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Sport migration in Costa Rica:

Motivations and Goals of Athletes' Outflow

코스타리카 스포츠 선수의 이주 현상: 선수 이주의
동기 그리고 목적

2017년 8월

서울대학교 대학원

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Abstract

Sport migration in Costa Rica: Motivations, Goals and Consequences of Athletes' Outflow

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Costa Rica is a very small country in Central America with almost no sport tradition other than men soccer. Nowadays sport migration, especially the athletes' outflow to other countries, is a growing phenomenon not only in soccer but in many other sports.

While sport in Costa Rica has been extensively studied in the areas of sports performance, kinesiology and recreation, sport management is not yet considered an area of research. This study aims to enlighten the understanding of sport migration in Costa Rica. It is an empirical approach

to the current situation of outflow of athletes, trying to describe what are the causes and consequences of the emigrating dynamics regarding sports.

According to this purpose, the following research questions were addressed: (1) What are the motivations and goals of Costa Rican sport emigrants, specifically athletes?; (2) What are the characteristics of the Costa Rican emigrating athletes?; and (3) How can these emigrants be categorized based on the existing sport migration typology?

The participants include migrant athletes from both genders, from different age groups, representing eight different sports, who traveled to three different continents to practice their sport in pro leagues, amateur teams and US college divisions. As well, the cases include athletes going to countries with different languages, moving with or without family members and some having consecutive migration experiences.

The findings show that the main motivations that Costa Rican athletes have to go abroad are sport ambitions, cosmopolitanism and academic factors. Contrary to what is usually expected economic gain doesn't have an important role in the decision-making. The characteristics of these migrant athletes comprise four categories: recruitment process, decision-making, sporting experience and cultural experience.

Regarding the categorization of these Costa Rican migrant athletes, the typologies identified were *settlers*, *mercenaries*, *cosmopolitans* and *ambitionists*, being the later the type that better describes them. Several cases, mostly the female athletes, can be labeled as *labour of love*, since their motivations go beyond economic gains and are strongly related to the passion and love for the game.

Finally, these athletes show to have changing motivations and goals to migrate and to stay abroad, what means they can jump from one category in the typology to another. These changes are going to depend on the evolution of each migration experience.

Keywords: Sport migration, Sport management, Athletes migration, Sport in Costa Rica

Student ID: 2015-22362

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Costa Rica is a very small country in Central America with almost no sport tradition other than men soccer. That is why most of the sport sphere –developing programs, funding and media coverage– is centered on male soccer, making it very difficult for other sports to develop as they wish and to attract the population’s interest. For athletes and coaches is difficult as well to grow in a country with just a few professional leagues and where just a few can make a living out of it.

As in other professions and jobs, migration is taking place in Costa Rican sports, where football is the sport with more migration of athletes. Starting the year 2016, more than fifty male football players are working at a professional level out of the country, while only four female players are hired abroad.

Because of the relevance of soccer in the Costa Rican society, the sport labor migration issue got visibility only through it, mostly with the great contribution of migrant players to the Men National Soccer Team, but no further analysis had been made of the migration dynamics other than for journalism purposes.

Nowadays there are more and more athletes and coaches from different sports migrating to other countries with great results, not only for

labor purposes but for different reasons that will be explored in this research.

1.1. Justification

Migration is a very present phenomenon for Latin Americans. For decades people have been going from one country to another pursuing better life conditions; but nowadays, with the globalization of sports, the flow of athletes and coaches is getting bigger, adding one more edge to the complex issue of migration.

Historically, Costa Rica has been perceived more as a receiver country as there are more immigrants than emigrants. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL, for its acronym in Spanish) and data based on 2011 census, Costa Rica is the Latin American country with more immigrants registered, with a total of nine percent of its population (Fernandez, 2014).

Following this, most studies done regarding migration issues have been addressed in the immigration side. Economy, social and cultural researchers have been dealing with the causes and consequences of immigration. In the case of emigration, the labor flow better known and most studied one has the United States as principal destination (Estrada et al, 2012). Sport migration in the country includes athletes going to and coming

from different countries around the world, but the emigration phenomenon is becoming more common in different sports as athletes are finding more ways to reach a professional level.

Causes and consequences of this outflow had not been studied yet, and no data had been collected on how many athletes have moved out due to sport. The present research aims to be pioneer in the study of sport migration in Costa Rica focusing in the emigration side.

While sport in Costa Rica has been extensively studied in the areas of sports performance, kinesiology and recreation, sport management is not yet considered an area of research or a career. At the moment no university in the country offers sports management as a major, the only programs are minors or technical degrees for people already working in the sports sphere. In the case of sport migration, it's a totally unexplored area, therefore this research aimed to fill the void that exists now in the studies relating to sports and to migration as well.

Bringing the issue to the fore allows awaken an interest in the academic circle about these issues and the importance of studying these sports phenomena that certainly has impact one way or another in Costa Rican society. From this study there could arise others more focused on the social and psychological aspects, for example, of this phenomenon and even

in other areas like technology and media. “The various global flows that contour and shape global sportization processes include not only the flow of people with different habitus and identities but also the flow of technologies, media images, and finance” (Maguire, 1996, p. 335-336).

At the present sport migration is a reality in Costa Rica that has to be faced by sports managers in order to ensure that it happens on the best conditions and getting the greatest possible benefit for all parties involved.

Sports migration is bound up in a complex political economy that is itself embedded in a series of power struggles that characterize the global sports system. Migration is marked by a series of political, cultural, economic and geographical issues and pressures of which in the migrant figuration owners, administrators, agents, officials and media personnel play a prominent part in structuring the migrant’s life (Maguire, 2011, p. 1044).

On the practical sense, researching on sport migration in Costa Rica will allow identifying the shortcomings in the sport structure. For both, public and private sector, the study allows a better understanding through evaluation and analysis of the sport organizations and its actions towards the migration phenomenon, leading hopefully to improvements on the whole sport sphere (and maybe future sport industry).

Regarding the human resources, focusing on the emigrating athletes enables to identify the necessities of this group either to try to solve those needs within the country so more can stay enjoying good opportunities, or to contribute to their formation outside facilitating the networking and offering options abroad. It's important to understand the expectations of the ones going out and delve into the reasons that are making them leave their homeland on the sake of sport. Knowing what benefits are these emigrants getting from their experience overseas is a good starting point to the understanding of what policies should take place in sport governing bodies and sport state institutions in the next decades.

While this research is not intended to analyze in depth the relationship between migration experience and results in athletic performance, it takes a look at the results these athletes are having and how they benefit the country's sport status.

1.2. Purpose

The overarching aim of this thesis is to enlighten the understanding of sport migration in Costa Rica. This study is an empirical approach to the current situation of outflow of athletes, trying to identify what are the causes and consequences of the emigrating dynamics regarding sports.

The analysis of emigrating athletes from different sports under different circumstances intends to determine whether or not the experience abroad has been beneficial to their personal growth, to the organizations involved, to the sports performance and to the sport development in general in the *donor nation*.

Finally, recommendations are intended to be done regarding sport migration that may be of interest for public institutions, national sport governing bodies, sport managers, teams and even for a future players market.

1.2.1. Research questions

According to the purpose exposed above, the following research questions were addressed.

RQ1. What are the motivations and goals of Costa Rican sport emigrants, specifically athletes?

RQ2. What are the characteristics of the Costa Rican emigrating athletes and their migration experiences?

RQ3. How can these emigrants be categorized based on the existing sport migration typology?

1.3 Background information

1.3.1. Administration of Sport in Costa Rica

As in every other country, sport is managed by several institutions, some of them governmental while others are private. Government involvement on sport is addressed by four entities with different scope: Costa Rican Institute of Sport and Recreation (hereinafter referred to as ICODER), Cantonal Committees of Sports and Recreation, Minister of Sport, and Ministry of Education.

1.3.1.1. Costa Rican Institute of Sport and Recreation

According to the Sport Law 7800 passed on April 1998, ICODER has as primary aim the promotion, support and encouragement of individual and collective practice of sport and recreation for the inhabitants of the Republic, activity deemed in the public interest for being compromised to the overall health of the population. This institution is in charge of supporting the Federations of different disciplines, helping to develop high performance sports and procuring equal opportunities for all the people. As well, is in charge of managing public sports facilities, its maintenance, security and salubrity.

1.3.1.2. Cantonal Committees

The Cantonal Committees for Sport and Recreation (CCDR) were created under Law N° 6890 of 14 September 1983, as an addition to the Municipal Code. Since then, these entities regulate and coordinate any participation of each Municipality on sports or recreation, always according to the national plans elaborated by ICODER each year. As they were founded in the early 80s, nowadays are the sports institutions with longer presence on sports management in the country.

Its contribution to the development of sport is very significant given its proximity to the communities. Most approaches of Costa Ricans to sports and recreation come from the opportunities they are given in their communities and, depending on how positive or negative these experiences were, they continue in the practice of certain sports or physical activities.

1.3.1.3. Ministry of Sport

The actual Government proposed the creation of the Ministry of Sport, but the project to present to the Legislative Assembly is still in process. Meanwhile, Mrs. Carolina Mauri, a former swimmer, was named by the President as Minister of Sport. Even though the ministry doesn't exist yet, she is responsible for getting all parties together to come up with an optimal project for the foundation of this ministry. The principal discussions

are around the concern of avoiding duplicity of tasks between the existent entities and the new Ministry.

1.3.1.4. Ministry of Education

As Law 7800 states, physical education of children and youth of either sex, shall receive, at the preschool, elementary and secondary education, the priority attention of the State through the Ministry of Education and shall be subject to surveillance, planning and regulation. This Ministry formulates all programs regarding physical education and issues directives on methodological procedures. One of the most important tasks of the Ministry regarding development of sports is that it is in charge of organizing the National Student Games, contributing to the formation of athletes from early ages.

Regarding the non Governmental sector managing sports in Costa Rica, the National Olympic Committee and the federations and associations of each sport are the ones entitled.

1.3.1.5. National Olympic Committee (NOC)

The Olympic Committee of Costa Rica is a private association whose legal status is recognized by the state. While Law No. 7800 regulates the committee, including its functions, it is not possible to consider these functions are of a public nature and that, therefore, the said authority

exercises administrative function. This same law declares the Olympic Committee as an institution of public interest and the State has found it necessary to grant financial help. Help displayed through the granting of tax exemptions and, where appropriate, of budget transfers.

The CRC-NOC describes itself as “the entity that governs and promotes the Olympic movement in our country prosecuting the sport with the principles of Olympism and contribute to sporting excellence of our athletes and strengthen our national identity (Quiénes somos, parr.1)”.

Since its foundation, NOC has a direct and constant contact with the national federations recognized by this entity as well as with the federation in process to be recognize. This organization looks after the interests of its members before public institutions and other private entities.

1.3.1.6. National Federations

Almost every sport practiced in a competitive way in Costa Rica has its own Federation or Association. Federations are private entities that have to be recognized by the government through ICODER in order to have legal national competitions, to be considered in the annual budget and to represent Costa Rica in international competitions.

They also have to be recognized by the CRC-NOC. This process is quite complex, as they have to prove their work in the promotion and

development of the sport and its commitment to Olympism. Federations recognized by the NOC have the right to receive funding for different aspects, but they need to show significant progress in their competitive level to warrant that the money invested would not be in vain.

1.4. Terminology

For a better understanding and studying of migration matter is important to clarify concepts related to this issue. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), migration is the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. This definition encompasses “any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification” (2011).

The delimitation of the object of study in the present research involves working with two further specific concepts: emigration and skilled migration. IOM defines emigration as the act of departing or exiting from one State with a view to settling in another. In the case of athletes, they are considered skilled migrants as they are migrants with specific skills or acquired professional experience and because of their traits are “usually granted preferential treatment regarding admission to a host country (and is

therefore subject to fewer restrictions regarding length of stay, change of employment and family reunification)” (2011).

When it comes to skilled migration is generally thought of it as a brain drain problem for the ‘donor’ country. A brain drain refers to the emigration of trained and talented individuals from the country of origin to another country resulting in a depletion of skills resources in the former (IOM, 2011). Since in Costa Rica athletes migration is relatively recent and there is no real sports industry outside of football, the brain drain will not be considered as a problem to be included in this investigation.

Chapter 2. Literature review

Athletic migration has been an area of study for a few decades. During the nineties some researchers in the sociology of sports area turned toward sport migration. Among the most important ones can be mentioned Bale (1991), Bale and Maguire (1994) and Maguire (1996).

Bale started focusing on the foreign athletes on his study *The Brawn Drain: Foreign Student-Athletes in American Universities* (1991). As a geographer, his work was important because of his quantitative techniques that came up with revealing data that allowed him to estimate that there were approximately three thousand student-athletes at NCAA Division I schools. The total for all schools he conjectured to be roughly six thousand, seventy five percent of whom were men.

While some critics condemn the “exploitation” of foreign athletes, Bale’s interviews show that most of them are grateful for the superior athletic facilities, for the chance to earn a college degree, and for the opportunity to have lived in the United States. Regarding the dissertation presented it was important to determine if these attitudes towards being a student-athlete abroad were present among the Costa Rican ones.

On these early stages of study of sport migration the flow of foreigner athletes was perceived as part of the highly skilled group of

migrants, focusing on the brain drain, or *brawn* drain as Bale said, for the countries where they came from. Ten years ago researchers started exploring the idea that “migration may also lead to fluxes of finances, influential relations, knowledge and skills, and social and cultural remittances returning to developing countries” (Al-Ali *et al* in Agergaard and Tiesler, 2011, p. 5).

John Bale and Joseph Maguire opened up the field with their book *The Global Sport Arena: Athletic Talent Migration in an Independent World* (1994), a collection of researches reviewing the phenomenon of migration in the field of sport throughout the twentieth century in different disciplines and different latitudes. The book includes some cases in Latin America that can be very useful for the understanding of the early stages of migration in the region, and might give a hint of what the migration patterns were around Costa Rica.

A significant difference in this work is that sport migration is presented as a matter related to labor. The topic is studied not only from geographical perspective but from the sociology point of view. At the moment sportspeople were not thought of as workers but the authors argued “they are, in fact, not unlike other sectors of the workforce who, for various reasons, have to ply their trade in several national, continental or trans-

continental locations” (1994, p. 1). Under this perspective questions were proposed concerning athletes’ rights and the free movement of labor on the one hand, and the deskilling of underdeveloped countries on the other.

In relation with underdeveloped countries as ‘donors’ of athletes for the developed ones, Bale and Maguire point the Dependency Theory as a possible approach arguing that the global sports system, run mostly by multinationals or organizations dominated by first world nations, operates actively to under develop the third world by excluding it from the centre of political decision-making processes and from the economic rewards derived from the world sports economy.

A deskilling of semi-peripheral and peripheral states occurs on the terms and conditions set by core states. The most talented workers, in whom peripheral or semi-peripheral states have invested time and resources, are lured away to the core states whose wealth derives from their control over athletic labour and the mediasport production complex. Non-core states are thus in a position of dependent trading: their athletic labour being the equivalent of the cash crops which they sell in other sectors of the world economy (1994, p. 16).

In general, the book fulfills its function to raise concern among scholars regarding the implications of sport labor migration. Why do athletes decide to leave their native lands? How do they cope with the

experience of being in a foreign culture? How do people from their own culture and people from their host culture view their embarkation, arrival and settlement? What do these movements of athletes reveal about gender relations, the political economy of sports labor migration linked to broader trends regarding migration and globalization? (p. 5). These questions are all consistent with those raised for this research, which signals that twenty years later there is still a gap in research as some of these questions remain unanswered, mainly in the analysis of the phenomenon in Central America.

By 1996, Maguire published his study *Blade Runners: Canadian migrants, ice hockey, and the global sports process*, taking the experiences of Canadian ice hockey players moving to Great Britain to have a discussion based on a sport migrant typology proposed by the author: pioneers, settlers, mercenaries, returnees, and nomadic cosmopolitans, as shown in Figure 1. While these categories were identified from the Canadian case study, the author makes it clear that his work takes the blade runners as a "critical case" that can be associated with global processes of sport.

The ones identified as "pioneers" possess a strong passion for exalting the virtues of their respective sports, so their words and actions can be seen as a form of proselytizing trying to convert the natives to their habits and sports culture. Next type is identified as "settlers", those who

bring their sport but subsequently stay and settle in the society where they are working. Others are viewed as “mercenaries” that are motivated by short-term gains, what means that are not attached to the local. By contrast, some are “nomads”, motivated by a cosmopolitan engagement with migration using their sport career as a journey (1996). Finally, all these types can act as returnees, as shown in Figure 1.

In the early nineties, blade runners migrating to Great Britain where playing the role of pioneers, this because of the lower standards in this country and the marginal status the sport had. The European players on their side, acting as returnees, decided to return home and play for their local teams on a temporary basis, but national federations and the international governing body were against it.

For Maguire, these Canadians in Great Britain could have experienced the different types of migrants. They started adopting the role of pioneer, then settled for a while and almost feel like home, yet also felt secure in the knowledge that the option to return was still available (1996). For this present study is going to be important to identify whether or not the participants fit in several of this types.

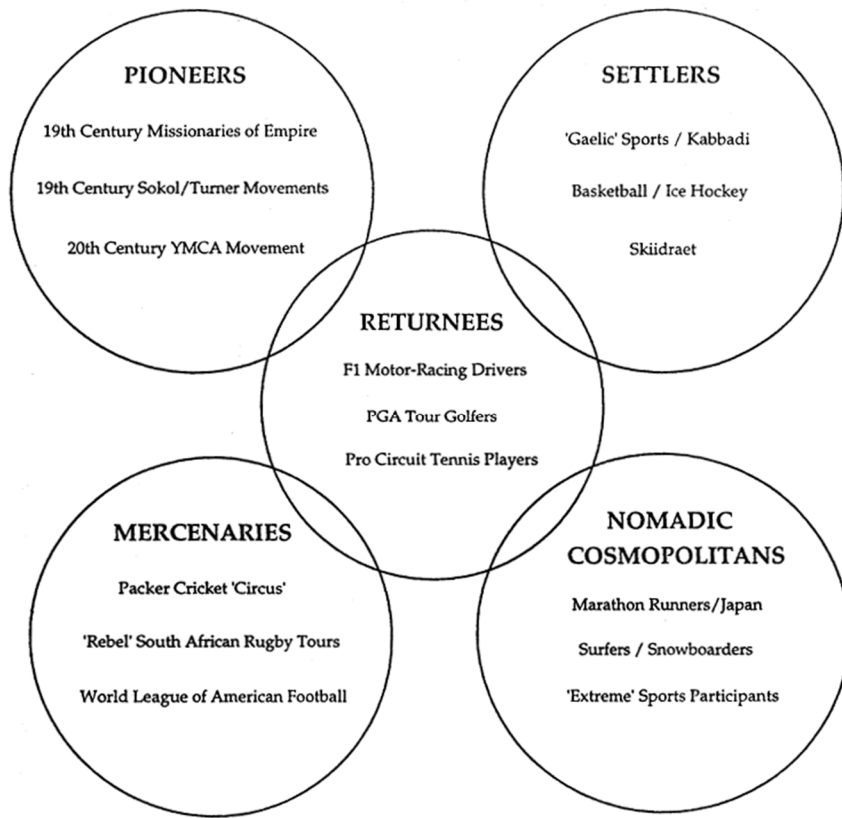


Figure 1. Typology of Sport Migrants (Maguire, 1996, p. 5).

Maguire's work discusses about labor rights, work permits and salary caps that according to the author have to be considered as factors that affect the migrants' experience. An important issue of migration appointed by the author is that migrants in their new team take the place of a junior, making difficult for the governing bodies and to the sport itself to develop and grow. If the sport has a small league, with limited opportunities for

athletes to actually play in it, when the foreigners arrive the juniors will have their options even more limited and their motivation is going to go down. This is a common situation sport managers and governing bodies have to deal with considering the bad consequences that increasing migration may cause.

Nevertheless, on national team level, the research shows that the benefits of this migration were substantial as the ice hockey British team was promoted from Pool C to Pool A and reached qualifications for the Olympics mostly because of the participation of dual nationals. This positive consequence of the migration patterns has to be also taken as reference when analyzing the consequences for the sports sphere in Costa Rica after the outflow of athletes.

Another academicism that came to the picture in these early stages of research is David Stead, who worked with Maguire in many different studies (Maguire and Stead, 1998a, 1998b) mostly focused on labor migration on Europe. On their article "*Rite de passage*" of passage to riches?: *The motivation and objectives of Nordic/Scandinavian players in English league soccer* (Maguire and Stead, 2000), through interviews and questionnaires, they provide an insight into this athletes motivations and objectives, as well as their preparation for migration, their choice on

England as destination and some other more personal factors like the family relationship.

Because of the object of study and the approach, this work is very close to what is intended for this dissertation. All questions mentioned before are covered by the authors, but the article focuses on the nature of the migration experience examining the phenomenon from the migrants' perspectives themselves.

The authors share valuable information regarding the investigation itself, mentioning, for example, the problems they had reaching the football players. Not only contacting them was difficult, but also many were not willing to give the interview as they didn't feel comfortable sharing their personal experiences and perspectives. In some cases pseudonyms were necessary to guaranty their participation. The issues presented are a good guidance to take into consideration when designing and applying the interviews and questionnaires for the present study.

In broad terms the article points two main motivations and objectives: quest for experience and the financial incentive. As for experience, proving themselves better was an important thing for them. Many donor nations don't have a good level league so players were looking for something new, tougher and challenging. As it comes to financial

incentive, of course the amount they received at the moment was way more than what they would have made in their home countries. Though, many players recognized their particular position in the marketplace; they were aware that they were in England because it costs less to bring players from outside than to pay for English footballers, but they were also confident that their quality as players was good in comparison to the English, or even better.

The importance of the family relationships and the influence they had on the decision-making was another important factor that the authors refer as “migrants by association”. Footballers’ partners who had to move with them took a big hit as suddenly their lives together were all about *his* career. For most of the participants having their family with them at the new country was important to overcome the whole migrating experience and to feel supported. The authors mention that there are specific questions that need to be asked about how such “migrants by association” deal with the move. All these questions are relevant because a partner’s or family member’s difficulties may have a large impact on the personal and professional well-being of the player (2000).

The study concludes that England was selected as the destination country because of the attractiveness of the English soccer situation, being a

league with long tradition and long time as professional league. “The reputation and status of the English game, and the type of soccer played, were seen consistently as being more important than any wider benefits of being in England” (2000, p.48). For many, the ability to speak English was an important factor as well.

For the conclusions, the authors throw some other questions regarding the power relation between clubs and players. “The buying and selling of professional athletes involves complex business transactions. The principal actors are the officials of the clubs involved. To what degree is the migration motivation something imposed on the relatively less powerful athlete?” (p.53).

Going back to the migrants’ families, Thomas Carter presented his article *Family networks, state interventions and the experience of Cuban transnational sport migration* on 2007. His work discusses the impact family plays upon any potential migrant’s decision of leaving. The author pays particular attention to one of the unfortunate consequence of transnational sport migration, the real and potential damage done to migrant families resulting from migrant athletes leaving their homes (2007).

The article is more of an ethnographical research that intends to show a different facet of transnational sport migration. It presents two case

studies of Cuban migrants and how their migration experiences affected their respective families. The cases emphasize the fears and costs of becoming a transnational migrant athlete, and even though they're both Cuban cases and are historically specific, the author insists that there are many migrants from different countries who have experienced or are experiencing these costs.

Carter states that the negative aspects of becoming a transnational sport migrant have not been well discussed, if discussed at all.

These risks include the breakup of migrants' families, the changing social relations families experience in their communities of residence as a result of the migrant's changing social status, and how family members become targets for various violent criminal acts because of the migrant's status and perceived wealth (p. 372).

Some more questions as thrown to have into consideration in the sport migration process: what are the risks for the families? Should family members accompany the athletes if they do decide to migrate? The costs of separation can completely ruin family relations causing break ups, turning relatives on one another, and stretching families to their limits. "Migration is rarely an individual act but the concerted effort of a number of people permitting that one individual to become mobile" (p. 385).

In this sense, Carter makes important observations regarding power relations. The decision to become a migrant is not necessarily one made by the athlete or coach itself, family pressures come to the picture and even institutionalized persuasion, like in the case of Cuban government. This agrees completely with the statement made by Maguire and Stead referring to the player, although it is highly benefited, is in a lower position in the power relationship. The cases presented by these authors show that this relationship occurs to both capitalism prevailing in sport as in socialist sports community.

Sine Agergaard in 2008 was the first to take a turn in sport migration as a field of study and focused her work on the migration of women athletes, starting with Danish handball clubs. At the moment there was a lot of interest in research for athletes mobility mostly centered on male athletes and internationally important sports, such as football. Her article *Elite athletes as migrants in Danish women's handball* was pioneer in not only including the gender variable but in opening the discussion for minor sports.

In a quantitative approach, the article explores the increasing number of foreign players in the Danish handball league; on the qualitative side, it tries to determine the motivations of these foreigners for moving to Denmark, including family- and space-related aspects which had not been

covered before. To close the triangulation, the author includes interviews with managers from both clubs involved to take a look into the clubs' strategies to facilitate the player's incorporation to the team.

Regarding migration theory, Agergaard takes Maguire's typology of sport migrants as a reference, and the updated typology by Magee and Sugden (2002) that includes six categories: the mercenary, the settler, the ambitionist, the nomadic cosmopolitan, the exile and the expelled. As you see in this typology the pioneer and the returnee roles have been excluded and others were incorporated to better fit the actual motivations found in various studies.

Reviewing Magee and Sugden work "*The world at their feet*": *Professional football and International labor migration* (2002), they allege that Maguire's model is weakened as he had no primary data to support the classifications. Base on the lived experiences of the foreign players interviewed the authors provide the substance for the following typology. The *mercenary* is the migrant who is motivated first and foremost by money. As proposed by Maguire, this one doesn't have much bond with the host country. The *settler* is an athlete who has moved to another country and stayed there for four or more seasons and might even be motivated to stay after finishing the professional career.

The *ambitionists* can be grouped into three types. First of all there is the player who had the strong desire to achieve a professional career. Second, there is the athlete, who has dreamt about playing in a particular country and perhaps even a particular club. Third, some are ambitious about playing in a better quality league, “with the highest possible sporting level giving them the possibility of improving their career and receiving more medals” (Agergaard, 2007, p. 7).

The *exile* is one that had to leave voluntarily his or her country for sport-related, personal or political reasons. For the authors, athletes who come from countries that are not able to offer a professional career are considered exiles as well, as they have to work abroad to pursue their profession and make a living at what they are good at. This category, if applied to athletes from developing countries, like Costa Rica, would include many athletes in many disciplines because of the very few professional leagues available there.

The *nomadic cosmopolitan* is motivated to experience different nations and cultures. Finally, the *expelled* is a player who is, in effect, forced to migrate. None of the participants of the study fits the category, but some other players were mentioned as examples. These players left their respective domestic leagues because a combination of behavior problems

and problems with the football authorities, and high media exposure made it virtually impossible for them to play professionally in their home leagues.

Back to Agergaard's article, as a social anthropologist her method is actor-oriented. For the qualitative part four foreign players were interviewed, who represented different nationalities and periods of stay in leading Danish handball clubs ranging from at least three to twelve years. As happened to Maguire too in his researches, there were some problems with data collection. Most foreigner players were not willing to give the interviews and the access to them was complicated. Due to these issues the group of participants is very limited.

On its first part, the study shows that indeed the foreign participation in the handball females' league is rapidly growing and the increasing numbers have been followed by a discussion of the disadvantages and advantages of immigration. For some, the presence of foreign players is perceived as an obstacle for developing young talents, argument that was also present in Maguire (1996) as a concern among sport managers. No answers or solutions are still found.

On the second part, the author asks what are the motives for the different foreign players to migrate to Danish handball clubs. Is it the possibility of professionalization and the salary or do other reasons motivate

the players? Previous studies assured that most migrant athletes are strongly motivated by the financial reward but Agergaard's findings show that with women it might be different as money is not as much and does not have the same value than for male football migrants, for instance. In the case of foreign women in Denmark the motivations had more to do with the possibility of living the experience of a professional league and what that entails, such as playing to large audiences and media coverage, among others.

Finally, regarding club's strategies, the conclusions point that sport managers choose to take athletes that they know that will not require so much attention to incorporate to the group and seem to be able to carry the adaptation process more smoothly. It is important for the management of the club to avoid using a lot of time and money on the integration of foreign players (p.14).

Costa Rican sport migration includes not only sport labor migrants but student-athletes who found college opportunities abroad through the practice of their sport. Noel Dyck, a Canadian anthropologist, published his work *Going South: Canadians' Engagement with American Athletic Scholarship* (2010) where he examined how the American scholarships

were perceived and how was the journey of the Canadian children and youth in pursuit of them.

The article “seeks to penetrate an ambivalent form of competition that rewards its winners by taking them away from their families and country for a period of years just as they enter adulthood” (p.41). Dyck’s argument is presented from a tragic perspective appointing only the negative consequences. It could then be studied to argue whether to leave home at that time helps them gain experience of life and even strengthens family ties; after all, many student-athletes go for a while, not for a life.

Another of the author’s questionings that brings a lot to the discussion has to do with the people who influence the motivation of those athletes. He shows parents, coaches and other figures in the sport community have enormous responsibility in the building of those motivations as they constantly present the American athlete scholarships as the ultimate level of achievement that transcends the limitations of being merely ‘good by Canadian standards’.

It is also often touted – if not invariably believed – that students who win a ‘full ride’ scholarship will have the entire cost of their university education paid for. (...) Coaches and parents enthusiastically pitch this prospect as an ‘invaluable opportunity’ that will permit an athlete to play sport at the ‘highest’ level and get

a degree from a ‘big’ and presumably ‘prestigious’ American university (p. 45).

Even though his analysis is more focused on the discourse used to promote these scholarships, it clearly demonstrated these motivations are kind of imposed by adults around the athlete. Dyck’s findings confirms again what was proposed by other researches (Maguire,1996; Maguire and Stead, 2000; Carter, 2007) regarding the power relation in which the athlete is involved and how the decision to migrate is not made only by her or himself.

After many researches from a sociological standpoint, Seungbum Lee presented his article *Global outsourcing: a different approach to an understanding of sport labour migration* (2010), where he states that sport migration can and should also be analyzed from the point of view of business. Supports the argument that current sport labor migration is different from conventional sport labor migration and it can be explained as a form of global outsourcing. So far the academic approach to explain this migration was based on a neocolonial exploitation perspective, but for Lee “sport has become a form of commodification by virtue of intensified globalization, which, in part, was fuelled by transnational corporations’ lucrative investments in sport teams” (p. 154).

Outsourcing is described as a practice in which an organization contracts out one of its in-house processes or functions that the organization does not or cannot focus on anymore (Kumar and Eickhoff, 2006 in Lee, 2010). After reviewing outsourcing literature Lee comes up with three major reason of outsourcing that fit sport labor migration: cost minimization, quality improvement and resource access.

Cost reduction is a compelling reason. Due to the high level of competition in the global marketplace, a sport organization might realize that it needs to reduce costs to maintain efficiency, and the reduction of labor costs is a very common way to achieve it. As appointed by other authors, for clubs the costs of bringing foreigners to the team requires less effort and investment than dealing with national athletes or investing on developing young talent.

The quality improvement is something every sport organization seeks. In the case of foreign athletes they are expected to bring immediate contributions to the team, if not, they can be dismissed quickly. An important risk mentioned to have into consideration concerning quality is that once an organization outsources a certain activity, it will gradually stay away from new knowledge or recent developments related to the activity

outsourced, will eventually lose the understanding of it and will avoid it (Gonzalez et al., 2008 in Lee, 2010).

The third reason presented is resource access. Organizations might want to outsource an activity to get constant access to resources that they don't have. For example, European soccer clubs invest in youth academies in Africa so they can have better access to youth talent.

The author insists on presenting a side of sport labor migration different than the neocolonial perspective where global outsourcing exploits cheap foreign labor force, detracts the value of local labor force and lowers the domestic employment opportunities. He argues that there can be mutual benefits for all parties involved; the outsourced countries can spur their domestic economy by having these alliances.

In 2011, Maguire comes up with another article going further in the relation between globalization and sport migration. *'Real politic' or 'ethically based': sport, globalization, migration and nation-state policies* provides an overview of sport migration issues and connections with broader questions concerning national identity, foreign policy and globalization. This work opens the discussion on foreign policies, one edge of the migration issue that was not explored yet.

The author indicates the need to understand that the sport ‘global village’ includes athletes but also coaches, officials, administrators and sport scientists that are also migrating for labor purposes. In addition to this, although women are travelling more frequently and in greater numbers, remains the trend that there are more men traveling and are doing it more freely. Gender relations are then one dimension that plays a crucial part in contouring a migrant’s life (p.1044).

On his discussion he connects sport labor migration to the ‘highly skilled’ migrants in the wider labor market. States that the significant changes in the transnational labor market allow drawing parallels between the ‘highly skilled’ that move in advertising, accountancy, banking, law and IT, and elite sport migrants. Studies on the highly skilled refer to ‘brain drain’ or ‘brain circulation’ while in sport ‘brawn’ as well as ‘brain’ are involved, matter that was first explored by Bale (1991) two decades before.

Referring to the brain drain, Maguire continues to analyze sport labor migration from the neocolonial exploitation perspective criticized by Lee (2010). As an example he mentions that Latin and Central American countries regularly experience the loss of baseball stars and football players to the USA and Europe, not only denying the local audience direct access to the talent nurtured and developed in their country, but, in some instances,

making them lose some of their quality performers when the demand of the clubs abroad clash with international matches. “Less-developed countries ‘invest’ in the production of athletic talent but once this talent reaches maturity, more economically developed leagues, such as Major League Baseball, recruit the best available” (p.1048).

Among the questions the author proposes there are two discussions related to the present study for Costa Rican athletes: (a) which sports are most involved, why have they been so affected and what structural or cultural changes have thus occurred in those sports?, and (b) what implications are there for sport, domestic and foreign policies of nation-states? As appointed in the purpose of this study, for the Costa Rican case is important to get answers to these questions in order to determine what are the best domestic policies to regulate and/or promote emigration of local athletes.

Vera Botelho and Sine Agergaard bring again the discussion about women migration in 2011 with the article *Moving for the love of the game? International migration of female footballers into Scandinavian countries*. The study interviews twenty-six players from North America and Africa playing in the football premier leagues of Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) to know what their motivations to migrate really are in

comparison to men footballers. This because the authors believe that “female footballers are not just objects being moved by global and economic forces, but are individuals who take an active part in the developing migratory process and have their specific reasons for migrating” (p.810).

The authors start demonstrating that historic reviews show that female players’ migration started even when women football was banned, so the development of female migration parallels that of the game itself (Agergaard and Botelho in Maguire and Falcoux, 2010).

Scandinavia has a larger tradition in women’s soccer and its success is due to three main factors: (1) high level of gender equality reached in the Nordic societies, (2) Nordic civil society model of organizing sports in local club, mostly run by volunteers and independent of both state and commercial enterprises, and (3) the relatively good performance of the countries’ national squads in international competitions, what increased global awareness. The success of these national leagues is the reason why immigration of players is possible.

The theoretical references of this study have two pathways: first, the conventional literature on sport migration widely presented above, and second, the concept of ‘labour of love’ as a way to uncover new dimensions

and understandings of the subjective and sometimes ‘irrational’ reasons that drive players to migrate. Conventional literature tends to focus on football migration to and from Europe, raising doubts about their potential for generalization. It has been also focused on men athletes and acknowledges the motives of football migrants have mainly been economic. Based on this literature the authors reduce the typology to four categories: (1) economic gains, (2) settlement, (3) the cultural experience (cosmopolitanism) and (4) football ambitions and experience.

Answers of all participants were analyzed to locate their motives in one of the categories above, but the results show that most of them don’t quite fit in any of those. Foreign women players in Scandinavia don’t make much money a month and many of them remit part of the salary back home, so *economic gains* is one reason but not that important. *Settlement* is not as important as described in other literature. The general picture is that they travel on short-term contracts. *Cosmopolitanism* is present in some of the participants, mostly North Americans who enjoy having the change to travel around Europe, but for African players is more about experiencing the football culture in another country, but it is still not a main reason to migrate. *Football experience and ambitions* might have more weight on their

decision as most North American participants want to play professionally. On the other hand, African players apparently just go to play.

The latter pathway gives an alternative approach with the inclusion of the concept of 'labour of love'. Eliot Friedson was the one to introduce the concept and postulates that work is not always an unpleasant necessity; some work activities, such as voluntary work, provide self-fulfillment, pleasure and creativity.

In contrast to alienated labor, labors of love are voluntary. Being freely chosen, they can be part of the worker's nature and allow self-fulfillment. They imply motives for undertaking work that are not in the immediate and obvious sense self-interested, that are beyond economy (Friedson in Botelho and Agergaard, 2011, p. 812).

He establishes three requisites for the existence of a labour of love: (1) an activity that one would undertake voluntarily as leisure or work dependent on context, (2) an activity where income is not a sole determinant of labour, and (3) an activity that leads to self actualization. Under these the analysis was better since both, the North American and African players, refer to the 'love of the game' as a main reason for migrating and for withstanding dislocation from home, a cold environment and low salary. For this labor of love motives seem to be beyond economic gain; it has to do with satisfaction in the activity itself, excitement, challenge and self-

determination. These migrants are happily engaged in football as a labour of love.

At last, Agergaard and Botelho mention the risks of this labour of love includes threat of injury at any time, so short career of athletes, and not knowing what to do after their career is over. Although these reasons are seen here from a football standpoint, apply equally to most sports.

Women, soccer and transnational migration by Sine Agergaard and Nina Clara Tiesler (2014) is a great anthology that presents very well the research topic. It starts with an overview of the development of migratory processes in women's soccer; then shows case studies of various contexts of women soccer players migrating to and from most established countries as well as peripheral countries, and at the end presents transnational migration as a theoretical paradigm.

On their introduction the authors do an examination of the evolution in sport migration studies in the last twenty-five years. This overview makes very clear what has been stated before: women sports migration has not been present in most of the research on this topic and there is a void in understanding the migration phenomenon among women athletes. The book pretends to fill somehow that void compiling articles focused on women written by many leading scholars in the field.

For the aims of this dissertation the most relevant articles in this book were four. Chapter four, by Both and Liston, examines women migration to colleges in the United States, situation that is now very common among Costa Rican athletes. Chapter five, by McCree, also explores migration to colleges in the United States but is centered on the case of Trinidad y Tobago, a developing country with many characteristics in common with Costa Rica. Chapter seven, by Takahashi, outlines the explicit strategy from the Japanese Football Association to support women soccer players playing abroad. The Japanese case is of huge interest to enlighten about possible ways in which Costa Rica can get the best out of the sport migration phenomenon. Finally, chapter twelve, by Agergaard, Botelho and Tiesler, revisits the typology of athletic migrants.

The only research found focusing on coaches is *Coaches' migration: a qualitative analysis of recruitment, motivations and experiences* by Borges et al. just published in 2015 for the Leisure Studies Journal. The study examines sport coaches that have migrated. The main focus is to investigate the individual perceptions of highly skilled coaches on their recruitment process, motivations to migrate and migration experience. It's centered in the analysis of perception of five coaches purposively selected for their migration experience and professional expertise.

The study confirms the statement of Bale (1991) and Bale and Maguire (1994) that sport migration must not be always perceived as “exploitation” since sport migrants are benefited and mostly grateful with their experience abroad. “The coaches who participated in this exploratory study concurred that migration has benefited them at a professional and personal level. However, they also point out serious difficulties encountered in the host countries which pose as negative aspects of their experience” (2015, p. 601).

In addition to the importance of the results shown in the study to give a previous perspective on coaches’ migration experiences, this article uses a methodology that is adequate to answer the research questions in this proposal.

The results of the interviews are analyzed in three phases of the migration experiences: (1) recruitment process, (2) motivations to migrate, and (3) migrating experience. First, the recruitment process includes mechanisms, family decision-making and bureaucracies. Second, the motivations to migrate tried to categorize them in cosmopolitans, pioneers and ambitionists. Third, the migrating experience is divided in sporting experience and cultural experience. Also includes an overall evaluation

where coaches were asked if they would repeat the experience and if they would recommend others to work abroad.

Like the present research intended, Borges et al. give a voice to a group of sport migrants that has been ignored in sport migration research. They present very relevant information for the National Sport Governing Bodies or sport organizations in general regarding the motivations, ambitions and expectations of coaches migrating. This information could be very useful to design new policies or programs directed exclusively to coaches, that tend to be left apart by these organizations.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The methodology presented below creates the basis for the research design, analysis and discussion. This research is qualitative and has an exploratory approach, since there is no reference for research in sports migration that refers to the case of Costa Rican athletes, neither at the present nor in previous years. “In sports management research, where the material of the most interest is often not in the form of quantifiable numbers, but rather people’s opinions and experiences, qualitative data may be extremely relevant and useful” (Skinner et al., 2014, p.70).

The multiple case study design was used to produce detailed descriptions of the motivations and experiences of migrant Costa Rican athletes to relate it to earlier literature. Gall et al (in Vohra, 2014) defined case study research as “the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p.55). For this first Costa Rican research on the subject, first source for data collection were the athletes. Further information was extracted from media interviews, biographical features and interviews.

Many researchers (Skinner et al., 2014; Vohra, 2014; Yin, 1994, 2002, 2009) confirm that the multiple cases strengthen the results and increase the robustness of the findings. In order to do that, the selection of

the cases is really important and has to be done according to the aims and question of the research. Case studies enable researchers to cope with unique situations where variables outnumber data points, relying on multiple participants and types of sources to attain credibility and confirmability (Skinner et al., 2014).

For Yin (1984 in Vohra, 2014) there are two approaches to select cases according to replication logic: (1) literal replication, where the cases are designed to corroborate each other, and (2) theoretical replication, where the cases are design to cover different theoretical conditions. Since case studies rely on analytical rather than statistical generalizations, relying on replication logic provides external validation to the findings. Each case served to confirm or disconfirm the conclusions drawn from the others (Vohra, 2014). Another possibility for the author is choosing cases with predictable contrasting results. Significant similarities and differences can create a platform to compare and contrast.

For Pettigrew (1990) the rationale for selection has to do with “planned opportunism” because of the practicalities of the process. For him there are four factors that contribute to successfully selecting cases: (1) the questions being posed, (2) the level of access and the setting where the data is going to be collected, and (3) the funding. For this particular study the

second factor was an important one to take into consideration since the researcher and the participants were in different countries and all communications were online.

3.1. Participants

According to the literature reviewed regarding selection rationale, participants were purposively selected for their migration experience and professional expertise. This purposive sampling process was intended to select a productive sample to fulfill the research question while avoiding redundant information. The main common criteria for all was that they are highly qualified sportspeople (most, if not all, have participated with the respective national teams) and had experience migration due to their sport practice.

3.1.1. Selection

Aiming to have diversity and representation of the different groups among the Costa Rican sport migrants the list of participants was developed trying to include at least a case for all the following characteristics:

- *Participants from different sporting disciplines:* Although men soccer is the most popular sport and the one with more Costa Rican professional athletes playing abroad, this study doesn't

focus on soccer but explores the motivation and goals among athletes in other minor sports with no professional leagues in the country. Just by offering existence proof of successful migrants athletes in other disciplines this project has made a great contribution to visualize this fact.

- *Both genders*: As an exploratory study working for the first time with Costa Rican sport migrants the researcher considered important not to focus on one gender but to include both, considering that contrasting results could come up that would enrich the findings. Equal participation of both genders was intended.
- *Younger and older*: The research pretended to include participants covering a wide range of ages, from student athletes in their early years to mature and retired players. None of the participants were underage.
- *Participants who had migrated to consecutive countries or migrated again to the same country*: Migrating more than once supposes the experience abroad had particular characteristics that made the athlete or coach do it again.

- *Migrations within or outside the continent of origin:* It was interesting to know how distance can affect the migrant experience supposing the farther one goes the more different it is from the home country.
- *Migration to countries with shared or different languages:* Since language is basic to communicate on a daily basis, is important to know the experiences from both sides as it might affect the perception on the migration process.
- *Moving with or without family:* The impact family plays upon any potential migrant's decision of leaving is very relevant to this study. Also, once moved to the host country, family member's status may have a large impact on the personal and professional well-being of the player.
- *Sport labour migration or migrant student-athlete:* Both scenarios should be studied to have a wider perspective on the motivations, goals and consequences of this phenomenon.

3.1.2. List of participants

A total of eighteen athletes were invited to be participants in this multiple case study; of those, twelve agreed to participate and gave an

interview. Table 1 shows all the athletes that participated on this research and the general information regarding their migration status.

Table 1. Migrant athletes participating on the study

Research participants					
	Interviewee Code	Gender	Sport	Country	Status
1	Int1	M	Football	Canada	Back in Costa Rica
2	Int2	M	Cycling	Belgium, Luxemburg, Spain, Switzerland, Colombia and USA	Back in Costa Rica
3	Int3	M	Bowling	USA	Still out
4	Int4	F	Football and Handball	Germany, Spain, Chile and Trinidad y Tobago	Back in Costa Rica
5	Int5	F	Volleyball (indoor and beach)	USA	Back in Costa Rica
6	Int6	F	Muay Thai	Thailand	Still out
7	Int7	F	Futsal	Guatemala	Back in Costa Rica
8	Int8	F	Football	USA	Back in Costa Rica
9	Int9	F	Football	Spain	Still out
10	Int10	M	Volleyball (indoor)	Finland and Spain	Back in Costa Rica
11	Int11	M	Bowling	USA	Still out
12	Int12	F	Basketball	USA	Back in Costa Rica

As intended, the participants on this study include at least one case for all the eight scenarios presented above.

- a) *Different sporting disciplines*: All participants represent eight different sports: soccer, bowling, cycling, volleyball, handball, futsal, muay thai and basketball. Out of those eight, five are Olympic sports (soccer, cycling, volleyball, basketball and handball) and three are non-Olympic (futsal, muay thai and bowling).
- b) *Both genders*: The researcher pretended to have equal participation from both genders but it was not possible. The study includes seven female athletes and five male athletes.
- c) *Younger and older*: Regarding the ages and sporting experience of the athletes, we found that most participants had their migration experience on their twenties. The youngest age of the first migration among the interviewees was eighteen years old (Int5 and Int7) and the oldest age of first migration was twenty-six years old (Int6). The youngest interviewee age was twenty-one years old and the oldest interviewee was forty-four years old. Only Int4 was a retired athlete at the moment of the interviews.

d) *Migration to consecutive countries or again to the same country:*

Int2 went from one country to the other as a result of his good performance. Int4 also went to different countries seeking for training. In the case of Int12 she is the only case that went back to the same country and tried three different teams and divisions.

e) *Migration within and outside the continent:* seven athletes went

to countries on the American continent on their first migration: Canada, USA, and Guatemala. Four athletes went outside the continent, three to Europe and one to Asia.

f) *Countries with shared and different languages:* In four cases

migrants went to countries with an official language same as their mother tongue. Those were Int7 in Guatemala, Int9 in Spain, Int4 in Spain and Chile, and Int2 in Colombia. The migrations to countries with different languages that they knew well were: Int3, Int5, Int8 and Int12 who were studying in English in USA, and Int4 who was coaching in English in Trinidad and Tobago. A few migrated to countries with languages they knew a little, which is the case of Int1, who knew some English in Canada, and Int2 who knew some French in Belgium and Luxemburg.

- g) *Moving with family*: most interviewees traveled alone. Only one of the participants migrated with her family (fiancé), and only one athlete was married with kids and still migrated alone.
- h) *Different sport competitive level (sport labour migration vs student athletes)*: Only four athletes migrated to pro teams, three did to amateur teams and five athletes migrated as students-athletes.

3.2. Data collection

The participants were contacted to explain the purpose of the study. This initial contact consisted of emails for the ones that are easily accessible through the researcher's network, and private messages through social media (Facebook and Twitter) for the ones that were be more difficult to reach. According to their consent and availability, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted. Interviews were via online conference and one self-administered interview was done via email by one of the athletes who was not able to set an interview appointment.

First, a test version of the interview's guide was developed based on the analysis of the literature reviewed. The instrument included questions that allow examining migration factors present on previews studies like country and cultural contexts; sporting relations and networks; family

context; sporting and cultural adaptation; migrants' characterization. The open-ended nature of the questions provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics more in detail (Skinner et al., 2014).

A panel of experts in sport management was consulted to evaluate if the initial instrument represented properly the aspects of sport migration that wanted to be studied. After the experts recommendations the pilot questionnaire was improved and then applied to a small group of athletes to validate the clarity, intelligibility and accuracy of the questions.

First part of the interview consisted of demographic information (e.g. age, host country, gender, sport practiced, years practicing the sport) while the second part had open-ended questions that allowed participants to express freely their perceptions about their experience abroad. The structured open-ended interviews have several advantages: (1) they are adaptive so a respondent can discuss a knowledge area in depth, (2) they are potentially a rich source of data, (3) they are empathic, and (4) they can build rapport (Nadler in Vohra, 2014, p. 57). An interview guide can be seen in Annex 1.

Regarding the language, is important to note that all the participants as wells as the researcher have Spanish as their mother tongue. The

questionnaire was designed in English to be reviewed by the panel of expert, then, after its approval it was translated to Spanish. The interviews were carried in Spanish and later translated to English by an external translator, in order to avoid any bias by the researcher.

3.3. Data analysis

Using a framework analysis approach the collected data was analyzed using the existing theories and categorizations for sport migration. Phenomenology and typology modes were used as part of the data analysis method since the study attempts to understand the experiences of participants in their migration journey while trying to classify them according to patterns, themes or other groups of data.

This was the first step to provide structure to the data and assign meaning to it. Coding makes it easier to search data, make comparisons and identify patterns that require further investigation. Skinner et al. (2014) mention three characteristics codes should have to be valid: (1) should accurately reflect what is being investigated, (2) they should be mutually exclusive with no overlap, and (3) should be exhaustive.

Coding process was done according to the four stages suggested by Skinner et al (2014).

- *Open coding*: All statements relating to the research question are identified and grouped in categories. It is important also to identify the speaker and context of these statements.
- *Axial coding*: Re-examining the categories to determine how they are linked. Researcher compares and contrasts them to bring together the 'big picture' and explore all possible ramifications of the phenomenon under study.
- Looking for patterns and explanations.
- *Selective coding*: Reading through raw data for cases that illustrate the analysis or explain the concepts.

The answers were imported into qualitative data analysis software for systematic analysis. The software used was *QDA Miner Lite* on its free version.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1. Motivations and goals of athletes outflow in Costa Rica

All participants were interviewed to determine what are the motivations and goals of the Costa Rican athletes migrating to other countries. The following descriptive analysis shows the results obtained in answer to the first research question.

4.1.1. Motivations

Athletes gave relevant information about personal, sport related, economical and even academic motives that influenced their decision-making.

4.1.1.1. Sport ambitions

Most athletes wanted to achieve the highest possible level in their career. In nine of the cases athletes mentioned they went abroad to have access to a better quality league than the one they were involved in Costa Rica. Int10 explained it very well when asked about what he considered was the most positive thing of migrating.

The fact of being in another country and to have the option to prepare yourself to the level that other countries do with coaches that are of much more category than those in Central America; and to have all the implements that you need to prepare you.

Many refer to their motivation being more about personal growth and self-actualization in the practice of their sport. When asked about the determinant factors to decide to go abroad some of the answers were:

My factor was the sports experience I was going to have and the maturity I was going to get by going to play in another country with another team. Int7.

At first the reason I left is because I wanted a new sporting challenge. Int8.

The main factor was the personal improvement, the desire to grow in the sporting and personal environment. That was what most caught my attention at the time. Int 2.

For a few others the motivation to go abroad was that they finally got an opportunity to go practice their sport in the country of their dreams. That was the case for Int12, a female basketball player whose dream was to play in the United States and said “That had been my dream for my whole life; going to play in the US was like Wooow!”. Int6 was also looking forward to move to a specific country, Thailand, where muay thai, her sport, is a whole culture.

4.1.1.2. Cosmopolitanism

On the personal side of the spectrum of motivations cosmopolitanism was the most common one among the athletes consulted. The quest for a cultural experience was very relevant for many, it was mentioned by 50% of the respondents. The benefit of being able to visit other countries and be in contact with other cultures was a big motivation to accept the migration experience. “The condition for me to leave is always my personal growth. Is to know other cultures and to have that experience, to be in another country, with another meal, with another language...”, said Int4 when asked about her motivations.

Int10, a volleyball player who got an offer to play in a pro league in Europe is another example:

“To have the experience of being able to know another culture. I honestly did not even know where Finland was, but the opportunity was very attractive. (...) Besides that, I not only knew Finland but also I knew other parts like Holland, Germany, Russia... I mean, I had the opportunity to not stay in a single country and to know other things that I would not have known had it not been for the sport”.

As mentioned by this athlete, for some of them the possibility of leaving the country would have been impossible had it not been for the sport.

Int9 explained her case saying “If it was not for football I would not know as many countries as I have. Football and sport in general open up a lot of possibilities for you”.

4.1.1.3. Academic

As mentioned before, five out of the twelve participants migrated as student-athletes to the United States, what means there was an academic gain that also played its role in the motivations to go abroad. In all the cases the interviewees admitted that the possibility of getting an American college degree made the offer to go to the US difficult to reject.

Int12 mentioned the benefits she considered about going abroad as a student-athlete beyond the sport-related motivations. “The mere fact of having a degree from a US university was much better than one from the Universidad Hispanoamericana [a Costa Rican university] to get a job”, she said.

In two of the cases the athletes mentioned the academic gain as one of their principal motivations. Int3 even considered this his main motivation to migrate using the sport as a medium. “The university [I chose] was very good academically, which was very important for me; one of my priorities. (...)The academic part was super important for me, to have a good academic level”, he said when asked about the most determinant factor to decide to go

abroad. “I have to focus on my career and my education before the sport”, he said later on the interview.

4.1.2. Goals

All goals are preceded by motivations but are specific desired achievements that can be easily identified and the person is conscious of them. Although each participant mentioned many motivations to migrate, one specific goal was identified for each of them.

Among the main goals that stand out we can mention Int7 who had very clear her goal to make it to the Costa Rica National Team after her return. At that time there still was no futsal women’s National Team but it was in formation.

My coach told me that when there was a selection I was going to be one of the first ones to be called because I went to play abroad. (...) I feel it was worth it because I’ve been for four years playing in the National Team, so I got what I wanted thanks to having left.

For Int8 the goal was also very specific. After knowing she had the possibility to go to the United States to play soccer, she wanted to be national champion at whatever division she was playing. Her determination to achieve her goal was influential on her decision when choosing the university she was going to join as a student-athlete.

At the end I decided to go to West Florida because the coach convinced me. That team was Division 2 [in NCAA] but ended in second place the previous season. I wanted to try to make it to a national final and be a national champion. The other university was Division 1 but was not that good, so I chose to go to Division 2 to be a national champion, and fortunately I achieved it on my last year.

Still regarding sport oriented goals, Int4 had a very particular one: she left the country knowing she wanted to become a coach some day. Since her first migration she was very clear that after being a top athlete in soccer and handball she wanted to become a coach, what at the time was not very common among women. All four of her migration experiences were more about self-actualization than performance improvement as an athlete, and sought to contribute on her way to achieving her goal.

In contrast with the goals presented so far, some of the participants who are student-athletes confirmed that their main goal goes beyond the sport-related motivations.

For Int3 the main goal identified has to do with getting good quality education in the United States. He said that since a very early age he was decided to go study in the US, then we found that sports was a great way to get admitted in a good university and receive a sport scholarship. In similar terms, Int11 mentioned that getting a good job in the US was on his top of

mind and he knew that studying at an American university was the way. In addition he mentioned that his desire to stay in the US goes hand in hand with his desire to play bowling, given that in Costa Rica it would be impossible for him to have a good well paid job and have time to practice his sport on a regular basis.

Well, the ideal is to get an internship and get the job to stay here. Because I feel that for me to be able to keep bowling, because I do not want to quit it at all, I have to stay. Here there are bowling clubs that organize tournaments privately every weekend, so if I want to go and play in Indianapolis, I just go, it's 3 hours away. But in CR there are no tournaments. There are not even tournaments in Panama, or Colombia, or anywhere near. Then it would only be practice and practice because there is no competition. So going back there would mean to get my level down, and I do not want that to happen.

4.2. Characteristics of Costa Rican migrant athletes and their migration experiences.

The descriptive analysis in this section includes aspect of the whole migration experience since the first contact with the possibility of going abroad until the return to Costa Rica –in the cases of those who returned already. The characteristics of the migrant athletes and their migration

experiences in this study can be analyzed in five categories: recruitment, decision-making, sporting experience, cultural experience and difficulties.

4.2.1. Recruitment

Most of the participants got their opportunity by playing for the national teams, where they had the chance to get in contact with scouts. In nine out of the twelve cases the first contact with their recruiters was very informal. The athletes were not seeking for the opportunity but someone approached them after watching them perform. The following extracts show some of the informal recruitment mechanism used:

Actually I did not plan to leave, honestly, but in a tournament that I was playing with the National Team in Mexico, the coach who recruited me saw me play. He knew someone here in Costa Rica, another coach, which gave him my contact and he sent me the email offering the full scholarship. Int5.

There was an international tournament here [in Costa Rica] and I played it with the Alajuela team. Then the coach of the Champions team of Guatemala told our coach that she was interested in taking two players to reinforce their team. She asked for me and another player but it was only to finish the championship. Int7.

It all happened because of a contact that came up in Belgium. A Belgian gentleman, a former professional cyclist, who was married to a Costa Rican and he knew the director of the team in which I was

in Costa Rica. There was no selection process because the director had the power to decide who to send and he thought I had the physical condition. Int2.

When I was already in second year [in the university], once I had a soccer game and by chance the college coach who ended up giving me the scholarship was here in Costa Rica visiting because his team was going to come to play in the summer (...). We won 2-0 and I scored the 2 goals, so after the match the coach approached and when he saw that I spoke English he gave me this email and talked about the scholarship. Int8.

All the cases were fortuitous; there were no structured or institutionalized actions by any organizations to procure the recruitment of these athletes. In the case of Int3 and Int11, who play bowling, they both got the suggestion by the national team's coach to participate in the formal recruitment process by the American colleges with bowling programs, but the coach or the national federation didn't get involved in the process or did any follow ups.

The only formal recruitment process occurred in the case of Int9, a female soccer player who went to a professional league in Europe. After a good performance of the Costa Rican women's national team during the last FIFA World Cup and agency reached her looking to represent her. She got

her opportunity to go abroad just two months after signing the contract with this agency.

Another important characteristic of the migrant athletes that participated in this study is that most of them were pioneers going abroad to practice their sport. Given these circumstances, recruitment processes were new for both them and their respective sports organizations. For Int7 that was an issue to deal with.

In general it was a very complex situation because no one had ever left the country before; it was the first time that female Costa Rican futsal players were going to be hired abroad, so everything was new for everyone.

“When I left I did not even know what to expect because in my life I never had something like that, and almost nobody [in Costa Rican volleyball] had left to the US before, I think I was the third or fourth”, said Int5 who was in a similar situation.

4.2.2. Decision-making

Regarding the decision-making process two behaviors were identified. The first one refers to the athletes who made their decision very quick, almost as an impulse. In five cases the participants admit that they took the decision without thinking it through, mostly because they were excited about the opportunity and considered they had nothing to lose.

In the case of Int7 her circumstances were very favorable, like most of the participants she was really young when the offer came up. “For me it was very easy to make the decision because I was 18 years old, I was very young, I was not working, I was not doing anything, just playing”, she said.

For Int12 in her two opportunities to go play basketball in the US she made her mind in just minutes, but she considers that has to do more with her personality. For her first migration she said “I practically made the decision right there. I did not think much. It was fast. A week and a half later I was leaving. At that time I was 18-19 years old”. Then on her second migration she made her mind very quickly again and went back to the US as soon as she could. “That [the offer] was in May and the university started in August and again without thinking I left. I am very stubborn and what I start I finish”.

For some that quick decision was not a good idea. Int1 mentioned several times how he would have preferred to take some time to meditate on his decision and get more informed about all the factors involved in his migration opportunity. “I really did not think much of it even though I knew it was not very safe”, he said. Now, having hindsight, he realizes “I would have liked to advise myself a little more and not make the decision so quickly”.

Another characteristic of the decision-making was the family involvement during the process. In some of the cases the family members gave total approval and support what made it easier for them, but in other cases the discontent was a struggle they had to deal with.

Int9 explained in detail how the approval of her parents made it easier for her to feel more comfortable about leaving her life in Costa Rica behind and go play in a different continent.

Mainly what made me questioned was the university, but talking to my parents they gave me the boost up. They were always the first to tell me to study and study, but now they were telling me otherwise, they were telling me to take advantage of the opportunity, to take advantage of the moment because I was very young and it was an opportunity anyone would want. That was very important for me, to count on the support of them and the endorsement made me take the decision.

For Int6 the struggle with her parents was something she expected since they had never liked her practicing muay thai, but has not a determinant factor on the decision-making because she knew they were going to accept it whatever the outcome was.

Obviously my parents opposed because of my career, because of my studies, because fighting, because I was going to get cut... Until the present time they do not like that I fight. But obviously they

respected the decision. They just told me to finish college and not drop it.

In the case of Int8 the disapproval of one of her relatives was very significant to the point that she rejected her first opportunity to migrate as a student-athlete. At that time “I had a bad boyfriend who convinced me not to go”, she said.

4.2.3. Sporting experience

Regarding the sporting experience the results show there are three patterns to analyze: the competitive level, the performance improvement and the networking.

In all cases –except for Int7 who went to an inferior league in Guatemala- the athletes migrated to play in a higher competitive level than the one they were used to in Costa Rica. Int10 who went to play volleyball on a professional league in Europe, experienced a huge contrast between his new team and the team he had back home.

I had never had such a complete work. In Costa Rica I did train and everything but never like that. I never had to train every day with the national team or with a same team, you train twice a week and play once. They trained from Monday to Sunday if necessary, and trained two or three times a day. In the morning, there was always a technical session, in the afternoon it was physical work, conditioning

and weights, and at night, the tactical and cognitive part was done. All training was systematized.

Int6 is another example of the superior level these athletes faced abroad:

The schedules were tough. At six o'clock in the morning I had to be ready to run. (...) We trained in the morning from 6 to 10, in the afternoon from 3:30 to 6:30, every day from Monday to Saturday and Sunday free. One would fight once a month or every 3 weeks, depending on whether one ended up very beaten from the fight. They gave one to 3 or 4 days of break depending on if one was cut and sometimes needed up to a week of recovery. If one was fine, just three days.

For many participants being in a better quality league improved their competitive level because of the quality of the training sessions and the constancy of the competitions. “I went up too high. Obviously as they demanded me more the level went up. Was then when I was at my best sporting level”, said Int5 when asked about her sporting improvement.

The following are comments showing the personal improvement of each athlete:

I grew up a lot regarding football. The performance of the league in which I played was very high despite being an amateur league. I was very positively affected. Int1.

I did improve in power because I had to play against people way bigger. Int8.

I started bad at first. Then I was playing so much that it took away the fear of anyone, took away the fear of playing tournaments, gave me more security about my game decisions, which I had to make on my own with respect to surfaces and surfaces of balls. (...) Because of failing I learned from my mistakes and I corrected thing and I could finally play well in the last two years. Int11.

I didn't get to know myself and I didn't get to know my capacity until I got there, because in Costa Rica and Central America you can believe that you are playing at 100% and that you do well everything you want to do, and feel that you are tired after the game. But when I got there the quality of training that is given to the players, the quality of preparation, all the technical and tactical work that is given to each player was impressive. (...) I arrived weighing like 70kg with 1.90m; I was the smallest of the team. In the physical aspect I had to put an extra effort to be able to reach the level of them. Int10.

In addition to the sporting experience itself, most athletes recognize they did a great networking while being abroad. The contact with many coaches, athletes and managers was a great contribution to their understanding of the sport environment and allowed them to find other opportunities in their quest for better sport experiences not only for themselves but for their peers back in Costa Rica. Int5 felt the networking was a big benefit for her and the sport in general.

When I returned I had many contacts in the US of coaches and athletes and so, so, for example, two of my teammates now are in the US with a scholarship too, and one went to Puerto Rico, but I gave them the contacts. I helped them to open doors and they succeeded. It means that when you leave, people in the US realize that Costa Rica exists and there are good players.

Her comment makes reference to another important characteristic of these migrant athletes and it is the contribution they are doing to their sport in Costa Rica. Most athletes have maintained a close relation with their peers in their home country and with some NSGB having the chance to transmit their obtained knowledge during their migration experience. It is important to mention that all participants kept competing with the respective Costa Rican national teams.

4.2.4. Cultural experience

Since all the athletes were in a foreign country they had some cultural shock experiences. Some of the issues mentioned regarding culture were racism, very different customs and language barrier.

For Int2, who had migration experiences to six different countries the biggest part of the cultural experience was to adapt to each society and its customs.

In Belgium the schedule was very similar to that of Costa Rica: people go to sleep early and get up early, so I did not have much of a problem. Besides, the people are very charismatic. When I was in Spain it was difficult because the schedules for everything are totally different. For example, I went from having dinner at 6:30 pm in Belgium to dine at 12 at night there in Spain.

For the student-athletes that went to the US racism was one of the issues they had to deal with, as shown in this extracts from the interview with Int8:

95% of the people you know are super friendly and good people, polite and everything, but there is a minority that is racist and when they hear you speak with accent and learn that you are not from the US, they give you looks and behave not being very kind or generous.

To face the negative aspects of the cultural experience, all participants playing in the US agreed that they resorted to join to other Latin Americans around to feel supported. These *latinos* were mostly students in their same college or member of religious groups.

Although language was not a determinant factor during the decision-making process, the athletes that went to countries with languages that they didn't know admitted that the barrier have them some frustration at the beginning. Nevertheless, in all cases language didn't affect negatively their sporting experiences since most participants knew English and were able to communicate with their peers.

Another important characteristic to take into consideration about the migrant athletes in this study is that most of them traveled alone. Not having the family support close enough affected many of them and made the experience a bit difficult at the beginning. Int11 explained his struggle being away of his parents and referred to how much he misses them.

It's because I always had them there in Costa Rica. They were there and I could talk to them. I always talked to them. You do not realize how important they are and how much you love them until you're a little far away.

For Int9 the struggle was similar because she was very close to her family. Even though she had lived by her own in Costa Rica in a city that was three hours away from her parents, she felt like being in a different continent made it worst. “Being in San Jose [Costa Rica] at least I knew that in three hours I could go and see them. But being here so far is different. I think it did affect me a lot”, she said.

In the case of Int12 the scenario was totally different because she had the chance to move with her fiancé. When she negotiated her agreement to move to Thailand she managed to get an offer for her boyfriend too, who is also a fighter, what gave them the chance to move together and practice the sport in the same camp.

It did help a lot the fact that I left with Mauricio. About that I cannot lie. I did not feel so alone or anything like that. But I do feel that every time you spend more time outside you get more accustomed to being outside.

The only other case of athletes with family is Int2 who had a wife and kids during his last migrations. In his case he commented that he still travels alone because he considers it better for them. He thinks that in every migration he has to dedicate too much time to the sport and the training and doesn't have much time to share with his family so he prefers to leave them

in Costa Rica, where they have other relatives to give them company, and go visit them often, at least once a month.

4.2.5. Difficulties

Among the difficulties that characterize these migrant athletes, economical issues, lack of support from NSGBs and deficiencies in the Costa Rican sport system excelled.

Regarding economical issues, for nine out of twelve athletes the migration experience signified an important expense. Just in two of the cases athletes can affirm that they had economical gains. Only one of the cases can be said that had no gain and no expense.

The interviews show that the migration experience was very different for those who came from a good economical status from the ones that came from a worse one. The first ones had family backing what they expressed made them more confident about leaving. The second ones had some struggles to get the money needed to go abroad, therefore admitted they had more pressure about the economical implications of migrating.

About the support of the national sport governing bodies (NSGBs) every participant referred that no support of any kind was given. Not economical, not in networking nor in guidance. Int6 explained the following about the issue:

Imagine that I have been playing with the National Team since I was 15. The sport here in Costa Rica is very badly handled, it seems to me. The ICODER and NOC scholarships are administered very badly because there are, but in the NOC instead of distributing them to a number of people it centralizes them on 5 athletes who are paid millions, and in ICODER I do not know who the heck decides who is given a scholarship and who does not. I have not received ICODER scholarships. Nothing, never. In comparison, my teammate who was from Guatemala, her Olympic committee gave her a scholarship and paid the plane tickets.

Referring to the national sport system in general the main difficulty athletes faced is that most of them didn't have any chances to get to a pro level in their country since there was no pro league at all for their sport. In the case of Int1 playing men's soccer, and Int2, practicing men's cycling, there are pro leagues for these sports where athletes get paid, but the amounts were not very significant.

Excepting Int1 and Int2, all participants agreed that in Costa Rica it is not possible to make a livelihood as an athlete. The following extracts of raw data show their perspective on this matter.

I don't really have a plan to return to Costa Rica because I know that I will not live out of bowling. Is a reality. The opportunity to live well is not going to hit me with sports. Maybe if I were in another

sport like golf or tennis or soccer where they put all the silver [money] it might be different, but it is not the case. I have to focus on my career and my education before the sport. Int3.

I feel that the economic sacrifice I had to make – that *we* had to make, because my husband did too- was more because we knew that we could make good money in Costa Rica doing anything other than being an athlete, because as athletes we were going to die of Hunger. Int6.

I'm not going to become a millionaire playing soccer! But at least here I have the peace of mind that I am playing soccer and I get paid for it. Here I can practice soccer, in Costa Rica I cannot. In Costa Rica I would have continue to depend on my parents because I was playing and studying. Int9.

We are not in a country where you are going to dedicate to sport, here is very little that can be done in sport; The only sport that leaves [economical gain] is football. Int10.

It seems to me very complicated, because I do not think I can live on it [bowling]. Int11.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The study conducted pretended to determine the motivations, goals and consequences of the migration of Costa Rican athletes. It was focused on the outflow to other countries to take a look at the cause-effect relation that there might be between the immigration dynamics and the improvements in the sport sphere in general in the country.

5.1. Motivations, goals and characteristics

An important finding of this study is that motivations, goals and characteristics of Costa Rican migrant athletes are very close related and have certain level of cause-effect relation. Therefore, this discussion analyzes the content related to RQ1 and RQ2 in a same section.

As showed in the results the main motivations for Costa Rican athletes to go practice their sport abroad are: (1) sport ambitions, (2) cosmopolitanism and (3) academic gain.

The results confirm sport ambition as one of the motivations, like it was presented by Maguee & Stead (2002) in their sport migrant typology. They stated that *ambitionists* desire at least one of the following: (1) to achieve a professional career, (2) to play at some particular country or league, and (3) move to a better quality league to improve.

The fact that most participants were not really looking for a pro career indicates that sport is not perceived as a serious profession and the lack of professional leagues keeps them unmotivated about trying to make a full career out of their sport. Even though pro career is not a principal concern, the desire to play in a particular league does exist. Getting to practice in the highest level possible in the world gives validation to their years of work and makes them feel better about themselves as athletes. Basketball players dream of going to play in the United States, soccer players try to make it to Europe, muay thai fighters want to move to Thailand.

None of the participants was paid for practicing their sport before migrating, what explains why their perception of sport is more related to the sport itself than to any economical gain or chances to go pro.

The possibility to experience a better quality league is a very significant motivation since it represents a challenge for the player. The athletes who get the chance to go abroad are top players in their respective sports and have reached the maximum level possible in Costa Rica. Migrating to other leagues outside is the way to prove themselves and their competitive level. As a result of rubbing elbow with quality players and high performance professionals the competitive level of these athletes

improves in ways that could not be reached in Costa Rica because of the deficiencies in the national sport system and the limited resources available.

Cosmopolitanism is one of the motivations present in all the typologies presented so far by sport migrations theorists (Maguire, 1996; Maguee & Stead, 2002; Agergaard & Botelho, 2011). The results presented confirm that the cultural experience athletes get when moving abroad has an important weight on the decision of leaving or not. Costa Rican migrant athletes appreciate the possibility they have to travel and get in contact with other societies through sport; possibility than otherwise they wouldn't have because of the big economical costs it means. As Maguire (1996) stated, cosmopolitans use their sport careers to journey.

Experiencing different countries and cities is perceived by migrant athletes not only as an open-minding experience but as a chance of self-actualization.

I have always been aware that I need to leave the country and see other things. See what is being done outside to come to implement it here or to learn how to take advantage of our resources, because sometimes we have useful things in our countries and we do not realize it. Int4.

As a positive consequence of sport migration there is some contributions to the sport by each migrant athlete. Although some of them have plans to settle in their host country, most migrant athletes keep playing for the national teams, contributing not only with their improved performance but also advising other players and sharing their knowledge with their peers. Athletes that go back to their home country behave in the same way but on a regular basis trying to impact the whole league or region they are playing at.

As mentioned in the results, most participants were pioneers in going abroad to practice their sport. One of the biggest contributions to their sport in Costa Rica is that they opened doors and opportunities through their migration experiences for other athletes in their same sport, and are very helpful in advising and guiding the athletes that are pursuing an opportunity like the one they had.

Regarding the economical factor, which is strongly present in all three typologies reviewed (Maguire, 1996; Maguee & Stead, 2002; Agergaard & Botelho, 2011), contrary to what the authors claim, Costa Rican athletes don't consider the economical gain as an important motive on their first migration. Sport-related ambitions and cosmopolitanism come first.

I accepted and I went always with the mentality of wanting to grow and get to practice with a professional team. That was more than everything what motivated me, more than the economic part. Actually when one is young one is moved more by passion than by the economy. Int2.

In relation to the economical factor and contrary to what was proposed by Carter (2007), family didn't play a big role in these transnational migration processes. The author stated that in many cases athletes migrate to get better possibilities to be able to support their families as opposed to their own personal sporting aspirations. Costa Rican athletes are not the case. Most of them migrate at an early age when they are not responsible of supporting a family, what gives them the opportunity to stick to their sporting ambitions and take some risks. The economical gain is not much and usually doesn't represent any change on the family economical status.

In the cases of players migrating as student-athletes, academic gain could be analyzed as a substitution of economical gain. Academic aspects are strongly considered by these athletes to decide whether or not it's worth to leave as a student-athlete. The possibility to get a foreign college degree

is very attractive for them, since foreign superior education is considered to be of higher quality and widely recognized by employers.

The results show that most athletes take the change of going abroad knowing that the gain is not going to be economic at all. In most cases going abroad is actually an big expense since they don't have economical support from others other than their nuclear family. As mentioned before, the economical status of each athlete has a great influence in the migration experience. Int8 who felt lucky to have the economical support of her parents, explains it well when asked about the many expenses she had to face, including some surprise charges she didn't know about before leaving.

Among the negative things, I would mention what happened with the surprise payments I found when I arrived. Fortunately my parents could help me but I always think of other people. There are people who make raffles to be able to pay the tickets and they go abroad almost without a dime, so that they suddenly learn that they have to pay more there is terrible. "But it's only \$ 500". There [in the US] for them \$500 is nothing, but for us it's a lot.

5.2. Sport migration typology for Costa Rican migrant athletes

As mentioned before, the three sport migration typologies reviewed for this study were the ones proposed by Maguire (1996), Maguee & Stead

(2002) and Agergaard & Botelho (2011). Each was design to improve the accuracy of the types and its characteristics. In answer to RQ3 the participants were categorized using the exiting types of sport migrants. Combining all three, the types that are considered in this categorization are: (1) pioneers, (2) settlers, (3) mercenaries, (4) cosmopolitans, (5) ambitionists, and (6) labour of love.

The first type is the *pioneers* who are characterized for coming to a new country to proselytize and convert locals to their sport habits and culture. None of the cases studied fit with this type since migrant Costa Rican athletes go abroad to practice sports that are very well established at the places they are.

Three *settlers* where found among the cases. Int6, Int3 and Int11 who explicitly said they wanted to stay as much as possible. Int6 has been in Thailand for six years when she came thinking she was going to stay just for a year, and has no plans to come back any time soon. Her case can be contrasted with Int12 who stayed in the US for eight years but, she did because of academic reasons and never had the intention to stay any longer after getting her degrees.

The *mercenaries* are referred as those who go abroad for short terms and seek short-term gains. In most of the cases they are hired guns, recruited

by their teams with very specific sport goals. This is the case of Int7 who was hired for a very short term just to finish the futsal season in the host country so she never got attached to the local atmosphere. Int10 was hired in Finland to substitute an injured player and even though he stayed for almost a year still it was just for the season and knew he was going back right after finishing it. Int5 stayed for four years in the US as a student. Even though she stayed longer, her goals as an “asset” for the team were very well established and she didn’t seek for anything further than just finishing the time established. As well as soon as she was done with her contract she went back.

In the case of *cosmopolitans*, as mentioned before, most cases studied have some references to cosmopolitan reasons to migrate. In the case of Int4 she was very clear at all times that for her a priority was to travel and get to “see things outside”, that explains why she has migrated to 4 different countries with very different cultures and different languages.

Ambitionists is the category that better describes Costa Rican migrant athletes. These athletes are motivated mainly by sport-related ambitions. Maguee and Stead (2002) propose three subcategories among the ambitionists. Like it was discussed before, desire to play at a particular

country or league rather than elsewhere, and desire to move to a better quality league to improve are the ones that match many of the cases studied.

Int12 migrated as a student-athlete when she was already twenty-four years old and had an advance career at a university in Costa Rica. She went from being in a full university in her home country to study in a junior college for two years and in a community college for two more years just because she was very passionate about the sport. Even though academically that meant a downgrade, she still accepted because she wanted very badly to play in the US, which she considered the best possible country to play basketball at.

Related to these displays of passion for the game, Agergaard and Botelho (2011) introduced a new category to the sport migration typology for those athletes who migrate just for the love and infatuation of the game. The authors insisted that in many cases the economic incentives mentioned in the other typologies proposed by other theorists are not the sole or main reason for an athlete to leave his or her country, what they called *labour of love*.

As showed in the results most athletes' motivations referred to sport ambitions and passion for the game above economic gain. Agergaard and Botelho focus their work on female athletes because they consider labour of

love is more commonly found among these since salaries are low, the opportunities are just a few and the conditions are usually not as great as for male athletes. The results for this study seem to confirm that statement.

Friedson (in Agergaard and Botelho, 2011) mentions three conditions to define labour of love: (1) an activity that one would undertake voluntarily as leisure or work, (2) an activity where income is not a sole determinant of labour, and (3) an activity that leads to self actualization. The cases studied in this research that matched more clearly with these conditions are the female athletes.

When asked if she would recommend other athletes to migrate, Int9, the female football player, referred to the female athletes saying “Yes. (...) although we are not rewarded like men, I think it is the satisfaction of being able to do what one likes”. In the same feel, Int6, the female muay thai fighter, is very grateful for the opportunity to go abroad despite all the struggles she lived because there she has the chance to do what she likes and dedicate fully to her sport. “I feel like I improved as an athlete a 100% because here I live like an athlete and that makes a difference”, she said.

For Int4 the passion for sports is what moves her, and she treasures her migration experiences beyond the economical factors –that in her case were more struggles than gains. “I was given the opportunity to go do what I

like. Because the truth is that's my essence (...).I paid the price, but I would pay twice, three times, four times. If I had to do it again, I would do it again", she said.

After a close analysis of the answers of the respondents we consider that it might be difficult for some of them to recognize they migrated to another country just moved by passion and love for the game, as it may appear to be irrational. For example, Int2, who didn't seem to have a clear goal to justify her decision to leave, can be perfectly categorized under the labour of love although she never made any specific statements indicating that love for the game was one her motives.

After doing this categorization of Costa Rican migrant athletes based on the existing typologies, we found that the motivations have changing dynamics. The motivations may change for every specific case according to the evolution of their migration experience. In most participants we could sense that the motivations to leave at first were different from the motivations to stay, as Int8 shows in this excerpt.

I knew that playing in the United States, which is the best level of women's football, was going to help me (...) That was the reason I left at the beginning. If you ask me why I stayed four years then the sports part has really little to do. Because even though it was a good experience and everything, I feel it was more what I learned in other

aspects. The experience of going outside to study is an experience of life. One learns a lot and really becomes a better person in a lot of areas. It goes far beyond the sporting part.

Given these changes in motivations, some athletes seem to jump from one type to another. They can start being *ambitionists* and end up being *mercenaries* or *settlers*.

5.3. Conclusions

Although every case studied mentioned many motives to migrate, the main motivations that Costa Rican athletes have to go abroad are sport ambitions, cosmopolitanism and academic factors. Contrary to what is proposed by other authors economic gain doesn't have an important role in the decision-making of these athletes, mostly because the economic compensations are not good or are not greater than the ones back in their home country.

The characteristics of these migrant athletes comprise four categories: (1) recruitment process, which was informal in most of the cases with little or no intervention of any NSGBs; (2) decision-making, which includes two contrasting behaviors, the ones that took the decision very quick almost as an impulse, and the ones who took more time and had more family

involvement during the process; (3) sporting experience, which shows the high competitive level and training sessions these migrants had to face, the great improvement and good performance of the Costa Rican athletes abroad, and the large networking made by them; and (4) cultural experience, which shows that every athlete had a cultural shock to deal with, that language was struggle but never a limitation, and that being away from the family had certain repercussions on them.

Regarding the categorization of these Costa Rican migrant athletes, the typologies proposed by Maguire (1996), Maguee & Stead (2002) and Agergaard & Botelho (2011) were adequate for most of the cases. The ones identified in these athletes were *settlers*, *mercenaries*, *cosmopolitans* and *ambitionists*, being the later the type that better describes them. Several cases, mostly the female athletes, can be labeled as *labour of love*, since their motivations go beyond economic gains and are strongly related to the passion and love for the game.

Finally, these athletes show to have changing motivations and goals to migrate and to stay abroad, what means they can jump from one category in the typology to another. These changes are going to depend on the evolution of each migration experience.

5.3.1. Limitations

Among the limitations found in this research we can mention the fact that most participants gave the interviews more than two years after having their first migration experience, what means that their answers about their initial motivations and goals rely on their memories.

As for many social studies, a limitation of this research is that people usually don't really know for certain what they want, need or feel, and can have some trouble to express it correctly and the whole study relies on their responses.

Because of the geographical and technologic circumstances the interviews were done by online conference. Face-to-face interviews could have revealed more information regarding how they truly felt about their migration experiences.

Social desirability bias is another limitation to have into consideration, since participants might not have been true to their motivations and goals to migrate trying to be viewed favorably.

5.3.2. Recommendations

After completing this research, many aspects of sport migration in Costa Rica are still to be studied.

The findings show that the migration opportunities and the actual experience abroad vary a lot depending on economical status of the athletes. In order to understand why this is happening and how sport migration can be made more inclusive in Costa Rica. Further research is needed to find a way to make sport migration more inclusive and accessible to all kind of athletes regardless of their economic background.

As well, findings show that there was little or no involvement of NSGBs in these migration experiences. These institutions and sport manager in general should get more involved to learn the dynamics on the recruitment processes in order to take advantage from them and come up with a systematized offer of migrating opportunities for Costa Rican athletes. To do so, institutions should invest in more research on this topic.

No statistics were found regarding sport migration in Costa Rica. It would be important to generate a data base about athletes going abroad that would allow organizations, both private and public, to have statistics to rely on and take action.

Finally, taking a deep look at the results of these migrant athletes in their performance internationally would give information to sport managers and leaders to consider sport migration as a serious matter.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Interview guide

The following interview is part of a research trying to determine the motivations, goals and consequences of Costa Rican athletes' migration. All the information provided will be used strictly for the purposes of the study and confidentiality is guaranteed.

a. Personal information

Name

Age

Gender

Sport

Years practicing the sport

Current country of residence

Country(ies) of emigration

No. of family members migrating with you. Specify the relation.

Income

Academic level

b. Open-ended questions

1. How did the opportunity to go abroad come to you?
 - a. Who contacted you?

- b. Did you have more than one option of countries to migrate to?
2. What were the terms?
 - a. Regarding payment
 - b. Regarding housing
 - c. Schedule
 - d. Studies
3. How could you describe your decision-making process?
 - a. How long did it take you to make the final decision?
 - b. Did you involve other people in it?
 - c. Was anyone against it?
4. What were the determinant factors for you to decide to go abroad?
5. What did you expect from the migration experience?
 - a. How are your expectations compared to your actual experience and results?
6. How was your performance affected by your migration?
 - a. Was it affected as expected?
7. What about going abroad do you think is/was the most positive thing?
8. What about going abroad do you think is/was the most negative thing?
- 9.
10. What makes you feel most convinced that going abroad is/was worth your effort?
11. What makes you feel least convinced that going abroad is/was worth your effort?
12. How do you think your migration experience is affecting or might affect the practice of your sport back in Costa Rica?
13. Did you receive any support from the national federation or ICODER to succeed in your migration process? If yes, briefly explain what kind of support.
14. Would you recommend other Costa Rican athletes to go abroad?

국문초록

코스타리카 운동선수의 이주 현상: 선수 이주의 동기 그리고 목적

이본 가르바요

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코스타리카는 중앙아메리카에 위치해있으며 남자 축구를 제외하곤 스포츠 전통이 거의 없는 아주 작은 나라이다. 최근 들어 스포츠 이주 현상 특히 선수들이 외국으로 나가는 현상이 빈번하게 이루어지고 있으며 이것은 축구뿐 만이 아니라 다른 종목의 스포츠에서도 마찬가지이다.

학문적으로 봤을 때 코스타리카 스포츠는 스포츠 경기, 운동학 및 레크리에이션 분야에서 광범위하게 연구되었지만 스포츠 매니지먼트 분야에서는 아직 연구되어지지 않았다. 이에 본 연구는 코스타리카의 스포츠 이주현상에 대하여 심도 있게 이해하는 것을 목표로 한다.

구체적으로 이 연구는 현재 선수들의 해외 이주현상에 대한 현상을 이해하는 실증연구로서 코스타리카의 운동선수 유출 현상에 대한 원인과 결과를 파악해보고자 한다.

본 연구는 다음과 같은 연구문제를 가진다. 1) 코스타리카 스포츠 이민자, 특히 운동 선수의 동기와 목표는 무엇인가 2) 코스타리카 이민 운동 선수의 특징은 무엇인가 3) 이민자들은 기존의 스포츠 이주 유형에 따라 어떻게 분류 될 수 있는가

본 연구의 참여자들은 다양한 범위에서 선정되었다. 3 개의 다른 대륙으로 이주한 스포츠 이민자 중 활동 범위를 프로 리그, 아마추어 팀 및 미국 대학으로, 8 개의 다른 스포츠 종목 선수로, 또한 다른 성별 및 연령대에서 참여자를 선정함으로써 구성을 다양화하였다. 뿐만 아니라, 다른 언어를 사용하는 국가로 이동하는 운동 선수, 가족 동반 이민 유무 및 연속적인 이민 경험이 있는 운동 선수가 포함되었다.

연구 결과 코스타리카 선수들이 해외로 나가는 주된 동기는 스포츠에 대한 야망, 범세계주의 및 학문적 요인으로 나타났다. 일반적으로 예상되는 것과는 달리 경제적 이득은 의사 결정에 중요한 역할을 하지 않는 것으로 확인되었다. 이민을 결정하는 운동 선수의

특성은 채용 프로세스, 의사 결정, 스포츠 경험 및 문화 경험이라는 네 가지 범주로 구성되었다.

이 코스타리카 스포츠 이민자의 분류와 관련하여 확인한 유형학은 정착민, 용병, 범세계주의자 및 야망론자이며 후에 더 잘 묘사되었다. 일부의 케이스에는, 대부분 여성 운동선수는 경제적 동기를 넘어 스포츠에 대한 열정과 사랑이 동기가 되기 때문에 사랑의 노동으로 분류 될 수 있다.

마지막으로 해당 운동선수들이 이민을 하고, 해외에서 머물면서 그들의 동기와 목표가 변화하는 것을 관찰할 수 있다. 즉, 유형학의 한 범주에서 다른 범주로 이동할 수 있다는 것이다. 이러한 변화는 각 이주 경험의 발전에 기반하여 이뤄진다.

주요어: 스포츠 이주, 스포츠 매니지먼트, 운동선수 유출현상,

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학 번: 2015-22362