unbelievable... I mean the individual skills that exist in that league are just phenomenal... it was just... I mean it's great to play with and against guys who are just...top of the world...it's a great league...” (Player 3) “big part of it was you know...because there (KHL) are more talented players basically...like...and it started to be more and more attractive to all the players so... it was already like 2007-2008 when the best players in Europe were already in Russia ...and now more and more players are there so...absolutely I wanted to try it...” (Player 2)
	Change 2*	“I just had a feeling that there is nothing more I can reach in this team (Club 1) so I wanted something else... Sweden is so similar than Finland that wasn't option anyway. Even before I signed a new deal with Club 1 I had some offers from Sweden but I didn't want to go there because I think there is nothing more than I had here... so that was a one thing I really wanted something else... and Russia is something else than Finland” (Player 1)
	Career goal 1*	“... Around 2010 it became a goal of mine to get a contract, get a chance to see what Russia is like and what's KHL like and... Get a chance to play there... and it really became... well you know... one goal for me and my career” (Player 3)
	Challenge 3*	“... I have nothing to win in this league, Finnish league... so I wanted also some new challenges and KHL was perfect for that, I knew that I get a good role there, league is good, lots of pressure for the "imports" and I just played in my hometown so many years... so I just wanted to challenge myself a little bit more... take that challenge too... that you have to score some points, you are just... you are import so they wait something a little bit more... bigger effort from you...” (Player 1) “For me of course it was a great opportunity and I wanted to take it and... I wanted to see if I can make it over there and... I knew that for us as a family... for me and my wife and us as a family it's going to be a big experience you know...getting adapted, learning

		the language... sort of surviving it... going through it... and seeing that ok... we are able to do this so we can go through anything...” (Player 3)
	Opportunity to travel, see new things and learn different cultures 1*	“I have a chance to you know travel and go somewhere else to play, see different culture, I kind of wanted to use that chance because after I am done with hockey you know... like you never know what is going to happen next like... and Russia is a kind of place that you don't normally you know travel... outside Moscow and Saint Petersburg...” (Player 4)

*frequency of times mentioned

7.2. Previous knowledge, attitude, help provided from the club and family

The results of the study reveal that the main issues related to the adaptation process of Finnish ice hockey players in Russia are: previous knowledge about migrants’ destinations; adaptive attitude showed by the migrants; help provided from the Russian clubs; importance of family’s adaptation and support. The small amount of previous knowledge about their future working places did not seem to affect the adaptation process of the players in a negative way. All the information that the four (4) participants had before they migrated were rumors and believes or stories of their colleagues who have already played in Russia. Moreover, it can be stated that salary and working conditions were more prioritized. This can be explained by the attitude that was shown from the players. Being open-minded, accept the differences as they are and trying to focus on the everyday routine as an ice-hockey player were key factors in adapting into a new environment.

Adapting into a new team can be always a challenge especially when the language barrier is a real obstacle. The communication within the team was tricky but the use of body language (Players 2,3) or teammates representing countries such as Czech Republic and Slovakia who were able to act like translators, because of the similarities in the languages (Players1,3,4) served as help to deal with that problem. Overall all four interviewees mentioned that they were accepted and welcomed by their new teammates very warmly.

According to the interviewees the help provided from the club was not significant, but satisfactory for their needs. The clubs provided them with a person who was fluent in English (translator, media guy or driver) who was there for them always and whenever

they needed him (Players 1, 2, and 3). The importance of knowledge of at least the basics of Russian language was highlighted as well. The only participant (Player 3) who spent in Russia almost two seasons claimed that learning Russian was a necessity in order to be able to understand the coaches' demands in his second club.

Finally, questions related to family adaptation were addressed to the two interviewees (Players 1, 3) who brought their families over with them. Both of them mentioned how helpful and easier was for them to have their closest people and spent their time off the rink with them. However, for the families themselves the social life activities were limited and it took a lot of "guts" from the wives of the players to accept this kind of life.

One of the participants mentioned that it was really hard to adapt to the time differences and long trips (Player 1). According to him the bad schedule of his team was the reason why he couldn't perform on his highest level. Moreover, later in the interview he claimed that this was one of the main reasons why he left from club 1.

TABLE 4. Adaptation process.

1st order theme	2nd order themes	Quotes
Adaptation process	Previous knowledge 4*	"Nothing really. Few of my friends played there before, in Russia, but I didn't know where I went and I didn't even want to know that much. I knew that some things are not working how you are used to it, but basically I didn't know where i went" (Player 1)
	Attitude 3*	"Of course... I am not going to lie... Russia is different and things are a bit different... interacting with other people might be different... I want to say its different... it's not better or worse, it's different! For me it was just realizing that... ok this is how it is done here... this is how it goes... and that's it... there is no problem... I never had a problem with that and neither did my wife" (Player 3) "I was open for everything like... you know like if something doesn't work right like... people told me there might be some problems... I was like I am fine with that I am here to play and... It doesn't bother me that... you know like that kind of attitude... like something happens then just you know deal with it." (Player 4)

Adaptation into the team 4*	<p>“I went there five days before two other Finnish guys so I just had... I think it helped me a little bit because I get used to those Russian guys before the other Finnish guys came and I think guys get me good like they were nice, they helped me... especially there was one Czech and one Slovakian guy... they helped me a lot... and I think it was quite easy to go in the team. There were not that many guys who spoke English, but... I think it was the second day there and they asked me to go out and I think that helps also... when they start drinking they speak more English than when they are sober so... I think that helped me a little bit and most of the guys were really nice to me, they helped me, I... it was pretty easy to go there.” (Player 1)</p> <p>“Yeah...that was good but...it was still weird because you can't talk to so many guys...we had...maybe...one two three four...maybe four guys who spoke really good English...couple of imports...so overall...6-7 guys who spoke English but rest of them... you can't communicate at all like...you come in, you shake their hand and smile but...you know...you never knew what they were talking about and... You know...you try to communicate with them with your hands and...That's how it is...you go there and you have to adapt or...you know...it's up to... but that went well, I didn't have any problems with the players...”(Player 2)</p> <p>“Not really like, there was... the Russians they didn't talk English that much, but there were few guys who had played in the States before so they knew a little bit English you know... and there was one Slovakian guy who spoke Russian so like he was kind of our translator... but it was... like everything went well I didn't have any problems like... adapting and going over there and like everything worked just fine...”(Player 4)</p>
Help provided from the club 4*	<p>“The translator we had... he really helped us... basically he just worked with us... he didn't had that many things to do and he was a really nice guy... he helped me a lot... like aaa... even now I am sometimes texting him... he is super nice guy and so easy going... he spoke good English and even there was... anything I needed I just called him and he helped me and... Yeah that was what the team gave and it was great... like everything we needed basically he just helped us... and then... there was a driver who spoke also English... I lived 200m away from rink so I didn't hire him, but the other Finnish guys they lived like 5km away so they just hired him... he was just helping them every day and he helped us also when we just called him to go to groceries or whatever... and he just went there with us and... It was also the same with the translator... if I really needed him he went just... first days he went with us to buy pillows and blankets and some basic things so... there were guys who really helped us” (Player 1)</p>
Family adaptation 2*	<p>“She (wife) wanted to go there too, but the time there was I think hard for them. We had lots of road trips and I was away like 8-10 days and they had no friends, nothing to do... they just stayed inside, going to groceries and watching cartoons so... there was nothing to do for them... at least I had the hockey I went to rink, I met somebody but they didn't meet that many people... we had the translator guy and then our landlord... once we went to eat to my landlord's house and once we went to the</p>

		translator's older daughter's birthday I think it was her fourth birthday... so basically we had two events during that five months and then sometimes we went for swimming with the family but... for them it was really boring.” (Player 1)
	Importance of having family with you 2*	“And for us moving in with a 1.5 year old kid... I don't think a lot of people would have done that... I don't think a lot of people would have the balls to do that... and I really appreciate my wife for doing that... because I would not have been able to be there for six months without seeing them... I would have gone crazy... so for me it was a life-saving that they moved with me and followed me... and a matter of fact is that every two weeks we were on a road trip... we went to play somewhere else and were away for a week and a half... and they were there just the two of them... and for them not going crazy, just the two of them... and not having anybody else as a company is a... is well done you know..” (Player 3)
	Hard to adapt to the bad schedule 1*	“Yeah it's so hard... and I think that year we had the worst schedule...So I think our longest one (trip) was 18 hours and 10 hours' of time difference... and then we played next day... so it was hard. For me I think the main reason why I didn't want to stay there was also that my family... it was too hard for them and also it's too hard for your body... just flying, changing your time all the time... like that was... I think when we came to Europe it was like... when we left the rink and when we were in the hotel it was eighteen hours and it was a ten hours' time difference and then we played next day so it's... it's impossible... you can't play good... we got seven points of twenty-five away games... so there were 75 points available and we got 7... So basically we just went to away games and tried to loose like... properly, not too bad and stay alive. Sometimes you were so tired on the ice... like you want to go sleeping and you just don't want to get hurt... sooo it wasn't fun”.(Player 1)

*frequency of times mentioned

7.3. Language, fan culture, working ethics

Players were asked about their perceived cultural differences during the migration period in Russia. Some of those differences serve as a tool for understanding better some unique features in the way Russian professional ice hockey clubs function.

The information derived from the study indicates that the most significant, perceived by Finnish ice hockey players cultural differences are language, fan culture and working ethics. Firstly, the language barrier was mentioned by all the participants. In Russia the amount of people who can communicate in English is not as big as in Finland. That forced all the participants to try and catch up some basics in Russian. The only participant (Player 3) who spent in Russia almost two seasons claimed that learning

Russian was a necessity in order to be able to understand the coaches' demands in his second club.

Another topic discussed was the differences in the fan culture between Russia and Finland. Three of the participants (Players 1, 2, and 4) mentioned that fans in Russia live and enjoy the games more than those in Finland. Moreover, they are less critical towards the performance of the players and are looking for big characters to cheer for. Players 1 and 4 highlighted how different are the working ethics in the Russian culture. It is worth mentioning that examples related to working ethics were brought up from both on and off the rink. In addition, few of the participants of the interview (Players 2, 3) mentioned that Russian and Finnish people have a lot of similarities in the way they behave. Finally, one interviewee (Player 4) claimed that Russian people are more religious than Finns

TABLE 5. Perceived cultural differences.

1 st order theme	2 nd order themes	Quotes
Perceived cultural differences	Language 4*	<p>“And also that people there they don't want to speak English even they can they don't want and that's one thing. I think people in Russia, especially in city 1 they speak more English than they show like they don't want to speak... there was a lots of guys who spoke English with me when we were together like one on one, but if there were other people they didn't even try and I think it's the same things in restaurants and markets... that even they understand they don't want to understand you like sometimes in the restaurants... it was so like Coca-Cola is the same in Russian and in English but if you try that and you speak English they don't want to understand...” (Player 1)</p> <p>“and also in Russia it seems to me like in a lot of places people... either they don't speak English or they don't want to... they are sort of afraid of speaking English... a lot of times I felt like they just don't know how so... you know...that's put in a position where... you know... I need to learn Russian to be able to do stuff...and for me learning languages have always been fun... and a pleasure...”(Player 3)</p> <p>“Well, obviously the language was the biggest thing like... in that organization only one person spoke English, it was like the media guy who arranged like... I don't know what he did there, but</p>

		he was the only one who spoke English... so it was a little difficult at first with our goalie coach during practices..." (Player 4)
	Fan culture 3*	"There were some fan groups who were always in the game and they were...you know...trying to make some atmosphere and...sound and noise...you know... in that sense they are more...more at least louder than in Finland...they are cheering more and...you know...and overall i think the audiences, they are...they were cheering for most of the...if you do some nice tricks or whatever on the ice...they liked that... they don't probably...yell so much to the referees like we do here or some negative things but...they really appreciate and love to see somebody doing something really nice...moves or whatever...then they were really loud and happy and everybody was clapping...so there...i think it's...fan culture was better than in Finland, but not as good as it was in Sweden...i think Sweden is better still but...but Russians were pretty good...I liked them...not so crowded but still they were loud and..." (Player 2)
	Social status 2*	"In Finland people are a bit everybody try to be similar, everybody try to be as close as average as possible... like you are not seeing that fancy cars like everybody like even the taxes like if you earn more you pay more taxes and everybody try to come close to each other like the average class here is so big and in Russia there is not such a thing like average people... like you are rich or you are poor and if you are rich you show that and you act like that and I think that's the biggest difference" (Player 1)
	Working ethics 2*	"And one thing in Russia like... let's say... equipment guy... if your job is to sharp skates... that's the only thing you do! You don't help somebody else like... you have a heavy bag like... on the road trip, but you don't carry anything, because that's not your job... you have your job and you do it! Like one example was like... i am a goalie... so like...somebody came to me from a like tight angle, i was playing at him... he made a pass to the far post and somebody scored a goal... and our goalie coach was like (somebody translated to me) "hey like don't worry about that... that's not your job, that's defenseman's job to take that guy... don't worry about that it's his job, it's not your fault..." always like you have to find somebody to blame you know... that was like... it was something I didn't notice at first but then like... after a few weeks, few months... I kind of realized that..."(Player 4) "Also like if something is not working then they

		can also always say that yeah this is Russia this is Russia and this is like their excuse and in Finland it's not an excuse if something is not working... then you just try to do it work and everybody has their own jobs and they try to make things working but there you try to as less things as possible, blame the other guys and just saying...we are doing that maybe tomorrow or maybe next week and then if it's not working they are trying to find somebody who to blame... nobody is taking the responsibility if something is going wrong and I think also that the work ethic, especially in our team I had a feeling that guys try to cheat as much as possible. Like if somebody is not watching then they are cheating.” (Player 1)
	Similarities with Finns 2*	“In many ways I think Russians are kind of like Finns...they...they maybe talk a little bit more but in some ways they are really reserved in the beginning and when you really get to know them...then they open up...same way Finns...they don't like... they are not like Canadians or Americans or Swedish who like the small-talk...especially in English..”(Player 2)
	Religion 1*	“is the religion and Russian guys they are like really superstitious... they all had their own good routines and if something went wrong...they did... it started everything over even if they took like 15 minutes or something like that...the religion... we had an orthodox priest who came into the locker room before the season and like... i don't really know what he did but you know like with candles...and... Like everybody's locker...like he like...blessed them...” (Player 4)

*frequency of times mentioned

7.4. Hierarchy, relationship between players and coaches and level of play

Today, most kinds of sports are globalized and ice hockey is not an exception. However, the main findings related to the differences between Russian and Finnish hockey cultures such as the hierarchy in the clubs' structure and the way it functions, the relationship between the players and the coaching staff and the playing style itself indicate that despite being considered a 'global' sport, ice hockey can still be very different in the way it is organized, coached and played.

While discussing on how differently ice hockey clubs are organized in Russia than in Finland one of the main issues mentioned was the hierarchy in the club's structure

(Players 1, 2 and 3). The distribution of roles is clear and everyone is expected to do his job and only whether it is a player, coach or a general manager. That can explain the big difference in the relationship between players and coaches (Players 1, 2 and 4).

Another issue related to the differences related to the ways Russian ice hockey clubs function is the training process and sport regime. All four (4) interviewees mentioned that the training sessions and everything related to them such as warmups and cooling down exercises were strictly controlled by coaches. According to two of them this has to do with the fact that Russian players tried to cheat as much as they could (Players1, 2) whereas players 3 and 4 explained that by saying that this is the Russian style of coaching. Moreover the sport regime that Russian players follow of the rink also differs a lot. It can be stated that they do not act as professional athletes and are not so conscious about having a healthy lifestyle (Players2, 3 and 4).

KHL is considered the second best league in the world after NHL. Therefore the level of play and amount of high skilled players differs considerably from Finnish or Swedish leagues and that's exactly what was mentioned in all four interviews. Moreover, it was stated that the style of ice hockey is more individualistic, high paced and that players have more freedom of action.

In addition, it was mentioned that people within the organization are putting their selves over the team and prioritize saving their positions (Players1, 3 and 4) and earning as much money as they can while they are on those. That can lead to incidents of lack of professionalism (Player 1 and 2).

Lastly, questions related to the relationship between players and referees in KHL were addressed to the participants of the interviews. Overall, the referees were better than all four players expected. Only one of the participants mentioned a situation where he felt offended from the fact the referee was refusing to communicate with him in English but this was a one-time incident (Player 1).

TABLE 6. Perceived differences in ice hockey culture.

1 ST order theme	2 nd order themes	Quotes
Perceived differences in ice hockey	Hierarchy 3*	<p>“I think in general... a big difference is...hierarchy...i feel like... maybe this... I don't know if this is because of the old times, I don't if it's from there or if it's just... if it's just different but...I feel in Russia you have...you have a clear system of... if you are a player... the head coach is your boss and the GM is the boss of the head coach... and the owner of the team or the money guy... is the boss of everybody... it's sort of... the steps of power are more clear... where in Finland a lot of times I feel like...there is way more...maybe cooperation or discussion about stuff. In Russia... is sort of a bit more simple...that you know...this is my boss and I do what he tells me and he has a boss... and he has to do what his boss tells him and then there is the main guy or the main guy of the main guy you know... who runs everything” (Player 3)</p>
	Player/coach relationship 4*	<p>“But... coaches' role in Russia... they are like almost felt... that even some of the older players that used to play in NHL for many years they were kind of afraid to talk to them you know... I don't know is their authority or what was the issue... even though like I heard later that some of the players... who spoke English like talked to us... and they didn't agree with most of the stuff the coach was saying... but nobody talked back to them... they kind of like respected them ...</p> <p>But that coach thing is like big thing. Here you can approach coach and talk like normal stuff... but there... I don't know if it's respect or like... what the thing is... or different kind of respect you know what I mean?”(Player 4)</p>
	Priority on saving position 4*	<p>“it's also that culture I think that aaa there are owners, then GM and if something is not working they want to kick out the GM, but then he is blaming a coach and if coach... if they want to kick out coach then coaches are blaming some players so somebody has to go. So... yeah it's a little bit more like everybody has a boss and everybody tries to save his position. It's not like everybody wants that team is playing good and if it's not playing then you start to find who is guilty... because in KHL there is so much money, i think it's not the same anymore, but especially 2-3 years ago so everybody who is in they want to get as much money as possible... they want to stay there, because i think it's so easy, easy way to earn some money in Russia... those guys like if they are like GM's they are some ex-players or... i think our GM was a stick boy before... now he is GM he is signing some players and I heard even that he made some deals that some players pay him that he sign them... so he get like 20-30% extra money just signing some bad players who pay him back... so I</p>

		think he is a rich guy in that city and he just wants to keep his job. He is not that worried how the team is playing, he is most priority is how he can earn as much money as possible and keep that job and try to earn even more” (Player 1)
	Lack of professionalism 2*	“Well of course...because in Russia there is a system that...if a coach comes from some other team he might take players with him and coach is signing them...he is deciding who gets the contract and who is not...so...they might take players from their old team...and then they are signing a contract and then the players pay the coach out of their salary...they pay the coach that took him with him...so they...that's kind of a weird system that...if coach likes somebody, he might take a player with him, gives him a good contract and the player pays extra money to the coach...and that's weird...and then... the weirdest thing what we had...coaches' own son played in the team and he wasn't a good player...he haven't played...after that year he haven't played anywhere in the KHL, he doesn't have any contract...I don't know if he plays still...but he wasn't a KHL player...but he still played...he played power play, box play and that was weird...because he was the coaches' son and he played all the year...and by no means...that was not a professional player...and that was so weird and...i was angry about those things that...it's not professional when the coach has his own son and...Favorites his own son...you know...that was pissing me off a lot” (Player 2)
	Decisions based on emotions instead of good planning 1*	“Like they have more money...and... But they don't really have the...common sense...they are doing the decisions after...you know...certain feelings or emotions...they are not planning stuff. We had a...our team started to get players at the end of the summer...where usually in Finland or Sweden or wherever the team is already set up...like we still had lots of signs in the beginning of June and that's really late...if you consider normal teams...usually teams know already after Christmas what...who they will have next year, which players they are going to get and who is not going to be there anymore and...you know...and they are firing players like...you know...after some incident they might fire somebody or...it's more after emotions...feeling-based decisions not hockey-wise or like...wise decisions after...like a longer period of planning or whatever... that is totally different and I didn't feel like our sports manager or whatever... I don't think they had good hockey sense...what kind of players they might have in the team and get in the team and fire...I don't really think that...it's too emotional...too much feeling in their decisions...that was I think the biggest difference...”(Player 2)
	Lack of trust 1*	“in Russia... I think what could be done better is... and I think it starts from all the way high-up... what could be done better in the organizations is making people below you... or making everybody on every step feel a bit more comfortable...or a bit more safe... give them a bit more space to work...give them a bit more trust. It's so much about result... whether you win or lose...that's the only

		<p>thing that matters...I know it's pro-hockey and that's what it is...you know... you are supposed to win... period... that's it. But sometimes... you don't always have the best day, sometimes you don't have the best week...or two weeks... you are underachieving... you are not playing as well as you can, you are not coaching as well as you can...well at that point... when you trust that person a bit...tell him like I know you are better than this... start working... pick it up... be better...they might give you back a lot more..."(Player3)</p>
	<p>Training process 4*</p>	<p>"There was always somebody to watch and that's Russian style. When you go to gym everybody is doing same things with the same weights and same program week after week... so yeah it's nothing individual there. Everything you do you do with the team and there is always somebody to watch and that's because if you are not watching they are cheating... and even there were some coaches watching like if we have a warmup with bikes and some guys didn't put any resistance... they just put their phones there that nobody is seeing that there is nothing on and then they just acted like it's so hard... even somebody is watching they are cheating..." (Player 1)</p>
	<p>Sport regime 4*</p>	<p>"lots of Russian players they are not like... they are good players but they are not like... professional athletes you know like... they drink beer, don't eat that healthy you know... but they are just good you know... they could be so much better if they lived like... better... but that's their mentality... they want to enjoy life... i heard so many players saying that they just like... they are happy to play hockey, they enjoy life... if they get money... they spend it...because they have money you know... that's their mentality... and lots of good Russian players could play in NHL... but they get more money in Russia and... You know..." (Player 4)</p>
	<p>Playing style 4*</p>	<p>"Its different hockey...it's not so organized, not that strict. In Finland you know...you have... it's sort of a cliché but it's true also...the biggest strength that Finns have when it comes to hockey is... playing as a team... and worrying about the common thing, the team thing...our win... we are good at that... In Russia... it's more about the individuals... the individuals are phenomenal but it's more about...the individual skills you know... who can score a goal for us to win...it's not that sort of...let's do it together thing...it's...every man for himself it's a strong expression but... but it's more about the individuals... the number of super-skilled players in that league is ridiculous... and people don't realize how good hockey it is...our coach last year put it the right way when he said that... in this league it's really hard to win but it's really easy to lose... that's exactly... that's hitting it in the nose with hammer. As a player it's so easy to make a mistake... and when you make one... the other guys are so skilled they are going to use it, they are gonna score but...the game itself is not that organized... it's not like we do this, it's more about individuals playing a game and reacting to each other you know...and there are some Russian guys who are so good..."</p>

		you just put them out there and say... do whatever... do your thing...they have to be coached and handled a bit differently...but yeah like... it's a good hockey league !" (Player 3)
	Relationship between players and referees 4*	<p>“The referees? No...I always felt that they are really professional...I am having more problems with the Finnish refs than I ever had with Russians one... i think they are really professional...they are a lot of talks about them being paid off, but I never saw... I never mentioned a situation in the game where I could say... ok this guys is paid off... I never saw anything like that...you can hear different kind of stories from some guys but I never saw anything... I never had problems with them, they were really good... most of them spoke some English too so... it was no problem whatsoever... I was happy with them ...”(Player 3)</p> <p>“Nahhh... here (In Finland) I was speaking a lot with the refs but over there (Russia) I said nothing, I was just quiet, but sometimes I had a feeling that they were a little bit racists, especially linesmen... they just spoke Russian to me and I said like " English I don't know what do you mean"... and they may just change me... and yeah there was one ref... I didn't say anything to him, but he just spoke Russian to me... I started to speak Finnish to him and he said to one of our Russian guys that if I continue talking with him he will give me 10 minutes... because I had... I just think it's fair if he is speaking Russian to me , speak Finnish to him... but he didn't like that... but yeah for me I think it was ok... those refs... sometimes I think they just were a little bit racists against imports, but not too bad .” (Player 1)</p>

*frequency of times mentioned

7.5. Impact of migration period on ice hockey career and as a life experience

Overall, all four Finnish ice hockey players mentioned that the migration period in Russia taught them a lot of things, gave them confidence, new valuable experiences and opened their minds. Therefore, looking on the goals they have set before migrating, it can be stated that they achieved those. They became better ice hockey players and managed to adapt and perform in a totally unknown environment successfully.

Moreover, it was stated that it made it easier for them to migrate and play ice hockey in other places of the world. The two players who migrated with their families (Players 1, 3) were really satisfied with the way they got through the challenge of moving and adapting to a new environment. The reasons for leaving were mainly the short-term deals that all the players had. However, Player 1 who was offered to stay for a second year didn't do that because of the long trips and his family. Two of the participants of

the interviews (Players 2, 4) claimed that they would like to stay for longer or go again, but they would consider the location of the club, mainly because of family issues as well. In addition, Players 2 and 4 mentioned that they would like to know more Russian in order to be able to enjoy their migration more and learn Russian habits and culture.

Finally, the interviewees were keen enough to offer advice to Finnish ice hockey players aiming to migrate to Russia. They highlighted the need to be mentally prepared to face any obstacles and differences with an open minded positive attitude.

TABLE 7. Summary of the migration period to Russia.

1 st order theme	2 nd order themes	Quotes
Summary of the migration period	Reasons for leaving 1*	“For my family and... The trips. I think those were the two first things... like if there was more for my family like more things to do... better facilities to live... that was one reason and one reason was that I had a feeling that I have to practice a little bit more... I can't just... I had a feeling that I had a six-month jetlag and I was just sitting in a plane or playing hockey and I didn't want that... so those were the two main reasons” (Player1)
	Impact on ice hockey career 3*	“Oh yeah it did... a lot...! I mean I got a lot better...as a player...purely as a player got way better... just by playing against so good guys... you just have to be on your toes all the time... and if that doesn't make you a better player then what does...? Of course!”(Player 3)
	Impact as a life experience 4*	“But I have to say...at least as much as I got better as a player... off the ice... everything outside hockey, all the experiences, sort of the life experiences...all the stuff that we experienced...you know... it was eye-opening and it make me a lot... lot more self-confident and lot more open-minded and lot more... sort of happy... there are million little things in Finland right now that I can...as I said earlier...appreciate...little things that I never noticed before...how easy the life is here... and safe... everything you know... makes you appreciate little things you never noticed...” (Player3)
	Consider the place to go 2*	“I probably wouldn't go because of the travelling...and it's too far...and then my wife probably wouldn't come...I wouldn't take her with me now either so...if you go too far...I don't know...that was maybe the first thing about Omsk that...it felt it was too far...especially like...not maybe for me but you know...for family to come over and see and you know...it felt like it's too

		<p>far away...especially my first year...I didn't really know that much how the...personal life outside hockey worked so I didn't know how it would be so...but after...everything went well so I don't think it's so tricky to take your family there with you...you know...they have good food in the supermarkets like here and we had a totally normal supermarket...and even though you have to eat something without knowing what it is you know...it's basically...nice restaurants and...you know...but still I would...you know...consider a little bit where I go...not just after the money...because it's a big deal...money is a big part of it but still I need to...feel good about it..." (Player 2)</p>
	<p>Challenge as a family 2*</p>	<p>"Yeah I got that. For sure... and yeah... now it's so easy to live in country 1 because I live there... if I would have just went first to country 1 it could have been so much harder... but now I went there city 1 first... and I think wherever I go now it's so much like... easier. We went there with the family, I went there as a hockey player and we survived... so I think it gives me a good backup for the rest of my life even... that I was there, we were there, we lived there and somehow we just survived... we got the food we can eat... our kids were quite healthy after that... and nothing bad happened soooo"(Player 1)</p>
	<p>Advice for other Finnish players 2*</p>	<p>"Yeah... if you are ready to feel something else, totally different and if you are... you have to be hard somehow... you can't be a complainer and if you accept that anything can happen I can recommend to go there, but probably my advice would be that don't sign two years contract... just sign one year contract and if you feel... if you like it you can sign another one... but I was really happy I sign only one for one year." (Player1)</p>
	<p>Language 2*</p>	<p>"Because like... even... I think it would have been even better if I was the only Finnish guy playing there... because that way I would have to maybe study a little bit more Russian you know... I would have loved to learn more you know... and... doing the whole thing on my own... I would have liked it more you know... because I know some guys who go over there like... and they decide not to go if they don't get another Finnish player or another import player in their team... but I think I would like it more if I would have been the only one you know... it was good that I had the Slovakian guy translating everything for me but like... other Finnish guys like... it's so easy to be there and just hang out with them you know... maybe I... I don't know... would have been nice to spend more time with the Russians..." (Player4)</p> <p>"Yeah... that would help definitely...would be really nice to go back and...if you know like...I could speak Russian...would be lot better experience, even though I had a good time but...you get to know the Russians</p>

		more and that...that would be a lot better...better relationship with maybe...you know...the trainers, coaches...you know fans...could be different...definitely a lot better..."(Player 2)
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*frequency of times mentioned

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this master's thesis was to examine how the migration period in Russia is perceived by Finnish professional ice hockey players by exploring and interpreting their personal experiences. More specifically, it was asked in this study for which reasons Finnish ice-hockey players migrate to Russia. Moreover, dimensions related to the adaptation process and how it affects the performance of the athletes among with the perceived by the players' differences between the Finnish and Russian ice hockey cultures are examined.

Personal and professional motivation for migration

Taking into consideration the work done by Maguire and Stead (2000) focusing on the migration of Nordic/Scandinavian footballers to England it can be stated that for the Finnish ice hockey players the migration to Russia was seen as a "rite de passage" rather than an instant gratification. The reputation and status of KHL and the level of ice hockey played there were seen as very important motives to move to Russia. Issues of self-development and personal investment were highlighted. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that by the time they made the decision to migrate the players were aware, committed and prepared migrants and looked at the differences they faced with an open-minded attitude. Additionally, they were of mature age and experience (Maguire & Stead 2000, 53-54).

Despite the fact that the ice hockey players were aware of the financial benefits they do not fit the mercenary typology presented by Maguire (2008). On the opposite they reveal some characteristics of 'nomads' who are motivated more by a complex blend of professional, cultural and economic elements (Maguire 2008, 448). They use their sports career to travel, learn other cultures and experience being the 'outsider', the 'stranger' (Maguire & Stead 1996 as cited in Maguire 2008, 448). However, the complexity of the reasons for migration of the players in this study suggests that it is unsuitable to possess this group of athletes to a particular typology without taking into account further relative studies of other migrant groups, although individually they all can be assigned to specific types (Maguire & Stead 2000, 54-55).

Personal and professional adaptation

Questions related to the socio-cultural problems of adaptation and dislocation should be strongly considered in the field of sports migration. According to King (1991) the consistent movement within different cultures demands skills such as flexible personal controls, temperaments and means of orientation. During their time abroad sport migrants are involved in a multilayered structure of inter-cultural communication with teammates, coaches, officials, fans and media personnel. Thus, while some of them experience the move from one culture to another free of a culture shock, others may not. (Maguire & Pearton 2008, 762).

While discussing the adaptation process of Finnish ice-hockey players it is important to highlight the size of Russia and the circumstances that come along with it. Despite the fact that all four players migrated to the same country the cultural settings which they faced were different. The lifestyle in Moscow and St. Petersburg has nothing to do with the way people live in the cities located in the Far East of Russia. Moreover, the amount of inhabitants who can communicate in English depends a lot on the location as well. Before drawing up conclusions regarding the adaptation process of Finnish players it is worth mentioning that they all “presented” a different city. Thus, the main findings such as the previous knowledge about the migrants’ destination, importance of having their families with them, the way they adapted into their new team among with the help provided from the club and the adaptive attitude they showed are issues which are not strongly interdependent with the location factor.

One of the elements examined by Maguire and Stead (1996) in probing the movement of cricket migrants to England was the personal and professional adjustments they went through. Knowledge about England and English cricket before migrating into the county was gain through youth or local league cricket tours. In some cases there was a former migrant cricketer who was keen enough to offer advice (Maguire& Stead 1996, 11). Before migrating to England Nordic/ Scandinavian footballers seem to have a small amount of knowledge about their future club and area to which they moved. It was more about, taking things on trust, self-confidence, and ability to handle whatever they faced (Maguire& Stead 2000, 49). Therefore, those two cases are similar with the situation of the Finnish ice hockey players who migrated to Russia. Their prior knowledge about

their destinations was limited and mostly based on second hand information or stories of their colleagues who have already played in Russia. Moreover, it can be stated that salary and working conditions were more prioritized than collecting information about their future work places.

Despite the “satisfactory” help provided from the clubs during their staying in Russia Finnish ice hockey players had to deal with problems of intercultural communication both on and off the rink. As it was already mentioned the competency in English language among Russians inhabitants is limited and it comes with no surprise that ice hockey players and clubs’ personnel are not an exception. However, that didn’t prevent them from utilizing alternative ways of communication such as body language. In a lot of cases their teammates representing countries such as Czech Republic and Slovakia acted like translators, due to the similarities of their languages with Russian. Moreover, Finnish players were able to learn and consistently utilize some words and phrases in Russian language, an action which was warmly welcomed by their native teammates. These facts confirm that Scandinavian players are considered good travelers, with a high level of commitment and the ability to adapt in foreign cultures. Knowledge of foreign languages and a cosmopolitan lifestyle makes sure they adjust well in the local cultures. What is true of football may also apply to sports such as basketball and ice hockey (Maguire 2008, 450).

According to Maguire & Stead (1996) sport migrants can have personal adjustment issues such as loneliness, need to relax, difficulties in maintaining relationships with family and travelling. All the players made their decision to migrate after discussing it with their partners and relatives. The support that they showed into making this big step and most significantly during the migration period was essential (Maguire& Stead 2000, 46-47). The Finnish ice hockey players highlighted how helpful and easier was for them to have their closest people and spent their time off the rink with them. Two of them migrated to Russia with their wives and small children while the other two families were separated and relied on visits when the team schedule allowed them.

Maguire and Stead (2000) raise questions about how the “migrants by association” deal with the migration and argue about their ability to adjust in their new position. In this particular study the ice hockey players praised their partners for coping and accepting a life with very few social activities for them. Moreover, they highlighted how hard was for their wives and children to stay alone while they were on road trips for eight to ten days. However, those difficulties which “migrants by association” faced didn’t have an effect on the personal and professional career of the players (Maguire & Stead 2000, 47).

Differences in ice hockey culture

Modern sport is bound up in a global network of interdependency chains that are marked by global flows and uneven power relations. Political, economic, cultural and social processes have affected the development of sport over the last 30 years. It goes without saying that among other globalization process this has led to a degree of homogenization. Nevertheless, there is a possibility of overstating the extent of the Western world triumph in term of global sport structures organizations, ideologies and performance. Furthermore, by implementing a multicausal and multidirectional examination of both homogeneity and heterogeneity researchers are better placed to probe the global cultural commingling that has been occurring. (Maguire & Jarvie & Mansfield & Bradley 2002, 21-22.)

Non-Western cultures, such as Russia have been historically resisting the domination of western sports cultures and actively promote on a global scale, their own domestic inquiries. The creation of KHL and its long term ambition to challenge the dominant North American National Hockey League (NHL) serve as a great example.

The strong hierarchical structure in the clubs’ structure and the way it functions, is an approach which is linked historically with the Russian (Soviet) sports culture and differs a lot from the Finnish one which is based on cooperation. It can be stated that this structure, is the main reason for the differences in the relationships between players with coaches or general managers. The results of this study revealed that this particular issue was the most surprising and hard to adapt to for the Finnish players. Moreover, decisions based on emotions instead of good planning and lack of trust, like firing coaches and players or general managers right away after a bad result are practices that

cannot be found in Finnish ice hockey clubs. Therefore, we are looking into two extremely different models of ice hockey clubs' structures and ways of functioning.

The results of the study indicate that the extremely controlled training process can be explained as "Russian style of coaching" or by the lack of working ethics shown by the native players. Drawing definitive lines from the samples investigated would be inappropriate. However, it is worth mentioning that issues of working ethics were highlighted not only in the ice hockey culture but also outside of it in everyday situations. Thus, it can be said that while investigating transnational athletic migration sport and culture should be seen as a comprehensive, interrelated whole.

It is assumed that, at the level of playing styles the transnational migration of players and coaches will be having an impact on decreasing some differences. However, taking into consideration the research carried by Maguire & Stead (2000) and the information derived from this particular study we might conclude that despite being a globalized sport affected by international organizational systems and commercialization, ice hockey doesn't carry within it a transnational culture, which can be found in other professional spheres.

Strengths, weaknesses of this master's thesis study and implications for future research

The strongest part of the current study is the fact that it is the first one providing insights on the migration of Finnish ice hockey players to Russia. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the study provides rich information among with answers to questions related to why and how in contrast with the quantitative approach which would only map the situation. Nevertheless there were some weaknesses as well, like the small number of participants. Furthermore, it is not possible to confirm whether the players that participated in this study did so because of their overall positive experience during their migration period to Russia. Despite knowing that not all of the Finnish players who have moved and played in Russia share the same feelings about their experience, there was no possibility to identify them before the participants' selection.

Therefore, for future research purposes it would be beneficial to include a larger number of participants, ideally after screening them with a short survey about their positive or negative overall experience after playing in Russia. This way we will have information from all the possible variety of answers. Moreover, another approach that would give more valuable information to Finnish hockey players who intent to migrate to Russia would be to interview players immediately before their departure from Finland and right away after their arrival. Thus, we will get deeper insights regarding the fulfillment of their expectations.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that is important to focus on the experiences of the migrants themselves as well as on the complexity of the relationships in which they are involved inside and outside ice hockey during their migration period. Under this focus in this study the personal and professional motives for migration were presented. Moreover, issues of adapting into a new environment both on and off the ice hockey ring were addressed, considering the cultural differences between Russia and Finland. Finally, from the data derived it seems that although commingle of sport cultures has taken place, the notion that a global homogenization of ice hockey culture is occurring is not supported.

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