‘Crossing blue lines and baselines’: examining the migrations of North American workers in British professional basketball and ice hockey

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‘Crossing Blue Lines and Baselines’:
Examining the Migrations of North American Workers in British Professional Basketball and Ice Hockey

By

Richard Elliott

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

4th July 2006

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For Lindsay,

You are the reason I am, you are all my reasons.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project would not have been possible without the help of a number of people. Particular thanks go to the various BBL and EIHL coaches, owners, agents, managers, and players who kindly gave up their time to contribute the bulk of the data which is presented herein. Thanks also go to John Ingram at FIBA Europe who provided access to the statistical data with respect to basketball, and Szimon Szemerg at the International Ice Hockey Federation, who provided access to similar data with respect to ice hockey. Thanks also go to FIBA Europe’s Sport Director Kosta Iliev, and to Andy Webb at the BBL for speaking so frankly about the global movement of players. My most sincere thanks, however, are reserved for Professor Joseph Maguire; supervisor, colleague, and friend. Without his tutelage in the sociological craft, and the benefit of his guidance in the sociological apprenticeship, this work would not have been possible. Moreover, without his gift of friendship over the period of study, the process would have been that much more difficult.
This research project is a sociological examination of global athletic labour migration. Based on a figurational/process sociological analysis, and using a critical case study tracing the movements of North American athletic labourers into Britain's professional leagues in basketball and ice hockey, the research project examines four interdependent elements of the migration figuration. The study examines those processes which motivate North American migrant workers to select the British Basketball League (BBL) or Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL) as their migration destination, the processes which motivate BBL and EIHL coaches to recruit North American workers, the mechanisms by which the recruitment of North American workers is facilitated, and the effects of North American worker involvement in the leagues.

Beyond the area of athletic labour migration this research project also provides a conceptual synthesis by combining research located within the sociology of sport and research from the sociology of highly skilled migration. The research project develops such a synthesis establishing that athletic migrants, who can justifiably be described as highly skilled using contemporary definitions, share many of the migratory characteristics identified for highly skilled workers in the broader employment environment.

This research project both builds on existing research in the fields of athletic and highly skilled migration, and develops new knowledge and understanding. It shows that the migration of highly skilled athletic workers must be considered beyond the simple macro-level determinants of the supply and demand of human capital, or the separate, and independent, push and pull factors that have been described as facilitating migrant movement. In this respect, this research project points to multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and multi-processual dynamics to better encapsulate how migratory movements are actually occurring.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research project is to examine, sociologically, a number of areas relating to the global migration of athletes. Some of the areas examined in this study have been analysed by sociologists of sport before. In these cases, the purpose of this research project is to bring knowledge and understanding up to date. Other areas have remained largely under investigated. In these areas the intent is to generate new knowledge and understanding. Beyond the sociology of sport, however, this study seeks to provide a synthesis. It seeks to examine if athletic migrants share the same, or similar, characteristics of movement identified for 'highly skilled' workers located in the broader employment environment. In this respect, it can be argued that examining athletic groups in isolation fails to see the potential usefulness of research which has examined migratory processes for other highly skilled workers. Synthesising concepts generated in the sociology of sport, and the sociology of highly skilled migration generates, therefore, additional new knowledge which has value in both areas. To achieve such a synthesis, this research project uses two critical case studies. It examines the migration of North American migrant workers in Britain's professional leagues in basketball and ice hockey.

The research project can be broadly divided into three sections. The first section establishes the theoretical and conceptual framework which will be used to underpin the study. This section examines the increasing significance of global interdependence, and the increasingly dynamic migrations of people, including both the highly skilled and athletes. It does so by integrating key concepts established within the figurational approach which is adopted throughout this work. The second section of the study then provides a socio-historical account of the development of basketball and ice hockey in Britain, and also includes an analysis of migratory patterns in the two sports across Europe. The third section is largely substantive and is made up of four chapters which address the key migratory elements being examined. These chapters examine; the migration motivations of North American migrants selecting either the British Basketball League (BBL), or the Elite Ice Hockey
League (EIHL) as their migration destination; the recruiting motivations of the coaches of BBL and EIHL clubs; the mechanisms by which knowledge relating to potential North American migrants is circulated, and the manner in which these migrants are recruited; and the affects of migrant worker involvement for indigenous player development in the two leagues.

Methodologically, the study draws on both qualitative and quantitative components. The quantitative component uses statistical data to establish trends in the movement of migrant workers in basketball and ice hockey across Europe. This data is presented in an attempt to contextualise the specific critical case studies being adopted in the research project. The qualitative component, from which the bulk of data used has been generated, draws on a mix of secondary source materials, and semi-structured interviews. Secondary source materials were used to provide a broad review of literature in the areas pertinent to this study, whilst interviews conducted with governing body representatives (both at national and European level), players, coaches, owners, managers, and agents connected to BBL and EIHL clubs, addressed the key themes being explored, and thus provided the necessary empirical data. Before it is possible to consider any of the data being examined, it is necessary to provide a brief introduction to the theoretical and conceptual framework which will be used to underpin the study.

Conceptualising the 'Problem' of Globalisation

This research project is a study of global migration. However, more than that, it is a study of globalisation. It is a study of the increasing interconnectedness of social experience, and of the increasingly complex enmeshment of all aspects of social life (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999; Held, 2000). Social experience, in a contemporary global environment is, for many people, increasingly affected by global patterns of interdependence. The development of a global economic structure, and of intensified world-wide competition (Therborn, 2000b), the augmentation of transnational corporations, and of a transnational capitalist class (Sklair, 2001), the development of transnational culture (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994),
and the increased national, trans-national, and trans-continental movement of peoples (Maguire & Bale, 1994) are all antecedents to, and results of, increasing global intensification.

Developing from work originally situated in the modernisation/international relations nexus (Robertson, 1992), Robertson contends that the term globalisation refers to both a spatial compression of the world, and an intensification of global consciousness. Waters (1995) argues, in a similar vein, that globalisation is “a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding” (p.3). In essence, both Robertson and Waters contend that developing global interconnectedness is the result of the perception of decreasing space, but increasing awareness of this space in global terms. As such, they theorise that a movement away from internal national development is evident, in favour of what Featherstone and Lash (1995) observe as the outcome of struggles between competing nation-states in a new global order. This order is built upon an increasingly complex power geometry (Maguire, 2005); a global figuration.

Globalisation, as it is experienced socially in a contemporary form, is not a recent phenomenon. Mennell (1992) and Robertson (1992) both note how global flows have developed out of a very long, uneven, and complicated series of processes. The result, Elias (1982) argues, is an increasing enmeshment of interdependencies globally. Appadurai (1990) argues that globalisation is manifest in a complex disjunctive order which captures the movement of people, technology, money, images, and ideas, in a series of ‘scapes’. Appadurai posits that, in a contemporary social environment, people live in ‘imagined worlds’, and thus the suffix scape relates to a specific form of global mentality; one which captures the complexities of global cultural development on multiple levels, and in multiple dimensions.
The diversity of interest in the study of globalisation is varied. Therborn (2000b) argues that discourses which focus upon economic difference, and the reactions elicited from such differences, the capacity of nation states to govern and control independently, the development of transnational cultural flows, and the concept of globality, are among the most pertinent areas of investigation in the contemporary model. Additionally, however, Featherstone (1990) asks if a single global culture is truly evident? It is sufficient to say at this point, that it is inappropriate to discuss global development in terms of a single global culture. Rather, it is important to determine that globalisation is manifest in multiple global cultures. As such, discussions which seek to conclude that homogenisation is the result of global development fall short of fully appreciating the intricacies of the complex power geometry of the global figuration. Rather, as Elias (1982) has noted, a commingling of both homogenising and heterogenising elements can be observed. In this respect, both a diminishing of contrasts and an increasing of varieties results in the development of multiple global cultures which manifest elements of the global, but maintain characteristics of the local at the same time. Thus, global processes should be identified as being multifaceted and multidirectional. This more processual approach should be consistent within the global model of sport also.

Global Sport

Using a developmental model introduced by Elias and Dunning (1972, 1986), and then built upon by Maguire (1999), it is possible to detail the emergence of an increasingly complex enmeshment of global interdependencies in sport. The sportisation model can be used to examine how a series of structured processes have acted as antecedents to the modern globalisation of sport, and how these processes have permeated the sportisation phases. Linking early structured processes to the civilising ‘spurts’ of the 18th and 19th centuries for example, Dunning (1999) shows how the growing significance of sport can be linked to continuing developments in state formation and functional democratisation; a process whereby new styles of conduct emerge as the power ratio between social groups moves in an equalising direction (Maguire, 1999).
In the additional phases of the developmental model, Maguire argues that shifts are evident in the overall power geometry of global sport. In this respect, Maguire notes a shift away from an Anglo/European influence in the global sport figuration, to one which is more readily informed by the American sphere of influence. A secondary shift is evident in later periods where Eastern sports cultures begin to emerge. Maguire (1999) notes how the changing power balance in the global sport figuration never results in one group’s power being total or exclusive. Thus, he points to the increasingly complex power geometry which exists in the global sport figuration. Recognising the significance of the twin concepts of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties, Maguire argues that members of different civilisational traditions both resist the dominant cultural signifier, and seek to express and develop their own cultural heritage. He uses the re-emergence of traditional folk pastimes, and the newly emerged Gay Games, and Special Olympics, among other examples, to exemplify such a point.

Framing a series of structured processes within the global sportisation process, Maguire (2004) contends that the global sports figuration is manifest in the complex mix of intended social actions and unintended consequences, which reflect and reinforce established and outsider relations, within specific power geometries. In this respect, the central elements of structured processes in the contemporary model of global sport reflect: the emergence and diffusion of achievement sport, a gendered ideology, the development of specific body practices, the increased scientisation of human expressiveness, a heightened awareness of habitat and environment, the emergence of a power elite, and the amalgamation of sport with business. Resulting from these processes is a complex disjunctive order which has the ability to both enable and constrain people, cultures, and civilisations in sport worlds.
The contemporary model of global sport is shaped by a series of disjunctive global flows which occur as a consequence of the movement of people, technology, capital, mediated images, and ideologies (Maguire, 1999). As such, the development of the global sports figuration involves the flexible interdependence of multidirectional and multifaceted movements, which are informed by a series of established and outsider positions, and which are contoured by time-space geometry, traditions and power struggles (Maguire, 2004). The contemporary global sports figuration is bound in a network of interdependency chains which are manifest in the consumption of global sports events, the consumption of global sports brands, and, of most significance for this research project, the migration of athletes.

**Global Migration**

Global migration is one form of globalisation which is more ubiquitous than any other (Held et al., 1999). Similar to the development of globalisation, human migration is not a new phenomenon. Rather, it has developed out of a series of very long term structured processes which have occurred globally through history. Early interdependencies created as a consequence of military conflict, religious diffusion, and the expansion of manufacturing and trade relations, all acted as antecedents to the contemporary global model of migration. Moreover, at later points in history, further structured processes, including the development of the slave trade and indentured labour, served to create a complex migratory web globally.

In the contemporary model, Fischer, Reiner, and Straubhaar (1997) contend that the primary motivations to migrate are linked to environmental conditions, economic wealth, political systems, social regulations, networks, and environmental amenities. More specifically, Held et al. (1999) argue that the bulk of migratory movements can be placed in a model which separates capitalist countries from those still suffering the problems associated with the fall of communism. Stalker (2000) argues that the 'new age of migration' is one which is evident in the divergence between the wealthier economies of the West, and other, less wealthy, developing nations. In such a model, tempting wage disparities are created which act as a strong
pull mechanism in the global migration figuration. Bohning (1984) argues that a correlation can be observed between wage differential and skill level. Thus, workers from relatively unskilled categories will, traditionally, be paid less than those individuals who are skilled in some manner. In the case of the highly skilled, wage disparities can be significant. In this respect, the contemporary wave of migration is increasingly reflective of the movements of workers from this latter category.

The problems associated with the global migration of highly skilled workers have been mapped out with the concept of 'brain drain', to suggest that developing countries risk losing their highly skilled labour force to the more developed nations (Iredale & Appleyard, 2001). In the contemporary phase of migration, technological and global development has resulted in changes in the structure of employment practices. Concomitantly, the increased demand for highly skilled labour in a number of spheres has been a major contributory factor in the changing composition of international migration (Iredale, 2001). Increasingly, ‘human capital’ travelling along specified migratory pathways, has created a system of ‘host’ and ‘donor’ countries. The concern for donor countries in such a system lies in determining the losses which can be justifiably sustained when their highly skilled workers migrate.

More recently research has moved away from the concept of brain drain to suggest that, as a consequence of the increasing flexibility of the global labour market, a shift has occurred from traditional settler migration, to more transient forms of temporary migration for highly skilled workers (Beaverstock, 1991). In this respect, it is argued that the movement of highly skilled workers globally creates knowledge rich communities in which capital and skills circulate (Beaverstock, 2005). In such a model, it is less likely that processes of brain drain can be observed. Rather, processes of ‘brain exchange’ or ‘brain circulation’ should be seen to be in evidence in the developing ‘network society’ (Castells, 2000), where knowledge flows are maintained by physical and technological connections.
Using contemporary definitions, such as that proposed by Iredale (2001), athletic workers, it can be argued, can be justifiably described as highly skilled given that these workers possess ‘intensive or extensive experience’ in their given field. Indeed, Castells (2000) argues that whilst highly skilled migration is reflective of the movement of specific individuals such as financial analysts, and computer programmers, so too is it reflective of a number of other workers, including athletes. These migrants are, Castells argues, workers who are employed as ‘highly skilled speciality labour’. In this respect, it may be possible to identify similarities between the migratory movements of athletic workers and other highly skilled workers globally.

Global Athletic Labour Migration

Increasingly, athletes in many sports are migrating within nation states, between nation states on the same continent, and beyond their own continents. The result is a contemporary sporting culture whereby athletic labour flows traverse geographical, political, cultural, ethnic, and economic boundaries (Maguire, 1999). The emergence of host and donor countries in the supply and demand of global athletic labour has resulted in the development of a series of ‘talent pipelines’ (Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield, and Bradley, 2002). The identification of talent pipelines can be used to help make sense of athletic migration, by observing the transitory patterns which exist, globally, in the movement of athletic labour. Beyond these specific transitory patterns of movement, however, patterns are also evident with respect to the seasonal movement of athletic labourers. In this respect, some athletic migrants can be identified as shifting their activities between the northern and southern hemispheres, in an attempt to facilitate continuous play over two or more seasons (Maguire, 1996). In some cases, athletic migration is framed by both transitory, and seasonal migratory patterns. Given these patterns of movement, the migration experience can be seen to differ for each migrant.
Maguire (1996) has developed a preliminary typology of sport labour migration to show how the motivations and experiences of athletic migrants are contoured by a series of complex interdependent processes. Using such a typology, politics, history, economics, geography, and culture, can all be seen to be influential in determining both the motivations of athletic migrants influencing them to relocate to ply their trade, and in affecting the ways in which they experience the migration process in the host nation. It is not possible to argue that athletic labourers are motivated to relocate to ply their trade for any single reason. Whilst some athletes may be more significantly motivated by short-term financial gains, others may seek a more personal development, rather than a financial one. Multi-processual dynamics should, therefore, be seen to be at work when considering the processes influencing athletic labourers to migrate; they should also be seen to be at work when considering the recruiting motivations of coaches, owners, and other officials in the host location.

Migrant athletes are increasingly being recruited as coaches begin to widen their search for the best talent (Bale, 1991; Maguire, 1999). The limited research which has been conducted in this area would seem to suggest that these workers are recruited through a series of informal networks to improve teams more rapidly, and to sidestep the time associated with the development of indigenous athletes (Bale, 1991). Migrant workers are sought out through networks of contacts in an attempt to improve performance levels for minimum expense. In this respect, the recruitment of migrant workers occurs given that these workers generally offer a higher standard of technical ability which can be taken advantage of immediately, but which will cost less than developing an indigenous athlete. The development of recruiting practices in this manner has ramifications for the development and recruitment of indigenous athletes in the host location (Bale, 1991).
The consistent movement of athletic migrants along determinable talent pipelines, and the increased use of the migrant worker to sidestep the time and expense associated with the development of indigenous athletes, whilst providing specific benefits for teams in the host location, can be seen to change the role of the indigenous athlete. Increasingly, in some host locations indigenous athletes find themselves in more peripheral positions. In these locations, researchers have argued that the recruitment and retention of migrant workers acts to disadvantage domestic talent, having ramifications for the development of youth programmes and national team advancement more broadly (Kivinen et al., 2001). These are processes that have been seen to be in evidence in British basketball and ice hockey.

Global Athletic Labour Migration in British Basketball and Ice Hockey

The sports of basketball and ice hockey share similar developmental characteristics in a British context. Whilst some differences can be identified in their early developments, since periods of increased commercialisation in the 1970s both sports have virtually paralleled one another developmentally. Both are ‘import’ sports in a British context. They are sports which have faced uncertainty throughout their existence; uncertainty stemming, primarily, from their inability to break free from the periphery of British sporting culture. The inability of either sport to truly capture the imagination of the British public has resulted in the instability of league formation and the various concomitant problems associated with this. The organisation of both sports in Britain has been, at best, haphazard, and fraught with disparity and dispute. Governing bodies have been launched, and then liquidated, organised, and reorganised. Leagues have been developed, only to subsequently fold, or be forced to change structure. Teams have been formed, and then disbanded, only to re-form, and then disband again, sometimes after a very short period, on other occasions following prolonged periods of competition. Both sports have experienced promising highs in their development. However, both have also experienced low points at which they have fought to maintain an existence.
The involvement of migrant workers in British basketball and ice hockey is something that has become synonymous with the sports. Indeed, whilst the introduction of American migrants to British basketball has been relatively recent, occurring as a result of a broader series of processes in the 1970s (Maguire, 1988b), it is difficult to identify a period in British ice hockey history when Canadian migrant workers have not been involved (Drackett, 1987). In this respect, clearly identifiable talent pipelines are observable flowing from the United States to the British Basketball League, and from Canada to the Elite Ice Hockey League. The reasons why North American migrant workers select Britain as their migration destination are varied; they are reflective of a complex mix of geographical, political, cultural, ethnic, and economic processes (Maguire, 1996). The effect of migrant involvement in the sports is less varied however. For the most part, the consistent employment of North American migrant workers has been seen to negatively affect opportunities for indigenous talent, increasingly marginalising the position of indigenous players who assume more peripheral roles (Maguire 1988b, 1996).

Using the critical case studies both the issue of migrant motivation and the effect of migrant employment will be examined in this research project. It is these areas that will build on existing research and will be brought up to date. Other elements of the migration figuration which have, to this point, been largely underdeveloped will also be examined. These areas include the recruiting motivations of club coaches, and the mechanisms through which migration is facilitated. Before these specific areas can be examined it is necessary to provide a review of existing literature in the areas pertinent to this research project, and to establish the theoretical and conceptual framework onto which the study will be built. Chapter One will attempt to provide both of these elements.
CHAPTER ONE
ATHLETIC MIGRATION AND GLOBALISATION PROCESSES: SOME THEORETICAL OBSERVATIONS

Before it is possible to attend to the various specific problems that have been explored, it is necessary to provide a broad introduction to the various theoretical and conceptual components which have been used to underpin the sociological observations being made. In this respect, it is necessary to create a suitable conceptual framework onto which the broader study of athletic migration, and the synthesis of athletic migration and highly skilled migration may be positioned. This chapter comprises, therefore, an introduction to the theoretical concepts, grounded in the figurational approach, which have a specific resonance for a study of this type, framed within a review of pertinent literature. It will begin with a broad introduction to the concept of globalisation, viewed from a figurational perspective. In this respect, this part of the chapter will examine how many spheres of contemporary human experience have been affected by a series of structured processes which have intensified the interdependence of people globally. The second part of the chapter will then examine how these processes, and an increasing global interdependence, have been manifested in sport. Following this introduction to globalisation, the third part of the chapter will begin to examine developmental processes in human migration, arguably one of the most ubiquitous aspects of globalisation. It will analyse the broad development of migratory trends, before examining, more specifically, the migration of the highly skilled and that of athletic workers globally.

Globalisation: An Introduction

Waters (1995) argues that if sociologists had proposed researching and writing about globalisation in the mid 1980s, they would have had to overcome a “wall of stony and bemused incomprehension” (p.1). This is a sentiment that is shared by Therborn (2000a) who argues that the study, and continual development, of globalisation is the “most immediate legacy to the new century of the social sciences of the outgoing 20th century” (p.149). He goes on to suggest that the study of
globalisation is, predominantly, a concern of the second half of the 1990s, but does suggest that significant sociological contributions were made to the study of globalisation in the first half of the 1990s also, specifically identifying work by Robertson (1992). Robertson himself argues that his own work on the general theme of globalisation and its implications, can be traced back to the mid-1960s. In this period, Robertson draws attention to work which dealt with the problems which were situated within the modernisation/international relations nexus, and specifically highlights analyses which sought to identify the problems associated with the modernisation of third world countries. That said, Robertson still suggests that the use of the term, globalisation, is relatively new in academic circles, and that it was not recognised as a significant concept until the second half of the 1980s.

It is possible to argue that the study of globalisation gained credence rapidly in the latter part of the twentieth century, and that there is currently little evidence to suggest that such a trend should cease in the current social context (Robertson, 1990). Contemporary key texts, such as those by Robertson (1992), Hall, Held and McGrew (1992), Albow (1996), Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (1999), and Appadurai (2001), are examples which, among others, detail the development and popularisation of globalisation study in the later 20th early 21st century period. Detailing the increasing amount of work in this area demonstrates, to some extent, the rise in popularity of the study of globalisation, and the use of the term, for the social sciences and beyond. As Giddens notes:

The global spread of the term is evidence of the very developments to which it refers. Every business guru talks about it. No political speech is complete without reference to it. Yet even in the late 1980s the term was hardly used, either in the academic literature or in everyday language. It has come from nowhere to be almost everywhere. (2002, p.7)

It can be argued, taking the above contentions in mind, that global development has increased rapidly in propensity more recently. However, that is not to say that the development of increasingly global interchange is a recent phenomenon. Using a developmental approach, it is important to probe beneath the surface of the concept,
in an attempt to examine the series of very long-term structured processes which have led to the more recent development of global cultural flows. These processes require closer examination.

**The Structured Development of Global Processes**

To better understand the application of the concept of globalisation to this study, it is important to establish the manner in which the contemporary model of global development has been derived from the observation of a series of very long-term, uneven, structured processes. To achieve this understanding, it is appropriate to consider the work of Therborn (2000b), who provides a useful developmental framework. Therborn’s six wave model has particular resonance for this study, as it can be used, not only to contextualise global development, but also to show how the increasingly dynamic global movement of peoples occurs as both an antecedent to and a corollary of developing global processes.

The first wave in Therborn’s (2000b) model shows how the diffusion of world religions occurred as part of the gradual development of transnational and transcontinental civilisations. The most significant period in this first wave was the 4th to 7th century period of the new Christian era. In this period, Christianity became the dominant religious model in Europe, and began to spread to parts of Africa, as a result of the expansion of the Roman Empire and the diffusion of Roman culture. By the late 7th century most of the world’s modern religions had been established at different points around the globe, and as a corollary of their development, the spread of language linked to religious writings was evident. The first wave also showed how early global processes were connected with the first mass migrations of peoples in Europe. Germanic tribes migrated South and West, whilst Huns, Slavs, Avars, and Magyars, entered Eastern Europe from Asia.
The second wave of global processes in Therborn's (2000b) model develop as part of European colonial conquests in naval explorations, beginning in the late 15th century. Initially conducted by the Portuguese, naval explorations were also conducted by the French, Dutch, Spanish, and by the British. The results of naval exploration were varied. However, one of the primary consequences of the development of open sea navigation, and overseas, transcontinental trade in this period was the expansion of forced migration, resulting as a consequence of the development of the slave trade.

The third developmental wave in Therborn’s (2000b) model is described as a 'global thrust' and was reflective, primarily, of intra-European power struggles. The third wave shows how a series of global wars which occurred between Britain and France, in North America, the Caribbean, India, and through Dutch involvement with France in South Africa and Southeast Asia, drove a series of global processes. In Europe, specifically, a combination of the wars of the Spanish and Austrian succession and the Napoleonic wars, which, together, stretched from 1700-1815, can be seen to result in the mass migrations of peoples and their cultural capital.

The fourth wave was driven by European imperialism. It occurred as a consequence of the development of bulk trade, voluntary forms of trans-oceanic migration, and the expansion and improved speed and efficiency of global forms of communication. It was also driven by mass migrations from Europe to the Americas and Oceania. The First World War formed the centre of conflict in this period, involving the entire British Empire. At its conclusion, and as a corollary of its existence, the first global state organisations were introduced; the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation.
The fifth global developmental wave was reflective of the reduction in costs associated with global travel and communication. However, more significantly, this wave was reflective of the development of global inequalities, primarily stemming from the ideologically driven Cold War. It is a wave in which the United States gains great power, and a period in which many forms of cultural capital from that country are exported around the globe.

The sixth and, up till now, final wave is one in which the politico-military dynamic of the Cold War has been overtaken by a mainly financial-cum-cultural one. The development of new global financial markets has resulted in a contemporary culture of global financial competition. Moreover, the re-emergence of mass transnational and transcontinental migration has reversed, in part, the trends of the fourth wave. Migration in the sixth wave occurs, in many cases, South to North and from West to East. Resulting, as a consequence of labour shortages in the core capitalist countries, migration in the post Second World War period has been epitomised by the expanding disparity between the capitalist nations and those still suffering the consequences of the collapse of communism.

Therborn's model is useful in establishing a framework for the development of global processes over time. The model can be used to show how a series of global flows have intensified over the course of a very long-term transformation. However, and more significant for a study which is informed by figurational sociology, the model can be used to demonstrate how, over time, previously independent groups of people have become increasingly interdependent, and how contemporary social life has become increasingly characterised of a developing web of interdependencies globally. These concepts require closer examination.
Globalisation as Interdependence: Key Issues

Derived from the work of Elias, one of the key concerns for figurational sociology lies in attempting to understand the ways in which people are affected by the problems of interdependence. A figurational approach, when applied to the problem of globalisation is, therefore, centrally concerned with understanding how people are bonded to one another globally, and the manner in which multiple global networks of interdependence, or global figurations, enable and constrain the actions of people (Maguire, 1988a). Critical of work which neglects to consider the significance of interdependence, figurational sociologists argue that the conventional distinctions between the 'individual' and 'society', and 'agency' and 'structure', create something of a false dichotomy, one which posits that people act independently of each other, and the social world. Theoretical perspectives which adopt such a position fall short, it can be argued, of fully engaging with the manner in which people are bonded together in complex and dynamic constellations.

Using the concept of interdependence, figurational sociologists can consider a move away from the notion that social structures consist of a number of loosely connected spheres operating upon a balance of relative causal weights (Maguire, 1988a), and place emphasis upon the global interdependencies between social groups. Figurational sociologists are, therefore, critical of work which seeks to base its conclusions upon single universal key determinants for specific aspects of human expressiveness, preferring, instead, to develop knowledge, 'in the round', by examining the many interdependent parts of the overall global figuration. Approached in this manner, composite units cannot be understood on their own, independently of other composite units, and the overall configuration. The units must be explained with respect to the ways in which they are composed of constituent parts, and are bonded to other units. Their "functional interdependence has an explanatory function" (Elias, 1974, p.26).
The concept of figuration can be used to provide a more adequate understanding of social actions in a global context, by examining the developing web of interdependent processes at work. Figurational sociologists are not simply concerned to consider the significance of developing global relationships in space, however, but also to contextualise the continuance of existing global figurations, by examining the ways in which they have developed over time. Figurational sociologists recognise, therefore, that in order to capture the character of human life globally, figurations should be considered to be dynamic in nature, and, therefore, constantly in flux. Viewed in this manner, figurational sociologists demonstrate how the discipline, when applied to issues of globalisation, is concerned with the problem of how and why, in the course of long-term global transformations, societies have developed and affected individuals with both planned intentions and unplanned consequences. This idea requires some spelling out.

In the course of the long-term development of societies both locally and globally, the complexity of social figurations is reflective of developing dynamisms. That is to say that, over time, bonds of interdependency have the capacity to increase or decrease in size and composition, and to reflect greater or lesser levels of complexity (Elias, 1978). As global figurations develop, so the possibility of their giving rise to outcomes that had not previously been foreseen becomes more likely (Elias, 1978). Planned intentions, therefore, whatever they may be, are more likely to produce unplanned and unintended consequences if they occur within a more complex global figuration, involving the actions of many people. Therefore, rather than speaking of people developing societies, figurational sociologists place the emphasis on the process of overall development within the global figuration. A development which is bound by both intended and unintended movements: which is not immediately controllable by the members of the figuration (Elias, 1978), but which is characterised by the power distribution evident within it.
The constantly changing dynamics of each global figuration is dependent upon the distribution of power within it. It is, therefore, important to appreciate that power is a central dimension of all social relationships. For figurational sociology, unlike some other sociological approaches, power cannot be conceptualised as a substance, or property, of which any one individual, or social group, can claim ownership. Thus, “power is not an amulet possessed by one person and not by another” (Elias, 1978, p.74). It must instead be conceptualised as a fact of social existence, a structural characteristic, and, therefore, an aspect of all social relationships (Elias & Dunning, 1986).

Many sociological approaches oversimplify the problem of power, neglecting to explore the concept’s complexities, preferring, instead, to focus on a single form. To simplify the problem of power, universal determinants, such as economic sources, for example, are identified as the source of power, held by one group, to be wielded over others (Elias, 1978). The main problem with approaching the concept in this manner is that all forms of the exercise of power are traced back to this single source. Therefore, these approaches lend little to an overall understanding of the relative positions of social groups. Rather, to achieve such an understanding, power must be understood to be an integral element of all social relationships, distributed between the various members, or groups, in a figuration. In this respect no member, or group, within a figuration can be deemed to possess all power, and, equally, no member, or group, in a figuration can be deemed to possess no power. Each member, or group, will possess power in some part. The question is how evenly, or unevenly, the power, within a figuration, is distributed? In this respect, Elias argues that “whether the power differentials are large or small, balances of power are always present wherever there is functional interdependence between people” (1978, p.74). To help illustrate this idea, Elias devised a series of what he called ‘game models’.
At the most basic level, Elias (1978) conceptualised a two-person game where one player is superior to the other. In this case, it is appropriate to assume that player A is very strong, whilst player B is very weak. It can be argued that the strength of player A enables him to force player B to make particular moves. Thus, player A has a higher measure of control, and therefore power, over player B. The key, however, to power in this model, and within figurationally guided research more broadly, is that, unlike some theoretical models, player A does not have absolute power over player B. Player A must still determine his moves based on those of player B irrespective of how weak player B may be in the game. Moreover, without player B, no game could occur in the first place. Therefore, whilst an uneven power ratio exists between player A and player B, both players have power over each other. If no power existed in the relationship between player A and player B, then there would be no game.

Within a two-person game, as with any relationship, it is possible that the balance of power will change. Thus, if player A's control over player B decreases, so player B's power over player A will increase correspondingly. Concomitantly, as one players power over another diminishes and power in the relationship becomes more evenly distributed, so the possibility of forcing a particular tactic upon an opponent becomes less likely. As the ability to control the moves of the other player becomes lessened, so the dependency between the players increases, as do their moves in the changing figuration of the game. Elias argued that, by the twelfth move of the game, it begins, more identifiably, to resemble a social process, and less so an individual plan imposed by one player with greater power over another.

The figurational conception of interdependence addresses a level of integration which cannot be comprehended by reference to individuals conceived of as if they could exist on their own (Elias, 1978). Rather, figurational sociology considers the differential interdependencies of people, by considering the complex and multi-layered distribution of power within a figuration. For the purpose of this analysis these complex, multi-layered, and multi-dimensional distributions of power are referred to as 'power geometries'. Figurational sociologists frequently refer to power
differentials in terms of ‘balances’ or ‘ratios’. These terms are useful. However, it can be contended that the use of terms such as these distort the complex nature of power distribution, they infer that a two-dimensional relationship exists in the distribution of power between groups in a figuration. Accordingly, the term power geometry can be used to infer that power is distributed between multiple groups bonded together in a series of ‘spatial relationships’. When conceived of in this manner, the complex distribution of power in a figuration can be captured multidimensionally and can be used to encapsulate the spatial expansion of a figuration, and the long-term processual development of it over time (Maguire, 2005). When considered with respect to the problem of globalisation, the concept of interdependence and the complex distribution of power shows how the adherents to different cultures have the ability to both accept and resist global flows. This area requires further examination.

The Global/Local Debate: Diminishing Contrasts and Increasing Varieties

Writers concerned with the general area of globalisation have sought to suggest that global processes are both antecedent to, and the result of, an increasingly complex interconnectedness and enmeshment of all aspects of contemporary social life (Held et al., 1999; Held 2000). Increasingly, societal development is conceptualised as occurring, not as a consequence of internal social change, but, rather, as a result of a more global development (Maguire, 1999); a development which is encapsulated by the blurring of national borders, the development of a global cultural economy, and the intensification of trans-societal flows (Featherstone & Lash, 1995).

The intensification of trans-societal flows is facilitated by a process of what Giddens terms ‘time-space distantiation’ (1990). This process, he determines, reflects how, in a contemporary social context, ‘places’ remain fixed, but the time taken to rapidly traverse space, decreases considerably. In this respect, a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order is created which reflects the global movement of people, capital, communications, media, and ideas (Appadurai, 1990). Each of these
is said to have the ability to traverse the globe at varying rates. Whilst people, using modern forms of transportation, can now move, relatively freely, around the globe at great speed, global forms of communication facilitate the almost instantaneous global transportation of capital, media, and ideas. Contemporary global flows are reflective, therefore, of two dimensions; a ‘stretching’ of spatial relationships, and an intensification of global interdependence.

The resultant effects of developing cultural intensification have been mapped out in a range of theoretical traditions, which can be broadly divided into two theoretical schools; those who endorse a single-cause approach, and those who favour multi-causal logic. The former group, whose central contentions are most commonly based around a modernisation thesis, seek to suggest that global flows lead, inevitably, to a homogenisation of cultures, and eventually, following an almost linear movement, reflect the Western model of development (Maguire, 1999). The adherents to models, who assume that cultural imperialism is the outcome of developing global trends, most commonly seek to attribute the development of these trends to a single universal component, be it the economy, technology, or the media. Cultural imperialist accounts frequently refer to terms such as ‘Westernisation’, or ‘Americanisation’, in an attempt to capture the homogenising tendencies said to be involved in cross-cultural processes, and the manner in which one culture may dominate another. These models fail to identify, however, the ways in which an indigenous population may differentially interpret, understand, and/or resist the cultural manipulation levied upon them by the carriers of a dominant culture (Maguire, 1994c). Some theorists have accordingly concluded that this is a non-productive line of thinking.

Several objections have been raised regarding those accounts which place an emphasis upon homogenisation. Robertson (1990), for example, contends that increasing cultural enmeshment is reflected in the emergence of a new global diversity, one in which citizens are becoming more aware of ‘otherness’, and are appreciating individual differences more than previously. The reassertion of local
identities is representative of the manner in which cultural products are actively interpreted and used by those who consume them (Maguire, 1999). These models of social development accordingly contend that increasing heterogenisation, rather than homogenisation, is a major outcome of global development.

In stressing the formation of a more or less integrated global culture, the danger lies in overstating either the case for homogenisation or that for heterogenisation. Therefore, instead of approaching the problem of global development from either of these marginal poles, it is necessary to conceptualise the manner in which the processes of integration/disintegration, unity/diversity, are interwoven (Robertson, 1992). It can be argued that the figurational interpretation of global cultural development can be used to address such processes of interweaving.

Using a figurational approach, it is possible to identify how more recent global formations, reflected in the increasing interdependency of political, economic, cultural, and social patterns, have arisen out of an interweaving between the planned intentions of individuals and groups, and the unplanned outcomes resulting from them (Maguire, 1999). Contemporary global patterns are examples of a series of structured processes. This development has resulted in a densening of interdependency chains globally, and, therefore, previously independent groups of people around the world have become increasingly interdependent. Built through a series of power struggles which are representative of an enmeshment of multidirectional movements (Maguire et al., 2002) and established and outsider positions (Maguire, 2005), the increasing intensification of interconnectedness is reflective of a series of civilisational struggles, which, as Therborn's (2000b) model has shown, are very long-term in nature (Maguire, 1999). A number of areas here require closer examination.

Approaching the problem of globalisation from a figurational perspective permits the avoidance of a number of conceptual snares. One such trap is the seemingly non-resolvable debate between those who question whether globalisation results in a homogenisation or heterogenisation of cultures (Maguire, 1994c). From a
figurational stance, neither thesis can be described as being wholly correct. Rather, a series of more accurately reflective points must be found on the continua existing between these poles. Therefore, a commingling of both elements can be observed. Such an observation is possible using the twin concepts of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties.

During the long-term development of Western societies, it can be noted how the contrast between acceptable behaviour for different class groups have diminished. According to Elias:

The conversion of ‘alien’ social constraints into self-restraints, into a more or less habitual and automatic individual self-regulation of drives and affects – possibly by sword or starvation – is taking place in the West increasingly among the masses, too. (2000, p.383)

The development of these processes reflected an increased enmeshment between the established (upper strata) and outsider (lower strata) groups, and the changing power balance between them. As the dependency between the groups involved moved in an equalising direction, so the contrasts which had previously distinguished them began to diminish (Maguire, 1999). Concomitantly, however, whilst a diminishing of contrasts was evident, so too, within the overall movement, was it possible to identify a counter-movement, where the contrasts increased again. As Elias noted:

In accordance with the balance of power, the product of interpretation was dominated first by models derived from the situation of the upper class, then by the pattern of conduct of the lower, rising classes, until finally an amalgam emerged, a new style of unique character. (2000, p.386)

Elias referred to the power aspects of this process as ‘functional democratization’, and determined that as the power ratio between social groups moved in an equalizing direction, so new styles of conduct emerged (Elias, 2000). Therefore, as the balance of interdependence between established and outsider groups changes, both a diminishing of contrasts and an increasing of varieties is evident (Elias, 1978). These
concepts can be applied beyond the Western model in order to better interpret the global patterns of development.

In the same manner in which modes of conduct have been observed as spreading between established and outsider groups within particular European nations, so too have they been observed spreading beyond geographical boundaries, primarily as a corollary of Western colonisation. With Western societies assuming the position of a global establishment over time, the spread of Western forms of conduct occurred as a consequence of the migration and settlement of occidentals in other nations (Elias, 2000). In the same ways in which established groups had colonised outsider groups during the internal development of Western societies, so, too, have such processes been evident in the relations between the West and ‘outsider’, i.e. non-Western societies (Elias, 2000). Colonisation by established Western groups resulted in the spread of forms of conduct, tastes, and sports beyond the West. However, increasingly, as the interdependency between the established and outsider groups changed, non-Western codes and customs began to permeate Western societies also (Maguire, 2004). As the spread of Western civilisation increased, so large parts of the world which had previously been independent, became dependent upon one another (Elias, 2000). The result was a commingling of patterns of conduct, derived originally from very different social and cultural groups (Maguire, 1999, 2005).

The diminishing of contrasts and the increasing of varieties evident within Western civilisation, and between the West and non-occidental societies shows how, from a very early stage of global development, the established position of the West was challenged. Indeed, as Therborn’s (2000b) model discussed earlier, and the sportisation model will show later, Western culture had been permeated by elements of non-Western cultural capital long before the West was established as the dominant cultural signifier in the global figuration (Maguire, 2004). Moreover, the contrasts within Western culture differed greatly also. The forms of commingling were, therefore, varied, and dependent upon the form of colonisation, the specific regions’ history and structure, and the degrees of enmeshment of their political, economic, and
military interdependencies (Maguire, 2004). In this respect, tracing the global development of specific areas is dependent upon an observation of the manner in which diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties are individually effective over time. Thus, in a specific area or region, at one point, it might be possible to identify the former, and at another, the latter. The outcome will, however, largely be a consequence of the balance of power between established and outsider groups (Maguire, 2004). It is wrong accordingly to assume that global developments simply reflect the activities of established groups alone. This is a model which should be seen to be consistent with the global development of sport also. It is to this area that the chapter now turn.

Globalisation, Sportisation, and Global Sport

The sportisation process can be used to help make sense of how a series of structured processes have developed over time and led to the emergence of modern sport as a consequence of planned intentions and unplanned consequences. The process shows how, initially, ‘civilizing spurts’ which occurred in the 16th and 17th but mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries involved the emergence of more organised games and pastimes governed by written rules (Dunning, 1986). Originally developed by Elias and Dunning (1986) and including two primary sportisation phases, it is Maguire (1999) who has sought to expand the model to include more recent phases in the global development of sport.

Elias and Dunning’s (1986) first phase of the sportisation process show how, in the 17th but mainly in the 18th century, sport-like activities or pastimes such as cricket, fox hunting, horse racing, and boxing, began to develop into their contemporary forms. The second phase involved showing how these sports diffused to other parts of the world. Association football, cricket, wrestling, tennis, rowing, croquet, and track and field, among others, were adopted and absorbed to varying degrees in different countries and cultures, primarily as a consequence of Western colonisation. Before this period, Elias notes how “‘sport’ – the social datum as well as the word – was initially a stranger in other countries” (1972, p.88).
The third phase, Maguire (1999) argues, can be described as the 'take-off' phase. In this period, toward the end of the 19th century, and into the early 20th century, achievement sport and the concept of fair play diffused through both the formal and informal British Empire. Concomitantly, the establishment of international sports organisations, the development of international competition between national teams, the global acceptance of rules and governance for specific sports, and the organisation of global sports competitions, such as the modern Olympic Games, are all evident. In the third sportisation phase, Maguire (1999) argues, an Anglo/European influence is evident. That is to say that the primary spread and diffusion of sport in the third phase, (and also the earlier phases) was from Britain and Continental Europe, to other parts of the world. The fourth phase in Maguire’s model identifies a shift in such a pattern. In the 1920s and 1930s Maguire contends sports such as baseball, basketball, ice hockey, and volleyball diffused “to those parts of the world more centrally linked to the ‘American’ sphere of influence” (p.84). The result of diffusion in this manner was a diminishing of contrasts in these sports globally.

Whilst a shift in the diffusion of sport was evident in the fourth phase, it is also possible, toward the end of this period, to detail the gradual decline of the superiority of Britain and Continental Europe in the development, management, administration, and regulation of sports globally. It is also possible to observe, with increasing regularity, British (English) teams being beaten by national teams from nations to which specific British sports had originally diffused (Maguire, 1999). In addition, the development of national team competition demonstrates the increasing significance of sport in binding people to their nation in this phase. Thus, throughout the various sportisation phases, sport came increasingly to be used as a source for the manifestation of national identities.
Maguire's (1999) fifth sportisation phase involves what he calls a 'creolisation' of sport cultures. In this context, whilst phase four had witnessed a diminishing of contrasts, as a consequence of American influences in sports development phase five is witnessing an increasing of varieties. Maguire argues that, in the same manner in which the established Western dominance was challenged in the broader global model, so, too, were similar processes evident in sport. The hegemonic control of the West evident in the earlier sportisation phases could no longer be fully asserted, and hence a commingling of sports cultures began to become evident in this fifth phase. A further shift is evident in the diffusion of sports in this phase. Whilst earlier phases had witnessed diffusion from Britain and then the United States, in the fifth phase, more diffusion is evident from East to West. The increasing popularity of Eastern martial arts and sumo in the West provides evidence of this.

The concept of a sportisation process can be used to show how, over very long periods of time, established Western sporting practices have diffused to other parts of the world. However, the process also shows how, in some places and at certain times, the acceptance of these practices and the dominance of the West have been challenged. The result, for the contemporary global sport figuration, is that both a diminishing of contrasts and an increasing of varieties is evident. Global sport has become more than a mechanism for cultural interchange, however. Rather, the global sport figuration exemplifies a complex, disjunctive network of interdependencies which both enables and constrains people in sport.

The contemporary global sport figuration is shaped by a series of global flows. It has a disjunctive order which has developed as a consequence of the movement of people, technology, capital, mediated images, and ideologies (Maguire, 1999). The development of the global sport figuration involves a flexible network of multidirectional movements and forms an interdependent figurational field of established and outsider positions, which are contoured by time-space geometry, traditions and power struggles (Maguire, 2004). The contemporary global sport figuration is bound up in a global network of interdependency chains which reflect
the consumption of global sports events, the consumption of global marketing brands, and the movement of athletes.

Maguire (1999) identifies the movement of athletes, coaches, administrators, and sports scientists as one of the most significant global flows in the global sports figuration. With greater frequency, athletes and other groups connected to sport are criss-crossing the globe as part of a global sports system. Without their interdependence within the complex disjunctive order, which includes global communication, finance, politics, media, and ideology, however, it has been argued, that the migration of athletes would not be possible (Maguire, 1999). That is, their movement must be identified as a crucial element within the broader global sport figuration.

In addition to the movement of athletes, the increased globalisation of ‘mega-media’ sports events (Rowe, 2003) such as the Olympic Games and the soccer World Cup, can be used to illustrate the further densification of interdependency chains in global sport. Global sporting events such as these can be viewed as key exemplars of globalisation. Much of their significance in global terms is attributable to the amount of media coverage secured by events of this scale (Tomlinson, 1996). Maguire (1993) contends that the development of a media/sport production complex has resulted in a context within which it is “difficult to underestimate the extent to which elite level sport and the media are interwoven” (p.29).

As Maguire (1993) notes the significance of the interdependency between global media and global sport in the overall figuration should not be underestimated. Equally, the increasingly identifiable densification of interdependency chains between global sport and global marketing brands should not be overlooked either. Maguire encapsulates the significance of such processes in his analyses detailing the development of basketball (1988b), American football (1990), and ice hockey (1996) in Britain. In these studies, Maguire captures the increasing interdependence which is evident between the sports governing bodies, the media, sponsors, advertisers, and
other groups associated with the global development of the sports. Maguire also seeks to detail the complex power geometries which exist with respect to competing groups in the sports as their global development intensifies. To exemplify his observations, Maguire notes how, with respect to ice hockey:

Citizens of countries spread across the globe regularly view satellite broadcasts of National Hockey League (NHL) ice hockey matches. The best players drawn from North America, Europe and Asia perform in these games. The players use equipment – sticks, skates, uniforms, etc – that are designed in Sweden, financed in Canada, assembled in the USA and Denmark and then sold on to a mass market in North America and Europe. (2004, pp.8-9)

This example demonstrates the complex series of social processes at work between a global media audience, whose interaction with events is facilitated by the global media/sport production complex, the global manufacture and production of equipment, the global marketing and sales of equipment, and the intercontinental migration of athletes. This final element will require closer examination in the context of the present study. However, before this, it is necessary to address the issue of global migration more broadly.

Global Migration: An Introduction

Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) argue that human migration is one form of globalisation that is more ubiquitous than any other. They argue that, in its simplest form, human migration refers to the “movement of people and their temporary or permanent geographical relocation” (p.283). Cohen (1995) contends that population shifts have been evident since the “dawn of human history” (p.1), and Hammar and Tamas (1997) detail that, at the end of the twentieth century, approximately one hundred million people are residing outside of their country of birth. That, in itself, might appear to be a highly revealing statistic which effectively demonstrates the scale of migration in a contemporary context. However, to be truly indicative of the scale of global migration such a figure must be juxtaposed with the number of those who have not moved; a figure of six thousand million. In reality, whilst migration might appear superficially to be a growing trend (and as this work
will seek to address, in some spheres, including sport, it is), it is still the case that ninety-eight percent of the world’s population remain in the country in which they were born (Hammar & Tamas, 1997).

Whilst statistics such as those presented above outline, in a very simple form, levels of migration at the end of the twentieth century, it is important to make clear that human migration is a highly complex phenomenon (Johnson & Salt, 1990). Contemporary antecedents to migration are many and varied, and can include overpopulation, poverty or economic stagnation (Sassen, 1988), economic or technological development (Hammar & Tamas, 1997), international wage disparities, political or social disruption (Stalker, 2000), or movement to ply a highly skilled trade (Iredale, 2001; Iredale & Appleyard, 2001). Moreover, the individuals involved in the migration process have differed over time in motivation and experience. They include missionaries, military personnel, slaves, indentured migrants, the aristocracy, merchants, bureaucrats, settling nomads, or peasant agrarians (Held et al., 1999).

To fully appreciate contemporary migration patterns, it must be understood that, as a dynamic process, the antecedents to the migration of people and their labour have changed over the course of the long-term development of societies. Thus, the motivations for migration in a contemporary context have developed out of a series of interdependent long-term, often blind and unplanned developmental processes. In this respect, and in order to better understand the development of migration processes in a contemporary context, it is necessary to provide some historical context.

Held et al. (1999) detail four historical waves of global migration. These involve flows of people in the pre-modern period (before 1500), the early-modern period (1500-1760), the modern era (1760-1945), and those which are occurring today (1945 onwards). Within this model, Held et al. also consider three separate waves which include the slave trade, indentured labour and migration during global war. Whilst all of these waves have significance for the present study, it is the later periods, from approximately the fifteenth century onwards, that will provide the focus.
for the first element of this analysis. That said, it is still important to briefly discuss the early period in order to provide greater contextualisation. To enhance clarity, in this study three historical waves of global migration will be examined; an 'early', a 'modern', and a 'late-modern' wave.

*The 'Early' Wave: Pre-Modern / Early-Modern, 200BC – 1500AD*

Some of the earliest migratory movements occurred in a period around 200BC in Asia, in which approximately two million migrants moved within the Han state (Held et al., 1999). Even though this migratory movement was regional rather than global in nature, movements resulting from military conflict were occurring between Mongolia and China, and, in some cases, movements were reaching across Asia and into the Middle East and Europe even in this early period (Held et al., 1999). In the Middle East, the increasing significance of Islam, and the death of Mohammed in 632, provided the greatest boost to outward migration by Arabs in that area (Ahmed, 1997; Elias, 1982). In Africa around that time a network of migrant communities was developing around ports and trading posts along the Eastern coast. Migration based on agrarian development in what is now Cameroon and Nigeria, occurred from around 100BC and continued for many centuries as well (Held et al., 1999).

In Europe, early migratory movements were based primarily around the church, military conflict, and trade (Elias, 1982). The movement of Greek and Roman armies could be identified both northward into central and northern Europe, and southward into North Africa (Held et al., 1999). During the early medieval period, skilled labourers and artisans in the mining, metalwork and textile industries migrated to developing centres of production in Europe (Bartlett, 1994), whilst the ruling elites and aristocracy moved as a consequence of military success and dynastic alliance (Held et al, 1999).
The 'Modern' Wave:

Mass Migration / The Slave Trade and Indentured Labour, 1500 – 1900

Whilst global migration is evident, given the above, from an early historical period, it is, arguably, in the ‘modern’ period that the greatest levels of global mass-migration can be identified. European colonialism in this period gave rise to a number of types of migration outward from Europe, firstly to Africa and Asia, then to the Americas, and later to Oceania (Castles & Miller, 2003). Europeans migrated as military personnel, farmers, traders, clergy, or administrators. However, as Lucassen (1995) notes, increasingly these individuals could be deemed to be ‘transmigrants’. For example, in the case of military migrants from the Dutch East India Company, many were not Dutch, but had migrated firstly to the Netherlands from Germany, and then onwards.

The emergence of mass migrations occurred initially as a consequence of the development of open sea navigation, but concomitantly, was also made possible given that migrants faced very little military resistance in the Americas or Oceania (Held et al., 1999). For most of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries migration to the Americas and Oceania proceeded slowly (Baines, 1991). However, in the early nineteenth century the migration pathway was utilised more frequently given the reduction in the cost of transatlantic travel (Held et al., 1999). In this period, and during the increased use of such a migratory route, it was from the British Isles that the majority of migrants originated (Castles & Miller, 2003).

As the development of migratory routes and processes proceeded over time, so the modes of migration have become more complex. Lucassen’s (1995) study of transmigratory processes between the Netherlands and the USA can be used as an example. However, whilst the migration of people increased dramatically in the modern period, it was the development of the slave trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which acted as a source of some of the greatest mass-migrations.
Held et al. (1999) argue that the conquest and colonisation of the Americas by European migrants was, ultimately, linked to the forcible movement of people from the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The system of chattel slavery formed the basis of labour and commodity production in the plantations of the Americas and the Caribbean where slave labour was used in the production of sugar, tobacco, coffee, cotton, and gold (Castles & Miller, 2003). Crucial in the political and economic supremacy of Britain and France, the “dominant states of the eighteenth century” (Castles & Miller, 2003, p.52), the practice of forced migration was also common to Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands (Ishemo, 1995). It is estimated that during the period in which the slave trade operated, a period which stretched from approximately 1500 to 1900, more than four million people were forcibly removed from North East, East, and Central Africa to the Middle East and the Arabian peninsula (Clarence-Smith, 2000), and that anywhere between five million and twenty million people made the Atlantic crossing as slaves to the Americas and the Caribbean (Held et al., 1999).

Souden (1984) argues that with the decline, and eventual abolition, of the slave trade in the mid-nineteenth century, the use of indentured labour began to become popularised. The indentured labour system allowed colonial economies to replace lost slave labour and acquire “free agent” contracted workers for very small amounts (Tinker, 1984, p.79). Barbados, the West Indies, earlier tobacco plantations in Virginia and Maryland, and later plantations in the Carolinas and Georgia, received large numbers of white British indentured migrant workers in the eighteenth century (Souden, 1984), whilst the first Japanese migrants travelled, in much smaller numbers, under indenture to Hawaii (then not part of the USA), the USA, Brazil, and Peru (Shimpo, 1995). These migrants were given Atlantic, or Pacific passage, board and lodging during their period of contracted employment, and minimum payment, in the form of land, money, or in kind, upon the expiration of their indenture (Emmer, 1992).
At the same time as the development of the indentured labour system, which facilitated the movement of migrants predominantly from Africa and northern Europe, the mass migration of Asian labourers was occurring as part of the ‘coolie’ system (Richardson, 1984; Jin-Hui, 1995). A truly global migration, the coolie system saw the large-scale movement of workers from India, China, Japan and Java, to the USA, and to British, French, German, and Dutch colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean (Held et al., 1999). The system was generally based on short-term indentured contracts which were bound by penal sanctions or linked to debt. Invariably, given the circumstances, the treatment of these workers, their housing, food rations, and clothing varied little from that of slaves (Emmer, 1992).

The rise, decline, and eventual abolition of the system of chattel slavery, and the subsequent popularisation and decline of the coolie and indentured systems of forced and contracted employment took place over a period of more than four hundred years (Castles & Miller, 2003). It was not until the early 20th century that the practice of indentured labour was abolished in British colonies, and even more recently – 1941 – that the coolie ordinance was abolished in Dutch colonies (Stalker, 1994).

The ‘Late-Modern’ Wave: Industrialisation and Global War, 1900 – Post 1945

On the basis of the above discussions, it is possible to contend that the dynamics of migratory processes have altered inexorably during the long-term development of societies. In a context of late modernity, it is possible to suggest, in both European and global contexts, that labour importing, and labour exporting countries can be increasingly identified. Castles and Miller (2003) argue that “the wealth accumulated in Western Europe through colonial exploitation provided much of the capital which was to unleash the industrial revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (p.56). Thus, the mass migrations of the modern period, facilitated by colonisation, acted as antecedents to the increasingly complex migratory web which would develop in the late modern wave.
Up until 1914, migration had still primarily occurred as a consequence of slavery (in the earlier period) and indentured migration (in the later period). However, with the decline and eventual abolition of these systems, differing forms of migration became evident. In the period between 1860 and 1920, the largest migratory groups to the USA were Irish, Italian, or Jewish in origin (Smyth, 1992; Castles & Miller, 2003). However, that said, representatives from many other European countries and Mexico also moved to the USA (Stalker, 2000). In Europe, Held et al. (1999) argue, the most significant destination was France, which, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had relatively small migrations to its colonial territories and a slower pace of urbanisation relative to other European nations. The migration of rural populations to towns which had occurred in England and Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not gain momentum in France until early in the twentieth century. In this period, workers migrated to France from Belgium, Italy, Iberia, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, Poland, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Mitchell, 1992).

Britain continued to be one of the primary sources of transatlantic emigration during the period of industrialisation, but, importantly at this point, also began to receive significant numbers of migrant workers. Irish workers began to migrate across the Irish sea to replace the Welsh and Scottish workers who had migrated to the USA, and at the end of the nineteenth century and into the early part of the twentieth century, increasing numbers of migrants to Britain came from Eastern Europe, Russia (of Jewish descent), Italy, and Lithuania (Mitchell, 1992). Many of these migrants moved to Britain on account of its relative economic stability and prosperity compared to their home nations, and in order to take advantage of positive wage disparities (Stalker, 2000).
Economic power is often linked to political power, and accordingly it is important at this point to suggest that the movement of labour is often based upon coercion, which sometimes involves violence, military force, or bureaucratic control (Castles & Miller, 2003). In this respect, whilst the extensiveness and intensity of migrations during the pre-1914 and post-1945 periods were closely balanced, migration during the interwar period sometimes as a direct consequence of global conflict was considerably more dynamic. During the First and Second World Wars huge migrations were evident (Castles & Miller, 2003). Generally, these migrations developed as people fled the advancing German armies. During the Second World War, approximately six million ethnic Germans in Poland migrated back to Germany, whilst after the war four million who had resided in the Soviet zone left for West Germany. Three million Poles left eastern Poland for the new Poland, and over two million ethnic Germans migrated from Czechoslovakia to Austria and Germany (Held et al., 1999).

Following the second global war of the twentieth century, mass migrations continued to occur. In this period, however, migration was not forced as had been the case in the periods dominated by slavery or indenture. Nor was it a consequence of military conflict, although this antecedent would still play a major role in global migration in the later part of the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first centuries. The distinctly observable migratory flows increasingly became consequences of the widening gap between the capitalist countries on one side, and the former socialist and poorer developing countries, on the other (Stalker, 1994). Held et al. (1999) contend that there is now almost no part of the world that is not importing and/or exporting labour. In addition to the model above which distinguishes between the capitalist countries and those which are still suffering the problems associated with the collapse of European and Soviet communism, global migratory patterns are evident in South East Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.
Migration in a Contemporary Global Context

Fischer et al. (1997) contend that environmental conditions, economic wealth and risks, political systems, social regulations, networks, and environmental amenities all act as antecedents to migration in the contemporary context. It is possible to argue that the development of these migratory antecedents emerged out of the massive population displacements which occurred as a consequence of the Second World War. Post-war migratory patterns were often more regional in scope but also increasingly complex in nature. European countries, as Held et al. (1999) note:

Became enmeshed in more extensive migrations. In the 1950s and 1960s, Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland began active programmes of overseas labour recruitment, drawing first on the Southern European periphery before extending their reach to Turkey and North Africa. (p.299)

Similar to Held et al.’s contentions, and taking into consideration the migratory trends which were evident during a period in which capitalist nations could still be separated relatively easily from developing countries or those countries which were still suffering the problems associated with the fall of communism, Stalker (2000) argues that the “new age of migration” (p.21) is epitomised by the divergence between the wealthier economies of the West and those of the developing nations. Such a divergence has led to Stalker producing a model in which tempting wage disparities have been created. Whilst many people migrate to further their careers, one of the main reasons, Stalker contends, is to earn more money, and to take advantage of the wage disparities which have been created in the context of the contemporary pattern of global economic development. Fischer et al.’s (1997) use of standard economic theory can be applied to affirm Stalker’s contentions. Such a theory assumes that the best, and only feasible, measurement of quality of life, is material wealth. Given such an assumption, Fischer et al. argue that “the most important reason for most migration decisions is wage-level differences between macro-level units” (p.55).
Building upon the significance of wage disparities, Bohning (1984) argues that wage differentials between skill levels must also be seen to be influential to migration decisions. Whilst, traditionally, workers in the unskilled migrant category might be paid less for their employment in a foreign country, as a result of indenture, or deliberate measures to either take advantage of the migrant population, or to control the numbers of immigrant workers, the highly skilled are more likely to increase their earning potential in highly profitable industries. Fischer et al. (1997) and Bohning (1984) accordingly contend that the contemporary wave of migration is increasingly a consequence of the movements of highly skilled workers who relocate to those employment markets which provide the greatest economic rewards. Such a contention may be accurate in part. However, it is important to establish that the processes influencing the migration patterns of highly skilled workers are far more complex in nature. It is to this area that the chapter now turns.

The Migration of the Highly Skilled

In the 1960s, research into the concept of ‘brain drain’ sought to examine the movement of migrants who could be categorised as highly skilled, and sought to determine the losses which could be justifiably sustained by developing countries when their highly skilled workers migrated to more developed nations (Iredale & Appleyard, 2001). Research in this area sought to determine the extent to which the movement of highly skilled workers was determined by industry and market requirements (Iredale, 2001), and considered the magnitude, composition and direction of international highly skilled migration more broadly.

Studies which have sought to discuss the movement of highly skilled workers globally have increasingly placed emphasis upon those personnel employed in the information technology (IT), law, accountancy, and banking sectors. With specific reference to these areas, research has been conducted by Beaverstock (1991, 1996, 2004, 2005), Dezalay (1990), Pellegrino (2001), Khadria (2001), Mahroum (2001), Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (2001), Iredale (2001), and Xiang (2001). The specifics of these studies are varied. However, they increasingly focus upon the movement of
Technological and global development has resulted in changes in employment practices, which increasingly result in the freedom of individuals to migrate whilst employed by TNC's or by companies with off-shore locations (Iredale & Appleyard, 2001). Concomitantly, the high demand for highly skilled workers in a number of employment spheres has been a major contributory factor in the changing composition of international migration (Iredale, 2001). To emphasise such a point, Mahroum (2001) argues that the migration of highly skilled workers is increasingly becoming enmeshed in national technological and economic development policies in some countries. In these countries, Mahroum argues, brain drains remain a problem. These nations, he contends, still traditionally assume the role of donor. Pellegrino’s (2001) work begins to attend to the problems faced by donor countries.

Pellegrino’s (2001) study details the movement of skilled migrants from Latin America, to Europe in part but more commonly to the USA. It demonstrates how, as a consequence of a series of processes, movement from Latin America to other nations has increased, particularly with respect to the highly skilled sector. Pellegrino argues that a process of brain drain is evident, and that this process stems from economic and political uncertainty in the Latin American region. This uncertainty acts as a strong push mechanism for potential migrants. However, Pellegrino’s (2001) analysis, it can be argued, is in a minority in its approach to the contemporary movement of highly skilled labour globally. More recently, research into this area has chosen to focus less upon processes which result in brain drain, and more upon processes which involve the development of ‘brain exchange’ or ‘brain circulation’. The development of ‘epistemic communities’ is held by Thrift (1996) to constitute the changing composition of global highly skilled migration. The development of these processes reflects the increasing flexibility of the transnational labour market, the
global restructuring of business practices, and the development of information technology (Castells, 2000).

Khadria (2001) argues that a "globalisation of human capital" (p.46) is apparent in a contemporary context where a convergence of international standards and forms of employment regulation is necessitated. The development of trans-nationally recognised accreditation in certain fields has resulted in a move away from nationally defined standards and national forms of regulation. With specific reference to the migration of highly skilled IT professionals moving from India to traditional host countries (UK, Canada, and the USA), and also to newly emerging host nations (Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia), Khadria contends that many skilled labour markets are, in a contemporary context, relatively free of national controls, and that the increasing significance of the IT market has created global opportunities for highly skilled professional workers in this field.

In a similar vein to Khadria (2001), Beaverstock's (1991, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2005) analyses seek primarily to examine the movement of business and managerial elites (accountants, lawyers, finance and banking specialists) within the internal labour markets of TNC's. Like Khadria, Beaverstock points to the increasing flexibility of the global labour market, and the resultant shift from traditional settler migration to more transient and temporary forms of migration for highly skilled workers. Beaverstock contends that the emergence of these migratory trends is reflective of the growing pool of highly skilled professional and managerial workers who move between the international office networks of multinational corporations (1991). Beaverstock argues that the movement of highly skilled workers is facilitated to meet "both employment and business needs" (1991, p.1133), and that specific labour demand reflects the manner in which TNC's attempt to sell themselves as 'world-firms' to clients in an increasingly flexible and globalised professional service community.
The utilisation of migrant workers as opposed to members of indigenous populations is a consequence, Beaverstock argues, of the migrants’ ability to undertake certain key business tasks and to interpret global policy in a local context (1991). Moreover, the movement of junior and newly qualified professional service staff as well as more experienced migrants, transients, and trans-migrants is used to develop international experience, and raise global awareness of business practices. In this respect, the movement of these individuals globally between key financial and business centres (e.g. London, New York, Singapore) creates knowledge-rich epistemic communities where capital and skills circulate (2005). The circulation of knowledge and skills in this manner does not suggest, however, as earlier highly skilled migration studies have, that processes of brain drain are involved. Rather, in Beaverstock’s analyses, processes of brain exchange and brain circulation can be more readily identified.

In addition to the development of more flexible employment practices and of epistemic communities, Beaverstock (2005) also points out that the contemporary migration of the highly skilled is illustrative of the developing ‘network society’. Informed by elements of the work of Castells (2000), Beaverstock contends that migration is facilitated, and maintained by a series of formal and informal relational networks. These networks, which enhance the sustainability of a ‘translocal’ community, involve human interdependencies which are maintained with both physical connections (e.g. human face-to-face contact), and technological connections (e.g. telephone, e-mail, video-conferencing). The development of these networks, both physical and technological, enhances the increasing transnationalism of the labour market.

Like Beaverstock (2005), Meyer (2001) has also examined the manner in which networks of relationships can be used to facilitate the movement of highly skilled migrant workers globally. However, unlike Beaverstock whose networks are contextualised as existing solely in space, Meyer argues that migrant networks are developed over time. More particularly, Meyer contends that temporal networks exist
which provide potential migrants with resources built upon the earlier migrations of individuals within specific contexts. Earlier migrants, Meyer suggests, act as “bridgeheads” (p.93) for potential migrants, and ease the migration process by providing information about significant migratory procedures. Meyer’s approach demonstrates how migrants gain access to employment in a host nation via a series of social relationships which result in mutually beneficial recruitments. The role of the intermediaries is therefore significant in developing a micro-meso-macro approach to global migration.

Meyer (2001) argues that an intermediary need not be a professional such as an agent or employment consultant. Rather, migration may be facilitated by family members, friends, or colleagues who have experienced the migration process themselves, and can mobilise further migrations along similar networks to their own. Given such a framework, Meyer contends that “what case studies on migrant networks reveal without any doubt is the importance of connections – human mediation – in the migration process” (p.94). In this respect, the significance of social relationships and human interdependence is crucial when considering the ‘mechanics’ of the various migratory movements which are occurring globally. Moreover, these interdependencies should be looked at in both spatial and temporal dimensions.

It becomes clear following an analysis of research in the area of global migration that the global movement of workers, particularly the highly skilled, has increased dramatically in magnitude, composition, and direction, in recent years. Iredale and Appleyard (2001) argue that the issue of highly skilled migration has come to the forefront of migration studies as the mobility of highly skilled labour has begun to increase. What also becomes clear is that athletic workers and highly skilled workers share many characteristics of movement. To this point however, studies which have examined the movement of highly skilled workers have tended to focus upon professionals based in various sectors of international business such as information technology, finance, banking, accounting, or law. Little work has been carried out with the aim of providing a synthesis between research which has
examined the movement of highly skilled workers from these sectors and the migration of professional athletic workers. In fact, Maguire (1996) is the only writer who has attempted such a task. He has done so by drawing on the work of Dezalay (1990) in an attempt to shed light on the employment of Canadian migrant workers in British ice hockey.

Few attempts have been made to define exactly what a 'highly skilled worker' is. Accordingly, it should be argued that there is a general lack of precision with respect to the use of the term in existing literature. In fact, Iredale (2001) is the only writer to provide a specific definition for this category of worker, arguing that those employed in the highly skilled sphere possess: “intensive or extensive experience in a given field” (1999, p.90). Such a definition is, at best, ambiguous. Therefore, rather than relying on definitions to determine whether a category of workers may be defined as highly skilled, more adequate conclusions can be drawn by examining various elements of the migrations which are occurring, and identifying the similarities which exist between groups. One writer who has begun to draw attention to these similarities is Castells (2000). In his broader analysis of the developing network society he argues that whilst highly skilled migration involves the movement of financial analysts, scientists, engineers, and computer programmers, it also involves the movement of “artists, designers, performers, sports stars [emphasis added], spiritual gurus, political consultants, and professional criminals” (p.130). This is not to imply that the migrants examined in this thesis are ‘sports stars’ in the sense of being elite sports celebrities who, as athletic labourers, increasingly fulfil a series of complex and varied roles as marketable commodities, role models, and political figures (Andrews & Jackson, 2001). Indeed, it could be argued that migrant workers in British basketball and ice hockey are far from the status of such groups. They are, nevertheless, still workers who are employed as highly skilled “specialty labour” (Castells, 2000, p.130). In this respect, their movements may be seen to have much in common with other highly skilled workers globally, workers who are perceived to provide specific skills which may not be readily available within an indigenous workforce. Before it is possible to establish if this is the case the
movement of these workers and the broader area of athletic migration require examination.

Labour Migration and Sport

Whilst research into athletic labour migration is still somewhat limited relative to other areas which have been examined by sociologists of sport, the spheres of sporting experience so far analysed have been relatively broad. For example, the majority of work in this area has been conducted on Association football (Maguire & Pearton, 2000; Maguire & Stead 1998; Stead & Maguire, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Lanfranchi, 1994; Lanfranchi & Taylor, 2001; McGovern, 2000, 2002; Moorhouse, 1994; Bromberger, 1994). However, research has also sought to debate the effects of athletic labour migration in rugby union and rugby league (Williams, 1994; Collins, 2000), cricket (Maguire & Stead, 1996; Hill, 1994; Malcolm, 2002), athletics (Bale, 1991; Bale & Sang, 1996), baseball (Klein, 1989, 1991a, 1991b), American football (Maguire, 1990), ice hockey (Genest, 1994; Maguire, 1996; Kivinen, Mesikammen, and Metsa-Tokila, 2001), and basketball (Olin, 1984; Maguire, 1988b; Galily & Sheard, 2002; Falcous & Maguire, 2005). Moreover, whilst such research tends to focus upon sports in the West, Chiba, Ebihara, and Morino (2001) and Kudo, Nogawa, and Kudo (2003) have examined processes of athletic labour migration in the Far East.

Looking at the contemporary situation, athletic labour migration can be seen to occur on three levels (Maguire & Bale, 1994). It can occur within nation-states, between nation-states within the same continent, or on a trans-continental level, that is globally between continents. Intra-United Kingdom migration has been examined by Williams (1994) who studied the movement of Welsh rugby union players to English rugby league teams, Moorhouse (1994) who analysed the movement of Scottish footballers into English leagues, and McGovern (2000) who examined the movement of Irish footballers (both Northern and from the Republic of Ireland), also into the English leagues. Intra-continental migration has been examined by Maguire and Stead (1998) and Stead and Maguire (1998a, 1998b, 2000) whose studies focus
specifically upon the migratory processes and experiences of Nordic/Scandmavian footballers in the English elite leagues, Maguire and Pearton (2000) who focus upon developmental issues in European Association football and the associated ramifications of athletic migration, and Klein (1989, 1991a, 1991b) in his analysis of the movement of baseball players from the Dominican Republic to the United States. Global, inter-continental migration has been studied in the work of Collins (2000) which focuses upon Australian rugby league players recruited to English rugby league teams, Hill's (1994) historiography of migrant workers from Britain's former colonies in cricket, and in Maguire's (1988b, 1990, 1996) work which examines the migration of North American players into the sports subcultures of basketball, American football, and ice hockey in Britain.

In the contemporary sporting culture, athletic labour-flows traverse geographical, political, cultural, ethnic, and economic boundaries. These flows have developed steadily with the increasing sportisation and globalisation of elite level sports (Maguire, 1999). One of the consequences of the increased global development of athletic migration is that, increasingly, patterns of athletic labour-flow between host and donor countries can be more easily identified (Maguire et al., 2002). The movement of athletic labour from a donor to a host country varies depending upon the sport. However, movement, in a targeted and specific manner is being increasingly facilitated in some sports, through a series of 'talent pipelines' (Maguire et al., 2002). The identification of talent pipelines can be used to help make sense of athletic migration, by observing the transitory patterns which exist globally in the movement of athletic labour. Beyond these specific transitory patterns of movement however, patterns are also evident with respect to the seasonal movement of athletic labourers. Cricketers and rugby league players, for example, are known to shift their activities between the northern and southern hemispheres in an attempt to facilitate two continuous seasons of play (Maguire, 1996). In some cases, athletic migration is framed by both transitory and seasonal migratory patterns. Golf and tennis players can be identified as engaging with the migration process in this manner. The point here is that the migration experience will differ for each migrant.
In an attempt to frame the manner in which athletic migrants engage with the migration experience, Maguire (1996) has developed a preliminary typology of sport labour migration (see Figure 1). Contextualising the movement of athletes by developing a model built upon five categories, Maguire (1996) makes clear that the typology merely provides a series of sensitising concepts, and that within the complex web of multidirectional processes, the migratory categories overlap and shade together in different combinations. More particularly, Maguire argues that the migration experience can be characterised by a mix of processes exemplified by what he calls ‘pioneer’ type migrants, ‘mercenaries’, ‘nomadic cosmopolitans’, ‘settlers’, and ‘returnees’. Each of these categories requires some spelling out.

Figure 1 – Typology of Sport Labour Migration

(PIONEERS
19th Century Missionaries of Empire
19th Century Sokol/Turner Movements
20th Century YMCA Movement)

(SETLERS
‘Gaelic Sports’ / Kabbadi
Basketball / Ice Hockey
Skiidraet)

(RETURNES
F1 Motor-Racing Drivers
PGA Tour Golfers
Pro Circuit Tennis Players)

(MERCENARIES
Packer Cricket ‘Circus’
‘Rebel’ South African Rugby Tours
World League of American Football)

(NOMADIC COSMOPOLITANS
Marathon Runners / Japan
Surfers / Snowboarders
‘Extreme’ Sports Participants)

(From Maguire, 1996, p.339)
The pioneer type migrant will engage with the migration process in an attempt to extol the virtues of their sport. These migrants will use the migration experience in an attempt to induce others to become involved. Their engagement will accordingly involve an educational component. By contrast, mercenaries, rather than wishing to develop their sport in a foreign land, will be more highly motivated by short-term, often financially oriented, goals. These sport migrants will have "little or no attachment to the local, to a sense of place where they currently reside or play their sport" (Maguire et al., 2002, p.33). They will, therefore, spend little time with a specific team or club before moving elsewhere in order to secure the most lucrative deal. The nomadic cosmopolitan will seek a more cultural engagement with the migration experience, rather than a financial one. The migration experience, for these workers, is based upon the ability to travel and to experience and engage with new cosmopolitan encounters. The settler is less likely to seek transient cultural encounters. Migrants in this category will use the migration experience, either intentionally, or unintentionally, to shift their permanent residence. This process may occur as the result of the migrant marrying a citizen of the country to which they have migrated, or as the result of a prolonged period of residence which may result in the naturalisation of the athlete. The returnee, by definition, will not settle in the country to which they have migrated. They will have completed a full-circle in respect of their athletic labour migration. They will have journeyed beyond their own nation to seek employment, but would have felt the lure of their homeland to be too strong and, as a consequence, will have returned home to ply their trade.

The motivations and experiences of athletic migrants, as Maguire's (1996) typology shows, vary considerably. The migration experience is shaped and contoured by a series of complex interdependent processes. Politics, history, economics, geography, and culture, can all be seen to be influential in determining both the motivations of athletic migrants and in affecting the ways in which they experience the migration process. It is not, therefore, possible to fully capture the complexities of athletic migrant movements by concluding that migration occurs as the result of any single causal factor. Rather, to produce a more adequate account, a
number of interdependent processes must be considered to be at work. These processes permeate the specific migratory experience, the typology of sport labour migration (Maguire, 1996) and, more broadly, the global sport figuration (Maguire, 1999). These motivations require closer examination.

It becomes clear from an examination of existing research on the subject of global athletic migration, that one of the most significant areas of research has been the study of what stimulates athletes to seek employment opportunities outside of their own nation. Many studies examining global athletic labour migration have sought to make sense of the global movement of athletic workers by examining this issue (see Maguire 1996; Maguire & Stead, 1996, 1998; Stead & Maguire, 2000). When considering the migration of athletic labour globally it is important to establish a framework which moves beyond monocausal explanations to capture the motivations of the migrant (Maguire, 1996). In this respect, whilst some athletic migrants can be seen to be more significantly influenced by financial gain, the process of “following the money” (Maguire & Pearton, 2000, p.761) is interconnected with a broader series of processes which reflect political, historical, cultural, and geographical patterns. For example, the movement of athletic migrants does not always occur towards what one might call the ‘core sport economies’. Rather, migration occurs on a number of levels, and for a number of reasons.

It can be argued that the North American migration of basketball and ice hockey players into European leagues is expressive of a blend of economic, cultural, ethnic, and political factors, which structure seemingly contradictory migratory dynamics when considered through the lens, as it were, of the typology of sport labour migration (Maguire, 1996). For example, whilst players migrating to the more economically powerful leagues of mainland Europe may be more highly motivated by short term financial gains, and thus more mercenary in their orientations, North American migration to Britain, it can be argued, occurs for different reasons. In the British context, and given the peripheral economic and cultural positions that the sports occupy in the UK, migration from North America tends to involve pioneer type
migrants seeking to promote their sports in underdeveloped sports cultures or migrants seeking to develop a professional engagement in their sport above the level of their home nation (Maguire 1988b, 1996). It is also possible to argue that cultural factors such as language similarity affect the migration patterns which are evident. This has certainly been observed as being the case in ice hockey where Maguire (1996) argues that the migration of French-Canadian ice hockey players to French speaking countries is as much the result of cultural similarity as it is of the more commonly associated economic factors. Genest’s (1994) work supports such an explanation for migratory movements from Canada to Europe in ice hockey.

Research by Maguire and Stead (1998) and Stead and Maguire (2000), which examined the movement of Nordic/Scandinavian soccer players into English elite soccer, also showed that migratory movements were not limited to economic factors. These migrants were seeking a professional sporting experience, an intensity of commitment, and expressing a desire to test their abilities at the highest level. Nordic/Scandinavian soccer players were more intensely motivated by personal development than migrants from many other countries. They were seeking an opportunity to prove themselves at higher standards and against a better quality of competition than would have been possible at home. They also sought a more cultural engagement with the migration experience, having decided that learning about another country and its culture was of great importance (Maguire & Stead, 1998). For these migrants, their migration represented a personal and cultural investment, rather than simply a financial one.

The desire to test ability at the highest level is also, on occasion, linked to a lack of opportunity for career development in an athlete’s home nation. In such cases, both push and pull factors may be evident in the migrants’ motivations to relocate. The lack of professional opportunity may push the athlete from their home nation, whilst the lure of a specific location may pull them in a specific direction whether on cultural or economic grounds. As the work discussed above has shown, such processes are evident in soccer, but they are also evident in other sports. Maguire and
Stead’s (1996) study examining the overseas migration of elite cricketers to English county sides can be used as an example here. Again, the primary motivating factor for migrant players in English county cricket was the lack of professional opportunities for the migrant players in their home nations. However, the role that English cricket played as a global “finishing school” (Maguire & Stead, 1996, p.10) was significant in motivating overseas players also. In the same manner in which proving ability at the top level had affected the motivations of Nordic/Scandinavian soccer players, so, too, did it affect the motivations of migrant cricketers. In both of these cases, therefore, financial rewards cannot be deemed to be the most significant element of the motivation to migrate.

Examining the motivations of athletic migrants can help to make sense of global athletic migration more broadly. However, examining the migration process from the migrants’ standpoints alone will only reveal part of the figuration. In order to appreciate more fully the complexities of the migrants’ movement and to capture some sense of why athletes ply their trade in particular locations, the recruiting motivations of the coaches at the club by which the athlete has been recruited must also be explored. When examined in this manner, emphasis is placed, as it were, upon both ‘ends’ of the migration flow. There is a dearth of research which approaches the problem of athletic migration in this manner. Indeed, Bale’s (1991) study of the recruitment of foreign track and field athletes by American universities is the only research conducted to date which seeks to use such a perspective.

Bale’s (1991) work showed how, during the 1980s, American university athletic departments were placed under increasing pressure to produce successful teams, and how the intensification of such a pressure acted as a major contributory factor influencing the places from which college coaches sought prospective recruits. Increasingly, in the 1980s, Bale noted, American college coaches were seeking to recruit migrant track and field athletes, rather than developing their own North American athletes. The reasons for this shift in practice were varied. At a very basic level, university coaches began to question why they should restrict themselves to
North American athletes when these were not necessarily the best athletes available. However, more significantly, coaches realised that the pressure being placed upon them was not simply to produce the best team possible, but to produce that team as quickly as possible also. In such a context, American college coaches began increasingly to recruit foreign athletes to provide what they termed “instant help” (p.98). Recruiting foreign athletes in this manner, sidestepped the time required to develop indigenous athletes. As a result, athletes were recruited who could immediately make an impact on the team. Concomitantly, however, recruiting in this manner also reduced the pressure associated with the expense of developing a team. Foreign athletes were often recruited, that is to say, because they offered a higher general standard of performance which could make an immediate impact and which was also available for less than it would cost to develop a North American athlete.

Whilst Bale’s (1991) work began to attend to the recruiters’ perspective in the migration flow and the reasons why coaches were motivated to recruit migrant athletes, he was also the first to pay attention to the manner in which potential migrant athletes were located. This, again, is an area in which very little research has been conducted so far. Focusing upon the specific recruiting tactics of American college coaches, Bale noted how recruiting systems ranged from well planned networks of scouts and contacts in particular countries, to a random chain of events which took on a far more serendipitous form. Regarding the former system, Bale observed how North American college coaches thought it highly significant to maintain networks of contacts. Bale’s work showed how universities that had enjoyed the most significant recruiting successes had done so as a consequence of the quality of the network of contacts that had been developed and utilised. Bale noted how athletic recruitments could be facilitated through two types of contact networks; friends and colleagues of the recruiting coaches, or current and former players. In order to gain knowledge about, and facilitate the recruitment of, potential migrant athletes, coaches would either call a friend or colleague to enquire about particular athletes, or they would seek to make use of particular geographical connections formed through former or current migrant athletes. Irrespective of whether the recruitment of a migrant athlete
was facilitated by a coach or a player, Bale argues that many recruitments of migrant athletes were facilitated through such relational networks. This suggested that the significance of human interdependent patterns should not be overlooked when examining the ways in which athletic migrants are located and recruited.

Examining the series of processes which affect the motivations of the migrant and the recruiter, and identifying the series of processes which facilitate the movements of athletic migrant workers is important. Adopting a multi-dimensional approach permits a more rounded understanding of the various processes at work in the athletic migration figuration. To add a further dimension, it is also important to establish how the movement of athletes affects sports subcultures in both the host and donor locations. This is an area that has been examined by Maguire (1988b, 1996) who analysed the movement of American players into English elite basketball and Canadian players into British elite ice hockey, and Klein (1989, 1991a, 1991b) who studied the movement of Dominican baseball players out of the Dominican Republic and into the United States. Klein’s work showed how consistent outward migration along a determinable talent pipeline gave rise to problems which can be likened to a sporting equivalent of the ‘brain drain’. More particularly, his research can be used to show how intended migratory dynamics can lead to a series of blind, unplanned, and unintended consequences. In the case of Dominican baseball, the movement of Dominican players along determinable talent pipelines into the United States has resulted in a sporting ‘brawn drain’ (Bale, 1991). Such movements can be said in effect to be expressive of processes of “deskilling” (Maguire et al., 2002, p.37) in the donor country.

Klein’s work shows how the deskilling of a donor nation can be seen to occur when athletes persistently emigrate from a donor location. The negative and unplanned consequences of migrant involvement can also be identified when migrant workers persistently migrate into a host location. This has been seen to be the case for the inward migration of American workers into British basketball (Maguire, 1988b; Falcous & Maguire, 2005), and Canadian workers into British ice hockey.
(Maguire, 1996; Kivinen et al., 2001). In these sports, the problems associated with the introduction of migrant workers into both domestic leagues and national teams, are most commonly manifested in the changing role of the indigenous player. Increasingly, these players are left “riding the pine” (Maguire, 1996, p.349), which suggests that the recruitment and retention of migrant workers acts to the disadvantage of indigenous talent and, moreover, has ramifications for the development of youth programmes and national team advancement (Kivinen et al., 2001). In an attempt to regulate the global flow of sports talent, some European leagues have sought to introduce quota systems restricting the number of migrant workers permitted in particular sports. These policies rose to prominence in 1995 following the action brought about by Jean Marc Bosman and have proven to be highly problematic.

Athletes in individual sports such as golf or tennis, it can be argued, enjoy much greater freedom to move around the globe compared to their team sports counterparts where problems over freedom of contract can occur (Maguire et al., 2002). Problems of this kind gained prominence in 1995 as a consequence of a legal hearing brought about by Belgian footballer Jean-Marc Bosman. Bosman’s case resulted in a legal shift which permitted the movement of European soccer players as a right and judged that quotas covering EU citizens were “illegal and constituted a restraint of trade” (Maguire, 1999, p.117). Prior to the Bosman judgement, transfers could only occur if both the selling and purchasing club were in agreement and had set a transfer fee, irrespective of whether the player in question was out-of-contract (Blanpain & Inston, 1996). Bosman’s case came about as a consequence of his prevented transfer between Belgian club R.C. Liege and French club US Dunkerque. It collapsed because the quota of foreign players at the French club was already full. Bosman argued that the transfer rules imposed by the Belgian Football Association, UEFA, and FIFA disabled the free movement of European workers (Blanpain & Inston, 1996; Maguire & Stead, 1998). Therefore, in order for these rules to be brought into line with other EU policies on migration, the existing system would have to be amended.
The introduction of the 'Bosman ruling' did not simply have ramifications for migration patterns in European soccer but affected the migration of athletic workers in the European Union more broadly. As a result of the decision, EU athletes in all team sports were afforded much greater freedoms of contract, and could thus move more easily within the European Union to ply their trade then had previously been possible. Arguably, whilst changes in the freedoms for athletes were an intended outcome of the case, the ruling also resulted in a series of unintended outcomes which have specific ramifications for one of the sports being examined in this study. The ramifications of the Bosman case for British basketball will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Three.

Summary: A Framework for Understanding

The intention in this chapter has been to establish a more adequate framework from which to develop this study of global athletic labour migration. In this respect, the chapter has sought to show how this study must be contextualised within a broader series of global processes which have developed over very long periods of time. To best capture the manner in which these global processes have developed and affected groups of people with both intended and unintended consequences, the chapter has highlighted the significance of a figurational understanding, drawing particular attention to the concepts of interdependence, power, and the twin concepts of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties. These concepts are of central importance when considering the multi-processual nature of athletic labour migration. They can be used to show how, over very long periods of time, previously relatively independent groups of people have become more interdependent. They can also be used to show how the developing power geometries (Maguire, 2005) evident within these groups can enable and constrain the actions of people, and how the changing configurations have resulted in a commingling of patterns of conduct derived from different social and cultural groups. These conceptual considerations will be important for understanding the chapters which follow.
Important also is the synthesis which has been developed between migration research located in the area of athletic migration and research which has examined the movement of highly skilled workers. Drawing together conceptual components from both fields provides, it can be argued, a more rounded appreciation of what is actually happening. In this respect, whilst existing research examining athletic movements can be used as a base from which to test similarities or differences in migrant involvement in British basketball and ice hockey over time, the introduction of work from the highly skilled sphere provides a number of new and previously under-investigated outlets for analysis. Arguably, the knowledge which can be generated following an examination of these areas will have value both for the sociology of sport and the sociology of highly skilled migration.

To draw together research from the sociology of sport and the sociology of highly skilled migration, the substantive parts of this study have been divided into four chapters, each one addressing one of the key areas being examined. The first of these substantive chapters will address the issue of migrant motivation. It will examine the processes which influence North American migrant labourers to select the BBL or the EIHL as their migration destination. This chapter will draw on Maguire’s (1996) typology of sport labour migration to show that mono-causal explanations based around economic determinism have little value when considering migrant player motivation. It will show that migrant workers relocating to the BBL and the EIHL are motivated by a far more complex mix of processes. This chapter will also show, using concepts derived from Beaverstock’s (1991) work, how the development of an increasingly flexible global labour market has resulted in a shift from traditional settler migration to more transient forms of temporary migration for some migrant workers, particularly those employed by BBL clubs.

The second substantive chapter will address the recruiting motivations of BBL and EIHL coaches. This chapter will examine why migrant workers, particularly North Americans, are recruited consistently by the coaches of the teams in the two leagues. It will also show how migrant recruitment is driven, in part, by processes of
supply and demand. However, the chapter will also show that North American migrant workers are recruited to provide ‘instant help’, a concept first identified by Bale (1991) in his research. Whilst the processes of supply and demand and instant help can be used to more adequately capture some sense of why North American players are consistently recruited to BBL and EIHL teams, the development of a perpetuation model is also useful. This model, drawing on the twin concepts of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties and established and outsider relations, can be used to show how recruitments in the two leagues have developed over time, enabling the recruitment of North American workers, but limiting employment opportunities for workers from non-North American localities.

The third substantive chapter will examine the mechanisms through which North American migrant workers are recruited to BBL and EIHL teams. This chapter will show that migrant workers are more likely to acquire their employment via a series of interdependent connections, and that social relationships constitute the most effective means for securing mutually beneficial recruitments. This chapter will draw on Bale’s (1991) work to show how informal networks of communication can be used to locate and recruit migrant athletic workers. Moreover, the chapter will draw on the work of Meyer (2001) and Mullan (1989), which is focused on the highly skilled sphere, to make better sense of the various processes at work in the circulation of knowledge with respect to potential employers and employees. This work can be used to shed light on the processes through which migrants gain their employment. It can also be built onto the perpetuation model introduced in the previous chapter, to more adequately capture some sense of the power of North American migrants in the overall figuration.

The final substantive chapter will examine the effects of migrant involvement on the BBL and the EIHL. It will examine the ways in which migrant involvement affects opportunities for indigenous talent development at both league and national team levels, and will consider the future of migrant involvement in the two leagues. Drawing on the work of Maguire (1988, 1996) in the athletic sphere, and Beaverstock
(2005) and Iredale (2001) in the highly skilled sphere, this chapter will show how migrant involvement in the two leagues would appear to be affecting opportunities for indigenous workers in different ways. Whilst the recruitment of workers from the United States is viewed in negative terms in the BBL, in the EIHL the employment of Canadian workers is viewed more positively. This chapter will show, therefore, how the recruitment of migrant workers needs to be balanced with an intent to develop indigenous talent, and how, in the EIHL at least, the process of 'brain circulation' (Beaverstock, 2005) is being used to achieve such an end.

The substantive chapters of this study can be used to show that the movement of North American workers into the BBL and EIHL cannot be explained using mono-causal explanations. As will be shown, adopting a more processual form of analysis will considerably enrich the knowledge and understanding that can be generated. A figurational approach points to multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and multi-processual dynamics to better encapsulate what is actually occurring. When applied with the synthesis of work from the athletic and highly skilled spheres, it is possible to both bring existing research in the fields up-to-date and to generate new knowledge which has value in a number of areas. It is with this in mind that such a framework is advocated in this study. Now that this framework has been introduced, it is necessary to spend some time considering the research method which will underpin the study.
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this chapter of the thesis is to examine a series of key issues relating to qualitative methodological paradigms. Outlining these issues will, it is intended, identify the methodological practices through which the substantive elements of this study have developed. The chapter has been divided into three broad sections. The first section will introduce the key methodological and philosophical issues pertinent to the qualitative paradigmatic debate. The second section will then build upon the generic introduction set forth in the first section in order to examine qualitative issues in figurational sociology. The third section will investigate the necessary methodological application for the specific themes or ‘problems’ being examined in this thesis. This section will examine the specific tools by which data was collected for the research project.

In order to address the specific problems being examined in this research project and to create greater depth of understanding in the fields of athletic migration and highly skilled migration more broadly, the identification and development of a suitable methodological framework is paramount. Fundamental here is the selection of a methodology which adheres to the principles of either a qualitative or a quantitative approach, or one which seeks to apply procedures from both. For this study, qualitative methods are preferred for the most part, given that the established set of rules normally reserved for more traditionally ‘scientific’, quantitative methods of inquiry do not lend themselves to a study of this kind (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). However, that said, the application of quantitative methods will not be totally neglected in this work. This area will be examined later in the chapter.
An Introduction to Qualitative Research

Qualitative forms of inquiry permit an interaction with social groups which will produce the types of findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other methods of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Whilst traditionally regarded ‘scientific’ methods of inquiry offer their own benefits, qualitative methods permit a closer interaction with the social world, and, as such, permit the researcher to better understand the events, actions, and norms of social groups (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Greater emphasis is placed upon meanings and experiences (Reaves, 1992). Thus, qualitative inquiry provides the opportunity to secure rich descriptions of the social world which quantitative analysis would not provide (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Broadly, qualitative research seeks to describe the social world through the experiences of the social ‘actors’ who inhabit it (Bryman, 2001). It is, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), “a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions . . . . [which are] multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach” (p.3). Without the more stringent rules for data analysis that quantitative methods insist upon, there is more room for both flexibility and creativity within qualitative research (Krane, Andersen, & Strean, 1997). The approach creates an amalgam of methods by which the researcher seeks to reveal the meanings in the lives of social actors. Typically, these methods are based around the analysis of verbal data which includes interviews, narratives (or life histories), focus group discussions, and visual data which is processed using ethnographic methods such as participant and non-participant observational analysis (Flick, 2002). Each of the methods is designed and appropriated in a manner which seeks to develop an understanding of the social worlds inhabited by specific social groups from the perspective of the social actors involved themselves.

The qualitative paradigm is fundamentally built therefore, upon a framework of description. Securing rich, descriptive data is identified as being one of the principal aims of qualitatively guided research. Concomitantly, however, Bryman (2001) posits that contextualism is also a highly significant element of the qualitative
approach. Contextualism is manifest in the commitment to understand social phenomena within a specific context. Reducing such a context would jeopardise the probability of the researcher obtaining valid data. Therefore, as Flick (2002) notes, making assumptions about social groups *a priori*, results in the study of everyday routines as opposed to outstanding events which have significance for the researcher. Given this, the interdependent, processual nature of human expressiveness must be taken into consideration. The flexible nature of qualitative study lends itself to research of this kind.

The significance of the paradigm’s elasticity is demonstrated in what Denzin and Lincoln (1998) refer to as *bricolage*. Operating as *bricoleur*, they argue, the researcher pieces together a “close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem” (p.3). The researcher-as-bricoleur uses the tools of their methodological trade, utilising whatever strategies, methods, or materials are appropriate for the specific problem being examined (Becker, 1989) to create an appropriate methodological environment in which data can be accumulated. As Weinstein and Weinstein note:

> The product of the *bricoleur’s* [original emphasis] labor is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collagelike creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis. This bricolage will . . . connect the parts to the whole, stressing the meaningful relationships that operate in the situations and social worlds studied. (1991, p.164)

In a word bricolage permits the researcher to weld many methodological components into a workable synthesis, appropriate for the problem at hand. It also allows the researcher to select methodological tools on the premise that they are suitably matched both to the questions being asked and the context of the research problem.
The creation of a research bricolage establishes the multi-method nature of qualitative research. Otherwise known in methodological terms as triangulation, the primary objective of such an approach is to add rigour, breadth and depth to research (Flick, 2002). In this respect, a triangulation of research methods adopted solely in the qualitative paradigm (e.g. one which uses more than one qualitative data collection method), or the use of a multi-method approach which adopts methods from both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms, can be used to capture a more in-depth, valid, and reliable understanding of the phenomena being examined. Moreover, in a methodological field where validation is very difficult, triangulation, or bricolage, provides an alternative to validation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). It is necessary to explore this area more fully.

Denscombe (2002) argues that research “should produce valid data using reliable methods” (p.97). However, he also suggests that the measurement of reliability and validity is far easier in quantitatively guided analysis. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) argue that problems of reliability and validity have been explored thoroughly by quantitative researchers, whilst their treatment by qualitative researchers has been “sporadic and haphazard” (p.31). Generally, therefore, it can be suggested that measures of validity and reliability sit more comfortably within the quantitative paradigm where ‘standard’ research instruments are used (Mason, 2002).

Mason (2002) argues that reliability is best tested by observing consistency using the same tools, or instruments, of data collection. Thus, identical measurements made repeatedly and consistently with the same specific data collection instruments, which secure the same or similar results, can be described as reliable. However, a problem occurs when measurements of reliability are conceptualised in a manner which places emphasis upon the tools, or instruments, by which data is measured and collected. As Mason (2002) notes:
At the very least, given the non-standardization of many methods for generating qualitative data, a researcher will be unable to perform simple reliability tests of this type because the data they will generate will not take the form of a clearly standardized set of measurements. (p.187)

Mason (2002) argues accordingly that conceptual problems are inherent in the measurement of validity and reliability for qualitative researchers. Moreover, she contends that if a researcher relies excessively on reliability they will risk losing sight of that which they are measuring, and thus validity will be compromised.

Gaskill and Bauer (2000) contribute to this debate by means of what they refer to as the “reliability-validity dilemma” (p.340). More particularly, they contend that identifiable reliability does not necessarily confer validity. They also argue that reliability and validity make less sense when considered in respect to the interpretation of textual or interview evidence. In these cases, Gaskill and Bauer suggest, validity may be associated with lower levels of reliability creating a paradoxical dilemma. Bauer (2000) contends that the nature of qualitative research negates the use of any specific measurement tool of reliability and validity, and in this respect, analysis of data, and the determination of themes, trends, and conclusions drawn from those data, is based upon an individual’s interpretation of it.

In light of the above, it can be argued that the measurement of reliability and validity in qualitative research is highly problematic. However, it is still necessary to address these issues in a research project such as this. One way in which the reliability and validity of qualitatively guided social research can be enhanced is through a clear understanding of research philosophy, and the paradigm debate. It is to these areas that the chapter now turns.

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Research

Grix (2002) argues that a logical and directional relationship between core concepts of social science (ontology, epistemology, methodology, and method) needs to be understood in order for students and academics to engage, constructively, in dialogue and criticism of each other’s work. More specifically, Grix contends that
the starting point for any social investigation is the researcher’s ontological position. Epistemological and then methodological positions flow from the ontological position, which, in turn, inform the specific methods employed.

The initial position employed by a researcher, the ontological position, will seek to ask: what is the nature of the social reality under investigation? Bryman (2001) builds upon this contention by suggesting that:

Questions of social ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities. The central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors? (p. 16)

In a word, a researcher’s ontological position is defined by the manner in which they identify the social world; whether they believe it to exist in a ‘subjective’ or an ‘objective’ form. If inclining towards the former, a researcher will employ a ‘constructivist’ approach which permits an understanding of the fact that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Grix, 2002). If siding more with the latter, a researcher will employ an ‘objectivist’ approach where the belief is that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence which is independent of social actors. Whichever ontological position is adopted, the belief system developed in this stage of the research process will determine the possible epistemological applications in the next stage.

Epistemology, Grix (2002) contends, is one of the “core branches of philosophy” (p. 177). It is concerned with the theory of knowledge, specifically with respect to methods, validation, and ways of gaining knowledge of social reality. It is generally held that there are two traditionally contrasting epistemological positions; positivism and interpretivism. The former, Grix argues, is “an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond” (p. 178). It is a normative attitude regulating the use of terms such as ‘knowledge’, ‘science’, ‘cognition’, and ‘information’
(Kolakowski, 1972), the central concerns of which lay with “objectivity, prediction, replicability, and the discovery of scientific generalisations or laws describing the phenomena in question” (Ernest, 1994, p.22). The latter, Bryman argues, is:

Predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. (2001, p.12-13).

Selecting one of these epistemological positions, or any position which might exist on the continuum between the two marginal poles, will logically lead the researcher to employ a methodology which fits with the philosophical framework.

Often confused with methods, Blaikie (2000) argues that methodology is directly related to epistemology in the sense that it refers to the ways in which the knowledge which the researcher believes to exist is acquired. Methodology, then, can be understood to be the techniques and procedures adopted to collect and interpret data, as opposed to the specific tools of data collection which would fall into the category of methods.

Grix (2002) argues that the directional relationship between the “key building blocks” (p.179) of research may, at first, appear rigid and mechanistic. He does, however, qualify such an approach by suggesting that all research necessarily starts from an individual’s view of the world, which is itself shaped and contoured by the experience that individual brings to the research process. In this model, therefore, it is possible to contend that it is the ontological and epistemological positions of the researcher that shape the questions that may reasonably be asked in the first place, how they are posed, and how research is designed to address them.
Grix’s (2002) directional model is useful in understanding the logical relationships between the various stages of research. However, it can be argued that it fails to fully engage with the significance of theory in the research process. Whilst Grix notes that the researcher will adhere to specific ontological and epistemological positions from the outset, what he fails to draw attention to is the manner in which the researchers’ theoretical position helps shape their philosophical standpoint. Thus, the significance of theory in the research process should not be neglected. It is with this contention in mind that the next section of this chapter considers a figurational interpretation of qualitative methodology.

**Methodology and Figurational Sociology**

Earlier sections of this chapter have sought to introduce generic key terms used in the research process, and to outline how philosophical traditions create frameworks upon which investigation and analysis may be constructed. Figurational sociology challenges many of these traditionally taken for granted assumptions, and questions the ‘nature’ of social research (Bloyce, 2004). The approach is centrally concerned with seeking to explain long-term social processes of social development and to augment sociological knowledge by combining theory with empirical research. This, on the surface, may not appear an altogether different approach to that adopted by other theoretical and methodological traditions. It is here, however, that figurational sociology parts company with the more traditional approaches.

Grix’s (2002) directional model observed how the research process is made up of various stages. Whilst such a model is an important way of establishing boundaries for the research process, it can be argued that approaches of this type distort the research issue from the outset (Bloyce, 2004). Figurational sociologists seek to obtain more object-adequate ways of understanding the social world, and argue that emphasis should not be placed upon whether one theoretical or philosophical position produces more valid knowledge, but, rather, how a given body of knowledge can be said to display a measure of ‘reality-congruence’ (Elias, 1971b). It should not, therefore, be assumed that any one position creates more or less valid knowledge
based upon its notion of social reality. Rather, research should seek to provide “an approximation of how the social world really is” (Maguire & Young, 2002, p.5). In this respect, the concepts of ontology and epistemology offer, as Bloyce explains, something of a false dichotomy for figurational sociologists:

It is not that the two considerations are diametrically opposed, rather epistemology and ontology are so integrally related, they are so interdependent [original emphasis], there seems little sense in discussing them separately. That is to say, knowledge and reality are not separate entities; they are part of the same process. (2004, p.146)

The commonly appropriated, taken-for-granted labels applied in the traditionally guided research methods hold no weight for figurational sociologists. Maguire (1988a), in fact, goes so far as to contend that a number of cherished sociological assumptions are challenged when people first encounter the figurational approach.

Research by figurational sociologists is predicated on a series of tenets. These tenets guide the figurational researcher in a manner which seeks to accumulate knowledge by studying the interdependent nature of human relationships, by understanding that people’s lives are bound within the figurations that they form with others, by understanding that these figurations are dynamic in nature, and therefore constantly in flux, and by being aware that the long-term developments occurring in figurations have, and continue to be, largely unplanned and unforeseen (Goudsblom, 1977; Maguire, 1988a). To accumulate knowledge in this way several key issues deserve attention.

Theory and Evidence

Generally, in traditional methodological approaches, it is perceived that there are two commonly appropriated relationships between theory and evidence. Thus, the approach to theory will either be deductive, which Bryman (2001) argues represents the most common perception of the relationship, or inductive. The deductive approach, Bryman posits, requires the researcher, based upon their knowledge of the particular area, to produce an hypothesis (or hypotheses) which will
form the basis of empirical scrutiny. The researcher will be expected to create theoretical propositions prior to the advancement of the research process (Mason, 2002). Thus, theory is used to shape evidence. The inductive approach operates by contrast in the opposite direction. That is, the researcher develops theoretical propositions from the data generated in the research process, moving, as Mason notes, "from the particular to the general" (2002, p.180). For figurational sociologists, approaches to the relationship between theory and evidence structured in this manner, create, again, something of a false dichotomy. The inductive/deductive approach is, Bloyce posits, "formalistic, simplistic, and distorting" (2004, p.152). In order to create more adequate explanations of social processes, and to more appropriately practise the craft of enquiry, the researcher should move, as Alford notes: "back and forth from the clouds of theory to the ground of evidence" (1998, p.29).

Figurational sociologists are sensitised to the need for a constant interplay to exist between theory and evidence. Such an interplay permits the researcher, as Maguire and Young note:

To know which questions have to be asked and which questions are worthwhile asking. It also enables [the researcher] to put such questions in the right order or sequence – thus allowing [the researcher] to conduct 'good' sociological craft or practice. (2002, p.4)

In a figurational sense, the processes of theory formation and of empirical enquiry are interwoven, they are indivisible from one another. As Elias (1978) put it: the interplay between theoretical synthesis and empirical analysis should be constant. Adopting a framework which was frequently neglected by other social, cultural and political theorists, Elias negated the more traditional methods and focused upon a framework which recognises a sensitivity to the need for empirical analysis, without a saturation of sociological theory, but including adequate and relevant evidence.
Maguire and Young (2002) contend that such a sensitivity to the relationship requires an interaction with those areas which have previously been explored in the discipline, areas which have been thought about and reflected upon. Thus, the application of theory has to be sensitive to a “finely tuned time-space sensitivity” (Maguire & Young, 2002, p.4), which is reflective of the knowledge which has been previously accumulated in the sociological field of observation. Further to this, failing to sensitise oneself to the significance of history results in what Elias referred to as ‘the retreat of sociologists to the present’ (1987). Elias used this phrase to describe people whose work is a reflection of the immediate present, without reference, or sensitivity, to the manner in which the present has developed out of a series of very long-term social processes. Without a sensitivity to the significance of history, Elias argued, “the development of society, as that of ‘ideas’, ‘knowledge’, or ‘consciousness’, simply appears as a necklace of here-and-now situations strung together on an unknown and invisible thread” (1971b, p.158). The key issue, therefore, is to understand how later social formations - how later figurations - are formed from earlier ones (Maguire, 1988a). The significance of knowledge accumulation is predicated, in this manner, on a sensitivity to time and place. It is also, however, predicated on a sensitivity to processes of involvement and detachment.

Involvement and Detachment

In his study of the long interview, McCracken (1988) discusses the concept of what he calls ‘manufacturing distance’. Such a concept, he argues, is built upon the premise that researchers working in foreign cultures have a great advantage over researchers working in their own culture. McCracken notes that:

Those who work in their own culture do not have this critical distance from what they study. They carry with them a large number of assumptions that can create a treacherous sense of familiarity. (1988, p.22)
McCracken continues by arguing that research conducted with little distance runs the risk of being guided by an 'invisible hand'. Such a hand forecloses the range and the kind of things that the researcher can observe and understand.

It can be argued that McCracken’s (1988) concept of manufacturing distance begins to attend to the sensitivity required by researchers to appreciate that they are part of the research process. McCracken’s concept is, however, oversimplified in its application, suggesting that a researcher is either distanced, if studying a foreign culture, or not distanced, if studying their own culture. This kind of approach to objectivity and subjectivity in research is common. However, it is an approach which is rejected by figurational sociologists who prefer to seek to produce explanations of the social world which demonstrate varying degrees of adequacy (Elias, 1971a). Figurational sociologists argue that researchers can never be truly distanced, or detached, from that which they study, but argue also, that it is not possible, or indeed desirable for them to be completely involved (Elias, 1987).

Fundamental to the concept of involvement and detachment is the premise that a sociologist is the member of a social group whose interdependencies stretch beyond the confines of the academic community (Elias, 1987). They are a member of a social (con)figuration, and thus part of the social world themselves (Maguire & Young, 2002). Given this position, social scientists, unlike natural scientists, who cannot know what it feels like to be an atom or a molecule, are inescapably “involved in what they study” (Maguire, 1988a, p.189). The social scientific researcher is central in the research process and their involvement should be identified as a necessary quality in comprehending the social world under examination. This is not to assume, however, that their involvement is not problematic. As Maguire notes:
The task which the figurational perspective has set itself is to explore, and to make people understand, the patterns that they form together and the nature of the figurations that bind them to each other. The sociological investigator is, of course, part of these patterns. As such it is more difficult for a sociologist to perform the mental operation of detaching himself or herself from the role of immediate participant and from the limited vista that it offers. (1988a, p.189)

Maguire goes on to argue that countering the involvement of the researcher is not simply a question of adopting a completely detached role; this would not be desirable, or indeed possible. Sociologists cannot prevent themselves from being involved: “their very participation and involvement is itself one of the conditions for comprehending the problem they try to solve” (1988a, p.189).

Thus, the problem for figurational sociologists is not centrally concerned with the polar extremities of involvement and detachment, but, rather, with the continuum between the poles. To clarify this point, Elias notes that:

In the main, what we observe are people and people’s manifestations, such as patterns of speech or of thought, and of other activities, some of which bear the stamp of higher, others of lesser detachment or involvement. It is the continuum that lies between these marginal poles that presents the principal problem. (1987, p.4)

Figurational sociologists, therefore, encourage social scientific researchers to strive for a position which is both relatively involved and relatively detached. It is a position which demonstrates a sensitivity to the researcher’s centrality in the research process, and one in which the researcher should be able to recognise their position as participant but also as observer-and-interpreter (Maguire, 1988a). The problem of involvement and detachment is a question of sensitivity, of awareness, and of balance.

To assist researchers in adopting a balance between involvement and detachment, Maguire and Young (2002) offer a series of sensitising guidelines. They argue, firstly, that the sociologist must maintain the balance between theory and evidence. They must be aware of the constant interplay, the two-way traffic that exists between the two. Secondly, that they must maintain their focus upon obtaining
reality-congruent knowledge, and seek to provide a more adequate explanation of the social world as it exists at a given point in time. Thirdly, they argue, the adoption of long-term and comparative research models provides greater opportunities for the researcher to distance themselves from the research subject. Whilst fourthly, and linked to Elias's (1987) criticisms of sociologists who 'retreat to the present', they contend that the researcher must think about, and present their research in processual terms, taking into consideration the interdependent nature of social relationships, and the significance of the development of these relationships over long periods of time.

Adopting such an approach will, it can be argued, facilitate a better, more adequate understanding of the social world under investigation. It will increase the probability of the researcher obtaining reality-congruent knowledge, and will minimise the possibility of the researcher losing sight of the processual nature of the knowledge which they themselves accumulate. Moreover, the adoption of practices which manifest a sensitivity to the various elements of the figurational approach will prompt the researcher to question the adequacy of any evidence they encounter. It is necessary to explore this area in greater detail.

The Adequacy of Evidence

As previous sections of this chapter have argued, weaknesses in existing traditionally guided research models may stem from a distorted and simplistic approach to the nature of knowledge accumulation. Beyond such a criticism, however, figurational sociologists also argue that the ways in which evidence is harnessed during the research process will have an effect upon the knowledge that can reasonably be gained. Evidence can be gleaned from a number of sources, and by a variety of methods. The problem for researchers is in capturing a sense of reality, a sense of whether the evidence really reflects how the social world was, or is becoming.
Maguire and Young contend that there is “no such thing as an innocent text” (2002, p.17), and make clear that texts are produced and exist in a social context. To exemplify such a point, Maguire (1988a) argues that archival silence, represented, for example, by the absence of a specific individual’s or group’s recorded activities, does not necessarily suggest that that individual or group was not indicative of the figuration being examined. Maguire contends in this manner that facts do not ‘speak for themselves’, but rather must be viewed through a “‘narrow’ and ‘misty’ lens” (p.190), which is representative of that which particular writers entered previously into the field of observation. The job for the researcher is to assess just how blurred the image from a given lens is. The significance, therefore, for an understanding of the adequacy of evidence debate, lies in the appreciation that evidence exists interdependently with the social environment in which it is generated, that it is bound in a complex spatial and temporal web and enmeshed within a specific power geometry.

The ability to assess the adequacy of evidence depends on the researcher being able to establish the balance of power which exists between interdependent groups of people. Maguire (1988a) expands upon this point to suggest that:

Analysis should focus on both the level of participation by the observers of particular events in question, and on the pattern of tension and conflict evident in the relationship between observers and observed. (p.191)

In this respect, Maguire argues that an ‘insider’s’ account, will provide a more rounded and accurate reflection of the patterns being observed, whilst an ‘outsider’s’ account, although likely to provide a more detached perspective, may be distorted as a result of a lack of knowledge. An ideal scenario is one in which both the insiders’ and the outsiders’ perspectives can be gauged, one that will capture the complexities of both perspectives.
When the above position is not available, Maguire (1988a) argues, *verstehen* analysis (derived from the work of Max Weber) can be used. This form of analysis as developed by Maguire is based on the relative positions of groups in a figuration. It determines that some interpretation is involved in all acts of understanding, and that research should seek to recognise the meanings that people give to their actions. Adopting such an approach will allow the researcher to identify with the various ‘we’ perspectives, and to capture a sense of which actions are meaningful to the group. It will also permit the researcher to appreciate the situation from a greater distance by identifying with the various ‘they’ perspectives. These perspectives will allow the researcher to grasp how the actions of members of the group are interdependent (Maguire & Young, 2002). Using *verstehen* analysis will, Maguire argues, permit the researcher to see “small-scale interaction not in isolation, but in the larger context of changing figurations” (1988a, p.192). The adequacy of evidence, therefore, for figurational sociologists, is predicated on the understanding that it is dependent upon the precise pattern of interdependency between classes and other groups (Maguire & Young, 2002).

To gather evidence and to generate data for this study two methodological tools were selected. These tools were selected to provide both qualitative and quantitative data. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were selected in order to gather the descriptive qualitative data which, once analysed, could be used to more adequately address the specific ‘problems’ being investigated in this study. Quantitative statistical data were obtained from the global governing bodies for the two sports; the Federation Internationale de Basketball Europe (FIBA Europe), and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). These data were gathered both to contextualise the movement of migrant workers into the BBL and the EIHL (something that will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Three), and to broaden the spatial dimension of the study. It is to these methods that the chapter now turns.
Interviews

McCracken (1988) argues that the interview is “one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory” (p.9). For descriptive and analytical purposes, he argues, no instrument of inquiry is more revealing. The interview has the ability to provide the researcher with a glimpse into the life world of the interviewee, to examine the content and pattern of daily life, and to begin to appreciate the social world, as the interviewee, themselves, might. At first glance, interview protocol appears to be self-evident. The interviewer guides and directs a conversation which is structured in such a manner as to obtain desired information. The interviewee, or respondent, offers information based upon his or her personal experiences and knowledge in a given area. The interviewer’s responses are simply a series of prompts by which the interviewee is kept ‘on-track’, or in which clarification is provided to the respondent (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001).

Interviewing is a popular and commonly appropriated tool in qualitative methodology. This popularity exists because two of the major impediments for the social researcher; time scarcity and the concern for privacy, can be overcome relatively easily (McCracken, 1988). Such a research strategy, McCracken notes:

Gives us access to individuals without violating their privacy or testing their patience. It allows us to capture the data needed for penetrating qualitative analysis without participant observation, unobtrusive observation, or prolonged contact. It allows us, in other words, to achieve crucial qualitative objectives within a manageable methodological context. (1988, p.11)

Manageability, thus, is a prime requirement for the application of such a method. Equally important, however, is the manner in which interviewing permits a closer interaction with an individual's experiences and emotions.

The ways in which data are harnessed, and the manner in which the interview is conducted will be dependent upon the form and type of the interview. That is to say that different interview protocols are available to the social researcher, each one offering its own series of strengths and limitations. It is generally held that there are
four primary types of interview: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview, the focused or unstructured interview, and the group interview (Bryman, 2001). Before discussing the specific interview type used in this study, it is important to outline the various interview types in an attempt to provide clarity and contextualisation, beginning with the structured interview.

In many ways, the structured interview is similar to a questionnaire or survey, so much so, that Berg (1995) argues that, in some schools of methodological thought, the terms for these data collection methods are used interchangeably, given the limited variability of response that is permitted. In structured interviews, all interviewees supposedly will be given exactly the same context of questioning. Thus, each respondent supposedly receives the same interview stimulus as any other. The desired outcome of interviewing in this manner is to ensure that responses can be aggregated (Bryman, 2001). In structured interviews, the standardisation of both asking questions and recording answers results in a validation by which the variation of respondents’ answers will be the result of genuine, ‘real’ or ‘true’ variation and not due to the context of the interview (Bryman, 2001).

The semi-structured, or qualitative interview, moves away from the rigid structure that exists in more formal, structured environments, and permits a closer interaction with the subject (Mason, 2002). In some ways, the semi-structured interview bridges the gap between the more structured interview strategies, and the securing of more descriptive data. In this model, an interview schedule is still present. However, the schedule is more malleable. The researcher is permitted the opportunity to explore new angles, and to probe for further information should they feel it necessary.

The semi-structured interview has been commonly described as a ‘guided conversation’ (Warren, 2001), one in which the interviewer listens carefully, so as to ‘hear the meaning’ of the respondents answers (Spradley, 1979). The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to seek both clarification and elaboration on the
answers given in the interview, and thus, provides an opportunity for the researcher to take a more flexible approach to the interview (May, 1993). The amount of flexibility permitted in the semi-structured interview will be dependent upon the interviewer's interpretation of the protocol. That said, in most semi-structured environments, by and large, all of the questions will be asked in the same way, using the same or similar wording for each interviewee (Bryman, 2001).

The focused or unstructured interview provides far more flexibility for the respondent than the structured or semi-structured interview might (Burgess, 1982). The introduction of life-history or narrative approaches encourages the respondent to explore themes and issues of interest in a manner which suits both themselves and the researcher. Typically, the researcher will inform the interviewee of the type of information they are seeking to obtain, and will then observe the interviewee as they speak relatively freely in the general area (Platt, 2001). Interviewing in such a context creates an environment in which rich descriptions can be secured, but, more significantly, in which previously unforeseen areas can be identified for further investigation. Whilst benefits of these kinds enhance the desirability of this method, unstructured interviewing is limited in that the interviewer will have to work much harder in order to maintain control over the interview and to ensure that valid and desired data are obtained from it.

The group interview can also be described as relatively unstructured. It provides an interesting opportunity in which a researcher can secure information in respect of a specific set of predetermined themes or areas of interest whilst observing interaction between group members (Flick, 1998). Creating a group environment in which to interview can be valuable given the manner in which such an environment stimulates respondents' actions and thought-processes. If the researcher is able to maintain control over the group to ensure the accumulation of useable data, then such a method can prove to be both interesting and rewarding. Moreover, in time-sensitive environments, the group interview can be employed to obtain multiple interpretations in a short space of time.
Given these variants of interview type and taking into consideration both the specific problems being examined in this research project and the limitations imposed upon it, semi-structured interviews were selected as the desired form. Semi-structured interviews were selected over the other forms for a number of reasons. Firstly, the semi-structured interview does not have to be as rigidly conducted as its structured counterpart. In this respect, adopting the use of the semi-structured interview will permit the interviewee to respond in a more conversational nature (Warren, 2001). Compared with the more structured approaches, the semi-structured interview permits greater flexibility. It allows the researcher to probe deeper if they feel that more data can be obtained. Moreover, it allows the researcher to identify, examine, and follow-up on previously unforeseen areas.

Secondly, the adoption of the semi-structured approach provided a level of structure which was manageable for a study of this size, conducted within the relatively tight timescale available. Using more unstructured interview variants might have secured useful data, and may have provided further outlets for investigation. Arguably, however, interviews of this type are more difficult to manage and therefore, not suitable for a project of this size. As Sjoberg and Nett argue, The unstructured type is more suited for studying:

The normative structure of organizations, for establishing classes, and for discovering the existence of possible social patterns (rather than the formal testing of propositions concerning the existence of given patterns). (1968, p.195)

Given this, unstructured interviews would not have proved suitable when applied to the specific problems being addressed in this study and given the temporal and spatial boundaries to which the study adheres.

Thirdly, it can be argued that using semi-structured interviews has permitted the opportunity to better manage the data accumulated. Thus, it has been easier to capture the balance between abundance and manageability, and to recognise that each interview is, potentially, "a Pandora’s box generating endlessly various and abundant
data” (McCracken, 1988, p.12). The use of semi-structured interviews provided a means by which control was gained over the kind and amount of data obtained, without artificially constraining, restricting, or forcing the character of any such data. For this reason, the semi-structured interview sits comfortably between its more formalised structured counterpart, where less flexibility can be observed, and its unstructured counterpart, where issues of manageability become evident.

Fourthly, it can be argued that the semi-structured interview best facilitates the relationship between the researcher and the respondent, a relationship which must be very carefully crafted in order to serve the interests of good qualitative enquiry (McCracken, 1988). As Taylor and Bogdan note:

Far from being a robot-like data collector, the interviewer, not an interview schedule or protocol, is the research tool. The role entails not merely obtaining answers, but learning what questions to ask and how to ask them. (1984, p.77).

Thus, in this approach, the centrality of the researcher as a ‘tool’ is recognised. Such a sensitivity is important for figurational studies where the researcher must be able to capture their role both as participant but also as observer-and-interpreter. It is an approach which allows the researcher to adopt a ‘we’ perspective, whilst still capturing a sense of the ‘they’ perspective. The researcher is thus afforded a more adequate sensitivity to the problems of involvement and detachment. The semi-structured interview requires the researcher to be involved in the research process, whilst providing a level of flexibility that does not distance themselves beyond the possibility of obtaining adequate data.

Whilst it is important to discuss the manner in which interview methods are useful in a generic sense, in order to establish their suitability to the task at hand, it is also important to draw attention to the various specific challenges that were faced when using such a method to obtain data from what can best be described as the ‘special’ population under investigation in this study. Currently, there is no research which draws attention to the problems specifically associated with interviewing
athletes whether they be ‘elite’ or otherwise. Therefore, the following observations may have value for other studies where the interviewing of athletes is an active component.

Interviewing ‘Elite’ Athletes: Some Observations

The research addressed above, and further work in the area of interview structure and protocol, seeks to provide practical and useful advice for the researcher when interviewing in the field. In many cases, the basic detail discussed so far in this chapter assists the researcher in selecting appropriate research tools for the specific project in question. However, beyond this point, much of this work was not relevant for this study. Much, if not all, of the existing work in this field examines the application of the interview with very general sectors of the population (see McCracken, 1988). That is to say, many of the examples used concern work conducted with members of the general public. The examples are based upon interviews conducted with considerable time, and often in the secure environment of the respondents’ home or other ‘safe’ environment (see McCracken, 1988). What, then, happens when interviews are conducted with individuals deemed not to be from the general population; athletes for example? It is necessary to explore these issues here.

Stage One – Problems of Entrée

One of the initial problems which any researcher faces early in the data collection process is the problem of entrée; that is, how to gain access to a specific group in order for them to become a sample population (Guillianotti, 1995). Sampling from the general population will ease some of the problems of securing access to a group, and methods such as gatekeeper strategies and snowball sampling can be used to further enhance the process (Mason, 2002). Problems of access can, however, be magnified when working with specific groups outside of the general population; elite sports teams for example. This has been the case for this research project, even taking into consideration the peripheral position that the sports of
basketball and ice hockey occupy in the British sports culture. Gaining access to the eleven BBL and seven EIHL teams proved highly problematic.

Both the BBL and the EIHL are professional in the sense that each league is franchised, and players and staff are employed and salaried. However, that said, the organisation and professionalism of clubs in the leagues varies considerably. Some clubs have dedicated offices and dedicated staff responsible for the day-to-day running of the club, whilst others rely on individuals responsible for multiple functions, often based out of their homes. Contact with the latter group proved to be highly problematic. Time was also scarce for them, and, accordingly, the willingness to participate in research studies was minimal, or nil. Of the clubs with whom contact could be made more easily the problem of over-zealous officialdom became apparent. In some cases club officials were hostile when contacted, feeling, justifiably in many cases, that their club would gain nothing from the process, except for a drain on their time. Moreover, given the somewhat sensitive character of player migration, scepticism over involvement in the project was intensified for the personnel of some clubs who either made it clear that they would not be involved from the outset, or who became ‘otherwise engaged’ after agreeing to participate.

To generate the study’s sample, the first stage required each BBL and EIHL club to be contacted by telephone in order that a brief introduction to the project could be observed. During this telephone conversation a contact person for each club was identified, and made aware of the broad intentions of the study. The second stage then required a more detailed letter to be sent to the contact person of each club. This letter provided more detailed information about the project and asked the contact person from each club whether or not their club would be willing to participate. The personnel at some clubs were more accommodating than others in their willingness to be involved. Broadly, however, the sample of four EIHL and four BBL clubs who did participate in the study could be split into two categories: clubs which required a great deal of time and effort to gain access to; and clubs who provided no resistance whatsoever. For the former, the sample developed out of many months of additional
telephone calls, e-mails and follow-up letters, arranged and re-arranged dates, whilst, for the latter, an agreement to be involved came as the result of the single telephone conversation and letter. In this second category, contact was most commonly made with coaches directly. Attempting to gain entrée via a general manager, or other member of administrative staff proved highly problematic.

Stage Two – Research Environment

The existing literature dealing with interview techniques and protocol places little emphasis upon the environment in which the interview is conducted, preferring, instead, to focus upon the design and form of interview questions, the style and demeanour in which they are posed to subjects, and the introduction to, and departure from, the interview (Mason, 2002). Much space is accordingly dedicated in these texts to planning a careful and well calculated structure to an interview. However, much of this work seems implicitly to involve the idea that all interviews will be conducted in a homogenous vacuum, with little or no scope for variability, and with little or no consideration for relatively uncontrollable factors such as research environment or time. McCracken’s (1988) work, for example, discusses the use of the long interview, an interview which might run into several hours. His work details the manner in which a number of methods can be employed to probe the respondent to speak further about a particular area, in order to gain greater detail. Additionally, it details various methods by which momentum can be maintained and rapport developed between interviewer and interviewee. All of this is highly commendable and worthwhile. However, the environment in which an interview is conducted will, it can be argued, be significant in determining whether or not time will be made available. In McCracken's case, his sample population consisted of elderly people being interviewed in their own homes and being asked about how they had collected their own possessions over time; an area which, arguably, people in this sector of the population would be willing to discuss for prolonged periods of time.
What then, when the environment in which an interview is to be conducted is not even known before arrival at a venue and is relatively uncontrollable by the researcher? In the case of the present research project, interviews were conducted in a number of different environments. Primarily, they were conducted either following team practice sessions or following matches. Thus, the environment would typically be a sports centre or arena. However, where the interview was conducted within these facilities varied considerably. Interviews were conducted in cafeterias, bars, player lounges, corridors, on the court, in the locker room, and even in the car park. On occasion, an interview was conducted sitting, at other times, standing. In some cases the environment was relatively quiet. On others, the interviewer struggled to hear the interviewees’ responses given the number of people in the immediate area. The key point which must be made here is that, given the nature of the population being interviewed, the interviewer frequently had to ‘make do’ with the environment which was offered if an interview was to be conducted. The interviewer had, however, very little control over this environment, and this, it is believed, would have had an affect on the comfort of the respondent, and their willingness to spend time being interviewed.

*Stage Three – Availability of Time*

Linked closely to the available environment in which to interview, was the amount of time available in which the interview could be conducted. The interviews carried out varied in length from less than six minutes, to ninety minutes, with an average time of approximately thirty minutes. Whilst many of the studies examining interview techniques have been applied to relatively ‘captive’ audiences sampled from the general population, the time available with players and coaches in this study was often limited, particularly if the interview was being conducted following a game. On these occasions, most commonly, the players and coaches wanted to leave as quickly as possible. This was especially the case, given that games were played in the evening, and, in some cases, interviews did not begin until 10pm. The general impression obtained on some of these occasions, and during some interviews following practices, was that the respondent wanted to get through the interview as
quickly as possible, in order that they could leave. This made interviewing very
difficult, and negated the effectiveness of many of the suggested methods for building
rapport in an interview and maintaining dialogue.

In addition to the above, the interviewer noticed a distinct difference between
interviews conducted following practices and those following matches. In the former
cases, the respondent often had more time, they were more willing to talk, and
responded better to prompts and additional questions. The respondents on these
occasions also appeared more relaxed, and willing to convey their feelings with
regard to specific areas of interest. In the latter cases, the interviewer was aware that
many of the interviewees adopted a form of response more akin to a media interview.
Therefore, they responded with very short, sharp answers, in the same manner that an
athlete might, when interviewed by a television or press reporter following a game.
Obtaining greater detail from these individuals was very difficult.

*Interviewing the Athlete – Addressing the Challenge*

Taking the above into consideration, the interviewing of athletes can be highly
problematic, even at a level which, to many observers in a British sporting culture, is
not representative of 'elite' competition in the same way that core sport cultures might
be. However, during the interviewing stage of this research project a great deal of
relevant and useful data has been collected. Some interviews proved more rewarding
than others, but, for the most part, each of the 36 interviews conducted, which
comprised 20 players, 8 coaches, 2 assistant coaches, 2 player agents, 2
owners/managers, and 2 governing body officials, produced relevant data which
would prove interesting for the themes being examined in this thesis. How then,
given the problems addressed above was this possible?

The key to answering the above question is the careful and calculated process
of building rapport (Bryman, 2001). Arguably, a relationship could be identified
between the perceived quality of an interview and the level of rapport built with the
respondent and their club. In simple terms, a better rapport built with a specific club
or individual resulted in more time and flexibility being obtained with that club or individual. Where little or no opportunity was available prior to the interview to build rapport, then the process had to be conducted during the introduction to, and in the interview itself. On occasion, this proved problematic. Carefully building rapport with a specific interviewee prior to an interview resulted in some of the best interviews. On these occasions (which most commonly occurred with coaches), the individual concerned was much more flexible, in some cases allowing the researcher to visit the club on more than one occasion, and inviting them back, following the interview, should further data be required.

Whilst the building of rapport with clubs and players proved highly important in the generation of data through interviews, the researcher was always aware that the building and maintaining of rapport with respondents was something of a balancing act (Bryman, 2001). As Bryman points out, building rapport with a respondent is a necessary quality in order to secure the interview in the first place, and then to secure valid and useful data from it. Putting the respondent at ease and showing interest in the interviewee's responses essentially invites the interviewer to be friendly with the respondent. However, stretching this level of friendliness too far may result in the interview going on for too long, leaving the researcher trawling through less relevant responses, in order to find the data that they are seeking. The necessity to find the correct balance in rapport with the respondent is accordingly crucial in obtaining quality data from interview subjects. Such a balance, it is believed, was achieved on many occasions during the interviews conducted for this research project. This level of rapport was, however, only reached after a great deal of very careful planning. The process began well before any dates for interviews were scheduled, and rapport was often built over a prolonged period of time. In some cases, this was over a year before the interviews themselves were conducted, in other cases, within a few months. In each case, however, the significance of building an appropriate level of rapport was observed. Consequently, much significant data was generated from the interviews. The next part of the chapter will examine how this data was organised, and how it was
coded and categorised, in order that relevant themes for discussion could be established.

Coding and Categorizing Interviews

One of the most obvious questions that a researcher must ask themselves prior to organising the data that they have obtained is; what actually constitutes data in the context of the research (Mason, 2002)? In a word, a researcher should have a sense of what it is that they are organising before they start. This understanding, or sensitivity, will, most commonly, be derived as a consequence of previous work, from the review of existing literature, and the design of the research questionnaire from which interviews were guided (see Appendix I). Thus, the general themes of observation would have already been established prior to analysis, whilst sub-themes, and previously unforeseen areas will develop from it. The research, in this respect, moves from the general to the particular.

Given the many methods by which qualitative data may be generated, the coding and analysis process may differ considerably, and must, therefore, be considered to be context specific. In order to enhance methodological rigour, a series of coding practices were considered for the data generated from the interviews in this research project. However, it was felt that the coding and categorising process developed as it progressed. In general terms, the coding process sought to seek naturally occurring classes of specifically interesting elements and important characteristics of these elements, and to look for similarities and dissimilarities in the data (Berg, 1998).

To create an appropriate base from which the above could be achieved, the first task was to transcribe all of the interviews. This required each interview audio file being transcribed to a word-processed document verbatim (see Appendix II). The first coding stage occurred during this transcription process. During the transcription process the researcher made a series of very general preliminary notes, recording any details which were considered to be particularly interesting or significant for the
subsequent coding stages (Bryman, 2001). Upon completion of the transcription process and the first broad coding of general observations, the second stage of coding required the first full read-through of each completed transcript. During this second coding further observations were made on the data. However, on this occasion recurring areas of interest were noted and given preliminary sub-thematic labels. Once a series of sub-thematic labels had been created, further coding of the data was conducted in order to establish whether or not the preliminary sub-thematic labels could be considered to be useful for onward analysis following the coding process.

In order to provide some organisation for the generation of the codes and to assist in onward thematic analysis, a series of coding indexes were produced. These indexes were structured upon a pre-determined organisation derived from existing literature and the study's core areas of interest. Thus, indexes were produced based upon each of the broad themes under investigation, with sub-themes being inserted under these general umbrellas, as and when they were generated, following the above coding. Indexing in this manner allowed the researcher to affirm or negate the usefulness of a sub-theme as the coding process developed. It was generally considered that sub-theme validity would be affirmed by the number of textual references made in the transcripts. Thus, data consistently referring to a common sub-theme would be entered onto the index under the sub-theme header. Recording data in this manner allowed the researcher to establish the relative value of each sub-theme, and to determine whether or not a sub-theme should be maintained for further analysis, synthesised with another cross-referenced developing sub-theme, or removed for lack of consistent reference.

The end result, following the coding which moved from the general to the particular, and the generation of the coding thematic indexes, was a series of coding indexes which represented the development, deletion, and synthesis of many early sub-themes, into a far more manageable data set appropriate for analysis. Indexing in this manner permitted the researcher to easily identify the various sub-themes relating to each of the broader areas of interest, and, moreover, to quickly identify the key area
of text in each of the various interview transcripts. The latter was achieved given that each indexing sheet was designed in a manner which clearly pointed to the specific page of the particular transcript at which relevant data could be obtained, and, moreover, provided a small sample of the text for quicker recognition (see Appendix III).

Whilst the coding and categorising process is an important step in the analysis of data, it does not constitute analysis in isolation. Coding and categorising is simply the mechanism by which the researcher makes sense of their data and the method by which those data are reduced to a more manageable amount (Bryman, 2001). The substantive chapters of this thesis will represent a fuller analysis of this coded material. These chapters will seek to reflect upon the overall importance of the findings with respect to the key research questions posed by this analysis, and the broader area in which they are framed.

Whilst the bulk of the data for this research project are descriptive in nature, and have been generated through interviews, the study also involved a statistical component. The statistical component was used to contextualise the movement of basketball and ice hockey players into the BBL and EIHL by examining trends in player recruitment across Europe. Whilst this element of the data collection process was relatively small in comparison to the interview element, it is necessary to spend a little time examining it here.

Statistical Analysis

This chapter has already examined how qualitative research is built around a central core of description. It has also examined how interviews, in the case of this study, have been used to engage with the descriptive element of the data collection process. Earlier sections of this chapter, however, discussed the importance of the research bricolage; the synthesis of different methods applied either exclusively in a single paradigm, or the application of a mixed methodological approach utilising tools from both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. It was felt that whilst the
The descriptive element of this study was significant, a contextualisation of the developing processes in Britain needed to occur also. Thus, in order to increase the reliability and validity of the data and to broaden the spatial dimensions of the study, the inclusion of a statistical component was advocated. This component was used to build upon the descriptive data generated through the interviews, and was used to place the data generated from those interviews, which was specific to the BBL and the EIHL, into a broader European framework. It was felt, therefore, that understanding the developing migration processes in the rest of Europe and their implications for migration in Britain was significant.

To establish the level of migration across various European leagues, both the Federation Internationale de Basketball Europe (FIBA Europe), and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) were contacted. The intention was to determine what sort of statistical data was held by these organisations, and how these data could be used to help contextualise the British sample. It was decided that the best way to organise the data was to firstly establish a typology of league rankings in Europe for both sports. These typologies were proposed by FIBA Europe and the IIHF. The intention of each typology was to rank various European leagues into one of four tiers based upon a series of variables. These variables were provided by FIBA Europe in the first instance and included; income, spectator support, amount of media coverage, player salaries, and performance of teams in European competition. Once a typology had been supplied by FIBA Europe, the same variables were provided to the IIHF who then developed a typology for ice hockey. The intention was to calculate the total number of players in each league and then to examine the total number of migrants, including the total numbers of North Americans, as a percentage of the overall player and migrant totals. Examining these statistics within each of the typologies would, it was hoped, allow for the identification of any trends between migrant numbers and league quality.
FIBA Europe were able to provide a ranking based upon the variables, and it was possible, accordingly, to establish a typology for European basketball leagues for 12 of the European countries registered with FIBA Europe. Moreover, FIBA Europe provided access to their player database in Munich so that the number of migrant players for each of the available countries could be calculated. In addition to the player database, FIBA Europe provided a copy of the European Basketball Guide. This publication provided a complete record of each team for each of the divisions of the 27 national leagues registered with FIBA to play in Europe. From the European Basketball Guide it was possible to establish the total numbers of players for each of the 12 leagues in the typology.

The IIHF were not able to provide such detailed information. However, using the variables for league prestige which had originally been provided by FIBA Europe, representatives from the IIHF were able to propose a preliminary typology of league ranking for ice hockey. In this respect, whilst it was only possible to establish rankings for eight European nations, the data were still deemed sufficient for analysis. Additionally, the IIHF recommended the use of an online player database which held player records for the teams of the eight European nations in the ranking. The IIHF made it clear that this database, whilst not being owned by them, provided data which was generated through their organisation. The IIHF themselves did not hold detailed computer records at their offices in Zurich. The database provided all of the necessary player information required to establish migration trends.

Establishing trends in the wider context of European basketball and ice hockey is important. To have neglected the significance of the other leagues and the developing migration processes within them, would have been to assume that British basketball and ice hockey operate within homogenous vacuums. Thus, the statistical element of the research process has helped to locate the movement of North American basketball and ice hockey players in the two leagues in Britain within a wider context. It has helped to establish the migration patterns which have developed over time in the sports more broadly. The next chapter of the thesis will begin to explore these
patterns more broadly. It will examine, socio-historically, the development of the two sports in Britain through time, and will contextualise migrant movements across space.
CHAPTER THREE
’DEAD SPOTS AND THIN ICE’: THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASKETBALL AND ICE HOCKEY IN BRITAIN

Before presenting the substantive elements of this analysis, it is necessary to provide some contextualisation. This chapter will, therefore, examine the development of basketball and ice hockey in Britain over time, and the involvement of migrant workers in the two sports in Europe. The intention here is to build a framework of understanding with regard to the sports’ current positions, by examining a series of structured processes in their development, and by analysing their ‘place’ in a broader European context. The developmental element will help to contextualise the contemporary continuations of the two sports. It will facilitate an understanding of the relational dependencies in which they are bound up, and the inherent power geometries influencing their ongoing development. The statistical element will be used to contextualise the employment of migrant workers in the two sports across Europe. Both of these forms of contextualisation will be required in preparation for the discussions which will follow in the substantive chapters.

The Early Development of Basketball in Britain: Origin and the NBL

It is not the intention of this study to document a complete history of basketball in Britain. Therefore, this section will focus on the game’s more recent history. However, it would be remiss not to allude to the manner in which the early development of the game has helped shape the contemporary form and the many interdependencies flowing from and through it. It is sufficient to say in connection with the early period that the development of basketball in Britain began at around the end of the nineteenth century, shortly after the initial invention of the game by Dr. James Naismith at the Springfield YMCA in Massachusetts, USA (Bale, 1982). Basketball was introduced to Britain at a point in the nation’s history when an interest in sport was developing rapidly (Polley, 1998), and at a point when the British Isles were exporting many sports forms to other parts of the world in the context of both the formal and informal empire. Originally brought to Britain by Madame Osterberg,
who introduced the sport to her college in Hampstead (Bale, 1982), the games first organising body was established within a year of its arrival. By 1922 enough clubs existed in Britain for a national championship to be held. However, by 1936, only thirty four clubs, predominantly spread throughout England and Wales, were registered with the organising body (Bale, 1982). As with most non-indigenous sport forms, basketball was not, at this point in its development, subject to widespread adoption in Britain (Falcous, 2002).

The first official governing body for the sport in England, the Amateur Basketball Association (ABA), was formed in 1936. During these early years several attempts were made to form a national league. However, none of these attempts were successful (Maguire, 1988b). Maguire notes in this connection how, up until the late 1960s:

The game remained amateur, tied to voluntary organisations and university teams, and was supported by only a small band of devotees. By and large, it was played, controlled and administered by the same group of people. (1988b, p.310)

It was not until 1972 that the first English National Basketball League (NBL) was formed, and not until 1974 that the more organised English Basketball Association (EBBA) was developed out of the former ABA.

The development of the first national league, and first organised governing body followed a sustained period of growth for the sport in Britain (particularly England), during the 1960s and 1970s. By 1965 Bale (1982) notes that 539 clubs existed in England, totalling 6,739 players. By 1979 these numbers had increased significantly to 868 clubs, offering playing opportunities to 16,495 players. Predominantly a male dominated sport, it is estimated that, in the late 1970s, approximately 3,500 women were registered to play with clubs in England. Whilst the increased participation rates would appear to suggest a move forward for the sport recreationally, only six teams were involved in the first national league in 1972. Of these six teams, one was connected to a voluntary organisation, one represented a
branch of the armed forces, whilst the other teams remained predominantly ‘amateur’ in stature and organisation (Maguire, 1988b). In this respect, Maguire notes how a “sense of continuity with the past” (1988b, p.310) was still evident.

Whilst the game struggled to break free from its amateur shackles and the shadows of its disorganised past, the inception of the NBL in 1972 gave birth to a new period of development for the sport in Britain particularly at elite level. With increasing regularity, NBL teams were able to secure income from sponsorship. By the start of the second NBL season in 1973, at least four of the eight teams now competing in the league had secured revenue in this manner (Maguire, 1988b). The introduction of profit generated via sponsorship was germinal in the development of the British professional game in this period. Between 1972 and 1988, the NBL was expanded from the original six teams to fifty two, with 45 of these teams being defined as ‘senior’ (Maguire, 1988b). By the 1973-74 season, the NBL had its first title sponsor – Clarke’s Men’s Shoes, and Bale (1982) observes how, by 1979, the NBL had been split into two divisions, sponsored by Rotary Watches. In this period, Bale notes how the game had begun to develop from “a sport which is almost entirely participatory-recreational, to one with a strong spectator orientation at the highest level” (p.139). Following periods of sponsorship from Clarke’s and Rotary, and periods with no title sponsor (1975-78), the NBL was later sponsored by Just Juice (1981-83), Wimpey Homes (1983-85), and Carlsberg (1985-88).

The effects of the increased commercialisation of the British game in the 1970s and 1980s were highly significant in the rapid development of the sport during this period. Already, however, during the league’s infancy, the problems associated with rapid commercialisation and the sport’s still peripheral position, were evident. The Milton Keynes All Stars, champions of the NBL in 1975, were extinct by 1979. Their demise followed the withdrawal of sponsorship by Embassy cigarettes (Bale, 1982). The inability to create a stable commercial operating environment has proven to be a major problem for basketball in Britain. In addition to the fragility of the Milton Keynes club, the volatility of the NBL in this period was evident in the
demise, or relocation, of many NBL clubs. By 1987, none of the original NBL clubs remained in existence, and 27 further clubs had been formed, but had subsequently folded. As Maguire (1994a) notes:

A number of teams playing in the league in the late 1980s, such as Leicester Riders/City Bus and Polycell Kingston have had several different previous names. In the case of the club currently located in Kingston, a suburb of London, the club has not only had at least seven name changes but also relocated to Scotland only to return subsequently to its original home. (p.236)

Often linked with changes of ownership or sponsorship, the fragility and volatility of the sport at a professional level in Britain, were observable from an early point. The increased revenue generated from increasing commercialisation, brought with it its own set of problems which would have ramifications for the development of the sport in Britain.

The relatively rapid commercial expansion of the NBL resulted in the sport, at the highest level in England, very quickly becoming subject to various market pressures (Maguire, 1988b, 1994b). The league, and the sport itself in England, found themselves enmeshed within a complex political economy (Falcous & Maguire, 2005), reflective of a number of dynamisms, each requiring satisfaction in order to promote and maintain the stability of the league. In trying to sustain a level of stability, the commercially oriented owners of the clubs found themselves at odds with the more established officials and the governing body, the EBBA. The owners wished to adopt American-style marketing strategies and media coverage, and to, as Maguire (1994a) notes “change the ideological messages underpinning the game centring on American spectacle and entertainment” (p.233). Key to these practices was a move away from “amateur ‘home-based’ players to achievement-oriented migrants and ‘indigenous’ workers” (Maguire, 1994a, p.233).
The development of sponsorship in the NBL from small scale, localised
groups, to larger national and multinational corporations, provided the vital
commercial base required to facilitate the recruitment of American migrants to the
NBL teams (Maguire, 1988b). The club owners, who were in favour of importing
players from North America, suggested that doing so as a formal strategy would
increase the general playing standards in the league, improve the overall spectacle for
the audience, and enhance entertainment value. Concomitantly, they argued that the
introduction of migrants would increase audience numbers, thus further enhancing
commercial opportunities, and, in turn, club revenue (Maguire, 1988b).

In 1972, the first year of the NBL, only two migrant players were registered to
play in the league. However, between 1982 and 1986 this number increased
significantly, to a point where migrants accounted for one fifth of the entire leagues
registered players. When coupled with the number of players registered as 'dual
national', or 'naturalised' (i.e. those players who grew up and learned the game
outside of Britain), the figure for the period 1982-86 rises to approximately 30 per
cent (Maguire, 1988b). In this period of the game's development, a noticeable shift
was evident in the hegemony of the NBL and, it can be argued, British basketball
more broadly. In the early to mid 1980s, American players began to dominate the
British professional game. As Maguire (1994a) observes:

Offensively, Americans dominated the top ten ranking positions throughout
the period under consideration. They were key performers in terms of assists,
scoring and rebounding. This evidence indicates both the extent of sports
migrant involvement and their domination in terms of 'starting fives' and
court time. The English players tended to occupy supporting positions.
(p.234)

Whilst many team owners had suggested that the introduction of American migrants
would improve playing standards in the league, it was unclear as to whether or not the
owners believed the introduction of the migrants would improve the standards of the
British players. The result, however, during the early introduction of migrants, as
Maguire observes, was that the role of the British player changed. In this period,
these players found themselves assuming peripheral positions on the bench and thus ‘riding the pine’ with increasing regularity.

Even before the increased influx of American migrant workers in the mid-1980s, concern was being raised by the National Executive Committee of the EBBA (Maguire, 1994a). During the 1977-78 season it was agreed by the organising body that a quota system would be implemented which would limit the signing to two foreign players each for NBL teams. Such a move drew attention to the increasing commercialisation of the game in Britain, where players, particularly American migrants, were increasingly being viewed in terms of financial investment. Some observers within the governing organisation sought a reduction in the number of migrants permitted to NBL teams from two to one (Maguire, 1988b). However, such a change never materialised. On the contrary, in this period NBL teams realised that in order to compete economically, commercially, and competitively, they would have to recruit the best American migrants, both players and coaches, available to them. A culture of fear developed within the league with regard to the consequences of losing the migrant players and coaches, and the benefits that dovetailed with them.

One such benefit was the increased media exposure afforded to the NBL and basketball more broadly in Britain. The 1980s saw the emergence of British basketball in all areas of the media, however, most obviously on television (Falcous, 2002). Barnett (1990) observed how televised basketball coverage increased from just four hours in the entirety of 1980, to nearly thirty hours in 1988, an increase which predominantly occurred as the result of a move from the BBC to the newly launched Channel 4. As Whannel (1992) notes, when Channel 4 selected to feature basketball as part of its sports coverage the sport was “full of enthusiasm” (p.81) and involved forms of coverage that were specifically manufactured for television. Many production methods were used in an attempt to make the product more appealing to what can be argued was a relatively naïve British audience.
 Whilst the increased exposure on television and other media coverage was welcomed by the club owners, predominantly concerned with the commercial success of their respective clubs, the concerns of the EBBA were somewhat different. Increased television exposure of basketball in Britain augmented revenue in the sport dramatically, which in turn resulted in the NBL teams spending further large amounts on more American imports (Whannel, 1992). When long-term interest in the sport by the British public failed to materialise and media revenue peaked, the clubs suddenly found themselves in the midst of a cash-crisis. Whilst initial interest in the sport had shown promise, the audiences quickly fell away, resulting in disgruntled sponsors, many of whom pulled out of their various commitments with clubs. Thus, a series of processes were at work which resulted in an initial rise in the sport from a commercial perspective but which also resulted in the limited success of selling the sport to a wider British audience. As Falcous (2002) notes: “whilst making strides into the TV market during the 1980s, basketball, it should be emphasised, remained marginal to the popular British sporting consciousness” (p.157).

By 1984, the NBL club owners were dissatisfied with the organisation of the sport in Britain. Their response was to establish the Basketball Owners Association (BOA), an organisation originally formed by nine of the NBL division one clubs (Maguire, 1988b). Seeking greater autonomy and in an attempt to maximise financial rewards, a power struggle developed between the BOA and the EBBA. The result was that, in April 1986, the dissatisfied owners formed their own breakaway league, the development of which requires examination.

*From Federation to Franchise: The BBL and the Volatility of the British Game*

The formation of the breakaway British Basketball League (BBL) in 1986 was opposed by the EBBA, who urged the National League Council not to recognise it (Maguire, 1988b). Owned by the member clubs with a representative from each club nominated to the board of directors, the BBL “adopted all the characteristics of commercial sports models, as pioneered in North America” (Falcous, 2002, p.157). It focused, primarily, upon the commercially oriented elite level of competition, rather
than mass participation, or grass roots development; areas that the division one owners felt the EBBA placed too much emphasis upon (BBL, personal communication, July 4th, 2005).

Initially, the BBL was administered, organised, and promoted by the shareholding clubs under the operating name of the Basketball League Limited (BLL). However, like its NBL predecessor, the BBL failed in its early development to create a platform of stability from which to build. Developed upon a franchise system, whereby clubs owned their own franchise area which corresponded to local council authority boundaries, clubs were permitted to apply for a licence to run a franchise in a particular area. However, if, at any point, a club felt that the current franchise area was not delivering the necessary prerequisites for stable business operation, then that club had the option to relocate to a new franchise area or to sell the franchise on to new owners (BBL, personal communication, July 4th, 2005). These options were frequently exercised.

The adoption of the American style franchising system resulted in the relocation of many BBL teams and changes in the ownership of many more. The inability to create a stable operating base resulted in the sport’s popularity in Britain fluctuating in an unpredictable manner, at some points increasing dramatically in popularity, at others, struggling to maintain an existence. The upward trend of this distorted development is evident during the late 1990s when, during a high point for the game, many BBL teams moved from local authority owned sports centres to multi-purpose sports arenas, offering spectator capacities of between five and eighteen thousand. Teams that took advantage of the increased popularity of the British game at this point were the Manchester Giants who relocated to the Nynex Arena (later renamed the Manchester Evening News Arena), the Birmingham Bullets who relocated firstly to the National Indoor Arena (NIA) and then onto the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), the Newcastle Eagles who moved into the Newcastle Arena, the Sheffield Sharks who moved into the Sheffield Arena, and the London Leopards who made the London Arena their new home.
During the heady period of the late 1990s commercial interest in British basketball accelerated one again. Franchises began to attract interest from major investors from the spheres of sports and entertainment. Franchise licences were purchased by entrepreneurs such as Harvey Goldsmith, and the president of the Planet Hollywood restaurant chain, Robert Earl (Falcous, 2002). Similarly, sponsorship increased in the league during this period. The main title sponsorship already having shifted from Carlsberg, at the BBL’s inception, shifted again to Budweiser. Moreover, team sponsorship developed, with companies such as Adidas, Lego, Peugeot, and Renault lending their support to BBL teams. Invariably, in order for owners, sponsors, and advertisers to gain the degree of exposure required to make their investments worthwhile, the need for frequent and regular media contact was significant. This contact was delivered through a three year television deal signed with British satellite broadcaster BSKYB in 1995. This deal guaranteed the BBL weekly game coverage on a two hour weekend slot. This initial deal was improved in 1998, with an extension worth £1 million over a further three years (Falcous, 2002).

Elite basketball in Britain appeared superficially to be making progress commercially, and competitively. However, it was still the case that the sport only really penetrated small pockets of interest around the country. For the most part, the sport remained marginal to the wider British sporting public. As one BBL representative noted:

We class ourselves as a minority sport. We’ve struggled to shake off, despite a couple of significant rises in the late 1980s and again in the late 1990s, that it’s an American sport being played in the UK. (BBL, personal communication, July 4th, 2005)

The minority status of the sport in Britain was one stumbling block to the wider commercial development of the game. However, a more significant problem was the inflated expectation that dovetailed with the rises of the late 1980s, and particularly the late 1990s. A series of poor commercial decisions in this second period resulted in the loss of the BSKYB television contract, and subsequently, the backing out of club owners and sponsors. As one BBL representative observed: “There has been a
tendency in the past to run before we can walk” (Personal communication, July 4th, 2005). Therefore, after the successes of the 1990s, the BBL found itself in an altogether more familiar position, more akin to the NBL days.

Following the loss of all television coverage, both terrestrial and satellite, British basketball struggled even more to penetrate the consciousness of the British public. Many of the teams who had elected to relocate to large purpose-built arenas during the late 1990s rise, subsequently found their surroundings change, sometimes on multiple occasions. Examples of these moves included the Birmingham Bullets who moved from the NIA to the NEC but then downsized to the Aston Villa Leisure Centre, before downsizing further to the local authority-run North Solihull Sports Centre. The Manchester Giants, who had moved into the Manchester Evening News Arena, moved on to the much smaller Manchester Velodrome, before finally folding in 2003. The London Leopards, who had moved into the London Arena, in the up-and-coming redevelopment area of the London Docklands, found themselves relocating outside of London to Essex and the Brentwood Leisure Centre, before dropping out of the BBL shortly after.

The demise of so many BBL teams speaks volumes about the downturn of the league at the turn of the 21st century. Whilst some teams still maintain larger capacity facilities, for the most part, the teams of Britain’s elite basketball competition compete from local authority-run sports centres, or university facilities. The instability of the BBL since its inception has been marked by a series of processes and a series of dynamisms which are constantly in flux. Each of these elements has added to the complex web in which the BBL is now enmeshed. A further element of this web is the continuing changes in player demographics. This area requires further attention.
The BBL and Migration: ‘Brits on their way – Yanks here to stay?’

At its inception in 1986, the BBL maintained the quota limits established by the EBBA for the old NBL. Thus, only two foreign players were permitted to each club. These regulations remained in force for much of the early period of the BBL’s existence. However, with increased commercial pressure and the introduction of the Bosman ruling, these regulations were eventually changed for the 1996-97 season, when five non-national players were permitted per club (BBL, personal communication, July 4th, 2005). These rules stood out against those observable in various continental European leagues, and, for the most part, went against the recommendations laid down by the game’s European governing body – FIBA Europe.

Before 1996 and prior to the changes which were due to come into effect following the Bosman ruling in 1995, most European teams had two foreign players as per FIBA Europe’s suggested guidelines. The remainder of their players would, most commonly, represent home nationals, given that, pre-1995, the free movement of labour in sport was not yet guaranteed between EU states. Before the introduction of the rules following the Bosman ruling, the BBL operated a similar system to most of the other European leagues competing under FIBA Europe’s umbrella. However, after the changes imposed in 1995, the BBL’s policy for the recruitment of migrants moved at somewhat of a tangent to the other European nations. The majority of the European leagues elected to maintain the FIBA Europe recommendations of two migrant players, understanding that EU nationals no longer qualified as migrants. They then adhered to the new labour rights established as a consequence of the Bosman ruling and opened the remainder of their positions to EU nationals. At this point, the BBL elected to increase the number of migrant players permitted per team from two to five. This was on the premise that the remaining five positions would all be filled by ‘British’ players (BBL, personal communication, July 4th, 2005).
The effects of the free movement of sports labour in Europe following the Bosman ruling, were felt very much at the elite level in British basketball. Given the new rules, players holding EU member state passports could now move relatively freely around Europe and seek out the best employment opportunities available to them. This meant, for British basketball, that its top British players migrated outward to the more prestigious European leagues in an attempt to secure more lucrative financial rewards, given that they would no longer be categorised as imports (BBL, personal communication, July 4th, 2005). The increase from the previously permitted two migrant players to five was, in effect an attempt to address the apparent skills shortage which developed when these players migrated out of British basketball. As one BBL official put it:

We would have taken a significant drop in level, had the view been that it was only going to be short term. But the feeling was, particularly at that stage, that we could bring through the young British players, and improve them, but once we did that, because of the status of the sport in this country, as soon as they got to a reasonable level, their aspiration would always be Europe, unless we could improve ourselves. (Personal communication, July 4th, 2005)

The risk for the team owners in such a context was in the level of competition that would be achievable if the existing system of two migrants was maintained following the loss of the better British players. It was felt by the owners that the commercial interest in the sport, which was gaining during this period, would be lost if the league elected to rely on home-grown talent rather than on migrant workers.

Since the changes in 1995, the BBL foreign player quota has changed very little. Split now into two categories, players are either classified as national or non-national. To qualify as a national player, the player must be eligible to play for the Great Britain or the English national team, whilst non-national players are classed as any player not eligible to play in those teams because of their place of birth. For the start of the 2004-05 BBL season, each team was permitted to sign up to four non-national players on the understanding that the remaining six players were all
nationals. Of these six, each club is permitted to sign one player who is national by virtue of naturalisation (BBL, 2004).

The quota regulations and the introduction of a salary cap of £150,000 per team per season, have resulted in unparalleled movement within British basketball. Migrant players are constantly moving between the eleven teams of the BBL in search of the best financial deal, no matter how small the increased financial reward might be. Moreover, this rapid turnover of migrant talent is facilitated by coaches who are seeking to maximise their own returns, and thus quickly replace migrant players who fail to meet with their expectations (Falcous & Maguire, 2005). In the current context, it is highly unusual for migrant BBL players to be signed to any contract lasting longer than a single year. Thus, BBL coaches rebuild squads each season, often constantly recruiting throughout the existing season for the following one.

Practices such as those outlined above are indicative of a league which is still afforded little stability. They are also indicative of a sport which is enmeshed within a complex global and local political economy (Falcous & Maguire, 2005), which has developed out of a series of structured processes. As Falcous and Maguire (2005) put it:

Understanding basketball labor migration in local contexts requires an awareness of the global contours of social, political, and economic power arrangements within the game. Global basketball structures are characterized by different interest groups at the global, regional, and national level: governing bodies, commercial investors, consumers, sponsors, officials, and players.

In order to provide some contextualisation of the manner in which this global and local political economy is reflected in the BBL in its current form, it is necessary to make some general observations.
The BBL in 2004-05: Some General Observations

In 2004-05, the BBL was made up of 11 teams based in: Chester, Newcastle, London, Sheffield, Brighton, Glasgow, Bracknell, Milton Keynes, Plymouth, Leicester, and Birmingham. Based predominantly in local authority-run sports centres or university facilities, links with the past are still very much in evidence in the BBL in its contemporary form. The move back to smaller facilities has been mirrored by the change in apparent commercial opportunities. As periods in the past had experienced a development from small localised sponsors to more national and multinational groups, so commercial interest has recently declined, and BBL teams are increasingly again sponsored by local groups or companies. Concomitantly, in the 2004-05 season, the BBL has no title sponsor, and, as a result of the financial pressures stemming from this lack of commercial interest, has recently downsized its operation in Birmingham from eight members of staff to one.

Dovetailing with the apparent disinterest in the elite British game and resulting from a series of poor management decisions, the BBL currently has no contracts for televised media exposure. In the past, it had been able to usually rely upon the BBC to cover the league’s ‘showcase’ events each season. In 2004-05, however, the BBC elected not to screen the annual BBL cup final, as it had in years past, instead choosing to cover women’s crown-green bowling from Hopton-on-sea (The Observer, 16th January, 2005). The ‘place’ of basketball in Britain following this decision by the BBC was summed up by one journalist, who commented:

Basketball [in Britain] is distinctly second rate. All the PR in the world cannot cover up the fact that the Scottish Rocks are inferior to the Los Angeles Lakers. British basketball is a cast off sport . . . . The sport has neither tradition, nor an expectation of permanence. There is nothing to fall back on and neither is there much hope for the future. (The Observer, 16th January, 2005, p.13)
The inability of the BBL to secure media exposure, even for its more media-worthy events, speaks volumes about the current state of the sport at elite level in Britain. The problems associated with the fall-away of media exposure and the commercial outlets flowing from it, have seen some observers call for the game in Britain to ‘go-under’ and reinvent itself.

The fragility of the BBL enhances the significance of questions relating to migration. Basketball in Britain has frequently operated upon the margins of British sporting culture. Many existing studies of athletic migration examine the movement of athletes to core sport cultures where financial rewards and the outlets for media exposure are greatest (see Bale & Sang, 1996; Maguire & Stead 1996, 1998; McGovern, 2002 as examples). What, then, when movements occur from a core sport culture (North America) to a peripheral culture? This question will be examined later in the thesis. Before this can occur, however, it is necessary to switch focus and establish similar developmental parameters for ice hockey in Britain.

**The Early Development of Ice Hockey in Britain: Origin and the BIHA**

Whilst it is relatively easy to piece together a developmental model for British basketball, performing the same or a similar function for British ice hockey proves far more difficult. There is a dearth of literature in the area, and that which has been written, and which is now published most commonly in various electronic forms, often provides contradictory accounts as to the games origin and early development. Indeed, Phil Drackett’s (1987) history of British ice hockey is one of the few general overviews of the sport’s development in Britain. Many of the developmental accounts which can be found on various web sites, or through the limited publications available, are often representative of a particular team or area (see Crawford, 2002). This lack of evidence, in itself, says something about the development of the game in Britain.
It was in February 1936 following a match between Great Britain and the United States that the British public suddenly became aware of a sport called ice hockey. The game, broadcast on BBC radio, was an instant sensation, resulting in six hundred phone calls, many telegrams and letters to the BBC, and overnight fame for Bob Bowman, the game’s commentator (Drackett, 1987). The 0-0 result against the Americans and the subsequently favourable results in other matches, meant that, in 1936, the Great Britain ice hockey team became the first to secure the ‘triple crown’ of Olympic, World, and European honours (Maguire, 1996). The success of the British team in this period, as Drackett (1987) notes, was to “launch an ice hockey boom which would survive the Second World War and last until the 1950s” (p.9-10).

Interestingly, this boom period for ice hockey in Britain had developed out of a decision by the British Ice Hockey Association (BIHA) with respect to a foreign player quota. Whilst British basketball did not introduce player quotas, following the introduction of migrants into the sport, until the 1970s, ice hockey’s governing body in Britain felt it necessary to introduce limits some forty years earlier. The BIHA stipulated that all English National League teams should have at least four British-born players, one of whom should have been resident in the country continuously for the past two years and one of whom should have played at least one full year in British ice hockey. The introduction of this quota system resulted in the development of a number of good British players from which the BIHA was able to select the national team to compete in 1936 (Drackett, 1987).

Opportunities, it appeared, were being protected for British players in the English National League from an early period, given that Canadian born migrants were making increasingly important contributions in the league during this period (Maguire, 1996). However, the stipulations that at least one British player must have been resident in Britain for at least two years, and that another must have played in British ice hockey for at least one year, point to a need to recruit players who had shown some loyalty both to the country and the sport in Britain. This need was evident given that many of the players playing both in the English National League,
and in the national team at that time held dual national status, and had, in fact, honed their skills in Canada, not in Britain. Thus, whilst the quota system was adopted to protect opportunities for British players in an increasingly migrant-oriented league, the reality was that most players playing in Britain at that point in time, would have learnt their skills in Canada, irrespective of nationality. Thus, British ice hockey was built, almost entirely, on ‘Canadian’ players (Kivinen, Mesikammen, Metsa-Tokila, 2001); a trend which was to develop further over time.

If the 1936 success of the national team had led to a boom in ice hockey interest which lasted until the 1950s, then the period from the late 1950s until the 1980s, by contrast, was to see this interest dwindle and the long-term decline of the sport in Britain (Maguire, 1996; Crawford, 2002). In 1955-56 the British League, which was developed out of the old English National League, was reduced to just five teams representing; Harringay, Wembley, Brighton, Nottingham, and Paisley. The withdrawal of other national league teams was the result of hotel costs, variable attendances, the apparent disparity in playing standards, and the decision made by many of the Scottish clubs to take part in the more localised Scottish Amateur League (Drackett, 1987). The sport in Britain at this point faced an uncertain future and, whilst attempts were made to resurrect interest, the 1950s and 1960s saw only small groups maintain an attraction to the sport (Kivinen et al., 2001). Ice hockey, like basketball, was a sport that failed to fully capture the British public’s imagination.

It was not until the mid 1970s that serious attempts were made to resurrect ice hockey in Britain, when a consortium of North American businessmen, representing various groups, proposed that a British team, the London Lions, should compete in a season of matches against continental Europe’s leading teams (Drackett, 1987). Backed by the owner of the North American National Hockey League’s (NHL) Detroit Red Wings, the London team was to be based in Wembley. Playing 71 matches between the 11th of October 1973 and the 31st March 1974, an average of one match every two and a half days, the team travelled to Sweden, Finland, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, West Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and the
other ‘home’ nations (Drackett, 1987). The ultimate aim of the season was the formation of a European super-league, which would be run along similar lines to the NHL, but with the various major European hockey nations being represented at club level. This idea sounded feasible in principle however, the reality was that the necessary base of British, or for that matter European, interest did not exist and, as a result, the London Lions were disbanded after just one year.

Following a period of uncertainty in the 1950s and 1960s, and the failed attempts to resurrect the sport in the early 1970s, the beginnings of another resurgence in British ice hockey were evident towards the end of the 1970s when the Southern League, which had been formed in 1970, expanded from five to twenty-two teams, and the Northern League (also formed in 1970), expanded from its original eight teams to fifteen. The antecedents to such a quick up-turn in interest in the sport in this period are unclear. However, it can be argued that this was a period which saw the emergence of Britain as an increasingly important market for migrant Canadian hockey players, seeking employment opportunities in Europe (Genest, 1994). By the end of the 1970s, 80 teams were affiliated to the BIHA, registering more than 2000 players (Drackett, 1987). By 1982 commercial and media interest in British ice hockey was increasing (Barnett, 1990) and the BIHA signed television deals with both Thames Television and ITV sport for the new British National League (BNL), which was formed following the merger of a number of smaller provincial leagues. British ice hockey, like basketball, was being exposed during this period to a series of different pressures and was becoming enmeshed in a complex political economy which was to have ramifications for the sport’s more recent development. This area requires further examination.
British ice hockey has, since its introduction, been built upon a reliance on migrant talent, migrant players being recruited overwhelmingly from Canada (Kivinen et al., 2001). The recruitment of Canadian migrant workers to British ice hockey, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was connected with a restructuring of the sport which occurred in this period (Maguire, 1996; Crawford, 2002). The move away from a sport played in front of relatively small crowds, representing limited pockets of interest, to a mass market product being sold to larger audiences, the media, and sponsors, is reflected in the up-turn of Canadian migrant recruitment at this time. Ice hockey, like basketball, was increasingly being viewed in terms of financial production by club owners.

The late 1980s and early 1990s proved to be an interesting period for migrant recruitment in British ice hockey as the financially oriented owners tried to find different methods by which they could recruit Canadian players, in order to address the commercial pressures being placed upon the newly structured BNL at this time. Given that the eligibility regulations had changed little since the 1930s, clubs were forced to find new methods by which they could get Canadians into the country. As Maguire (1996) notes: “the methods by which migrants enter GB can vary considerably. Although some clearly use official channels and their clubs apply for work permits, other methods are also employed” (p.349). These ‘other’ methods included, for example, bringing players in on the assumption that they were visiting the country on holiday. These players were specifically instructed to tell British immigration officers this, and under no circumstances, were they to be seen carrying any of the paraphernalia associated with ice hockey. Players who were unable to adhere to these instructions usually found themselves on the first flight back to Canada (Maguire, 1996).
In addition to the somewhat unorthodox measures applied at times to recruit Canadian players during this period, the increasing use of the dual national or naturalised player also became more significant. Given the historically strong migratory links with Britain, Canadian born ice hockey players who could lay some claim to lineage, would see their playing status change considerably. Players holding dual citizenship from more recent outward familial migration to Canada, or other administrative claims to British residence, or those who had spent long enough in the country to claim naturalisation by right or marriage, would not count towards the foreign player quota, and thus proved to be highly marketable commodities. Given this, the Canadian dominance of British ice hockey might well have been underestimated in this period as many such players did not appear in the foreign player statistics.

The increased involvement of Canadian migrant workers in British ice hockey during the early 1990s sparked a period of huge transition in the sport. Very much akin to basketball, the effect of the increased involvement of migrant workers in this period was the result of, and catalyst to, the developing political economy in the sport in Britain (Maguire, 1996). This increased period of growth resulted in the formation of a new governing body for the sport in Britain. Ice Hockey UK (IHUK) was formed as an umbrella organisation to administer the various British leagues, including the new Ice Hockey Superleague (ISL), which was formed originally by eight breakaway clubs of the former two-division BNL in 1996 (Kivinen et al., 2001). The formation of the ISL saw the first changes in the league structure of British ice hockey since 1983, when the BNL had been formed following the merger of a number of more provincial leagues.

The ISL was to be Britain’s first fully professional ice hockey league, offering new standards of play, facilities, and entertainment (Kivinen et al., 2001). With clubs originally based in: Cardiff, Sheffield, Ayr, Nottingham, Newcastle, Bracknell, Manchester, and Basingstoke, the formation of the league was the first real attempt to sell the sport to a wider, more mainstream British audience. Many of the ISL teams
elected to relocate, as many BBL teams had, to purpose-built arenas. Thus, the Sheffield organisation relocated to the Sheffield arena, the Nottingham team to the National Ice Centre, and Newcastle, to the Newcastle arena. Moving into purpose-built facilities provided more opportunities for ISL teams to increase their fan bases, and in the first season of ISL competition, it was estimated that some 1 million fans attended Superleague games, whilst a further 3 million tuned into television broadcasts (Roberts, 2005). Early expectations for the continued development of ice hockey in Britain, as a consequence of the successes of the ISL, were high. As a result, major sponsors began to be attracted to the sport. The league itself was sponsored by Sekonda, whilst ISL teams secured sponsorship from a diverse range of organisations including; Adidas, Allsports, British Telecom, Virgin, and the Evening Standard, among others.

Key to the marketing strategy of the ISL was the selling of an ‘entertainment package’ to a wider British audience. Thus, as had been the case in basketball before, a shift in the marketing practices of the league’s decision makers was evident. Increasingly, the sport, at elite level in Britain, was adopting North American marketing strategies, and adhering to the values established by North American sports models. Fundamental to the success of these various strategies was a higher standard of play, a standard not readily attainable by British players. Therefore, with increased revenue, generated by more lucrative commercial interest in the sport, both the quality and the quantity of migrant recruitment was affected. ISL teams could afford to pay better salaries and thus attract players of a better quality from North America. More significantly, however, fearing the consequences of not having sufficient numbers of migrants involved to further increase the appeal of the sport, the quota systems were changed considerably. Whereas, in the past, regulations had maintained a foreign player quota of either 4 or 5 permitted migrant players (small fluctuations and changes in the stipulations were evident over time), the ISL now opened the floodgates, initially allowing teams to recruit up to 8 full non-national players (Roberts, 2005). When coupled with dual nationals and naturalised players, ISL teams were recruiting almost entirely North American squads. The few ‘token’ British players
who were employed in the league faced the same problems as their counterparts in basketball and increasingly found themselves on the bench (Maguire, 1996). Indeed, in this period, only a handful of British players were able to maintain any significant ice time.

The ISL was exposed, as the BBL had been before it, to a series of fluctuations during the seven years of its existence. Many teams were formed, but then relocated or were folded due, for the most part, to the sorts of reasons for the disbanding of many BBL teams in the same period. In some cases, the wealthy owners who had taken advantage of the increasing interest in basketball during the 1990s, had also sought to diversify, adding ice hockey teams to their burgeoning entertainment empires. This was certainly the case for the franchise in Manchester where the Giants (BBL) and the Storm (ISL) were both owned by the same organisation, and both took advantage of the benefits of wealthy ownership, both moving into the multi-purpose Manchester Evening News Arena for example (Crawford, 2002). However, when the owners became dissatisfied with the apparent slow growth of both sports in Britain and elected to pull-out of the organisations, the clubs found themselves in financial difficulty, and folded. The Manchester Storm franchise was to resurface in the EIHL 2 years later, renamed the Manchester Phoenix, only to subsequently fold again one year later. The Manchester case demonstrates how ice hockey in Britain, like basketball, was still skirting on the periphery of the British public’s sporting interests. Crawford summarised such a position when discussing the development of the ISL and ice hockey in Britain more broadly:

Ice hockey for much of this century has been a homeless wanderer, returning back into the psyche of the British public only when it has been able to find a home in an arena or rink built for either ice-skating or as multi-purpose leisure facilities. Consequently, it is a sport in Britain that has followed a very precarious and unstable path. Moreover, from its early days it has been dominated by North American influence and players, and today is largely seen by many of its supporters as an ‘imported sport’ with few ties to British history and culture. (2002, p.34)
The sport's inability to capture the imagination of the British public was evident in 2003 when, after seven years of competition, the "disastrous experiment" (Roberts, 2005, p.22) that was the ISL was forced into liquidation. The ISL were in arrears to the governing organisation IHUK owing significant financial sums. The solution from IHUK was to settle the remaining balances, and then for the various ISL teams to rejoin the BNL, the league from which they had originally split some seven years earlier which still existed but was generally considered to be at an inferior level to the ISL (Roberts, 2005). The owners of the three former ISL 'big arena clubs', Sheffield, Nottingham, and Belfast (Belfast were not one of the founding ISL clubs, but joined the league later), feared that rejoining the smaller BNL would have serious ramifications for their still relatively stable commercial operations, and thus joined with five other clubs in an attempt to form another breakaway league – the Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL). This area requires further examination.

The EIHL: A League for the Future, or the Same Old Story?

The creation of the EIHL in 2003 led to something of a power struggle in British ice hockey. IHUK were unhappy that they were unable to bring the ISL clubs back into the BNL, and thus develop a single more integrated league structure, something that the organising committee had sought to do since the introduction of the ISL in 1996 (Roberts, 2005). However, their inability to tempt many of the former ISL clubs back to national league competition stemmed from the weak financial position that IHUK found itself in, ironically, due to the outstanding arrears of the former ISL clubs (Roberts, 2005). The decision by the ISL board not to pay fees and to form the new breakaway EIHL created a deepening rift between the club owners and IHUK. The result was that IHUK refused to recognise the new league (Roberts, 2005). The crisis for British elite ice hockey was reaching breaking point when, just days before the start of the EIHL's first season and, in an unprecedented move, the world governing body the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) stepped in, in an attempt to restore order (Roberts, 2005). The IIHF, exercising its supervisory role, took temporary control of ice hockey in Britain and asked their British council member to conduct a fact-finding mission with regard to the situation.
The response from the council member was that the EIHL should be recognised immediately in order that the impending season’s opening would not be delayed (Roberts, 2005).

Following the crises of 2003, the IIHF insisted that IHUK should draw up a new set of administrative rules to make clear how ice hockey was to be governed in Britain and how the various leagues, including the EIHL, would fit into IHUK’s overall framework. These rules were approved by the IIHF at their semi-annual conference in October 2004. In addition, the IIHF produced a report entitled ‘IIHF and British review panel findings in order to improve ice hockey in Great Britain’ (Roberts, 2005). Once a workable order was returned to the sport, EIHL board members were able to join the IHUK board. This had not been the best start for the new league, and the development of the increasingly complex power struggle had further heightened awareness of the fragility of the sport at elite level in Britain.

Given that, at its demise, the ISL permitted 12 foreign players per team, the introduction of the EIHL, even with a £6,900 per week salary cap, saw little change in the overall reliance upon overseas talent. For the first year of competition in 2003-04, the club owners agreed to a quota system permitting 11 non-national, work-permit players on the premise that, by the 2005-06 season, this number would be reduced to 10. These numbers appear, still, to be significant in themselves. However, when coupled with those migrants claiming dual nationality by way of ancestry, or birthright, and those who claimed naturalisation by residency period or marriage, the involvement of migrants is still highly evident. Most EIHL teams, comprised of approximately 18 players, ‘ice’ almost exclusively North American squads. Therefore, the position of the British players has changed little, and those few British players who are able to secure a place in an EIHL squad, still find their involvement reserved, for the most part, to the bench.
Seven teams competed in the second EIHL season in 2004-05, following the loss of the Manchester Phoenix franchise, who folded due to lack of funds. The seven competing teams included the three original ‘big arena clubs’; Nottingham, Sheffield, and Belfast, and teams from Basingstoke, London, Coventry, and Cardiff. Of the remaining four clubs, two were playing out of local authority-run ice centres. Thus, the London Racers played at the 900 capacity, Lee Valley Ice Centre, and the Cardiff Devils, played at the 2,500 seat Wales National Ice Rink. The other two clubs were playing out of private facilities, situated in both cases within multi-use leisure parks. The Basingstoke Bison played at the 900 seat Planet Ice, and the Coventry Blaze, from the 2,500 seat Coventry Sky Dome. The facilities in the EIHL thus vary considerably. The big arena clubs are able to offer all of the conveniences afforded by modern purpose-built facilities, whilst the other clubs find themselves ‘making do’ with the facilities which are available. In some cases, the rinks are very old, neglected, and in need of repair, whilst in others they are relatively new but not built with the purpose of providing a large spectating environment.

In its first season the EIHL attracted a total of 592,344 fans, with the big arena clubs averaging gates of around 3,500, whilst the smaller clubs averaged approximately 1,500 (Roberts, 2005). Whilst game attendance figures appear to be relatively healthy considering the minority status of the sport in Britain, interestingly very little change has been evident over time. The 2003-04 EIHL season average of 2,418 fans per game is similar to the average of 2,454 fans per game in the BNL in 1995-96 (Roberts, 2005). Thus, no growth is evident in the figures for this latter period. However, more serious for the EIHL is its failure to secure any sustained television contract, the result being that the league is currently without a major title sponsor, and the sponsorship of the clubs varies based upon local media exposure and the competence of the clubs’ marketing departments.
British elite ice hockey now sits at somewhat of a transitional phase. The EIHL, still in its relative infancy, has not yet shown signs that it will afford the sport the stability which it has been lacking since the 1950s. However, that said, the 2004-05 season was extraordinary not just for British ice hockey, but for European, and global ice hockey, and provided a previously unforeseen opportunity for exposure. It is to this area that the chapter now turns.

*Putting the ‘Elite’ in the League*

The 2004-05 season in global ice hockey was exceptional. It was exceptional because the league at the cultural and economic core of the sport – the North American National Hockey League (NHL) cancelled its season following a dispute between the league and the players union. The league owners, following unprecedented growth in player salaries, proposed the introduction of a salary cap for NHL teams. The introduction of such a cap was opposed by the NHL players and they instructed their union to begin the negotiations from which a bitter, season-long dispute would develop. Initially, the effects for ice hockey outside of North America were minimal. Some NHL players sought out playing opportunities elsewhere to bide their time, awaiting the resolution of the dispute, and the beginning of their shortened NHL season. However, as the struggle between the league and union became more complex, and the likelihood of any NHL play became more distant, so more NHL players migrated out to various other leagues where playing opportunities were available. Very few teams, no matter how big or small, would turn away the services of an elite player from the sports truly ‘elite’ league, and thus opportunities for NHL players were many and varied.

Many NHL players selected to ply their trade in Europe for the 2004-05 season, some European NHL players returning to their home nations. Many North American players elected to play in Russia, with some Russian teams icing almost exclusively NHL teams. Other North Americans selected the top European leagues in Sweden, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, whilst some North American NHL players also selected the smaller European leagues, including the EIHL.
The effect of NHL players in Europe is determined largely by the country in which those players elect to play. It is not unusual, for example, for players to move from the top European leagues into the NHL, or for NHL players who are perhaps seeking greater ice time, or a prolonged professional engagement with the sport, to migrate out to them. However, the movement of players in this manner between the NHL and British ice hockey had hitherto been virtually unheard of. Thus, the potential for interest generated in the sport during this season was significant. Indeed, many national newspapers ran ongoing stories with regard to the involvement of NHL players. Particular focus was placed upon two ‘NHL’ers’ who were plying their trade with the London Racers’ franchise. Eric Cairns of the New York Islanders, and Scott Nichol of the Chicago Blackhawks. These two players, more accustomed to playing in front of 20,000 fans in state-of-the-art arena’s, now found themselves at the 900 capacity, local authority-run, Lee Valley Ice Centre. The interest in Cairns and Nichol was generated, it can be argued, because the gulf which exists between the NHL and EIHL was most marked in the case of these two players. Nowhere else could the spectrum of opportunity in the sport be more clearly demonstrated.

Irrespective of the manner in which the media coverage portrayed the EIHL, the involvement of NHL players still drew attention to the league, and the sport more broadly in Britain. However, it appeared, from early indications at least, that the league was unable to capitalise on the involvement of NHL players. As one journalist reported:

The influx of NHL players has, perhaps surprisingly, been slow to make an impact on attendances in the Elite League. While the arrival of top players in other European leagues has seen a marked increase in interest – the Swedish league last week reported record attendance figures for the season – crowds here have yet to benefit. (The Times, 5th March, 2005, p.94)

The inability of the EIHL to build upon the involvement of the game’s elite players during the 2004-05 season is a consequence of the sport’s still marginal position in British sporting culture. Throughout its development from the 1950s onwards, ice hockey in Britain has struggled to shake of the ‘minority’ label. Other than the brief
period of wider interest in the 1930s following the success of the British national
_team, the sport has never truly engaged with or broken into the British consciousness.
The development of the game, even with the involvement of some of the world’s best
players, reflects this position.

To this point, this chapter has sought to contextualise the ‘place’ of basketball
and ice hockey in Britain by examining specific elements of both sports’
development. To furnish additional contextualisation, a statistical component is
provided. This helps to broaden the level of contextualisation achieved by exploring
the employment of migrant workers in the two sports across Europe. It is to this area
that the chapter now turns.

A Statistical Analysis of Migrant Involvement in European Basketball and Ice Hockey

To better contextualise the employment of migrant workers in the BBL and
EIHL, it is important to create a model which addresses the levels of migrant
involvement elsewhere in Europe also. Examining migration patterns in this way will
help to contextualise the total number of migrants involved in Britain, and more
significantly for this project, the total level of North American involvement, when
compared to other European nations. Using a statistical component and a
developmental element will, therefore, provide a contextualising model which is
sensitive to both spatial and temporal dimensions.

In order to create a viable framework from which comparisons of levels of
migration could be made, it was necessary, firstly with the help of FIBA Europe and
the IIHF, to establish a typology of league rankings in Europe (see Figure 2).
Developing this typology meant that migration could not only be contextualised at a
general level in Europe, but also within an economic and cultural hierarchy. Using
such a framework means that comparisons in migrant involvement can be made
between leagues which are generally deemed to be more or less professional, based
upon criteria including: national team performance, salary level, media exposure,
European domestic team success, revenue, and audience numbers. Thus, those
nations positioned at level 1 of the typology can be described as having leagues which are deemed to be more professional, and which occupy the core economic and cultural positions in European basketball or ice hockey. By contrast, countries with leagues positioned at level 4 occupy more peripheral positions and are arguably less professional. The typology is not, it should be made clear, a complete representation of every league in Europe since data for some teams and some leagues were not available. The typology does, however, provide sufficient data so that viable comparisons can be made across the various levels of competition in Europe.

In order to be able to contextualise the levels of involvement of migrant workers in European elite basketball and ice hockey teams, it is necessary, firstly, to establish for the 2004-05 season the total numbers of migrants in comparison to the total number of indigenous players. This is not something that can be done easily, if at all. Figure 3 represents the total number of players playing in the top basketball or ice hockey league in 2004-05 for each nation listed in the typology. This number has been divided to show more clearly how many of the total number can be labelled as domestic players and how many are migrants. Thus, the first pie chart (which can be seen on the left) shows the proportion of domestic players (dark grey), to migrant players (light grey). The second pie chart (on the right) shows the countries from which these migrants have been recruited. What Figure 3 does not represent is the number of migrants classified as either dual national or naturalised. These players, it must be assumed, will have been included by the various federations in the domestic count. Thus, the data which follow, whilst useful for this exercise, should be seen to be reflective of an underestimation of the true level of migrant involvement in European basketball and ice hockey.
The data in Figure 3 show that 551 (31%) ice hockey players employed by teams in the leagues listed in the typology for the 2004-05 season could be described as migrants. Of this 551, just less than half, 264 (15%), were recruited from Canada. The other nations from which most migrants were recruited included Slovakia,
Finland, the USA, Sweden, and Norway. Migrant players were also recruited from many other nations. However, where less than five players per nation were recruited, the count is shown as ‘other’. The remaining 1235 (69%) must for present purposes be described as domestic. However, this is on the understanding that a certain percentage of this number will either hold dual citizenship or will count as ‘domestic’ by virtue of naturalisation. A greater number of migrants are included in the basketball sample. In this case, 1121 (45%) players recruited to teams in the top league nations in the typology in 2004-05 can be labelled as migrants, with 523 (21%) of these migrants being recruited from the United States. Players were also recruited, however, from Serbia and Montenegro, Argentina, France, and Slovenia. For the basketball sample, where less than 10 players were recruited to a nation, the count will show as ‘other’. Of the total number, 1371 (55%) players must be labelled as domestic, taking into consideration the caveats observed above.

Figure 3 helps to contextualise the overall level of migrant involvement for the nations listed in the typology. The data included in Figure 3 also go some way towards contextualising the levels of migrant involvement in European basketball and ice hockey more broadly. The specific interest for this study, however, is in determining how the British sample can be contextualised within a broader European framework. To establish this contextualisation it is necessary to examine migrant involvement for each nation listed in the typology for the 2004-05 season. It is not necessary to present all of the relevant data for discussion here. Thus, only the British data will be included in Figure 4. The rest of the data can be found in Appendix IV.
The data collected for migrant recruitment for particular nations is represented in the same manner as the data for the overall level of migrant involvement in European ice hockey and basketball. The data presented on the first pie chart (which can be seen on the left) represent the total number of players, migrant or indigenous, playing in the top league in that particular nation in 2004-05. The second pie chart (on the right) represents the nationality distribution within the migrant group. These charts can be used to illustrate the locations from which migrants are most commonly
recruited. Again, the data for indigenous players must be approached with caution, given that data indicating the involvement of dual national or naturalised players is not available and therefore could not be represented here.

Upon examination of the data gathered regarding ice hockey, it is possible to observe a series of trends and patterns with respect to the involvement of migrant workers for the nations examined in the typology. One of the most obvious trends is that, with the exception of Hungary, as the typology level drops, so the percentage level of migrant recruitment increases. That is, migrant workers are more heavily relied upon in leagues which are deemed to be less professional. Fewer migrants were recruited as a percentage of the overall player total in the core sport economies and in leagues which were deemed within the typology to be more professional, Sweden and the Czech Republic are the most obvious examples here. Furthermore, where migrant recruitment has occurred in these two core economies, it has not primarily involved the recruitment of Canadian players, generally by far the largest migrant group. Rather, migrant recruitment to these leagues has been from within Scandinavia or from Eastern Europe. Thus, migration in the two core economies of European ice hockey can be described as somewhat atypical when compared to recruitment as depicted in the rest of the typology.

With the exception of Sweden and the Czech Republic at level 1, and Hungary at level 4, migration in the rest of the typology is expressive of a Canadian domination. In Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Britain, the number of Canadian migrants approximated to, or exceeded, the total combined number of migrants from other nationalities. Recruitment of the second largest group, Scandinavians, was also widespread. The recruitment of this latter migrant group could be observed in Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Italy. Little recruitment of this group was evident in the Czech Republic or Hungary, where migration was reserved for workers from Eastern Europe, predominantly from Slovakia.
In Britain, migrant recruitment also shows Canadian dominance. Indeed, of the nations sampled within the typology, the British recruitment of Canadians is greater as a percentage of player totals than in any other nation. When coupled with the recruitment of Americans, the recruitment pattern of British ice hockey can be described as clearly revealing a North American dominance. Of the 120 professional playing jobs available in the EIHL in 2004-05, 71 were taken by North Americans. The remaining 12 migrant positions were taken predominantly by Eastern European players. However, the statistics suggest that these players did not complete full seasons for their clubs.
Whilst a series of trends were observable with respect to migration patterns for the teams analysed in European ice hockey, so, too, were trends evident in the basketball sample. As the data show, migrant recruitment was, for the most part, consistent across the typology, with the exception of Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro. In these countries, migrant recruitment was considerably lower and somewhat atypical relative to the other nations. No American migrants were recruited to teams in these countries, whereas American recruitment could be observed in all of the other leagues of differing levels, resulting in the American players representing the largest migrant group for the nations analysed.

Whilst the role of host for Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro was limited, their role as donor was considerably greater. Migrants from these two former Yugoslav republics made up the second biggest migrant group after the Americans. The distribution of these players was, again, generally consistent throughout the typology. Whilst two of the level 1 nations, Spain and Italy, did not recruit significant numbers of either Croatian or Serbian players, Greece, the other level 1 nation, did recruit from this migrant group. Equally, recruitment from this group could be observed in France at level 2, Germany at Level 3, and Hungary at Level 4. Nations that did not elect to recruit from this group appear, from the data, to rely more heavily upon American migrants. This makes sense given the number of migrants represented by these two groups.

The range of countries from which migrants are recruited varies throughout the typology. Arguably, however, two of the level 1 nations, Spain and Italy, recruit from the most diverse range of locations. Recruitment throughout the rest of the typology was, for the most part, consistent, being split, predominantly between Americans or players from former Yugoslavia. Recruitment at level 4, specifically with respect to Britain and Sweden, represented the most limited range of locations from which migrants were recruited. In both of these nations, migrant recruitment was limited for the most part to American migrants. When observed as a percentage
of migrant involvement, in these two nations the reliance upon Americans can be described as greatest.

When comparing the British data to that of the other nations, it becomes evident that, in the British case exactly half of all players recruited are migrants. This number would be affected should data be obtainable which reflected the involvement of dual national and naturalised players within the domestic count. However, the data do show that the BBL is not the league which recruits the most migrants, by percentage, of all the leagues examined in the typology. Indeed, as a percentage of the total playing number, the country which recruits most migrants is Germany in Level 3. What the data for the British sample do make clear is that a greater percentage of American migrants are recruited to the BBL than to any of the other leagues in the typology.

Whilst the data presented here are relatively simple, and do not cover every league in Europe, what they do is help to contextualise the significant involvement of migrant workers in the BBL and EIHL. Moreover, the data show how significant the recruitment of North American workers is in both basketball and ice hockey in Britain when compared to their representation in other European nations. Framing this contextualisation within the typology of league ranking, and alongside the developmental contextualisation, means that a stable contextualising model can now be used as a frame of reference for the substantive chapters which follow. It is necessary to draw attention to these chapters within a broader summary.

Summary: Contextualising Similarities?

The intention in this chapter was to provide some contextualisation for the chapters which follow, by providing a socio-historical discussion, detailing the development of the sports of basketball and ice hockey in Britain over time, and a statistical element, framing the recruitment of migrants in these sports within a broader European context. The purpose was to highlight the series of processes evident in the development of both sports and to illustrate the manner in which these
processes were involved in a series of planned and unplanned consequences. What this chapter has hopefully also drawn attention to are the similarities which exist in the developmental models of the two sports in their contemporary contexts, specifically since periods of increased commercialisation in the 1970s and 1980s.

Both basketball and ice hockey share a relatively similar developmental lineage. Both are North American sport forms which generated initial interest in Britain in the early twentieth century. However, due mostly to national team success, it was ice hockey that captured the British public’s imagination in the early period. Following this marked difference in the sports’ development, however, both, in a contemporary context, share a relatively common developmental pathway, dependent, for the most part, on the same, or similar social and cultural conditions. Both sports have had to face uncertainty during their more recent developments, uncertainty stemming, primarily from their inability to break free from the periphery of British sporting culture. The inability of either sport to truly capture the imagination of the British public has resulted in the instability of league formation and structure and the various concomitant problems associated with this. The organisation of both sports in Britain has been, at best, haphazard and fraught with disparity and dispute. This has been made evident through observation of the governing bodies which have been launched and then liquidated, organised and reorganised, leagues which have been developed only to subsequently fold or be forced to change structure, and teams which have been formed and then disbanded, only to re-form and then disband again, sometimes after a very short period, on other occasions following prolonged periods of competition. Both sports have experienced promising highs in their development, highs which with careful management, may even have led to increased and sustained growth for the sports. However, both have also experienced the low points at which devotees of the sport have had to fight to maintain an existence. Interestingly, the ebbs and flows of both sports have occurred in the more recent context at similar times and thus should be considered to be related, in part, to a series of wider processes during these periods. Specifically, the late 1980s and late 1990s have proved to be periods of growth for both basketball and ice hockey in Britain.
Maguire’s analyses (1988b, 1996) began to attend to some of these processes by detailing how the increased commercialisation of the sports in these periods dovetails with the increased use of migrant workers and the development of marketing practices based upon North American sports models. Observing the development of a complex political economy, Maguire’s work demonstrates how the sports were exposed to various pressures in these periods, and how the administrators of the sports sought to address these pressures in an attempt to build sustainable operations. The move from amateur-based governing bodies, to more commercially oriented franchising systems, would initially lead to growth in the sports. However, this growth was short lived and both sports now find themselves in transitory periods of development.

The similarities in the development of basketball and ice hockey are reflected in their enmeshment in comparable political economies in 2004-05, the season with which this study has primarily been concerned. Both sports still operate very much upon the periphery of British sporting culture, and reflective of this, neither sport has any secured television rights for exposure via this medium. Sponsors are of similar value and attendances are comparable. Both sports rely almost exclusively upon migrant talent to maintain their levels of competition and interest, and discernible talent pipelines are evident in the recruitment of migrant workers to the teams of the BBL and the EIHL. As the statistical section of the chapter illustrates, the overwhelming majority of migrants in British basketball and ice hockey are recruited from North America. BBL teams predominantly recruit Americans, whilst EIHL teams predominantly recruit Canadian workers.

The similarities between both sports’ development, and their subsequent related contemporary positions, make a comparative study of migration more interesting given that few sports can offer such comparable characteristics. It is with this in mind, accordingly, that the following substantive chapters will begin to address the key questions posed by this work: why do North American basketball and ice hockey migrants select Britain as their migration destination? Why do BBL and
EIHL coaches elect to recruit North American workers over indigenous workers or migrants from other locations? How are these workers recruited to BBL and EIHL teams, and how does their involvement affect the leagues in the early 21st century?
CHAPTER FOUR
‘THE POND HOPPERS’: EXPLORING THE MIGRATION MOTIVATIONS OF NORTH AMERICAN PLAYERS IN THE BBL AND EIHL

The purpose of this chapter and the three which follow is to build upon and add to the existing body of knowledge in the area of athletic migration, and to provide a synthesis with research which has examined the migration patterns of highly skilled workers. To do this the following substantive chapters of the thesis will be structured in such a manner that each will focus upon one of the key interdependent elements being examined within the migration figuration. To begin, therefore, this chapter will examine the migration motivations of North American basketball and ice hockey players. It will seek to better understand the complex, interdependent series of processes that influence migrant workers to select the BBL or the EIHL as their migration destination. It will also begin to attend to the complexity of the networks of interdependency in which the players are involved. The following three substantive chapters will then study further elements of the figuration. More particularly, they will examine: the recruiting motivations of BBL and EIHL club coaches, the methods by which migration is facilitated between North America and Britain, and the effects of North American migrant recruitment upon the sports subcultures of basketball and ice hockey in Britain. Building up a representation of the migration figuration in this manner will permit a more adequate understanding of the complex, overlapping, and disjunctive series of processes which are reflected in the movement of athletic workers in British basketball and ice hockey.

The sports of basketball and ice hockey share, as the previous chapter has shown, a similar developmental pattern when considered in a British context. That is to say a common series of processes can be observed in both sports at similar points in their development. Whilst some differences can be observed in the early developments of the sports, since the 1970s both basketball and ice hockey have, arguably, virtually paralleled one another in developmental terms, particularly when considering the increased recruitment of migrant workers. The recruitment of North
American workers, in both basketball and ice hockey, can be seen to have occurred as one of the results of the rapid commercialisation of the sports at elite level in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s (Maguire, 1988b, 1996). In this period, increasing numbers of North American players were recruited and the relatively rapid commercialisation of the sports resulted in North American players increasingly being viewed in terms of financial investment (Maguire, 1988b, 1996). This is not to assume, however, that the primary motivation for North American migrants to ply their trade in Britain during this period was financial gain. It must be kept in mind that, as Chapter Three has shown, the sports remained marginal to the popular British sporting consciousness (Maguire, 1996; Falcous, 2002). Therefore, even during the periods of relative stability and prosperity in the 1970s and 1980s, both basketball and ice hockey still remained very much upon the periphery of the overall British sporting culture.

Maguire’s (1988b, 1996) work does not suggest that those North American migrants selecting Britain as their migration destination during the 1970s and 1980s could be solely described as ‘mercenaries’. In fact Maguire did not address the issue of migrant worker motivation in any great depth at all in his study examining basketball. This was never the focus of this work. Indeed, no research has yet been conducted which explicitly seeks to explore the migration motivations of American migrant workers in British basketball. However, that said, Maguire does approach the issue of migrant worker motivation in his study of British ice hockey. Here, by introducing the preliminary typology of sport labour migration, Maguire sought to capture variations in the migration incentives for migrant workers. Whilst Maguire never applied this framework to basketball per se, it is possible to argue that the recommendations he made in respect of one North American sport played in a peripheral British context can also be made for another. One has to bear in mind, of course, that variation may be evident as a consequence of the time which has lapsed between Maguire’s original studies and the present work.
Maguire's (1996) examination of Canadian migrant workers in British ice hockey, will, of course, be more readily applied to the section of this chapter which explores that sport specifically. However, given that it is one of the only pieces of research which seeks to explore the incentives for migrant workers in a North American sports subculture in Britain, and given the similar developmental frameworks of the two sports in Britain since the 1970s, it can be used as a valid frame of reference for basketball also. Much can be drawn from Maguire's work with regard to the migration motivations of Canadian workers in British ice hockey. Of greatest interest for this study, however, is the indication it provides, that whilst some migrant workers are motivated by more mercenary desires and therefore spend little time in Britain, many are motivated to ply their trade in Britain by incentives which are not directly or in any single sense economic. Such a contention would seem reasonable given the financial frailties of the BBL and the EIHL observed in Chapter Three.

Maguire (1996) argued that many Canadian migrant workers selected Britain as their migration destination for reasons other than financial gain. In this respect, Maguire argued that migrants were more likely to be motivated by: the close overlap that exists between the Canadian and English versions of the English language, the ability to be able to extend a professional engagement with the sport beyond the players' professional capacities in their home nation, or the ability to be able to assume the role of 'pioneer' and to educate with respect to 'their' sport at the end of their careers. Some of these incentives were evident in this work, when considered with respect to both basketball and ice hockey. These incentives would seem to contradict the contentions made by researchers in the field of highly skilled migration which argue that financial gain is the most significant motivating factor influencing highly skilled migrant workers to relocate.
Research in the field of highly skilled migration contends that, whilst a series of processes influence the migration decisions of highly skilled migrants, the most significant factor motivating these workers to migrate to ply their trade is, ultimately, the intention to secure greater financial rewards (Fischer et al., 1997; Stalker, 2000). These contentions suggest that highly skilled migrant workers seek to take advantage of the positive wage disparities which have been created in contemporary models of global economic development. In this respect, researchers studying this area observe how the contemporary migration of the highly skilled increasingly reflects movement into core economies. The movement of Indian IT professionals into developing technological markets in Australia, and the migration of highly skilled Latin American workers to Europe and the United States, can be used as examples of this type of migration (Pellegrino, 2001; Xiang, 2001).

When considering migration into core economies, research such as that discussed above, contends that the financial incentive is highly significant. However, what happens when migration occurs from a core economy to a peripheral economy, as in the case of North American migration to the BBL and the EIHL? It may be less likely that migrant workers are motivated to relocate to improve their economic situation in a model such as this. This was certainly one of the contentions made by Maguire (1996) with respect to the migration of ice hockey workers to Britain. It would seem that these migrants were less likely to manifest mercenary tendencies. In this respect, when research in the field of athletic migration is juxtaposed with work which has examined the migration of highly skilled workers, it may be the case that seemingly contradictory dynamics are created. To establish if these contradictory dynamics do indeed exist it is necessary to examine the motivations of the North American migrant groups. It should be made clear that all of the names used in the substantive chapters of this thesis are pseudonyms.
When questioned about their motivation to migrate to the BBL many American migrant workers argued that their 'choice' was a consequence of the limited playing opportunities available elsewhere, whether in Europe or in North America. In this respect, for many members of the migrant group, which was for the most part made up of young, relatively inexperienced players who had not been immediately recruited to professional teams out of North American colleges, the motivation to select the BBL as their migration destination seemed to stem from their increasing need to seek out those limited professional playing opportunities that were available. As one player, Rod, noted:

I was just hungry. Coming out of college, you will take a job anywhere, I didn't go to a big-time school, but I was a big-time player at my school. So I just wanted to get a job overseas.

Rod's situation was similar to that of many of the American basketball players interviewed. Studying biographical player data held by FIBA showed that the majority of migrant players who ply their trade in Britain, were doing so for their first professional team since leaving a North American college. By contrast, other, more powerful European leagues were able to attract more experienced American migrant players, whilst migrant involvement in Britain was reserved for the most part for young, inexperienced migrants recruited into their first professional jobs at the beginning of their careers.

It should be kept in mind that the BBL, using the typology of European league ranking outlined in Chapter Three, is positioned on level four, the least powerful tier of European competition. Given the higher relative prestige of the leagues in continental Europe, the teams of the BBL are only able, for the most part, to attract players who have very limited professional playing opportunities elsewhere. The best American college players are drafted into the North American elite National Basketball Association (NBA). Players who are not drafted into this league may be
recruited into the National Basketball Development League (NBDL), also based in North America. Alternatively, they may be sought out by the wealthier, more powerful European leagues, the core economies of European basketball. Players who are not selected to any of the more powerful leagues, either in Europe or North America, will attempt to seek out the remaining professional playing opportunities, whether in the other North American ‘minor’ leagues, or in the more peripheral, and less powerful, European leagues. At this level for the most part, the quality of the players and their level of opportunity is reflective of the quality of the league to which they are recruited. In this respect, the motivations to migrate for these relatively less powerful athletes, may reflect a structured choice, one which is bound by their abilities. As Steve observed:

In my situation I would rather be in Europe, you know, in Italy, France, Greece, Spain, but I’m not. I don’t feel like I’m good enough right now. So, I mean, it was just a matter of wherever I can play, I’ll play, and even, in my case, even if the living situation was worse, or if I didn’t get a car, I think I would still play. Just because I want to play basketball that bad.

For many players, therefore, the BBL was seen as a way of securing a first professional engagement in the sport. As Chris put it: “I know a lot of the American guys use it [the BBL] to get their foot-in-the-door”. However, for many of the migrants interviewed, their long-term intention was not to stay and pursue a career in Britain. Rather, the BBL was merely the first rung on the professional employment ladder.

Arguably, many American migrant workers select the BBL as their migration destination because limited opportunities exist elsewhere. These migrants make a decision to ply their trade in the BBL, a decision which is structured by their circumstances and abilities. For these relatively less powerful migrants, the BBL is one of a very limited number of choices, should they wish to pursue a professional engagement with the sport. However, whilst these migrants realised that the opportunities available to them were limited, they also realised that the BBL could potentially be used as a stepping-stone to the more prestigious leagues in Europe,
leagues, which at that point in the young migrants' careers, may have been out of reach. Indeed, when asked why they had been motivated to sign a contract with a BBL club, the migrants interviewed suggested that their motivation was based on the belief that the league could be used in a transitory manner, and would, therefore, permit onward migration within Europe, or, in one case, return migration to the United States. Mike was one of the players who made such an observation. He remarked:

I might go to Europe next year. I just wanted something to get me started, just something to get me on my feet, to get me wet behind the ears so to speak . . . Because I wasn’t a big scorer in college, I believe that’s why this is a stepping-stone for me. I’m just hoping that this will take me to another level.

Steve, who had previously commented on taking the job in the BBL because he was unable to secure employment in any of the more prestigious European leagues, made a similar observation:

You’d see this league as a stepping-stone to get to Europe, especially if you come from one of the better programmes in college . . . you can get to other places, and make a lot more money.

Repeatedly, and without the term ‘stepping stone’ being introduced to them, players made reference to the manner in which they saw no long-term future in the BBL, but appreciated that the league provided an ideal opportunity to test themselves in European competition. As Joe put it:

I know that I could definitely play in the top leagues in Europe, but I’m just using it [the BBL] as a stepping-stone. I felt that if I could come here and comfortably play, then I could go to the bigger leagues.

In one case, a player even believed that the BBL could be used as a stepping-stone to facilitate return migration to the United States. Shane, who eventually only stayed in the league for a few months before moving elsewhere in Europe, commented: “My main goal is to get back to the States and play in the NBA. This is just another stepping-stone to get towards it”.

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Suggestions that the BBL could be used as a stepping-stone to more prestigious European leagues, or in a process of return migration to the United States, became common when discussing migration motivations with BBL migrants. However, it was not only the players who were aware of the ways in which the league could potentially be used in such a manner. BBL coaches also recognised the significant role that the BBL played as a springboard for many young American migrants. Martin was one such coach who recognised the benefits of selecting the BBL in this manner. He commented: “I believe, at the minute, most Americans that come here to England are using it as a stepping-stone to get seen by other teams in Europe”. This was a sentiment that was shared by another coach, John, who commented that: “You get players who are over here who are looking – really looking – at it as a stepping-stone to go elsewhere”. The role that the BBL could play in onward European migration was not reserved for BBL coaches, however. One of the migrant players, Rod, remarked how his North American college coach: “Thought that the BBL would be a great stepping-stone . . . as far as getting into Europe and then getting started from there”.

Indeed, whilst coaches, both in the BBL and in North America, were aware that the league offered the possibility of subsequently moving elsewhere in Europe, some used this very factor to persuade migrants to play for their BBL team. As one of the BBL coaches, Nick, put it:

We try and sell them on the fact that it’s a chance to move up the ladder, you know, and go from there. But the point is, it’s the right time, right place for a lot of them, if there’s jobs available, if we get the right contacts, and place for them, we can move them on.

BBL coaches were pragmatic about the league’s transitory role, with very few migrant players being signed to contracts lasting beyond a single year. The rapid turnover of migrant talent (an area which was addressed in Chapter Three) results in coaches constantly recruiting new migrant players, season by season, based on the understanding that many of the existing migrant group would be seeking more
prestigious and potentially lucrative contracts elsewhere during their time in the league. As Martin commented:

Loyalty within this league is very very limited . . . [player name] was with us this season, but his contract stated that if he had a big offer from Europe that we’d release him. I was paying [player name] £16000. He’s gone for a £50000 contract, and I said to him right at the start, you don’t have to have this clause in your contract. If you get that deal in Europe for a lot more than I’m paying you, there’s absolutely no way I would stand in your way.

In this respect, whilst Falcous and Maguire (2005) argued that the rapid turnover of migrant labour in the BBL was facilitated by coaches who sought to maximise the returns that they received from their migrant workers, so, too, would it seem to be the case that such a turnover is facilitated by the migrants themselves as they seek more lucrative contracts in the more prestigious European and North American basketball economies.

Using the BBL in a transitory manner appeared to be common for the majority of migrant workers in the league. However, whilst the BBL was used to facilitate a form of rapid onward transition, following one or two seasons in the league, so, too, was this transitory function used in a less rapid and arguably more deliberate manner. Whilst the intention of many migrant workers was to use the BBL to gain a foothold on the professional career ladder and then to move upwards as quickly as possible, some migrants felt that staying in the league long enough to qualify for a British passport would make them more desirable to teams in other, more prestigious leagues located in the European Union (EU), given that they would no longer count as foreign players. Chris suggested that this was the case, remarking that: “A lot of the guys will play a couple of years, or maybe five to get their passport”. A similar observation was made by Mike, who noted:

If you look at the history of this league, that’s what a lot of guys have done. They've used it to get a British passport, and perhaps move on to Europe that way.
As Chapter Two has shown, the rules governing the free movement of athletic labour in Europe had been imposed following the 1995 Bosman ruling. These rules stipulate that quota systems cannot be used to restrict the movement of EU member state passport holders among EU nations. Thus, those individuals holding passports from EU member states cannot be counted as ‘foreign’ players in EU states, irrespective of their country of birth. North American migrants holding British passports, cannot, therefore, be counted as foreign players in this way either. The result, for North American players holding British passports, is that the flexibility of their movement within the European Union increases. This increased flexibility occurs mainly as a result of the greater number of playing opportunities that are available, specifically, in those nations where much stricter regulation of foreign player numbers is observed. In these nations, North American EU qualifying passport holders can be highly desirable commodities, given that they possess generally higher levels of technical ability than many domestic players, but can be recruited outside of the foreign player quota. To exemplify this point, Chris commented on how European coaches:

Like the North American guys, especially those who have a passport. That's why you have American guys who stay in this league to try and get the passport. So hopefully it makes you more valuable down the line.

Indeed, many players were aware of the value of a British passport in facilitating their onward migration. Some even argued that obtaining a new nationality status would lower the overall level of expectation levied upon them as a migrant worker. Steve was one player who noted this. He commented: “If I get the passport I can play anywhere in Europe, because I wouldn’t count as a foreign player, and you don’t have to be as good”. Thus, the role that a British passport could play in onward migration, beyond the BBL, was multifaceted. Not only was it seen to provide a greater number of employment opportunities for lower calibre migrant workers, so too was it seen to lower the level of expectation required.
The significant role that the BBL plays as a stepping-stone league to Europe's more powerful basketball economies should not be overlooked. Indeed, when questioned about their migration motivations, the manner in which the BBL could be used to facilitate onward and upward migration, either rapidly or through passport qualification, was cited repeatedly by migrant workers in the BBL. Such patterns can be used to suggest that the more transient forms of temporary migration which have been seen to occur for highly skilled workers (see Beaverstock, 2005) also appear to be in evidence for this athletic group. However, to conclude that migrants were only motivated to select the BBL as their migration destination given the role the league could play as a stepping-stone in their attempts to secure more lucrative contracts further up the European basketball league hierarchy, would be to fall short of fully capturing the complex series of processes involved in the migration decisions of the players. Therefore, to more adequately understand why many American migrant workers relocate to the BBL, as opposed to any other league of comparable quality, it is necessary to consider the significance of cultural similarity also.

It became clear from discussions with migrant workers that cultural similarity was also a significant factor influencing their decisions to select the BBL as the league in which to ply their trade. Whilst many of the players observed that the league could be used as a good starting point for a professional career and for onward progression, these players also appeared to have selected the BBL over other comparable leagues primarily because of the manner in which many elements of British culture had been, as some players observed, 'Americanised'. Rod was one player who made such an observation, arguing: "As far as living here in London, I think that London is very Americanised. It's very similar". This was a sentiment that was shared by Shane who remarked in a similar manner: "I didn't want to have to learn a new language, so it was easier being in England which is pretty much Americanised". In this respect, migrant workers appeared to suggest that they were more comfortable moving to the BBL given the similarities that existed between Britain and the United States. This was a particularly valuable benefit for those
players who had recently graduated from North American colleges, some of whom had never travelled outside of the United States prior to their employment in the BBL.

Attempting to grasp exactly which elements of British culture the players felt were ‘Americanised’ was difficult. However, one of the most important factors for the players appeared to be the close overlap between the American and English forms of the English language, something that Shane had alluded to in his comments. The importance of not having to learn a completely new language was seen as significant by a number of players. Joe remarked, for example, how he was: “Just happy that it [Britain] was an English speaking country”. Whilst players such as Shane and Joe identified the importance of language similarity in motivating migrants to select the BBL, the significance of such a factor was heightened by two players who had played professionally in non-English speaking nations. As James, an American player who had played in four different European nations, put it:

Moving to the BBL is never going to be a tough transition. Moving to Europe is a tough transition because you have a foreign language to deal with, and sometimes most of the people don't even speak English. So that's a major transition.

James’ sentiments were shared by another American, Steve, who was playing in his first year in the BBL following a brief period of employment in the Italian second division. He remarked how:

The only advantage here is obviously there’s no language barrier – and that’s huge . . . the first time I went over [to Italy] I was in shock because you can’t talk to anybody and you’re trying to learn a language.

It can be argued that not having to learn a new language acted as a strong pull mechanism for the migrants observed in this study. Players who had not experienced playing in non-English speaking nations perceived that movement into one of these leagues would be more difficult than movement into the BBL. These perceptions would appear to be affirmed by the two players who did have experience of playing in non-English speaking nations. Such a contention would seem to parallel arguments
made in respect of the migration of Canadian migrant workers in ice hockey by Maguire (1996), Genest (1994), and Crawford (2002). In these cases, language was seen to affect migration patterns for North American workers.

The ability to be able to speak the language of the host nation was a significant motivating factor for many American migrants in the BBL. For most of these players, employed professionally for the first time, having to learn a new language in the host nation may have affected their decision to select the BBL as their migration destination. Some of the players interviewed had not travelled outside of North America before. Therefore, given the age, and relative inexperience of many of the players interviewed, being able to speak English in the host nation appeared, it would seem, to have helped smooth the migration transition. However, if it is to be contended that the primary motivating factor for American migrant workers to relocate to the BBL is onward migration, then the benefits of language similarity might explain why Americans select the BBL as their migration destination, over any other league of comparable quality. If the majority of these players have little or no intention of pursuing a long-term career in the lower quality leagues, then why waste time learning a language which may become redundant for them after one or two seasons? North American migrants may, therefore, select the BBL as a ‘league of convenience’, one which permits onward progression within Europe, but one which also requires the least effort in transition. Additional research would be required to further establish the validity of such a contention.

The processes influencing American basketball migrants to select the BBL as their migration destination are varied. The data presented here would seem to suggest that a mix of economic and cultural processes are involved. In this respect, whilst the function that the BBL provides in terms of a stepping-stone to more lucrative contracts in the more prestigious leagues of European basketball was deemed important, so, too, was the ability to be able to speak the language and to take advantage of other cultural similarities in the host nation. Similar processes could be seen to be influential for the migration decisions made by migrant workers selecting
the EIHL as their migration destination. However, whilst cultural similarity and financial gain were both deemed significant, further processes could also be seen to affect the migration decisions of the ice hockey migrant group. It is to these further processes that the chapter now turns.

'Before the Ice Melts':

*Exploring the Migration Motivations of North American Ice Hockey Players*

It became clear from discussions with migrant workers in British basketball that the motivations to select the BBL as their migration destination were varied and reflected a mix of both economic and cultural elements. Similar motives were identified for the ice hockey group. However, for these workers, the range of responses obtained was far more varied which suggests that more complex processual dynamics were at work. Interestingly, however, whilst cultural similarity was deemed to be significant for the basketball group, so, too, would it seem to have some bearing on the migration decisions of migrant workers in British ice hockey. Just as in the basketball sample, the ability to be able to speak English in the host nation appeared to be a particularly significant factor. Doug was one of the Canadian migrants who argued that being able to speak English had motivated him to select the EIHL as his migration destination. He remarked how it had made it: “Easier to come over here without the language barrier”. This perception was shared by Jeff, who, in a similar manner, remarked that one of the primary factors motivating him to migrate to the EIHL was because: “It’s English speaking, which is huge”. Kevin built upon the observations made by these players to suggest that:

The reason why a lot of guys come [to the EIHL] is because there’s no language barrier, which appealed to me especially. It’s an easier adjustment, and it’s pretty much the same as back home.

The perception that transition to an English speaking country would be easier was shared by both basketball and ice hockey players. Migrant basketball players who had experienced playing in non-English speaking countries confirmed these
perceptions. This was also the case for ice hockey. As Michael, a player who had spent the previous year playing in Germany, observed:

I don't think it's that hard of an adjustment compared to last year in Germany where there was certainly a language barrier . . . I think it's an attractive option for a lot of guys who don't have to go and learn a completely new language.

The significance of being able to speak English was clearly important for migrant workers. This is something that has been identified previously in research by Maguire (1996) and Crawford (2002) analysing the migration of Canadian players to Britain, and Genest's (1994) examination of the movement of French-Canadian players to French speaking nations.

Whilst the ability to be able to speak English in the host nation was a significant motivating factor for Canadian migrant workers selecting the EIHL as their migration destination, so, too, was the ability to be able to migrate to an environment which was dominated by North American workers. Indeed, Canadian migrants noted how playing in the EIHL was very similar to playing 'back home' as a consequence of the number of Canadian players, coaches, and administrators employed in the league. This was something that was noted by one of the migrant players, Marcus, who suggested: “This league’s alright. It’s more North American, because there’s a lot of North Americans in it, and you’re around guys you’re used to”. Doug, who had played the previous season in Italy, shared this sentiment. He suggested that:

It's easier here, I like it here, probably because there are more Canadians on the team. There's 11 over here, whereas in Italy there were only three. Everybody spoke a little bit of English, but obviously not like it is over here . . . it's like playing back home here, with so many Canadian guys on the team.
Thus, many Canadian migrant workers felt more comfortable selecting the EIHL as their migration destination because of the numbers of Canadian workers recruited to the league. For these players, the EIHL represented something of an adjunct Canadian culture, a culture in which a distinctly Canadian style of play was manifested.

The development of a Canadian style of play in the British league is not something that appears to be a recent phenomenon. Indeed, Maguire (1996), in his research, discussed the distinctly physical, North American form of the game that was played in the EIHL’s predecessor leagues. Migrant workers in this study followed similar patterns. Doug was one of the migrant workers who noted how a particular style of hockey was played in the EIHL. He commented: “It’s definitely a more North American style of hockey over here”. Mike, in a similar vein, suggested that:

If you compare the style of hockey in any other countries in Europe to what it was in North America, you’d probably find the EIHL is the closest sort of match to that.

Mike went on to comment how being able to play a North American style of hockey was of benefit for North American migrants. With respect to his own migration, he remarked how:

In some of the other countries, I’m not quite sure how they would have responded to the style of play that I have, and I knew here wouldn’t be a problem. I figured in the EIHL I’d probably get the greatest opportunity to show the greatest range of my talents.

Therefore, for many migrant workers, relocating to the EIHL presented an opportunity for play within a recognised comfort zone, one in which the migrant could both speak the language and more readily engage with the style of play. In this respect, and in a similar manner to the BBL, the EIHL could be described as a ‘league of convenience’, a league in which minimal transitional effort is required to secure a professional playing opportunity. This is an area that will be examined in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six.
It should be kept in mind that the EIHL, like the BBL, is one of the least prestigious leagues when considered in the context of European ice hockey more broadly. In this respect, the calibre and relative power of most migrant players recruited is, like the BBL, limited. That is not to say, however, that the players in the ice hockey group are comparable to the basketball sample in their age and professional experience. Indeed, whilst the majority of the basketball players interviewed were young and relatively inexperienced, many of the ice hockey group were older, having played professionally in the North American minor leagues prior to seeking professional playing opportunities elsewhere. One of the EIHL coaches, Dave, explained this:

They've tried to make their career in North America, and most of them have got to the American League, which is one step below the NHL. But there comes a point where you're not going to get a contract any more. Either you're too old, you're not a prospect any more, and some players just want to try something different, something new.

Thus, whilst many of the basketball players interviewed were just beginning their professional engagement with their sport, many of the ice hockey players were seeking to play out the latter part of their professional careers in Britain. With this in mind, many of these players' migration motivations reflected movement at this point in their career.

Reflecting on the point in their careers at which migratory movements most commonly occurred, migrant workers suggested that they were motivated to play in the EIHL because of the lighter playing schedule that was available and the benefits, particularly with respect to self preservation, that dovetailed with it. Jeremy was one of the players who commented thus. He remarked:

It's quite common for guys of my age to start thinking about coming here after playing four or five years in North America. You get an easier schedule. There's no seventy or eighty game schedule, so it's a little easier on you.
Given that many of the North American migrant players who moved to the EIHL did so towards the end of their careers, the ability to be able to maintain physical condition was significant. Many players felt that, in such a physically demanding sport, the ability to be able to reduce the amount of contact on the body was a major motivating factor in selecting their migration destination. Doug made this point when he observed: “In North America your body takes a beating, so it’s nice to only play two games a week”. This was a sentiment that was shared by Duncan. He noted similarly how: “Over here [in the EIHL] there are less games, less contact, so less action on your body”. For some players, the significance of body contact was linked to the desire to avoid injury late in their career. For others, however, less contact meant that their professional engagement with the sport could be extended further. This was something that Kevin suggested: “There are less games over here, so there’s less wear and tear on the body. You can play a little longer”. Thus, some migrants were motivated to relocate to the EIHL in an attempt to prolong their professional engagement with the sport. These ‘glory-days guys’ (Maguire, 1996) sought to enhance this objective by placing themselves in a less physically demanding environment.

Whilst Canadian migrant workers made it clear that they had selected the EIHL as their migration destination in an attempt to avoid injuries late in their careers and to extend their professional capacities beyond their abilities in North America, they also sought to use their talents as a vehicle by which new, culturally diverse and cosmopolitan encounters could be attained. In this respect, migrants used their professional engagement with their sport to seek out the experience of the ‘outsider’, or ‘other’ (Maguire & Stead, 1996). Arguably, many of the migrant workers had given up on the dream of playing at the highest level professionally, and, therefore, these players used their talents to seek out alternative benefits. Jeff was one player who was seeking to use his experience as a professional ice hockey player in this manner. He commented: “I think the chance to play in a different country and experience a different way of life, whilst still playing hockey, is a chance you have to
jump at". Michael shared this sentiment. When asked why he had been motivated to migrate to the EIHL, he argued:

> It was a great opportunity, but it was a life experience also. It was an opportunity to live in, and to see different cultures. As much as it is for me to come here and play, it's also an opportunity for me to get a new experience.

The significance placed upon the gaining of new life experiences and cultural engagements was also reflected in comments made by another migrant, Kirk. He described how he had been motivated to move to the EIHL because he wanted to: “Experience a different way of life, to see another country, to explore, and meet new people”.

Whilst the ability to seek out new culturally diverse engagements acted as a motivating factor for the players interviewed, equally as important was the ability to secure a more lucrative salary than that which would have been available in the North American minor leagues. Migrant workers argued that the level of competition and ability observable in the North American minor leagues, from which many of the migrant players had been recruited, and the EIHL was comparable. However, they also suggested that, for that level of competition, the contracts available to players were more financially lucrative in Britain. Doug was one player who made this point: “The money is better here for the level that I was playing at in North America”. Other players also noted how higher salaries available in the EIHL, primarily as a result of favourable economic relativities between North America and Britain at the time, acted as a pull factor in influencing North American player migration. As Kirk observed:

> The exchange rate right now means that a lot of guys want to come over here. You can save some money, and send some money home, because it's pretty much double.
Jeremy summed up the importance of financial gain for migrant workers, however, when he observed that: "The dollars are better, so financially it’s a good choice". Thus, like other highly skilled groups, the financial dimension has to be seen as influential in the migration decisions of migrant workers. However, rather than being identified as the single most significant factor influencing migratory movements, it should be seen as one element of a broader series of processes.

The significance of similarities in language and of similarities in playing style, the benefits of a less physically demanding schedule, the ability to be able to engage with more culturally cosmopolitan encounters and the importance of securing a relatively more lucrative contract, could all be seen as influential in motivating Canadian migrant workers to migrate from the North American minor leagues into the EIHL. These factors, it can be argued, motivate players to migrate by providing specific, and often tangible, benefits in the host location. A further motivating factor can also be seen as influential. This factor did not provide any sort of tangible benefit to be enjoyed in the host nation, but, rather, could be used to smooth the migration pathway to the EIHL, and thus, make the league a more attractive option for some players.

Meyer (2001) argues that what case studies exploring migrant networks reveal is the importance of connections, of human mediation, or, put in figurational terms, human interdependence, in the migration process. The contention here is that individuals may be motivated to migrate as a consequence of a series of interdependent relationships which exist between the migrant and family members, friends or colleagues who have experienced the migration process themselves. These ‘bridgeheads’, as Meyer refers to them, can provide vital contacts and information which can, for some migrants, both reduce the anxieties associated with migration to a foreign land and facilitate a pathway to a specific destination. Together, these benefits can make the migration process appear considerably more accessible. Bridgeheads have the capacity to mobilise additional migrations along interdependent networks similar to their own, and, thus, prove vital in creating networks of
relationships which might not otherwise have existed. The use of human mediation in the migration process has been seen to be significant for the movement of highly skilled workers. It would appear to be a significant factor within the athletic migrant group also.

Knowing players who were either currently playing in the EIHL or who had done so in the past, proved to be a significant motivating factor for many of the migrant workers interviewed. Being able to use friends or other contacts as bridgeheads, meant that players could deal better with the complexities of the migration process and prepare themselves better for the adjustments which would have to be made. Prospective migrants could use existing migrants based in the league to smooth the migration pathway. They could take advantage of a series of interdependent relationships to gain a sense of the environment, the working and living conditions, the playing facilities and the various benefits that dovetail with a professional career in Britain. Duncan was one player who had been motivated to select the EIHL as his migration destination on this account. He remarked:

I was lucky. I had had a couple of good friends, ex-team mates, who had played over here. They knew what the situation was like. So I was pretty knowledgeable when I came over here.

Jeremy also noted how being able to take advantage of contacts was important in the migration process. He argued in a more general sense that: “You have to know someone who’s been over here [in the EIHL]. You don’t want to go into anywhere blind”.

Being able to take advantage of an interdependent network with other migrants was significant for a number of players, not simply because the prospective migrant could establish a better perception of what to expect in the host nation but because prospective migrants felt that friends and colleagues could be trusted to provide a more accurate reflection of life in the EIHL than other intermediaries, such as agents. As Doug put it:
If you're talking to one of your good friends from college, you're going to take his word. So it's a lot easier to listen to your friend than somebody that you don't really know.

The significance of interdependencies was fundamental for recruitment into the EIHL, both in the motivation of prospective migrants and in their subsequent recruitment. Many players referred to the significance of having contacts who were either still playing in the EIHL or who had played in the league in the past. In some cases prospective migrants were even motivated to select specific clubs as a direct result of relationships with other migrants. Kirk was one player who had been motivated in this manner. He commented: “I chose Sheffield because I had played with a couple of guys who had played for Sheffield before”.

Whilst current and former players acted as bridgeheads for prospective migrant workers, migrant coaches also had the ability to perform the bridgehead function, albeit in a somewhat different guise. Bridgehead players could motivate prospective migrants to move to ply their trade by providing information with regard to the migration process in a specific location. However, beyond this capacity these bridgehead players were limited in their ability to actually recruit prospective migrants. Migrant coaches, however, could be used as bridgeheads to directly provide opportunities for players in specific locations. These coaches were, for the most part, directly responsible for the recruitment of players, and, therefore would use existing relationships to facilitate the recruitment of North American players. As one of the EIHL clubs’ operations managers, Scott, noted:

Guys kind of follow each other around in packs. A coach will gain a core of three or four guys, and then, wherever the coach goes, those players will follow him around Europe. That happens quite often.

One player, Kevin, commented on how his various movements around Europe and his move to the EIHL had been facilitated in such a manner. When asked why he had been motivated to relocate to the EIHL, he remarked how: “I seemed to have followed people, old coaches that I have known, and that seems to have worked out pretty well
for me”. Indeed, Kevin was one of several players that one particular coach had recruited to the EIHL from a North American minor league club which he had coached in the previous season. Many of these players remarked that their primary motivation to migrate to the EIHL was the significant role that this coach played in their recruitment. Michael summed this situation up when he commented how:

At the end of last year coach and I were still at our old club in Rockford, and he said the he was applying for the job here. I said that it would be awesome to go, to experience England and Europe, and he said that's perfect, I'll bring you if I get the job. So I said okay, and when he got the job he signed me up.

Given the above, the significance of the bridgehead should not be underestimated when analysing the migration motivations of Canadian ice hockey players selecting the EIHL as their migration destination. Clearly, both other migrant players and coaches, acting as bridgeheads, have the ability to influence the decision that the prospective migrant ultimately makes. These are elements that will be returned to in Chapters Five and Six.

**Summary: The Multi-Processual Dynamics of Migrant Motivation**

Examining the motivations of North American migrants who are plying their trade in basketball and ice hockey in Britain, reveals a complex series of interdependent processes bound within the broader global development of the two sports. Further to this, exploring migration motivations in the two sports is indicative of levels of both sameness and difference in migrant incentives. One of the primary differences which became evident from examining the data gathered during this study is that, whilst both North American basketball and ice hockey players used their talent as a vehicle by which to facilitate trans-continental migration, the points in the players’ careers at which they sought to take advantage of this benefit differed. More particularly, whilst the majority of American basketball players migrating to the BBL chose to do so at the beginning of their professional careers, Canadian ice hockey players used their abilities as a vehicle for global movement either in the middle or, as Maguire (1996) had identified previously, more commonly towards the end of their professional engagement with the sport. The significant differences in the point in the
players' careers at which migration occurred had important ramifications for the motivations influencing those players to migrate to Britain to ply their trade.

The BBL seems to serve a very distinct purpose for American migrant workers. The league performs a transitional function, one which, with careful manipulation, can, following an initial migratory movement, facilitate further onward, and upward migratory movements. The BBL is used as a stepping-stone or springboard to the more powerful basketball economies either in Europe or, in some cases, in North America. The migrant workers themselves and BBL coaches are actively aware of the ways in which the league can be used to facilitate onward migration, the importance of the function that it potentially provides and the benefits that can be taken advantage of for those players who, in the early stages of their careers may be unable, for any number of reasons to secure employment in the more powerful leagues of Europe or elsewhere in the world.

For many American migrant workers plying their trade in the BBL, engagement with the league is fleeting. These players use their time in Britain to 'pad their stats', to test themselves in European competition, to make new contacts, form new relationships and to make themselves as highly visible as possible to the greatest number of other teams. They take advantage of being on Europe's 'doorstep'. These players truly are 'pond-hoppers', who 'skim off' the BBL on their way to potentially more lucrative contracts in the more prestigious economies of European basketball, or, on some occasions, back to North America itself.

For another group of North American basketball migrants, however, whilst their overall intention is the same as that of the first group, the manner in which such an end is met differs. For these players, their involvement in the BBL is far less fleeting. These players do not seek further migratory movements after one or two years. Rather, they seek to maintain residency and employment in Britain for a period of five years intending to qualify for a British passport. These players are willing to sacrifice a more rapid onward migration in order to be able to enjoy the freedoms of
movement and employment afforded in EU member states to EU citizens. These players are aware of the benefits that will flow from their changed citizenship status. They are aware of the greater number of employment opportunities that will be available, the lower expectations and the potentially more lucrative contracts that can be obtained in basketball’s increasingly flexible global labour market.

Viewed in this way, it is possible to contend that the motivations of the migrant group examined here appear, in the contemporary context, to have more in common with the motivations of highly skilled groups as opposed to those of previously observed athletic migrants. More particularly, whilst American migrant workers do not seek to ply their trade in the BBL in an attempt to directly benefit from positive wage disparity, in the manner that Fischer et al. (1997), or Stalker (2000) suggest, this objective was their ultimate aim. Maguire (1996) began to attend to this issue when he recognised that, for some Canadian ice hockey migrants, Britain was simply “another port of call” (p.348). However, the connection between the mercenary desires of the migrant and the use of the league as a potential stepping-stone to achieve greater financial rewards was never made explicit. This link can, however, be made here with respect to migrant labour in British basketball.

A further link can also be made between the athletic migrant group examined here and other highly skilled groups for whom an increasingly flexible global labour market has been observed (Beaverstock, 1991). The development of such a framework for the movement of highly skilled labour globally has, Beaverstock argues, resulted in a shift from traditional ‘settler’ migration, to more transient forms of temporary migration for certain highly skilled migrant groups. Beaverstock argues that the emergence of these trends is reflective of the growing pool of highly skilled professional or managerial workers who move within the international office networks of multinational corporations. Whilst, clearly, the context is different for the highly skilled group, the manner in which contemporary migratory flows involve more transient forms of migration can be observed for the athletic migrant group being examined here. Whilst these workers do not move between international office
networks, they do move, in some cases rapidly, between international league networks.

For Canadian ice hockey players, given the point in their careers at which their migration occurred, further onward movement was not their primary incentive. Indeed, the processes influencing the migration of Canadian ice hockey players drawing them out of the North American minor leagues were diverse and varied. These processes were indicative of players who, for the most part, were seeking to play out the remainders of their careers in the EIHL. Self preservation as a consequence of a less demanding playing schedule in a physically intensive sport rated highly for this group. So, too, did the ability to be able to travel and explore; the need to seek out new and cosmopolitan cultural engagements was important. Also important was the ability to be able to take advantage of interdependency ties to smooth the migration process, as well as the more mercenary incentive of securing a more lucrative contract and thus making as much money as possible before the ‘ice melts’.

Whilst many of the processes influencing North American basketball and ice hockey players to ply their trade in the BBL or EIHL differed, the importance of cultural similarity was shared by players of both groups. Of greatest significance here is the close overlap that exists between the North American and English versions of the English language, something previously identified by Maguire (1996), Genest (1994), and Crawford (2002) for ice hockey migrants. Being able to speak the language of the host nation was important for both migrant groups. In addition to the importance of language similarity, the North American style of play that could be seen to have developed in the EIHL also proved to be an incentive for North American migrants. The close ties of North American players, coaches, owners, managers, and administrators employed in the sports, mean that the BBL and EIHL operate, as was shown in Chapter Three, increasingly upon a North American sports model. The result, therefore, is that a diminishing of contrasts in playing and coaching styles, management, and administration is evident in the two sports. In this
respect, North American migrants, given the commingling of sports cultures, are able to migrate into a familiar environment. The BBL and the EIHL have become 'leagues of convenience', leagues which require the least amount of effort from players involved in making the transition.

The data presented here suggest that some of the elements observable in Maguire’s (1996) preliminary typology of sport labour migration are evident in the contemporary continuations of the two sports, whilst others are not. For example, the role that the migrant could play as ‘pioneer’, seems to have diminished somewhat. There was little evidence to suggest that North American migrants employed in either the BBL or the EIHL were motivated to become so because they wished to extol the virtues of their sport. This was similarly the case for both the settler and the returnee. No players in either the basketball or ice hockey samples suggested that they wished to use their skills in order to be able to make Britain their permanent home, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and only one basketball player alluded to using the BBL as a stepping-stone to facilitate return migration as a player. Such trends would seem to reflect the more transient forms of migration currently observable in the increasingly flexible global labour market (Beaverstock, 1991). However, it can certainly be argued that the more mercenary elements of the migration experience acted as incentives for the migrants studied here, as did also the opportunity to be able to assume the role of the ‘other’ or the ‘outsider’ (Maguire & Stead, 1996), in a more established community.

Studying the migration motivations of North American players is useful. It is a necessary step in seeking to better understand the migration figuration. However, seeking to understand migration in the two sports by examining the migrants’ position alone both reduces and distorts the complex series of interdependent processes at work. In order to be able to contextualise and better understand global athletic migration in the two sports, attention must also be directed towards both ends of the migration flow (Fawcett, 1989), and towards the various interdependent processes at work in the figuration. Therefore, in addition to the players’ position, the positions of
the coaches and their various recruiting tactics must be taken into account. The next chapter of the thesis will explore these positions.
In the previous chapter of this thesis a series of contentions were developed which sought to make sense of the motivations of migrant workers and the various processes which influence their decision to relocate to the BBL or EIHL to ply their trade. Analysing the migrants' perspective within the migration flow is significant. However, examining this perspective in isolation involves a failure to fully capture the complexities of any migratory movement. To better capture these complexities and the various interdependent processes which are involved in the movement of migrant workers, attention should be directed to both ends of any migration flow (Fawcett, 1989). With this in mind, this second substantive chapter of the thesis seeks to make sense of the recruiting motivations of BBL and EIHL coaches. It seeks to examine the series of processes which flow from, through, into and out of the recruitment of North American basketball and ice hockey players. It will seek to understand why BBL and EIHL clubs predominantly recruit North American migrants as opposed to developing local indigenous talent or recruiting migrants from other parts of the globe.

Whilst the motivations driving certain athletes to migrate to ply their trade have been explored by researchers in the field of athletic migration prior to this study (see Maguire 1996; Maguire & Stead, 1996, 1998; Stead & Maguire, 2000), very little research has been conducted which seeks to examine the recruiting motivations of clubs in the host location. In fact, Bale’s (1991) study exploring the recruitment of foreign student track and field athletes by American universities, is the only work conducted in the field of athletic migration to date which examines the hosts’ perspective within the migration flow. Adopting this approach, Bale identified how the increasing pressure placed upon North American college coaches to produce successful teams as quickly as possible resulted in coaches widening their recruiting vision to include athletes located outside of North America. Many coaches, Bale
argued, recruited foreign athletes to provide what he termed 'instant help'. More particularly, foreign athletes were recruited as they offered a higher standard of technical ability which could be taken advantage of immediately. Recruitment in this manner, therefore, sidestepped the time and also the expense associated with the development of indigenous athletes.

Beyond the area of athletic migration, analyses of recruitment motivations in host locations, in the field of highly skilled migration are also limited. Beaverstock (1991, 2005) is one of the few writers who has sought to direct attention to this area. Framing recruiting motivations within the broader increasing flexibility of the global labour market, Beaverstock contends that an intensification in migration for the highly skilled group is reflective of the increasing pool of highly skilled professional and managerial workers who move, for the most part, within the office networks of multinational corporations. The movement of highly skilled workers, Beaverstock argues, is facilitated to meet both employment and business needs. Thus, in this model, supply and demand can be seen to ultimately influence the recruiting decisions of migrant employers.

The concept of supply and demand is useful in attempting to better understand recruiting motivations in a host location. However, it can be argued that approaching recruitment from this position alone fails to capture the complexities of the wider series of processes which influence migrant recruitment. As chapters Three and Four of this thesis have shown, the recruitment of and reliance upon North American workers in British basketball and ice hockey is significant, having increased over time as one consequence of a broader series of global processes. Indeed, the recruitment of North American workers in the two sports has become so significant in Britain that it is possible to argue that both sports are dominated by a North American influence (Maguire, 1988b, 1996; Crawford, 2002), and that a diminishing of contrasts is occurring between the North American and British styles of play, organisation, and administration. To better understand how the recruitment of North
American workers has contributed to and perpetuates such processes, it is necessary to examine the various recruiting motivations of BBL and EIHL club coaches.

'Filling the Void?': Addressing the Domestic Talent Shortage in British Basketball and Ice Hockey

Chapter Three of this thesis began to address the issue of American basketball player recruitment. It suggested, based on discussions held with the BBL, that one of the factors leading to the increased recruitment of North American migrant workers was the apparent lack of British talent available. The increased recruitment of American players in the 1970s and 1980s (Maguire, 1988b) had already restricted the number of playing opportunities available to British players. The recruitment of those few British players who were deemed good enough to play in the BBL led to further complexity when these players migrated out of the BBL during the mid-1990s, in an attempt to secure more lucrative contracts in the more prestigious European basketball economies. These players were able to take advantage of an increased flexibility in their movement following the introduction of the rules imposed in basketball as a consequence of the Bosman ruling in soccer. Taking advantage of the same benefits that many inward migrating Americans were seeking to achieve with passport qualification, the best British basketball players used the new freedoms afforded to EU citizens to move relatively more freely around the European Union.

To counter the loss of the best British players and in an attempt to address the apparent indigenous skills shortage which had initially developed during the 1970s, and 1980s (Maguire, 1988b), but which had been compounded following the Bosman ruling, the BBL made the decision to increase the foreign player quota from two foreign players permitted per team to five. This increase was made on the assumption that unless the rules imposed following the Bosman ruling should change again, and given the relatively less powerful position of the sport in Britain, the best British basketball players would continue to migrate to the more powerful, and economically stable European leagues. Fearing that the league could not be sustained by relying upon the remaining British players and in an increasingly commercial environment,
BBL coaches elected to recruit further American migrant workers, and to recruit more consistently those workers who could be classified as 'dual national', or 'naturalised'. These processes reflected a continuation of the trends that had originally been noted by Maguire during the 1970s and 1980s.

The problems associated with the outward migration of British talent were, according to BBL representatives, evident in the immediate post-Bosman period. However, analysis of the data derived from the interviews conducted with BBL coaches for this study, suggests that the outward migration of the best British players still affects recruiting patterns for the sport in Britain today. In the contemporary context, the few better quality British players that there are continue to migrate out of Britain and into the core basketball economies. One of the BBL coaches, Martin, noted that this was the case and made the link between outward migration and the more mercenary desire of these British players who seek opportunities elsewhere. He commented on how: “Your good English players, because of the Bosman ruling, will go to Europe, and earn a lot more money”. This was an observation that was also made by Nick, who argued that:

The best English players aren't going to play in this country. That's just the way the Bosman ruling has really changed that, and begun the financial structure of our league versus the leagues in Europe. Obviously the best [English] players are going to go and play there [in Europe], because the money’s greater.

Thus, the lack of money available to BBL clubs was seen by some coaches to act as a 'push' mechanism for the limited number of higher ability British players. When coupled with the greater freedoms afforded to this group as a consequence of the Bosman ruling, the result was that none of these players remained in the BBL.
Coaches made it clear that, whilst the best British players sought out more lucrative contracts in the core basketball economies, they believed that those players who remained did not have a level of ability suitable for recruitment into the BBL. One of the BBL coaches, Robert, argued in this connection that British players could be divided into two categories:

There are two types of domestic player. There are the players that can really play, and we can't afford them because they go to Europe. And there are players that are not good enough.

Therefore, whilst the best British players sought out professional playing opportunities outside of the BBL, coaches felt that there was an undersupply of indigenous workers available for recruitment into the league. As Nick put it, with respect to those British players who did not seek employment in one of the core basketball economies: “There just is [sic] not enough talented English players”.

Another coach, John, made a similar observation with respect to this group, contending that: “I don’t think there is that much talent, British talent, out there”.

John suggested that one of the reasons why so few of the remaining British players were able to meet the standard of expectation for recruitment into the BBL was inherent in the culture of the sport in Britain and the level of opportunities available. He remarked how:

It’s like soccer over here. From an early age they’ve got a football and they can go and play every day. That’s the way it is over in the States and in Canada. They’re able to play every day, where that is not the same situation over here with the British players. And quite often you find that the British players have just as much talent or ability. They just don’t have the facilities where they can go and work on their talent to hone their skills.

However, whilst John believed that limited opportunities were available in the sport in Britain as a result of basketball’s ‘place’ in British sporting culture, others felt that the lack of opportunities was inherent in the league itself. One coach, Darren, even went so far as to remark that he felt British players were stigmatised:
Sometimes the difference in talent level isn't actually that great. The problem is a lot of our young guys don't get the chance. There's a stigma. If you're English, you can't play.

The options for many of the British players not able to secure professional employment outside of the British league were, therefore, limited. As Martin put it:

Your English players are either your better juniors who are there just to make up numbers on the bench or practice. Or the better English kids, who aren't good enough to get into a starting spot on a BBL team and who have now dropped down to division one.

Domestic players could, therefore, either assume the role of 'bench-warmer' and 'ride-the-pine', a position which seems to have changed little since Maguire’s (1988b) research, or, they could seek out playing opportunities in the lower leagues. Whatever the outcome of these recruiting decisions, BBL coaches made it clear that the lack of domestic talent available for recruitment into the league influenced their decisions to recruit from alternative sources. This was a problem that could be observed in British ice hockey also.

Similarly to the BBL, few British workers are employed in the EIHL. Those British workers who are fortunate enough to find themselves employment with an EIHL team, frequently find themselves, like their BBL counterparts, assuming the commonly accepted peripheral roles on the bench, or making up the numbers in practice, positions previously identified by Maguire (1996). Just as in basketball, the employment of Canadian workers seems to be facilitated partly by an indigenous skills shortage. However, whilst in basketball the best British players migrate to the core economies, in British ice hockey a skills shortage is created given that the sport has little tradition of participation in Britain (Kivinen et al., 2001). Ice hockey in Britain, as Chapter Three has shown, is built upon a framework of migrant involvement. In this respect, whilst some British players do make it into the EIHL, few of them offer a standard of ability comparable to migrant players. The result, therefore, is that EIHL coaches widen their recruiting vision.
Many of the EIHL coaches who were interviewed for this study argued, as their BBL counterparts had, that the lack of British talent available for recruitment into the league affected their motivations to recruit from alternative sources. Paul was one of the EIHL coaches who made such a contention. When asked why he selected migrant workers over indigenous workers, he argued: “There's not that many British players at the moment of an import level. There are some, don't get me wrong, but only maybe 6 or 7 that are the same calibre”. Another coach, Mark, made a similar observation when asked the same question. He responded: “There are too few top-quality British players out there at this time”. Dave shared these sentiments. However, whilst he again argued that few British players enjoyed a level of ability suitable for EIHL employment, he also suggested that recruiting lesser calibre, lesser ability, British players might prove to be a ‘turn-off’ for fans and sponsors:

I think that there is some really good home-grown talent, but I don't think that there is enough to make up a good team. I think that they [EIHL] can maybe look at dropping another import spot, but I don't think that you could drop them all. I think that the level would come down to a point where you would lose a lot of the sponsors, lose a lot of the fans, and I don't think that it would be good overall for the sport.

Therefore, coaches felt that Canadian migrant workers were central to creating a product which would be entertaining and sustainable, a position that had previously been identified for migrant workers in British basketball (see Maguire, 1988b; Falcous & Maguire, 2005). This is an area that will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

The lesser ability level of British players would appear to be significant in motivating EIHL coaches to recruit from the migrant group. However, consistent recruitment from the migrant group would appear to have intensified the uneven power balance between the domestic and migrant player that was originally documented by Maguire (1996). The comments of one of the EIHL team’s operations managers, Scott, can be used to show how this is the case:
There is a rule in the league that you have to have five British players on the team. So we have six actually right now. And we’re only allowed to have eleven imports. Fact of the matter is, those eleven imports are our best eleven players, and they’re all Canadians.

Scott went on to observe how his team had tried to provide opportunities for British players by organising a series of open ‘try-outs’. Such a move was not to prove successful, however. He commented how:

We tried to do the try-outs at the start of the season this year and it wasn’t good really. We got a lot of [British] guys who were nowhere near good enough for the team, and I doubt if we’ll do it again.

Therefore, similarly to recruitment processes in the BBL, one of the primary factors influencing the decision of coaches to recruit North American players was the apparent lack of domestic talent available at a level of ability comparable to that of the migrant group. This point was made by one of the player agents, Gary, who observed that: “Canadians or Americans. They bring that little bit of experience and expertise with them, that perhaps British players don’t generally sometimes have”.

One of the EIHL coaches, Mark, suggested, as one of the BBL coaches, John, had with respect to basketball, that the reason why so few British players existed at the ability level of migrant players, lay as much in the culture of the sport in Britain and the apparent lack of opportunities available to develop skills, as it did in the limited number of playing opportunities available as a result of the extent of migrant recruitment. He remarked how:

The main difference is that the import players begin playing at a much younger age. It's almost as if you're born with skates on in Canada. My youngest little one is only three and a half, but he's already out there skating with a stick and a puck. He's been skating since he was 18 months old, much like kids over here with football. So by age five, you're playing organised hockey. You're working on your skills. You're making yourself much better. It seems as if kids over here don't start playing hockey until they're 13 or 14 years old, so they develop a lot later, and it's difficult to catch up.
Mark’s observations show, as was suggested earlier in Chapter Three, that ice hockey in Britain is a sport with little tradition for participation. Like basketball, it is a minority sport which sits on the periphery of Britain’s sporting culture. As the comments above suggest, the sport has struggled to break into the British consciousness. As a consequence of this, Britons come to the game much later, at a point when it is difficult for these young players to match the ability level of their migrant counterparts. As few domestic players meet the ability level necessary for recruitment into the EIHL, so the coaches in the league seek to recruit from alternative sources.

The data derived from the interviews conducted with BBL and EIHL coaches suggest that migrant labour is recruited because few domestic players are available for recruitment at a level of ability which is comparable to that of the migrant worker. This contention can be used, in part, to better understand why BBL and EIHL coaches recruit migrant workers. The under-development of British talent is not, however, the only factor which influences BBL and EIHL coaches to recruit labour from overseas. As the next part of the chapter will show, the coaches’ decision is also shaped by the financial position of both their individual club and the league more broadly.

*Watching the Bottom Line*: The Financial Incentive

As Chapter Three has shown, in a contemporary context both the BBL and the EIHL are limited in their commercial and financial capacities. Problems of financial instability have been evident at various points during the development of both sports and, currently, sponsors for teams in both leagues remain relatively small and localised, and media contracts are scarce. Little revenue is generated by, or available to, the teams of the BBL and the EIHL, and, therefore, the money that is available to coaches for recruitment and salaries, has to be used carefully. The job of the BBL or EIHL coach is to produce the best possible product for a minimum cost. This means, therefore, that being able to employ the best British players or to develop indigenous talent is often not financially feasible.
BBL coaches made it clear that, with the money available to them, they would not be able to afford to recruit those British players who are currently playing outside of Britain, even if they wanted to. Martin made this clear when he remarked: “I would love to be able to recruit a solely English team, but I don’t think you can afford to”. A similar situation was observable for recruitment in the EIHL where the recruitment of migrant labour was deemed to provide better value. For example, one of the EIHL club chairmen, Roger, noted with respect to the minority of players who could be recruited into the EIHL: “Foreign players, for their ability, are cheaper than domestic players”. However, for the most part BBL and EIHL coaches did not even consider being able to recruit British players, justifying the recruitment of migrant labour, instead, by directing attention to the expense associated with the development of indigenous talent. Regarding this, Nick commented on how:

Developing players is a costly venture. So that pretty much takes that out of the equation, to be honest. But you’re going to take some seasoned guys. You’re going to take some guys that have been in the league before, because your return is immediate. Most of the contracts are one year, so it’s not like you’re building for the future either. So again, it’s really a short term vision that you’re working towards.

John shared this sentiment. When asked how the recruitment of migrant workers affected his club financially, he argued: “It’s cheaper to hire an American than it is to keep a British player here”. Roger’s comments can be seen as summing up the situation of coaches with respect to their financial limitations and their effects on migrant recruitment. When asked how the financial situation at his EIHL club dictated recruiting patterns, he argued: “North Americans keep the quality high and the cost low!”.

But why should North American migrant workers be cheaper to recruit and offer a financial advantage, if, technically, it is contended that these players offer superior ability relative to other migrants and indigenous workers? The answer to this question lies in the size of the North American talent pools, the overproduction of labour in the North American market (Miller, Rowe, McKay, & Lawrence, 2003;
Falcous & Maguire, 2005), and the vast amount of players available for recruitment at different levels from American and Canadian sources. The answer, therefore, lies, as it does for highly skilled groups more generally (Beaverstock, 1991, 2005), in the interplay of supply and demand.

At a very practical level, coaches argued that their motivation in recruiting North American migrants stemmed from the great range of choice that was available in the North American talent pools. As Dave put it with respect to Canadian player recruitment in ice hockey: “There's a lot of [Canadian] imports out there who would like to come over, so you can pick and choose and you don't have to pay as much money”. In a similar manner, Nick noted, with respect to the American pool of talent in basketball, that: “There's just a lot more Americans. The pool is really never-ending for the American players, and it's quite small for the home-grown players”. John shared this opinion, he suggested that:

To bring an American in, or a Canadian... you get a vast array of players you can choose from. You've got a bigger pool of players to choose from at the start; a different selection of players. You can get any type of player you want.

Therefore, given the numbers of players available for recruitment from North America and the numbers of North American players seeking professional opportunities around the globe, teams from various leagues, including the BBL and EIHL, have been able to negotiate favourable deals for players who, in many cases, offered specific skills which could be used to perform distinct functions in teams. This process was summed up in respect of basketball by Kosta Iliev, FIBA Europe's sport director, who observed:

The situation with basketball is unique because the United States right now produces a large number of basketball players. Okay, the top players, they go to the NBA, but then every year they are flooding the markets all over the world, and of course, in the first step the clubs will have the benefit, the prices will go down. (Personal communication, June 7th, 2005)
Thus, the North American talent pools provide an abundance of players who can be sought out, and sign contracts which cost considerably less than a similar contract for a British player, or a migrant from another location.

Whilst many BBL and EIHL coaches were motivated to recruit North American migrants because of the financial pressures under which they had to operate, coaches also understood that in addition to producing the best possible team for the minimum cost, they had to produce successful teams as quickly as possible, in order to keep their jobs. For this reason, the motivation to recruit North American migrants was compounded by the manner in which specific individuals could be recruited from the wide choice of players in the North American talent pools to provide what Bale (1991) previously termed ‘instant help’. As Martin put it with respect to the BBL: “Americans will improve your team, from a win/loss results perspective, certainly very quickly”. Dave made a similar observation regarding the EIHL, also, drawing attention to the financial dimension. He remarked how:

There’s the pressure of having to win for myself as a coach. So it’s cheaper, and it’s almost a faster process, if you like, to get a quality player over here to fit into your programme for what you need right now.

The observations made by the coaches were echoed with respect to basketball by Kosta Iliev. He commented that: “It’s much cheaper, much easier, to take players from the United States, instead of producing players, growing players, and then establishing them with your team” (Personal communication, June 7th, 2005).

The ‘instant help’ model of foreign recruitment would seem to affect the recruiting motivations of BBL and EIHL coaches. The recruitment of North American players is justified on the understanding that employment from this group will provide an immediately recognisable ability level, for minimum cost. Such a model seems to fit with the observations made by Bale (1991), however, with one important difference. Using Clemson University as an example, Bale observed how the university soccer coach built an NCAA championship team exclusively out of
foreign talent, given that he was unable to recruit indigenous players because of a lack of funds and the limited number of domestic players that were available for recruitment. These observations would seem, for the most part, to parallel the observations made for recruitment into the BBL and the EIHL. However, Bale also noted that whilst the Clemson soccer coach was willing to recruit foreign players, his longer-term intention was, “to build a program American players would recognise and find attractive enough to play for” (Bale, 1991, p.98). Thus, the ‘place’, usefulness, and long-term development of indigenous athletes was still regarded as important in this case. Arguably, however, BBL and EIHL coaches do not recruit with this longer-term vision in mind. Nick’s comments with regard to short-term recruiting practices in the BBL can be used to justify this contention, as can also the comments made by the BBL representatives cited in Chapter Three, and Dave’s comments with respect to the EIHL cited above. The recruitment of North American players in the BBL and the EIHL appears not to involve an attempt to create a structure or an environment which will entice British players to play in the leagues in the future. Rather, as this chapter has already argued, structures have developed which increasingly marginalise the usefulness of British players. This position was summed up by one BBL coach, Robert, who was very blunt in his interpretation of the recruiting process for BBL coaches. He argued that: “I’m not employed to develop English players, I’m employed to win games!” This is an issue that will be returned to in Chapter Seven.

The first two sections of this chapter have begun to address the multi-processual nature of recruiting motivation for BBL and EIHL coaches. They have shown that the motivation to recruit North American migrant workers reflects a mix of cultural and economic processes. Understanding that these factors influence the recruiting decisions of BBL and EIHL coaches is important. However, it can be argued that yet further processes are at work in the recruitment of North American workers to the two leagues. The next section of the chapter will examine these processes.
'Ever Increasing Circles': The Perpetuation of North American Recruitment

When asked specific questions about their motivations for recruiting North American migrant workers, BBL and EIHL coaches contended that elements such as the under-development of indigenous talent, the size of the North American talent pools, the financial incentives, and the ability to improve teams' performances more quickly were significant. Establishing definite trends in migrant recruiting was important. However, whilst these distinctly tangible elements were identified by the coaches themselves, it was felt, following analysis of the data gathered with respect to a number of areas, that migrant recruitment, whilst indeed being influenced by the processes identified by the coaches, was also facilitated by a further series of processes.

When data reflecting general trends in migrant recruitment in the BBL and EIHL were analysed, it became clear that some of the coaches interviewed felt that the recruitment of North American workers was less about specific motivations and more about the history, or tradition of recruitment in the leagues, particularly since the periods of increased commercialisation in both sports in the 1970s and 1980s. BBL coaches felt that the recruitment of North American migrants was something that was almost taken for granted. One of the BBL coaches, Nick, for example, commented how the recruitment of migrant labour in British basketball was something that was "with the market", and that had "allowed the clubs to survive". Indeed, some BBL coaches felt that the recruitment of American migrant workers had been 'with the market' for so long, that the league had developed an American style of play, one which lent itself more readily to players from that location. Martin was one of the coaches who made this case, arguing: "The BBL is now very much a mini NBA, 'run-and-gun', minimal amount of offensive plays, the structure isn't there for the European".
In a similar manner, EIHL coaches noted how the consistent recruitment of Canadian players in their league had resulted over time in the development of a very physical, distinctly Canadian style of play. This style of 'bush hockey', which was documented by Maguire (1996), was noted by one of the EIHL club chairmen, Roger, who observed:

Hockey in Britain has adopted a Canadian style of hockey. It's very physical, very aggressive, and that's unique in Europe. The other European countries play a style of game which is dominated by the players from those places. Their style of play is very much like their own local game.

Therefore, in a similar process to the BBL, because of the numbers of Canadian workers employed in the EIHL, the playing style had developed into a more Canadian form. Roger and Martin both felt that the developments in playing style into more North American forms lent themselves, more readily, to migrants from the United States and Canada.

Identifying that the BBL and the EIHL are increasingly reflective of North American styles of play is, as Chapter Four has shown, significant as a motivating factor for North American migrants, influencing them to select the leagues as their migration destinations. So, too, would it appear, however, that development in such a manner is significant when considering the recruiting decisions of BBL and EIHL coaches. These coaches recruit North American migrant players because these players will arguably 'fit' into the sports subcultures more readily in Britain. Such a fit occurs given that both leagues have developed characteristics which are modelled on the North American model of competition as a consequence of the numbers of North American migrants recruited to the leagues. The recruitment of North American players in British basketball and ice hockey is driven, therefore, by a series of self-perpetuating processes. These processes can be mapped out using a 'perpetuation model' (see Figure 5).
The perpetuation model can be used to show how, in the first stage, the movement of consistent numbers of North American workers into the BBL and EIHL causes a diminishing of contrasts between the sports’ North American and British styles of play, conduct, coaching strategies, management, and administration. As this first process intensifies, so, in the second stage, the leagues begin to develop a particular type of North American ‘ethos’, a process first documented by Maguire (1996) with respect to British ice hockey. As the North American ethos develops in the leagues in the second stage, so, in the third stage, the BBL and EIHL become better suited to North American workers. Therefore, in this stage, recruiting coaches are motivated to recruit further North American workers, given that these players can
be more successfully assimilated into the developing North American-like subcultures. In this third stage, indigenous workers and migrants from locations other than North America become increasingly marginalised. This was a process that was identified by one of the EIHL player agents, Gary, who argued: “European players coming from, let’s say Scandinavia or Eastern Europe, just somehow their style doesn’t suit the EIHL as much as Canadian players”.

Many of the coaches interviewed made observations which would seem to fit with a model of recruitment built upon processes of perpetuation, when they were questioned about their motivation to recruit North American labour and their reluctance to recruit players from locations situated elsewhere. However, it was the EIHL coaches whose comments could best be used to exemplify the significance of such a model. Two coaches’ observations, particularly, stood out in this regard. Mark’s comments for example, can be used to show how the development of the physical ‘Canadian style’ of ice hockey that had developed in the EIHL affected his recruiting decisions. He argued that:

I find that Slovaks tend to be more skilled, where the Americans and Canadians are more physical. The Slovaks are very skilled but not used to the physical side of the play, they shy away from the physical side of the play, they’re not big on that. When the game is physical those guys seem to disappear, and when you’re recruiting, those are the things you look for.

Mark’s comments can be used to show how the diminishing of contrasts which is occurring between the Canadian and British styles of play has the effect of repelling migrants from locations other than Canada. Another EIHL coach, Dennis, took these observations a step further when he was asked why he recruited Canadian workers as opposed to migrants from other locations:
If I was bringing in players from say Sweden or Slovakia, I could probably get them cheaper than you can guys from North America, but to me, I don’t know what I’m going to get when I’m going to get those kinds of guys. You can talk to as many agents as you want, but I played back home in North America, so I know a lot of the players that I bring over, and the type of players that they are. So when you’re a foreign player coming to a foreign team you’re kind of like an outsider because if you don’t have three other Slovakian guys with you, that guy might feel alienated. So there’s a couple of different scenarios that you have to look at. I think that’s where we came into some problems last year where we had a Czech guy. I don’t think that he felt part of the team, and stuff like that, and you have to understand that those guys have nobody really to talk to because of the language and stuff like that.

In saying this Dennis made the assumption that players drawn from locations other than Canada are the foreign players. A similar perception was offered by another EIHL coach, Dave. When speaking generally about the pattern of migrant involvement in British ice hockey, he argued: “In the United Kingdom, Slovakians are the biggest group if you’re going to bring in, like, a real foreign player”. It can be argued, therefore, that migrant workers recruited from locations outside of North America are the ‘outsiders’ in an established community.

However, this is not to assume that the British workers in either the BBL or the EIHL are the established group. On the contrary, North American involvement in British basketball and ice hockey has reached such a level that the North American groups assume the established positions. More particularly, these groups generate a sense of collective group charisma based on continuing recruitment patterns and this strengthens and binds the North American group, intensifying their positions of power in their respective figurations. Moreover, whilst collective group charisma binds the North American groups, solidifying their established positions, such positions are strengthened further by the ascription of group disgrace. Thus, ‘real’ foreign players are stigmatised, as the comments above show; Slovakian players “disappear” when the game gets physical, Czech players “didn’t feel part of the team”, and, as coaches in earlier sections of this chapter have argued, British players “can’t play”. Therefore, whilst these dual processes can be used to bind the established group, so too, are they used to hold outsiders at bay. These processes play a significant role in motivating BBL and EIHL coaches to recruit further North American migrant workers and fewer
‘real’ migrant workers from locations other than the United States and Canada, or workers from the indigenous pool. Recruiting in this manner perpetuates the existing framework, strengthening the position of the North American migrant and increasingly marginalising the usefulness of players recruited from elsewhere.

**Summary: The Multi-Processual Perpetuation of Migrant Recruitment**

Examining the recruiter’s end of the migration flow reveals much about the structure of migrant recruiting in the sports of basketball and ice hockey in Britain. Such an analysis shows, as it did from the migrants’ perspective in the previous chapter, that the recruitment of migrant workers involves a complex series of interdependent processes which result in a range of both intended and unintended outcomes and which are reflective of an increasingly complex and dynamic power geometry. For the most part, the series of processes affecting the recruiting decisions of BBL and EIHL coaches involves a number of similarities. In both cases, the recruitment of North American migrant athletes was used to address the apparent indigenous skills shortage which existed in the British market. However, whilst the employment of North American migrants was an intended action to address the apparent skills shortage in the leagues, recruitment in this manner has resulted in a series of unintended outcomes. One of these outcomes is the development of a recruiting structure in which few opportunities are available for indigenous players or for migrants recruited from locations other than North America. Little seems to have changed in this respect since Maguire’s (1988b, 1996) analyses.

At a practical level, it can be argued that the recruitment of North American workers occurs in a global political economy where more players are available for recruitment from the United States and Canada relative to other countries (Falcous & Maguire, 2005). The size of the talent pools and the overproduction of labour in these countries dictates that the greatest range and choice of players are available from these locations (Miller et al., 2003). As Falcous and Maguire put it with respect to the overproduction of basketball talent in the United States:
The US functions as a core area of talent production, exporting players around the globe. The US high school and collegiate system produces players who feed the NBA labour market. The scale of overproduction, however, results in those not securing NBA contracts seeking employment in the worldwide network of leagues. (2005, p.24)

Similar processes are at work in the production of Canadian ice hockey players. Given the numbers of North American players seeking employment, recruiting from these pools increases the likelihood that a coach will be able to identify a player who can provide ‘instant help’, that is, a recognisable level of athletic and technical ability which can be taken advantage of immediately. Being able to recruit players in this manner, as Bale (1991) observed previously, sidesteps the time and expense associated with the development of indigenous talent. However, consistently recruiting from the migrant group without structuring this recruitment with the long-term intention of developing indigenous talent in mind produces a series of unintended outcomes which have ramifications for future recruitment in the sport.

The perpetuation model can be used to show how an over-reliance upon migrant talent can lead to a recruiting structure which increasingly reflects recruitment from a single donor location and which increasingly constrains workers from the indigenous population and migrants from locations other than the dominant donor. The perpetuation model can be used to show how the consistent use of significant numbers of migrant workers from a single donor source causes, in the first stage, a diminishing of contrasts between the sports donor and host forms. As a diminishing of contrasts occurs in the sports forms, so, in the second stage, the sport in the host location begins to develop a specific type of donor location ethos, one which lends itself more readily to the players of the dominant donor location. As the donor location ethos develops in the host location, so, in the third stage, migrants from the dominant donor location become more appealing to employers in the host location. As more migrants are recruited from the donor, so the donor location ethos strengthens further, perpetuating the recruitment of more migrants from the dominant donor. Moreover, as the donor location ethos intensifies and the power ratio shifts in favour of the dominant migrant, so indigenous workers and migrants from locations
other than the dominant donor become increasingly less useful and are increasingly identified as outsiders by the members of what has emerged as an established migrant community.

The perpetuation model can be used to help better understand the recruiting motivations of BBL and EIHL coaches. In both sports, the motivation to recruit North American players is built upon the premise that these players will ‘fit’ more readily with the style and the culture that had developed in the leagues. The model could also be used to explain why BBL and EIHL coaches were reluctant to recruit migrants from locations other than North America. In these cases, coaches felt that these players would not integrate with the North American style and ethos that was identifiable in both leagues. Some coaches even observed how indigenous workers and those few migrants who were, on occasion, recruited to the BBL or the EIHL from locations outside of North America, were stigmatised and thus, often spent little time in the league. Therefore, the perpetuation model can be used not only to show how the dominant, established, group solidify their position but also how they use this position to manipulate the recruiting structure and to hold outsiders at bay.

Now that both ends of the migration flow have been considered and a model for the migration of North American basketball and ice hockey players relocating to the BBL and the EIHL has been proposed, it is necessary to consider the series of processes which actually facilitate migratory movements. As Chapters Four and Five have shown, the movement of North American workers to elite British basketball and ice hockey clubs involves a complex web of interdependent processes. The purpose of the next chapter is to better understand how these various processes are used in the mobilisation of the athlete.
CHAPTER SIX
‘GETTING CAUGHT IN THE NET’: UNDERSTANDING RECRUITING PROCESSES IN THE BBL AND THE EIHL

Chapters Four and Five of this thesis have examined the area of migration motivation. The chapters have done so by focusing on the complex series of processes which occur at both ends of the migration flow and which affect the motivations of both the migrant worker and the recruiter. Conceptualising the movement of North American workers using a multi-processual approach provides a more adequate interpretation of the various factors which influence the migration decisions that are made. Broadening the field of analysis in this way to include both the donor and host locations provides the opportunity to analyse the various interdependent processes which affect migration decisions in a multi-dimensional environment.

The knowledge generated in the previous two chapters shows that migration decisions are contoured by a series of processes which reflect increasingly complex and dynamic constellations of people. The purpose of this chapter is to examine these constellations in greater detail in an attempt to better understand how North American recruitment to the BBL and EIHL is facilitated. This chapter will focus, therefore, on the specific mechanics of the many migratory movements that are being made between North America and the two leagues. It will focus on the specific processes used to identify, gain knowledge about, and recruit North American migrant workers, arguing that recruitment is facilitated, for the most part, through a series of informal relational networks and not through more formal third party intervention.

Very little research analysing the recruitment of workers through informal relational networks has been conducted so far. Bale’s (1991) work is the only research which has focused on this area when considering the recruitment and subsequent migration of athletic labour. In his analysis of the recruitment of foreign track and field athletes by American universities, Bale identified how recruiting
systems ranged from well planned networks of contacts in a particular donor location to a far more serendipitous chain of random events which would eventually lead to the recruitment of an athlete. In respect of the former system, Bale’s work showed how some North American college coaches thought it was “crucial to have a network of contacts” (p.104). It also showed how those universities that had benefited from some of the most significant recruiting successes had done so as a consequence of the quality of the network of contacts that had been developed and utilised.

Bale (1991) noted that athletic recruitments and the migrations resulting from them, could be facilitated, broadly, through two distinct kinds of contact networks. The first of these networks, Bale argued, was comprised of the friends and colleagues of recruiting coaches. Used to gain knowledge about and facilitate the recruitment of the athlete, in these cases coaches would either call a friend or colleague in another country to enquire about particular athletes, or would recommend athletes to contacts, in the hope that the athlete might be recruited. In a similar manner, the second kind of network that Bale identified used current and former players to take advantage of a particular geographical connection. In these cases, coaches sought to facilitate further migrations from a given location, following an initial movement. The hope, for recruitments facilitated in this manner, was that athletes who were either currently plying their trade in a given location or who had been recruited to a particular location in the past, would help to provide a link between that location and other potential migrants situated in the original donor location.

In contact frameworks which are facilitated either by friends or colleagues of the recruiting coach, or by current or former players, Bale argues that recruitment is facilitated through a series of “friends-of-friends networks” (p.106). In these networks, information about particular migratory destinations is passed through informal channels of communication in the same ways that bridgeheads have been seen to circulate knowledge which facilitates the movement of highly skilled workers in other employment spheres (Meyer, 2001). Similarly to Bale (1991), Meyer observes how migrations can be facilitated through a network of bridgehead contacts.
who facilitate a flow of information to the recruiter or the migrant. In many cases, these bridgehead contacts will have already experienced the migration process themselves and can accordingly provide knowledge which may be useful either for the recruiter in establishing the possibility of movement for a migrant, or for the migrant themselves in terms of the practicalities of any movement. The central contention to be made here is that bridgeheads involve the capacity to mobilise migrations using networks of interdependence and, thus, prove vital in creating and sustaining networks of relationships which might not otherwise exist.

The development of global friends-of-friends networks and the ability to be able to use bridgeheads globally to gain knowledge about a specific migratory location, point, as previous chapters of this thesis have, to the increasingly flexible nature of the global labour market both within sport and within other highly skilled spheres of employment more broadly. What the development of relational networks, and the expansion of the communication channels through which they are intensifying, would also seem to reflect is the generation of a series of ‘translocal communities’, that is communities which are global in geographical context, but which are maintained with both physical (e.g. human face-to-face contact), and technological (e.g. telephone, e-mail, video-conferencing) connections (Beaverstock, 2005). Translocal communities facilitate a global circulation of knowledge which is sustained both by a physical movement of people and by global forms of communication. In these communities, therefore, knowledge relating to prospective migrant workers and potential migrant employers is circulated by a complex and dynamic group of transnational contacts who act as mediators and translators of the flows of information. A study of translocal social networks can be used to show, therefore, how global bonds with colleagues are significant in the circulation of information with respect to potential employees and potential employers.
Before it can be established if the flow of knowledge relating to potential migrant workers relocating to the BBL and EIHL is facilitated by a global translocal community, it is important to establish the significance of relational networks for recruitments in the two leagues. It is also important to consider the reasons why relational networks might have developed as a method by which North American migrant recruitments are facilitated. It is to these areas that the chapter now turns.

**Conceptualising Recruiting Networks in the BBL and the EIHL**

As Chapter Four of this thesis has shown, for some North American migrant workers having a contact to act as a bridgehead was significant in motivating them to select Britain as their migration destination. In some cases, the knowledge and information provided by a contact acting in the bridgehead capacity even resulted in a migrant selecting a particular team or location. In this respect, when considered in the context of migrant motivation, the significance of social relationships should not be underestimated. Approaching migrant motivation in this manner begins to address how the members of the subcultural groups are bonded together in complex and dynamic constellations. The significance of relational networks is not limited to migrant motivation, however. Rather, these networks of interdependent bonds can also be seen to facilitate many of the recruitments of migrant workers both in the BBL and the EIHL.

When questioned about the manner in which they gained knowledge about prospective players and the ways in which migrant recruitment was facilitated, BBL and EIHL coaches pointed to the significance of a network, or of a ‘community’ of coaches or contacts, which had been built up, for many of them, over years of experience in various professional leagues. Interestingly, coaches suggested that these networks, whilst global in a geographical sense, appeared, for the most part to represent small, distinct and relatively accessible groups of people. One of the BBL coaches, Robert, for example, described how the network of basketball coaches was: “A little community even though it’s worldwide”. This was a sentiment that was
shared by another BBL coach, Nick, who argued that “the coaching fraternity is pretty small”.

Similar observations were made with respect to the size and accessibility of the network for recruitment in the EIHL. Dave, for example, suggested that: “The hockey world is very small. Everybody keeps tabs on everybody else”. Whilst Scott, one of the EIHL teams operations managers, expanded on this observation to argue that:

The hockey world’s a really small world, believe it or not. One thing we always do when we recruit a guy is we always get two references. Someone always knows someone. Somebody on the team that we already have signed knows someone who knows someone who’s played with them. The hockey world’s small that way.

Coaches made it clear, therefore, that whilst the networks through which they obtained information about potential recruits were global in geographical terms, both the size of the recruiting networks, and the level of accessibility of those people identifiable in the recruiting networks facilitated a useful framework for the transfer and circulation of knowledge. In this respect, these networks could be seen to operate in a similar manner to the translocal communities identified by Beaverstock (2005).

It became clear from discussions concerning the manner in which North American migrant workers were recruited to BBL and EIHL teams that the majority of movements were facilitated through informal networks of communication and not through the intervention of agents or other, more formal third parties. Indeed, sixteen of the nineteen players interviewed for this study had been recruited through informal networks. For the EIHL players interviewed, the intent to facilitate their own movements without the intervention of an agent was both a conscious decision, in an attempt to save the money that would have to be paid in agent’s fees, and a reflection of how recruitment in the league was generally facilitated. For example, when asked why he didn’t have an agent to help facilitate his migration, one Canadian EIHL player, Doug, suggested that:
To be honest with you, to get over here, it's all about who you know. So it's all about if you have a friend over here, and if you can be recommended. So I really didn't feel that I needed an agent.

Such a position was reiterated by Michael, another EIHL migrant player who had facilitated his own move. When asked, like Doug, why he didn't have an agent, he commented: "After you've played for a few years, you get to know the hockey world is a very small world, so with the contacts that I've made, I didn't need one". Similar perspectives were identifiable in the remarks of other EIHL players. Duncan, for example, discussed how he had been contacted directly by a former coach under whom he had played in North America. Given this direct form of contact, Duncan made it clear that he felt that there "wasn't a need for an agent". Owen had also been contacted directly by a former North American coach who had relocated to the EIHL. When asked how this affected his decision whether or not to use an agent, he replied: "I had to pay my agent, so when the opportunity came along to work out a contract by myself, I got rid of him".

For the players identified here, and for others in the sample, it appeared that using a contact other than an agent to facilitate a migratory movement was the preferred method of securing professional employment in the EIHL. This method permitted players to navigate a path to a professional contract without incurring the expense associated with agents' fees. From the coaches' perspective, being able to navigate this path was also important, given that clubs would also be responsible for paying agents' fees in the event that an agent proved necessary to facilitate a movement between one club and another. One of the EIHL coaches, Paul, identified that this was the case when he remarked: "I think the clubs are trying to kind of bypass the agents, obviously because of fees and budgets". A similar position was identified by another coach, Mark. He remarked:

I'm not a big believer in agents . . . I think that some agents take advantage of players. They cost them jobs in-the-fact that they ask too much money for them . . . The number of players I went for through agents this year is zero.
Thus, whilst taking advantage of informal networks of communication was significant for EIHL players, so too were these methods desirable for EIHL coaches whose clubs, as Chapter Three has shown, often operated within tight budgetary boundaries.

The use of networks to recruit migrant workers in an attempt to negate the expense associated with the payment of agents, was not reserved for ice hockey migrants, however. A similar position was also evident when the recruitment of American players to the BBL was examined more closely. One of the BBL coaches, Darren, made this clear, for example, when he suggested that players should: "Get rid of their agent; because if you're good enough, you're going to get your own job through word-of-mouth". One player who had facilitated his own recruitment in exactly that way was James, one of the few BBL players who had extensive experience both in the BBL and in Europe more broadly. When asked why he didn't have an agent, he remarked:

I've been in the league for so long I know everything there is to know. So I know who I need to know, and it was very easy for me to contact who I needed to contact.

Whilst James was able to make use of the network that he had developed over years of experience in various leagues to bypass the use of an agent, another migrant BBL player, Steve, who had considerably less experience, also identified the benefit of sidestepping the agent, even if one was required initially. He commented how: "The agents used to get you in the door first, and then after that the player pretty much does it on their own".

For most of the players interviewed, the ability to be able to avoid the expense associated with the employment of an agent by facilitating their own migration through a relational network was both possible and desirable. The agents themselves, however, were not oblivious to the fact that recruitments in the BBL and EIHL were facilitated, for the most part, through informal networks of relationships and not through more formal third party intervention. One of the EIHL player agents, Jason,
recognised that the use of informal networks of communication in the recruitment of players was common. He was pragmatic about such practices, commenting: “Once the players know everybody then yeah, if they’re going to stay in the league, then they don’t need my services anymore”. One of the BBL player agents, Gary, recognised that recruiting processes were similar for basketball. When asked why some players didn’t have agents, he remarked: “Some players are able to get the job through friends. Sometimes the manager or coaches call a player directly in order to avoid using an agent”. Thus, it was accepted that recruitments could be conducted in this manner and that informal networks were used by some migrant workers to sidestep the expense associated with the employment of an agent and to maximise the money available in leagues which offered few, if any, significant financial rewards. Networks were much more, however, than simply tools for the avoidance of agent’s fees. They formed the base from which most of the recruitments to BBL and EIHL teams were facilitated. The next section of the chapter will show how this was the case.

'It’s All About Who You Know': Recruiting Through the Network

It became apparent following discussions with BBL and EIHL coaches that the development and cultivation of networks was significant for coaches who not only wished to avoid the expense associated with the employment of agents but who also sought to gain knowledge about and recruit the best possible migrant players available for the BBL or EIHL level of competition. In this respect, many of the coaches interviewed were quick to make clear the significance of developing, and utilising a broad contact network. As Darren put it when asked about the best ways to locate and recruit migrant basketball players:

It's a big network, you know somebody who knows somebody, so through word-of-mouth you get recommendations, and suddenly you get a link, it's all about building up the network.
Like the coaches identified in Bale’s (1991) study for whom knowledge networks were highly significant, the ability to be able to recruit the best players lay, for the BBL and EIHL coaches studied here, in the manner in which they manipulated specific networks of relationships and in the manner in which they sought to develop these networks. In this respect, when one assistant coach, Bob, was asked how easy it was for his head coach to gain knowledge about and recruit foreign players, he replied: “I think it’s easy for the coach to get players. He’s well known, he has lots of contacts”. Such an idea was confirmed by the head coach, Nick, who, when asked how he recruited migrant players, responded: “The most important thing for me is I’ve got a number of contacts that I’ve got to know over the years, and they’re a really good source of players”.

Whilst the general significance of knowledge and recruiting networks became apparent from discussions with league coaches both when discussing the avoidance of agents and when observing how best to locate players, what also became apparent was that the transfer and circulation of knowledge within these networks with respect to prospective migrant recruits could be facilitated by different contact sources. For the most part, however, networks broadly relied on the two types of contact previously identified by Bale (1991) for his study; professional colleagues (i.e. other coaches or managers), and current or former players.

From the discussions conducted with coaches, it appeared that some preferred to adhere to a particular contact network. For example, some coaches would only discuss potential recruits with other coaching colleagues, perhaps a potential recruit’s former coach or a coaching colleague who may have coached against a particular player. Dave was a coach who used the network in this manner. When asked how he used the network to recruit players to his EIHL team, he responded: “I’m more comfortable bringing in a player whom I might have known his coach”. Another EIHL coach, Paul, approached the network in a similar manner, commenting how gaining knowledge about potential recruits was: “All about getting scouting reports on the players through coaches that have coached the player, and coaches that have
coached against the player”. Some BBL coaches made use of the network in the same way, preferring to secure information about prospective recruits from other coaches. As John put it:

I’ll take up as many references as I can on players with the coaches they’ve played for in the past, assistant coaches. Any recommendations, just to try and find out the background of the player, what they’re like off the court, just as much as what they’re like on the court.

Thus, coaching contacts were seen as a valuable source of information about potential migrant recruits. Some BBL and EIHL coaches, therefore, limited their knowledge accumulation to the coaching network.

Whilst some coaches discussed how they used their network of coaching contacts to obtain information about prospective players, other BBL coaches observed how, at the other end of the knowledge flow, they were used as a source of information in the network for coaches seeking information about players. Nick encapsulated this two-way process when he observed how:

A lot of it comes from their side; a lot of it comes from them calling you about players. I mean I probably field ten times more calls than I make. I get a lot of calls from people, because I know a lot of people . . . So they’ll call me, and I’ll tell them about guys that played at Chester, or Sheffield, or the Towers, or whatever. So whenever you need the favour returned to you, you call them back.

The role that a coach could play as information provider was also observed by another BBL coach, Robert. He commented how: “There are three coaches from big teams, one in France, one in Italy, and one in Israel, who always phone me on what I think of a certain player”. Thus, the circulation of knowledge in the network relied on coaches not simply seeking information with respect to potential recruits but providing it also.
It was clear that some coaches felt that their coaching colleagues provided the best source of information with respect to potential recruits and that the knowledge circulated in the coaching community was of utmost value. Other BBL and EIHL coaches felt it significant to make use of current and former players as contacts, believing that exploiting this network would provide the information necessary to make recruiting decisions about particular players. One coach who chose to adopt this framework was Mark. When commenting on how he recruited migrant players to the EIHL team he coached, he observed:

It's a sport of connections; your players are your biggest recruiters, players that you coached, players that you've played with. So if you're a good person, and people respect you, your name will get passed on quite a bit.

Others coaches shared Mark’s perception that using players as network contacts to facilitate a flow of information about potential recruits was important. Darren, for example, when asked how he preferred to recruit North American migrant basketball players, suggested that:

I'm more comfortable bringing in a player where I might have known a player who's played against him . . . It's more of a comfort zone for me, bringing in a player who I will be comfortable with because I've got the OK from people that I've trusted in the past.

Being able to take advantage of the communication that existed in the players’ network was important in this connection. As one of the EIHL team owners, Roger, put it: “You have to know players . . . You have to build up your contacts . . . It’s just communication. You have to be in the network of people who talk”.

Tapping into the players’ network was important for some coaches as they believed that taking advantage of this source would not only facilitate a flow of information about potential recruits, but that current and former players could also be used to act as links (bridgeheads) between the club and the potential recruit, given that the circulation of knowledge in the players’ network was often facilitated by groups of friends as Bale (1991) identified. This was a process that was observed by one of
the EIHL coaches, Dave, who remarked: “Most guys who come over here will already have friends in the league, so it helps if somebody can pass your name on to a coach”. One of the EIHL team’s operations managers, Scott, used an example that had occurred at his club to explain how such a process could facilitate recruitments:

Once you get one guy, for example we got Mark. He was good friends with Jim, so we signed Jim, and Jim said; ‘hey Eric’s a good player, similar style, probably what you’re looking for. Give him a call’.

Thus, the intended use of current or former players as bridgeheads often provided vital links, some of which may have led to further recruitments which were initially unforeseen.

The circulation of knowledge in the network and the ability of players to act as bridgeheads to other players were processes that were captured from the players’ perspective also. Doug, for example, commented on how his recruitment to an EIHL team had been facilitated by friends in the contact network. He remarked how: “It was just a case of my friends saying: ‘do you want to come over here to play’. It was that easy”. In a similar manner, Jeremy, when asked how his recruitment was facilitated, responded: “I guess kind of word-of-mouth through two guys here that I played with previously in my career”. Thus, bridgeheads were vital in establishing links that might not have otherwise existed. They were highly significant in the development of networks that were not limited to a spatial dimension, but which operated within a temporal dimension also, given that potential migrants could be informed by players who had already experienced the migration process themselves. Their function was not, therefore, limited to migrant motivation as Chapter Four has already shown.
It became clear from the series of interviews conducted with BBL and EIHL players and coaches that social relationships, operating within both spatial and temporal dimensions, were highly significant in both the gaining of knowledge about players and their subsequent recruitment. Whether coaches elected to make use of the coaching network, or the players’ network, the majority of recruitments of migrant workers to BBL and EIHL teams were conducted in the context of a series of informal networks of communication, comprised of dynamic constellations of relationships. Coaches were aware that taking advantage of these relationships was the key to successful recruiting practices and thus, to the success of their team. As Dave put it with respect to recruitment in the EIHL: “You have to exploit every contact that you have to find out about a player”. The circulation of knowledge in this manner is something that has been identified for other highly skilled groups. Indeed, Mullan’s (1989) work can be used to show how, for some groups, an unwritten code exists that stipulates that knowledge essential to the migration process be shared.

So far, this chapter has shown that informal knowledge and recruiting networks are used to sidestep the expense incurred with the employment of agents. The chapter has also shown the significance of these networks in the development of relationships which facilitate migrant movements and the contact structures which are used to facilitate these movements. The next part of the chapter will show how the mechanics of migrant movement are facilitated using networks which, for the most part, are rooted in North America. Examining how these networks are developed with a North American bias can be used, alongside the perpetuation model introduced in Chapter Five, to better understand why the vast majority of migrant workers employed in the BBL and EIHL are recruited from North American sources.
'A Transatlantic Community':

North American Influences in BBL and EIHL Recruiting Networks

The contentions discussed in the previous sections of this chapter can be used to show that networks are highly significant in the recruitment of migrant workers to BBL and EIHL teams. What further analysis of these various networks shows, however, is that, for the most part, these networks are heavily biased in terms of North American contacts. In this respect, it is possible to argue, as Meyer (2001) has previously, that processes of 'knowledge channelling' occur. That is to say that contacts, whether they be among coaches or players, are more likely to be based in North America, are more likely to be North American themselves, and are, therefore, more likely to circulate knowledge relating to North American migrants. The development of a North American bias in these networks was observed by Mark, a North American himself:

I'm always in contact with coaches back in North America, primarily because they are my friends, so I'm always talking about players, I've got players passing my name on when they hear things. Guys are always talking in North America about what they are going to do next year. So somebody might say they are considering going to Europe, and somebody else might say 'well I have a friend who's coaching in the UK' . . . I built up lots of contacts. Many players that I coached are now coaching or are involved in hockey in some way. I know that lots of the players that I worked with are still playing, so I made a lot of contacts back home, and that is our main drawing area.

The ability to be able to call upon North American colleagues was important for many BBL and EIHL coaches, given that, as Chapter Five has shown, the largest talent pools for basketball and ice hockey players exist in the United States and Canada. In this respect, many coaches sought to take advantage of links that they had developed with coaches and players in North America.

For some coaches, building networks of contacts in North America was made easier given that they themselves were North Americans, such as Mark above. These coaches, who had grown up, and often played and coached in North American leagues prior to being recruited to British leagues, were afforded opportunities to develop networks of North American contacts often without necessarily even realising they
were doing so. By playing for or coaching North American teams and by developing relationships with players and their coaches, future North American BBL and EIHL coaches could develop North American relational networks very easily. Such a position was observed by one of the Canadian EIHL coaches, Dave, who commented: “I grew up in Canada, so I have most of my contacts in Canada”. A similar position was identified by another Canadian, EIHL coach, Dennis:

I’ve got connections back home, and the thing about back home is that I played in all those leagues. So when someone calls me up and says I’ve got a player, I can say, ‘oh yeah I played against that guy, and he was a good player’.

The significance of North American networks was also observed by Scott, one of the EIHL teams operations managers when he described the manner in which the Canadian head coach of his team used a North American network through which to recruit North American migrant labour. He observed how:

The coach has played in the East Coast League, in the American League, and he’s played here [EIHL], and that’s pretty much it. But the coach is really young, so he knows most of the guys himself, and he thinks back to where he’s played before and says: ‘hey you know that guy. I want that guy on my team’. And you just put the word out, and guys know guy’s, and someone will find the guys phone number. It’s quite funny actually. The coach has played against all these guys before, so he knows what’s up.

North American EIHL coaches were thus in a strong position to develop networks of relationships which were heavily influenced by a North American contact structure.

The situation for the development of North American networks was similar in the BBL. However, in this league, fewer of the coaches were actually North American themselves. Thus, for them, these relationships had to be developed and cultivated in a different manner. For the one coach interviewed who was American, like the EIHL coaches, however, American contacts had been developed during their time as a player and coach in American leagues. As Nick put it:
I spent a lot of time, a lot of time, cultivating these relationships back when I was younger. In the summers I spent a lot of time in the LA Summer League, coaching in the United States Basketball League, following the NBA circuit, free agent camps, and things like that where I got to know all these people.

One of Nick's assistant coaches, Bob (also American), was also aware of the significance of Nick's American connection. When asked whether he thought Nick's nationality was of benefit when gaining knowledge about American migrant labour, he responded: "He has a lot of knowledge from having his contacts in the States. He knows college scouts and NBA scouts, so he gets a lot of feedback from over there".

For British coaches employed in the BBL, the same opportunities to develop American relational networks were not available. That is not to say, however, that these coaches did not still seek to build and take advantage of American networks in a similar manner to their North American counterparts. One British coach who was at somewhat of an advantage to other British coaches was Martin, who had, as a player, spent four years at university in the United States. Taking advantage of his situation, Martin found that his American university coach had proved to be a good source of information about prospective recruits for the BBL. As Martin put it:

I still refer back to my own coach in the States who has got his own network. So I speak to him and he looks at different leagues and teams around him, available players that are going to be seniors coming out.

For other British BBL coaches, however, the possibility of being able to develop American networks was less. These coaches had to finesse networks in order to gain new contacts. For example, Darren, described the manner in which he had developed a North American relational network through American players who had played for him in the past. Using the recommendations of these players and using them as links to other players, and, more significantly, American coaches, Darren had been able to construct his own American network. This network was used to facilitate a flow of information. As Darren put it: "Coaches in the States will tell me what kind of players are coming out that year". Thus, whilst much more effort was required on the coach's part, the importance of a North American network was not overlooked.
It became clear from speaking to British coaches both in the BBL and the EIHL that the ability to be able to call upon contacts in North America was highly significant if a coach in either of the leagues wished to gain knowledge about and recruit the best North American players available for their budget. It also became apparent that North American coaches were at something of an advantage when it came to the development and cultivation of such North American networks. This group of coaches had been able to develop North American contacts whilst playing and coaching in North America. This was a concern for some of the British BBL coaches. John, for example, observed how:

An English coach is at a little bit of a disadvantage compared to the American coach over here, because obviously they’ll have links with universities and colleges and whatever, having been through that system.

For example, John noted that British coaches might be disadvantaged in the development of North American networks given that they would not have been through the North American university system, Martin, a British coach who had been through that system, made a similar observation. When asked if he thought his recruiting practices were similar to the other coaches in the BBL, he responded:

I think that the American coaches have probably got an advantage over the English coaches because of this networking from their previously being in the States. So I think that they’ve certainly got an advantage there.

Thus, it was felt by some British coaches that their North American counterparts had something of a ‘head-start’ in the development of North American networks, and that, as a consequence of this, were better connected to the circulation of knowledge in North America.

A similar position was identifiable in the EIHL where the one British coach interviewed believed that North American coaches were in a better position to harness knowledge about potential North American recruits, given the networks of North American contacts on which they could draw. However, whilst BBL coaches placed
emphasis on the development of contact networks during early periods of development, the EIHL coach, Paul, suggested that North American coaches were advantaged in their ability to sustain contact with North American players in North America. As Paul put it, when asked how easy it was for him to gain knowledge about and recruit North American migrant labour:

> Obviously a lot of the North American players or North American coaches that are playing here and coaching here go back there [to North America], so they might have an easier opportunity to actually go and see the players. So I think just getting to see the player is the biggest challenge you know . . . I guess the North American coaches who go back to North America are more in the loop. They’re going to make a lot more contact with players throughout the off season. A lot of them go skating in the summer and all these guys go and play ‘pick up’ hockey, and ‘oh this guys looking for a job or that guys looking for a job’. So they’ve got a lot more contact.

Thus, it was felt that North American coaches were not only advantaged in terms of the level of development of their North American networks, but that these coaches were also more likely to travel to North America on a regular basis, and as a consequence, were more likely to have greater contact with players and therefore more opportunity to recruit them. It was not clear from speaking to British BBL and EIHL coaches, however, whether they felt that being in an advantaged position made American and Canadian coaches more desirable to BBL and EIHL team owners.

What was clear from the study of recruiting mechanisms was that North American networks were highly significant in the gaining of knowledge about and recruiting of North American migrant labour to the BBL and EIHL. Indeed, the use of North American networks was so significant that sixteen of the nineteen North American migrant players interviewed for this study had been recruited to their current BBL or EIHL team as the result of contact facilitated by friends or coaches in the North American network. What the contentions made in this chapter show, therefore, is that further processes are at work which, when considered in addition to the perpetuation model for recruitment established in Chapter Five, would explain the consistently high levels of North American recruitment to BBL and EIHL teams.
Summary: The Significance of Networking

Chapter Five of this thesis sought to provide a more adequate explanation with respect to the consistently high levels of North American migrant player involvement in British professional basketball and ice hockey by exploring the various motivating factors influencing the recruiting decisions of the recruiter. What this chapter has shown is that the recruitment of North American workers involves a complex and dynamic series of processes. Thus, the relatively greater size of the North American talent pools, the cheaper cost of North American migrant labour, the development of North American styles of play, management, and administration in the leagues, and stemming from this, the development of perpetuating recruiting processes, all affect the decisions made by BBL and EIHL coaches, motivating them to recruit North American migrant workers. What this chapter shows also, however, is that the very mechanics of migrant recruitment have developed in such a way as to enable the movement of North American workers to the BBL and the EIHL, and to constrain and restrict migrants from other locations. Such a development has occurred given that the most commonly appropriated networks for the circulation of knowledge with respect to potential migrant recruits are heavily biased in terms of North American contacts, be they coaches or players.

What becomes clear from an examination of the recruiting practices of BBL and EIHL coaches is that a series of interdependent networks facilitate the recruitment of North American migrant workers far more commonly than any other method, such as the utilisation of agents. In this respect, networks of contacts, whether they be coaching colleagues or current or former players can be used as a resource through which links to potential migrants can be developed and through which information valuable both to the potential migrant and the potential employer can be circulated. In this respect, what also becomes clear is the extent to which networks allow migrants to gain access to jobs in the BBL and the EIHL. The form of these networks may differ, depending on whether recruiters have elected to take advantage of the coaching network or the players' network. However, the result, for the most part, is the same: players acquire their employment via a series of interdependent connections. In this
respect, social relationships can be seen to constitute the most effective means towards mutually beneficial recruitments. These are processes that have been seen to be important for other highly skilled groups.

Meyer (2001) argued that, for highly skilled groups, the ability to be able to take advantage of human mediation in the recruitment process was highly significant, given that highly skilled employees required some sort of bridge to facilitate their encounters with potential employers. Conceptualising how such processes were facilitated for the highly skilled group, Meyer contended:

The pre-existing relationship between the (future) employee and the employer, through the intermediary of an individual known by both, not only provides the employee with information about the job but also guarantees the employer that she/he is, to a certain extent, appropriate for the vacant post. (p.94)

In addition to noting the significance of social relationships in the recruitment of highly skilled workers, Meyer observed how highly skilled migrants were less likely to rely on kin-based networks for accessing positions. Rather, highly skilled workers were more likely to take advantage of diverse and extensive networks consisting mostly of colleagues to facilitate their movements. The data presented here for the North American athletic migrant group would seem to support such a contention.

Whilst similarities can be observed in the use of networks to facilitate migratory movements and secure employment in the host nation, similarities can also be observed with respect to the circulation of knowledge in such networks. It became clear from the analysis of the networks used to recruit players to the BBL and EIHL that the circulation of knowledge in these networks was common, and that players and coaches were happy to act as links between clubs, and potential recruits, facilitating a two-way flow of knowledge either as donor or receiver. Similar processes have been identified for other highly skilled groups where “an unwritten code . . . stipulates that knowledge and information essential to facilitating the migrant process be shared” (Mullan, 1989, p.69). The development of such a code, Mullan argues, is based upon the bonds which are formed in what he refers to as, ‘social networks’. In these
networks, blood relations offer the strongest bonds. However, these familial relationships are followed closely by groups who share a common ethnic interest and a common organisational membership or affiliation.

The groups examined in this study share, it can be argued, both a common ethnic interest and organisational memberships. In this respect, the communicative bonds established between the members of these groups should, according to Mullan’s (1989) hypothesis, be strong. This would seem to be the case, given that the networks that have developed for the recruitment of migrant workers into the BBL and EIHL operate with a very strong North American bias. That is to say that the contacts who act as links in these networks are most likely to be based in North America and/or are North Americans themselves. Given that the networks used to facilitate the recruitment of migrant labour have developed in this manner, the flow of knowledge is much more likely to facilitate the movement of North American workers, given that processes of ‘knowledge channelling’ (Meyer, 2001) occur.

Meyer (2001) argues that, beyond facilitation, the impact of social networks on the movement of highly skilled workers is one of channelling. In this respect, the knowledge which is circulated in networks is channelled in such a manner as to enable the movement of migrants who share the same geographical and occupational origins. Thus, networks perpetuate the recruitment of migrants from particular locations and with specific occupational skills. The channelling of knowledge in this manner is beneficial for those migrants who share the geographical and occupational status of those who facilitate the flow of knowledge in the network. However, channelling knowledge in this manner can also act as a mechanism of exclusion, limiting options for migrants who are not connected to the dominant flow of knowledge and limiting their ability to migrate to particular locations.
Processes of knowledge channelling were much in evidence in the circulation of information relating to migrant workers in the various relational networks utilised to identify and recruit players to the BBL and the EIHL. North American coaches took full advantage of the networks of interdependent contacts that they had built up whilst learning their trade in North America and whilst plying it in Britain. These coaches would refer to former North American coaches, to current North American coaches with whom relationships had developed over years of competition, and with current and former North American players who were still playing either in North America, or who could provide links to North American networks in other parts of the globe. Interestingly, very similar networks were developed and utilised by British coaches both in the BBL and the EIHL. These coaches also cultivated relationships which were based, very much, within the North American flow of knowledge. British coaches used North American contacts based in North America, Europe and elsewhere to obtain knowledge about prospective recruits. They also used their current and former North American players as links between themselves and further potential North American migrants.

It became apparent that the channelling of knowledge relating to North American workers was facilitated through a series of ‘translocal communities’ (Beaverstock, 2005). In this respect, BBL and EIHL coaches and players were not only developing local connections in Britain via face-to-face contact with other North American coaches and players, but also strengthening these transnational bonds via regular telephone or e-mail contact with colleagues in North America or via travel to North America. The knowledge generated and circulated in translocal relational networks utilised by BBL and EIHL coaches was channelled in a very specific manner, enabling the movement of North American workers and constraining and restricting other groups.
Understanding how processes of knowledge channelling occur in the circulation of information about, and the recruiting of, North American migrant workers adds a further dimension to understanding why so many of the migrant workers employed in the BBL and the EIHL are recruited from North American sources. Whilst Chapter Five has already shown that North American migration to the BBL and the EIHL is enabled, in part, by perpetuating processes at work in the developing North American ethos identifiable in both leagues, so, too, would it seem that North American migration is perpetuated over time through the very mechanisms which facilitate migrant movement in the first place. The translocal relational networks which are used to gain knowledge about and recruit the vast majority of migrant workers to the leagues have developed in such a manner that knowledge about North American migrants is channelled into these networks, whilst knowledge about non-North American migrants is channelled out or not considered at all.

Using the data examined in this chapter and the previous two chapters, it is possible to show how the movement of North American migrants to the BBL and the EIHL is reflective of a complex series of processes. It is also possible to offer more adequate explanations to questions which seek to understand why so many North American migrant workers are employed in BBL and EIHL teams. Now that these explanations have been offered, the next logical step is to examine the manner in which the high levels of North American migrant involvement affect British basketball and ice hockey. This will be the focus, therefore, of the final substantive chapter of the thesis.
CHAPTER SEVEN

‘DENIAL OR DEVELOPMENT?': UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF NORTH AMERICAN MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN THE BBL AND EIHL

The previous three, substantive chapters of this thesis have examined the recruitment and subsequent employment of migrant workers in the BBL and the EIHL from several different angles. To this point, therefore, it has become clear that both the motivations to migrate for the migrant and the motivations to recruit for the coach are bound in a complex web of processes which involve a number of economic, social, cultural, and political elements. What is also becoming clear is that, whilst a series of processes affect the migration and recruiting decisions made in both the donor and host locations, a series of networks facilitate many of the actual movements that occur between the donor locations and the two leagues in Britain.

The previous chapters show that the movement of migrant labour into the BBL and the EIHL cannot be understood using mono-causal explanations. Therefore, adopting a more processual form of analysis considerably enriches the understanding that can be generated with respect to the migration process in a number of ways. Beyond simple macro-level determinants of the supply and demand of human capital, or the separate and independent push and pull factors that have been described as facilitating migrant movement for other workers (see Bohning, 1984; Fischer et al., 1997; Stalker, 2000), a figurational approach points to multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and multi-processual dynamics to better encapsulate how migratory movements are actually occurring. Moreover, such an approach adopts a developmental perspective which takes into consideration the significance of previous migratory events for the course of those occurring more recently.

Adopting such an approach and applying it to the data presented in the previous three chapters, it is possible to observe how the various processes influencing the migration decisions of the migrant, the recruiting decisions of the coach, and the mechanics of any migratory movement are structured in a manner
which places North American workers in both the BBL and the EIHL in positions of greater power in the figurations relative to players from elsewhere. In this respect, whilst potential North American migrant workers are more likely to be motivated to migrate to the BBL or the EIHL over and above other leagues of comparable quality or prestige, BBL and EIHL coaches are also more likely to recruit from the North American group, favouring North American players over indigenous talent or migrant workers located outside of the favoured source. Whilst this two-way process facilitates the flow of North American workers to the BBL and the EIHL, the series of interdependent networks which enable the circulation of knowledge with respect to prospective migrant recruits are also structured in such a manner that the dominant flows of knowledge in these networks also involve a North American bias. In this respect, at every level and within each dimension, the various processes at work enable and perpetuate the flow of North American workers.

By interpreting the multi-processual dynamics of migrant recruitment in the BBL and the EIHL, and by contextualising these processes within a developmental framework, it is possible to show how the persistent recruitment of North American workers has been facilitated and how this recruitment has developed to a point of reliance for both the BBL and the EIHL. The purpose of this final substantive chapter is to examine how such a reliance, and the persistent employment of North American workers affects both leagues. To do this, the chapter will focus on three primary areas: it will examine the manner in which North American migrant recruitment affects playing opportunities for British players seeking employment in the leagues, the ways in which North American recruitments affect national team development, and the ways in which issues of migrant involvement in the sports of basketball and ice hockey in Britain may be considered in the future.

Some of the research conducted so far in the area of athletic migration has sought to debate the effects of migrant involvement on indigenous sports cultures (see Olin, 1984; Maguire 1988b, 1996; Kivinen et al., 2001; Falcous & Maguire, 2005). This work has sought, for the most part, to examine the manner in which migrant
worker involvement affects the opportunities available for indigenous talent development, whether at domestic league or national team levels. What existing research in the area contends is that the involvement of migrant workers in British sporting subcultures is framed within a complex local-global interplay (Falcous & Maguire, 2005). In this respect, “broader concerns regarding the welfare of the ‘national’ game and fears of ‘Americanisation’ operate largely in ‘negotiation’ with the immediate realities of local meaning and leisure identities” (Falcous & Maguire, 2005, p.34).

In their study of audience interpretation of North American migrant player involvement in British basketball, Falcous and Maguire (2005) argue that the effects of migrant worker employment in the British game present something of a paradox; a paradox in which, on one side, the playing superiority of migrant workers is established, as is also their contribution to improved team performances. On the other side, however, domestic fans consumption of the sporting product is framed in such a way that indigenous players are viewed more favourably given their more intense sense of identification with the local environment. As Falcous and Maguire put it:

Desires for a team victory and spectacle, to which migrants were seen as pivotal, were countered with predispositions to favour local lads on the basis of civic and national allegiances and cultural stereotypes. (p.34)

Therefore, from the fans’ perspective at least, the acceptance of North American migrant workers in British basketball was conditional and based on the fans’ interpretations that migrant workers lacked the commitment, passion, and work ethic which could be seen to exist among the domestic player group.

But what of the actual involvement of British players? How is this affected by migrant worker recruitment? Whilst it becomes clear from Falcous and Maguire’s (2005) work that domestic players were viewed more favourably when juxtaposed with their migrant counterparts, fans’ interpretations of the marginalisation of indigenous talent were not reflected in fears over the denial of these players to
develop in the domestic leagues or in threats to national team performance. Rather, when viewed through a specifically local lens, fans were more concerned that migrant players might lack a sense of local pride or commitment. To establish the effects of migrant worker involvement on indigenous player opportunities it is necessary to consider Maguire’s (1988b) earlier work examining the commercialisation of English elite basketball. Whilst the effects of migrant worker involvement on the playing opportunities of domestic players was not the primary focus of Maguire’s work, he did observe how the increased commercialisation of basketball in Britain was to a considerable extent facilitated by the increased recruitment of American migrant workers. Maguire’s research also showed, as has been discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, how the increased use of migrant workers weakened the position of ‘home-based’ players.

The increased utilisation of American migrant workers in the league had a clear effect on playing opportunities for domestic players who had, until the increased commercialisation of the sport in the 1970s and 1980s, made up the bulk of the playing personnel. When migrant workers came to dominate all of the major statistical categories in the league such as points per game, rebounding, and assists, domestic players increasingly found themselves in peripheral positions, often ‘riding the pine’ and thus supporting the more dominant Americans. The general consensus from the team owners was that the introduction of increased numbers of migrant workers would raise the overall standard of competition in the league. Whilst this may have been true, it was not clear whether the owners believed that this raised standard of play was to be achieved at the cost of indigenous player development.

What was clear from Maguire’s (1988b) study, however, was that a conflict did develop between the governing body, the English Basketball Association, and the team owners of the BBL’s predecessor league who argued that migrants were pivotal in the shift which was occurring toward spectacle-oriented entertainment. This friction was predominantly caused as a result of the decisions by the team owners to recruit greater numbers of dual national players, players who were essentially
American, but who, through the exploitation of administrative loopholes, could qualify as British nationals before they had even received British passports. The increased use of American players, either as standard migrant imports or as dual nationals, served to further marginalise the power of British players in the domestic league.

More than it having an effect on opportunities for domestic players in the league, however, Maguire (1988b) also observed how the increased use of dual national players marginalised playing opportunities for indigenous players at national team level. Indeed, Maguire notes that the introduction and increased involvement of dual national migrant workers in the national team during the 1980s was so significant that it led to some critics arguing that the Great Britain national basketball team was the only national team that “spoke with an American accent” (1994, p.472). It was contended, in this connection that the future of the game in Britain, at both league and international level, was being sacrificed for the sake of commercial success and financial gain, processes that dovetailed with the increased recruitment of American migrant workers, and which were generated by struggles between competing interest groups in the complex political economy in which the sport was becoming enmeshed. These are processes that have also been seen to have occurred to varying degrees in other leagues in Europe (see Olin, 1984) and in the Middle East (see Galily and Sheard, 2002).

Maguire’s (1988b) work has not only shed light on the effects of migrant worker involvement in British basketball, but has also shown similar processes to be at work in British ice hockey (1996). In this sport, very similar global-local tensions have been created in a political economy where competing interest groups vie for attention, seeking to create a league which is both entertaining and sustainable, and one which provides adequate opportunities for the development of indigenous talent at league and international level. Therefore, like basketball team owners, the owners of elite league ice hockey teams have been seen to welcome the involvement of Canadian migrant workers. This is not, however, a view that is shared by all. Some
critics have suggested that migrant workers have failed to provide good value for money, arguing that some of them have played in Britain simply to take advantage of a 'paid holiday'. Of greater significance for the present study, however, critics also contended that domestic players were being 'kept-out' of the sport by foreign workers. In this respect, even the best British born players faced challenges from what one critic described as “mediocre veteran Canadians” (Maguire, 1996, p.350).

Contentions that opportunities for indigenous players are limited in British ice hockey as a consequence of migrant involvement centre on issues of over-reliance. It must be kept in mind, however, that this over-reliance on migrant talent is reflective of a broader series of processes, some of which have been examined in the previous chapters of this thesis. These processes include, among others; the financial instability of the league, the lack of indigenous talent, and the development of a Canadian style of play. When combined, these various processes facilitate the flow of Canadian workers into British ice hockey. Concomitantly, however, they also serve to restrict the opportunities available for indigenous talent. Such developments have led some observers to suggest that Canadian migrants plying their trade in British ice hockey are less likely to be viewed as ‘pioneers’ extolling the virtues of their sport, and more likely to be viewed as ‘mercenaries’ seeking to take advantage of greater financial rewards for their level of ability in Britain (Maguire, 1996). The contentions made in Chapter Four of this thesis would seem to agree, in part, with such observations. As with migration in basketball, these processes are again not limited to the British league. Rather, similar processes have also been identified in other leagues in Europe (see Genest, 1994; Kivinen et al., 2001).

Interestingly, whilst the use of migrant labour in league competition faced strong criticism from some observers, there were some advocates of migrant involvement who argued that migrant workers provided powerful role models for young British players, particularly when considered in the context of dual national involvement in the Great Britain national team (Maguire, 1996). In this case, the long-term strategy of the clubs and governing body was to develop more indigenous
talent, using the involvement of British acquired dual nationals as the catalyst for such processes. Chapter Five of this thesis has already shown, using Bale's (1991) work, that some North American college coaches sought to develop teams in a similar manner. Using migrants initially to develop a team more quickly, the overall intention was to create a programme which would prove more appealing to indigenous players, and one that indigenous players would eventually find desirable enough to play for. Whether or not the development of British ice hockey has occurred in such a manner as to enable the development of British born players remains to be seen. This area will be addressed later in the chapter.

What is clear, however, from an examination of those studies of the effects of migrant involvement in basketball and ice hockey which are more pertinent for present purposes, is that the processes framing the employment of migrant workers are subject both to positive and negative ascription. Similar processes have been identified in research tracing the effects of highly skilled migration. However, it should be made clear that there is currently a dearth of literature in this area which seeks to focus on the effects of inward migratory movements in a host location. The limited research which has sought to focus on this area reflects a paradox similar to that identified by Maguire (1988b, 1996), where, in most receiving countries, the primary emphasis is on traversing a fine line between promoting economic growth whilst still protecting jobs for local employees (Iredale, 2001). In Maguire's study, such a paradox was reflected in the need to create a balance between entertaining spectacle and local indigenous development.

For the most part, research which has sought to shed light on the effects of highly skilled migrant involvement in the increasingly flexible global labour market has approached the problem from the standpoint of the donor. That is, the most common approaches have sought to unravel the meanings associated with processes of 'brain drain' and to determine the losses which could be justifiably sustained by developing countries when their highly skilled workers migrated to more developed nations (Iredale & Appleyard, 2001). These approaches are useful in the overall
context of highly skilled migrant movement. They establish a framework for understanding the effects of migration in those nations which traditionally assume the role of donor. But what processes are at work when such migratory models are approached from a position where a country, such as Britain in the context of the present study, traditionally assumes the role of host? To answer this question it is necessary to consider the responses of the people interviewed for the study.

'Getting Some Time or Riding the Pine?':

The Effects of Migrant Involvement on Indigenous Playing Opportunities in the BBL and the EIHL

Analysing the data that was obtained from coaches with respect to the effects of migrant involvement in British basketball and ice hockey showed that there was a clear divide between those respondents who perceived the involvement of North American migrant workers as a threat to domestic player development, and those who thought the involvement of migrant workers was a positive influence for British players. What galvanised the two groups, however, were suggestions that the sports of basketball and ice hockey, at the level of the BBL and the EIHL at least, had developed, as Maguire (1988b, 1996) had previously identified, into entertainment products at the centre of which North American migrant workers had come to provide the ‘spectacle’ required to satisfy British audiences.

The significance of delivering an entertaining product was noted by one of the British BBL coaches John who had been involved in the league since its inception in 1986. Whilst he observed how the involvement of American workers was important for the development of the overall BBL product, John was also one of the respondents who argued that the introduction and sustained use of American players had, over time, negatively affected the levels of opportunity available for domestic players in the British league. He argued in this connection that:
I think at the time when they [BBL] went to so many foreign players it served its purpose. Obviously there was Sky TV at the time, and they wanted a spectacle there. Obviously the influx of these Americans gave them that instant impact, which is great, but what it did do is kill off the opportunities for the English player.

Other BBL coaches shared John’s interpretation of the effects of migrant involvement, arguing that the employment of American migrants negatively affected the levels of opportunity available for domestic players in the league. Bob, an American assistant coach, for example, argued that the involvement of American migrant workers in the BBL: “slows down the English players progressing”. Another of the British coaches, Darren, made a similar observation:

A lot of the time the BBL is hurting the English game by promoting so many Americans . . . Eventually all that happens is that the good English players go off to Europe. So we’re just on the same carousel.

Comments such as those by the BBL coaches would seem to suggest that little has changed since Maguire’s (1988b) examination of the rapid commercialisation of English basketball in the 1970s and 1980s where the relative power of indigenous players was seen to erode. Darren’s comments would also seem to suggest that whilst the involvement of migrant workers continues to affect domestic playing opportunities negatively, so, too, do they draw attention to processes of self-perpetuation in which recruitment operates like a “carousel”. This line of argument would seem to fit with the contentions made in Chapter Five.

Whilst some of the coaches in the BBL sample group contended that the involvement of North American workers in British basketball was to the detriment of British opportunities, only one such response was obtained from the EIHL sample. Questions relating to the effects of migrant worker involvement on playing opportunities for indigenous workers were reserved for coaches, owners, and agents. Such a decision was made on the understanding that these individuals were in a better position to make assessments about the involvement of the migrant group, given that they often had a much longer engagement with the league when compared to players whose involvement was far more transient. However, the issue of migrant worker
involvement did develop, by chance, during discussions with one of the Canadian EIHL players, Mike, when he commented on playing in the ‘Cross League’, a secondary league which required EIHL teams to play against teams from the league below the EIHL – the British National League (BNL). He remarked:

I was a little surprised to see that the bulk of the Great British talent doesn’t necessarily play in the Elite League in Great Britain. I figured you’d get all these imports and then you’d have the best of what England has to offer in this league. But going through this year and playing all the BNL teams, you notice that there’s a bulk of English talent who plays in the league lower than us, which is probably a fiscal thing. So I think that takes away from the quality of the league.

Whilst an analysis of BNL rosters does indeed show that greater numbers of British players are employed in this league as opposed to in the EIHL, the same cannot be said to hold true for British basketball. In this case, the reliance upon American workers seems to have permeated the lower leagues also. This is something that was noted by one of the American BBL coaches, Nick, who observed how the English Basketball League (EBL) was also reliant upon American migrant workers and how the structure of recruitment in that league had developed as a consequence of migrant recruitment in the BBL. He commented:

Look at the one league down from us and they supposedly have two foreign players and the rest English. Sadly, I watched their Cup Final after ours, and it’s not young burgeoning talent, it’s old guys, former BBL players. It’s a bunch of Americans that have British passports now . . . There just aren’t enough English players to go around and that’s the consequence of what we’ve done.

In this respect, unlike British ice hockey but similar to the recruiting structures identified by Olin (1984) in Finnish professional basketball, the recruitment of significant numbers of American workers was not reserved for the top league alone. Rather, over-time, the involvement of migrant workers has filtered into the lower league also. Nick’s comments would seem to suggest that this permeation of migrant workers into the lower league has been caused by American workers who elected to remain in Britain once they had qualified for a British passport. Chapter Four of this
research project could not find any evidence to suggest that migrant 'settlers' (Maguire, 1996) have been employed in the BBL. It may, of course, be the case that some migrant workers do elect to stay in Britain, but, if they do, these players do not remain in the BBL but instead they drop down to the lower league. Further research would be required to examine the specifics of such movements and to determine exactly how far the use of American migrant and dual national workers has affected playing opportunities for domestic talent in these lower leagues. What can be said, however, based on the data presented here, is that the involvement of North American migrant workers has served to restrict the opportunities available to domestic players in the top leagues of competition in British basketball. Similar processes appear to be at work in British ice hockey too. However, more data are required to establish if such a contention is accurate.

Whilst some of those respondents who were willing to discuss the effects of North American migrant player involvement argued that the employment of migrant workers had negative consequences for indigenous player development, other respondents made it clear that they felt migrant worker involvement could be viewed positively. As Robert put it when asked how he thought the involvement of migrant workers affected the BBL and playing opportunities for domestic players:

I think it's great. It produces a really exciting product that if the league was run properly, would attract TV and sponsorship. It would enhance the product. The English players who can really play don't want to come here anyway. They want to go and make their money in Europe and best of luck to them. But the majority of the [British] players, and it's 90% who hang around, can't play anyway.

Thus, the importance of the involvement of American migrant workers in the creation of an exciting and entertaining spectacle was more significant for some coaches than the development of indigenous talent. Similar interpretations of the involvement of migrant workers have been offered by Maguire (1988b) and Olin (1984).
The involvement of migrant workers was also viewed positively by some coaches in the EIHL. However, in the case of British ice hockey, rather than suggesting that migrant workers were a positive influence with respect to the entertaining spectacle which they could potentially provide, EIHL coaches argued that Canadian migrants could be used to help develop indigenous talent. These were processes that were evident at one EIHL club where the coach, Mark, when asked how he thought the involvement of migrant workers affected opportunities for domestic players in the EIHL, commented:

I think it affects it generally in a very positive way, because the foreign players are very good at working with the British players... I know that my import players work with my five British players very well to help make them better players. And I know that one of the things that I'm happy about is that I'm able to play my British players quite a bit, and for me, if I'm going to have a player, I don't want that player to sit on the bench. I want him to play. So the foreign players work with the British players and that helps to advance them every day.

Mark was not the only EIHL coach to suggest that migrant workers could be used to improve the quality of indigenous players. When asked how he thought migrant involvement affected the level of opportunity available to British players, Dennis argued similarly that:

I think when you get stuck at a certain point, you plateau. You don't really get any better when you're playing at a certain level, and I think that the guys that are coming up, the young British players, you can see that their game goes up when they play against the import players.

The intention to make use of migrant workers to facilitate a flow of knowledge and skills to indigenous players is something that would appear to have developed in British ice hockey over time. In their study of the development of cultural diffusion in British ice hockey, for example, Kivinen et al. (2001) note how, during the 1960s, Canadian migrant workers were used to ‘implant’ their own habits and to ‘weed out’ beginners mistakes from the game. The development of such processes and their continued implementation in the EIHL might suggest that processes of ‘skills
exchange’ or ‘skills circulation’ are occurring similarly to the processes that have
been identified for other highly skilled workers (Beaverstock, 2005). Moreover,
whilst there was little evidence in Chapter Four to suggest that migrant workers
employed in either basketball or ice hockey could be described as ‘pioneers’, using
Maguire’s (1996) typology of sport labour migration, the educative role that the
migrant can assume in British ice hockey would seem to suggest that such an
engagement may still be in evidence.

As the above data show, the perceptions offered by BBL and EIHL coaches
with respect to the effects of migrant involvement on opportunities for indigenous
players in the leagues were mixed. In this respect, whilst some viewed the
involvement of North American workers in the leagues positively, contending that
their involvement was necessary to provide an entertaining spectacle, or to provide
instruction in the skills required for indigenous workers to develop, others argued that
the effects were more negative and served to restrict opportunities for indigenous
talent at league level. To probe the area more deeply, questions relating to the effects
of migrant involvement on national team development were posed. This area was
examined as it was felt that the involvement of migrant workers in the national
programme could be used as a good indicator from which to establish broader trends
in migrant involvement. The next part of the chapter will discuss the responses which
were offered when coaches, owners, and agents were questioned in this area.

‘Development or Distraction?’:

The Effects of Migrant Worker Involvement on National Team Development

Similarly to the responses obtained with respect to the effect of North
American worker involvement on playing opportunities for indigenous workers at
league level, when questions relating to national team development were posed to
BBL and EIHL coaches the responses received were varied. Broadly, these responses
could be placed into one of three categories. Firstly, that the involvement of North
American migrant workers affected national team development positively, providing
opportunities for domestic player development; secondly, that it affected it negatively,
serving to restrict the number of opportunities available to home-grown players; or thirdly, that migrant involvement had no bearing on national team development at all, and that the failures of the national programmes were reflective of the poor organisation of the sports in Britain.

The first group, who argued that the involvement of migrant workers affected national team development positively, based their contentions, as they had with respect to the involvement of migrant workers more broadly, on the assumption that domestic players' abilities would improve when they competed with and against better quality North American imports both at league and national team levels. These coaches who, interestingly, were all located in the EIHL sample group, argued that British born players could learn much from their North American counterparts. As Mark put it when asked how he thought the involvement of North American workers affected the quality of the national ice hockey team:

I think it helps British players, because if a coach is using his foreign players in a positive way to help his British players, then that is only going to help the national programme, I don't think that it hurts it by any standard, that's for sure.

A similar perception was offered by Dennis, another of the EIHL coaches. When asked the same question, he remarked: “I would think that it would affect it positively. If you’re playing with good quality import hockey players like the British players are, then you’re going to get better”. Similar perceptions regarding the involvement of foreign workers had previously been identified in Maguire’s (1996) research where Canadian migrants were seen as powerful role models for British born players in the national team.

Interestingly, one of the EIHL coaches, Dave, had previously been employed as Assistant Coach of the Great Britain national team. He was, thus, able to provide some detail regarding the development of the national programme in recent years. He commented:
More home-grown kids are on the national team now, and I was the Assistant Coach of the national team for a few years, and we had a lot of imports back then who had British passports, but who weren't home-grown. The kids who are coming through now are going to be the ones who, in the next 10 years, will be able to do a good job. So I think the league is helping to bring on more home-grown players, because we had hardly any home-grown players in the Superleague. So now at least they're playing and they are getting better, so I think that the national teams at all levels are doing better than they were five years ago, I think they're moving in the right direction.

Thus, for some coaches in the EIHL at least, the involvement of migrant workers was seen as a positive influence on the development of British-born players seeking places on the national team. Similarly to their involvement in the league, the role of migrant workers could be seen as educative (Maguire, 1996; Kivinen et al., 2001).

Whilst the majority of EIHL coaches who were willing to offer responses argued that the involvement of migrant workers could be used to positively affect national team development, responses from BBL coaches were more negative. For some of the BBL coaches questioned, the development of the Great Britain national basketball team in recent years reflected the negative consequences of migrant worker reliance in the league. Some of the BBL coaches interviewed argued in this connection as previous chapters of this thesis have, that, as a consequence of migrant involvement in the BBL, few opportunities were available for British-born players to develop to the standards found in international competition. This was the perception of Darren who, when asked how the involvement of migrant workers affected national team development, argued:

It kills national team development; all of the good English players are now playing in Europe. So getting clubs to release these guys for training isn't going to happen. The clubs are paying these guys £250,000, and you see the national team now, it's full of young guys who are based in the BBL. So it's all well and good trying to develop young players but our best players are away in Europe and we never see them.
A very similar argument was made by another BBL coach, John, who also observed how few opportunities were available for British born players in the BBL. Again, when asked how he thought the involvement of migrant workers affected national team development, he commented:

I think it’s killed it, because obviously there’s not that many spaces available for the English player to play. They’re taken up by Americans . . . So your international players are now looking to have to go and play abroad . . . and so that has really hurt the international programme.

Thus, whilst some EIHL coaches argued that migrant workers could be used to develop indigenous talent, BBL coaches argued that few opportunities for domestic player development were available in British basketball. As a consequence of this, the recruitment of migrant workers has been seen to permeate the national team. Few British born players are currently recruited to the national team. Rather, the majority of players securing positions are either dual national or naturalised North Americans. Based on these contentions, therefore, little seems to have changed since Maguire’s (1988b) study where similar processes were seen to be affecting opportunities for indigenous talent in the national team.

Not all BBL coaches argued, however, that it was the involvement of migrant workers in the league that negatively affected national team development. Some of the coaches interviewed argued that the involvement of migrant workers in the league had no bearing at all on the national team, contending that the national team was the responsibility of the governing federation and somehow detached from league competition. This was the perception of one of the coaches, Nick, who argued that the involvement of foreign players had little bearing on the development of the national basketball team. He remarked:
It really shouldn’t have much effect on it. I think the national team is a real separate entity to any league play. If the national team or the federation had money, they could do whatever they wanted. They could bring guys in. Look at the English football team, they bring guys from all over. A lot of the players aren’t in England any more. And it’s the same scenario, if they can afford to do it. Afford to bring them in, afford to put some quality training sessions on, afford to get some quality coaching in place; that’s more the reasons rather than the number of foreigners in the league.

Whilst more research would be required to establish the exact position of the governing body, the English Basketball Association, in the development of the national team, Nick clearly blamed the lack of development at international level on the federation, and not, as other BBL coaches had, the influx of American migrants in the BBL. Nick was not alone in his interpretation that the development of the national team lay with the governing body. One of the British coaches, Robert, presented a similar argument when asked how he thought the involvement of migrant workers affected the national team: “I don’t think it affects it at all. I think the national team, if it was run properly by the federation, would be successful”. Thus, it would appear that the friction, noted by Maguire (1988b), which developed between the clubs and the governing body during the increased commercialisation of the game in the 1970s and 1980s, can still be detected in the contemporary continuation of the sport.

When asked to consider the effect which the involvement of North American workers had on the development of national teams in basketball and ice hockey, two different interpretations were presented. It appeared from the discussions held with EIHL coaches, that migrant labour was being used positively in attempts to develop British players both at the professional level in the league and in the national team. The same could not be said of the BBL. In this league, the consequence of migrant involvement and the poor management of the national team by the governing federation were seen to have created significant problems for the involvement of British born players at both league and national team level.
If the development of national teams can be used as an indicator of future development in the sports of basketball and ice hockey in Britain, then it would appear, from the data presented here at least, that the two sports are moving in somewhat different directions. Whilst the BBL seems unable to counter the reliance that has developed on American talent, the EIHL appears to be making efforts to achieve a balance between migrant involvement and indigenous development. To establish if such a contention is accurate, BBL and EIHL coaches were asked what their league would look like, and whether or not it would still exist, if no foreign players were recruited. Asking such a question, it was hoped, would prompt the coaches to consider the future of their league. The next section of this chapter explores the responses to this question.

'Going Forwards or Backwards?':

The Future of Migrant Involvement in the BBL and the EIHL

When asked to consider the future development of the professional leagues and national teams in Britain, most of the coaches who commented argued that it was important to establish a balance between the development of a product which would appeal to audiences, sponsors, and the media, and the provision of recruiting practices which would provide adequate opportunities for British-born players to develop. To achieve such a balance, the coaches who commented argued that the numbers of migrant workers permitted in the current quota systems had to be reduced. For John, one of the BBL coaches, this meant reducing the number of foreign imports permitted to two; the number that had originally been permitted prior to the decisions made by the BBL in the mid-1990s to address what they perceived as a skills shortage following the implementation of the rules imposed by the Bosman case:

If they [BBL] could cut it back down to two, I think that would be a perfect league, because I think there is English talent out there to make this league a success, and sometimes I think you just get a more honest work ethic as well. Sometimes I think you get these Americans and they're big fish in a little pond and sometimes they don't work as hard as they should do.
The practicalities of achieving a balance between migrant involvement and indigenous development were discussed by one of the BBL assistant coaches, Michael. When asked what the BBL would look like with little or no migrant involvement, he argued:

> It would be a decent league, but you would have to be careful not to run the risk of wage inflation... When you've got a low [indigenous] talent pool, and only a set number of jobs, the wages can spiral out of control, and the owners don't want that. So having at least two foreign players means that they can control wages in certain spots.

Another coach, Darren, whilst not specifying how many migrant recruits teams should be restricted to, also argued that a reduction in migrant workers had to be included in any future development plans. Interestingly, Darren was attempting to address the issue of indigenous player underdevelopment at his club by steadily reducing the number of American imports that he recruited. Recruiting fewer American migrants had resulted in his team performing very poorly during the season. However, Darren felt this was a necessary step in ensuring the future development of home-grown players. He argued:

> Eventually, somewhere down the line, if it's going to change we have to invest in these young English guys. Look at us now. We may be struggling as a team, but we have a core nucleus of good young English guys. Hopefully we're going to bring in more young guys, and that's what you have to do. You have to pay them the right money, and develop them year by year, and finally you're going to have 10 good English players. It's the only way that the game is going to get back.

Thus, for coaches in British basketball like these it was perceived that a reduction in the number of migrant workers permitted was required if indigenous players were to improve over time. Similar contentions were offered in Maguire’s (1988b) analysis where some observers called for a reduction in the number of import players prior to the increase from two migrant workers to five.
Whilst BBL coaches argued that a reduction in foreign player involvement could lead to greater opportunities for indigenous talent development in the league, EIHL coaches argued that indigenous player development would be successful if migrant workers were used in the right way and in balance with home-grown talent. Indeed, as the previous sections of this chapter have shown, some of the EIHL coaches actively sought to make use of migrant workers in this manner in an attempt to develop indigenous talent. Thus, when asked if the EIHL could operate without the involvement of migrant workers, Roger, one of the EIHL team owners, argued that migrant involvement was a necessity for the continuation of the league and the improvement of the British-born players:

If there were no overseas foreign players there would be no professional game, period. The British players who are in our league are good because of the foreign players who are here.

Thus, coaches and owners argued that the involvement of migrant workers was significant. This is not to say, however, that they did not think that the number of imports permitted per team could be reduced to provide more opportunities for British-born players to play. One of the Canadian EIHL coaches, Mark, argued this point, whilst also maintaining that migrant workers were important:

I think that it's a good idea that they [EIHL] want to limit the number of foreign players slowly. So as we go down the road, I think they are going to drop it from eleven to ten to eight as these young British players come up through the ranks and get better. But until that happens we just have to stick with what works.

Not all respondents were convinced that a reduction of import workers in the EIHL would improve the league, however. One of the player agents, Jason, was unsure what benefits could be drawn from reducing the number of foreign imports permitted to EIHL teams. Jason argued that the governing body had to decide what it was they were trying to achieve with the league in Britain. As Jason put it:
UK hockey has to decide what the hell they're trying to do. If they want to develop their own players, there's ways to do that. It's money; it's at the coaching level. It's the coach's job to win or he doesn't have a job. So he's going to use every resource he has within his power to win those games. And that probably means playing more imports than domestic players.

Therefore, for Jason, questions relating to the reduction of imports permitted reflected the paradox originally identified by Maguire (1988b, 1996); were the governing body interested in producing winning teams that would be appealing to fans, sponsors, and the media, or did their focus lay with the development of indigenous talent in an attempt to improve performance at domestic and international level? These were questions which, regrettably, went unanswered as no representative from Ice Hockey UK was willing to be interviewed for this study. What the continuation of such a paradox shows, however, when considered alongside the other interpretations offered with respect to the future involvement of migrant workers in the BBL and the EIHL, is that little has changed since Maguire's studies, and that issues of migrant involvement remain both complex and highly sensitive.

Summary: The Effects of Migrant Worker Involvement in the BBL and the EIHL

The involvement of North American migrant workers in the BBL and the EIHL creates a series of seemingly contradictory dynamics when the effects of any migrant involvement are considered in greater detail. That is, when considering the impact which the recruitment of migrant workers has on playing opportunities for indigenous workers both positive and negative effects can be observed. Therefore, whilst for some coaches the steadily increasing involvement of North American workers was seen to restrict the number of professional playing opportunities available to home-grown players, for other coaches the involvement of North American workers was seen not only to raise the general standards of play but to improve the quality of indigenous talent as well. These contradictions were seen to apply at both the domestic league and national team levels.
Whilst it is possible to argue that questions relating to the effects of migrant involvement result in somewhat contradictory dynamics, when the two sports are considered separately from one another, the effects that the recruitment of migrant workers has both at league and international level becomes more clear. Thus, whilst in the BBL there were some mixed responses, for the most part it was felt that the involvement of American migrants affected the opportunities available for the development of indigenous talent negatively. At league level the majority of the coaches who were willing to answer questions on the effects of migrant involvement argued that BBL teams relied too heavily on migrant workers, contending that, as a consequence of the long-term development of recruiting practices that favoured American labour, opportunities were increasingly marginalised for British-born players.

Significantly, it appeared that the employment of American migrants was not limited to the BBL, however. Indeed, one of the BBL coaches argued that the reliance on migrant labour had become so significant in the BBL that, over-time, the recruitment of American workers had also permeated the lower levels of British basketball competition. Nick made it clear that he felt that the involvement of American migrant workers in the lower league was a consequence of the persistent recruitment of migrant workers by the clubs of the BBL. Therefore, the involvement of migrant workers on multiple league levels was seen very strongly to negatively affect the number of opportunities for domestic players to develop.

More than affecting opportunities for domestic players to develop in the BBL or lower leagues of British basketball competition, however, the involvement of migrant workers was also seen to negatively affect opportunities for British-born players to develop in the national team. Two of the BBL coaches interviewed contended that migrant involvement at league level had “killed” national team development, arguing that indigenous players were forced to seek employment elsewhere in Europe or assume peripheral positions given that the central positions on BBL teams were most commonly taken by American imports.
Not all BBL coaches argued that the failures of the national team could be blamed on the involvement of migrant workers however. Some suggested that the national team operated as a separate entity, independent of the BBL, and that, if the governing federation, the English Basketball Association, ran the national programme effectively, the team would be more successful. Contentions made in this regard point to a more complex and dynamic series of processes which could potentially be used to explain the failures of the current Great Britain national programme. The fractured nature of the governing structure for basketball in Britain could therefore be one reason. Another could be the financial instability of the sport at national level.

Whilst some mixed responses were observed in the data gathered on the effects of migrant involvement in British basketball, a clear trend did develop. For the most part, coaches believed that migrant involvement affected British basketball negatively. Different processes appeared to be at work in British ice hockey, where coaches were actively seeking to use their migrant workers to improve not only the quality of home-grown players but also the quality of the nation’s professional league and national team. The general sense, following an analysis of the data generated from the interviews, was that EIHL coaches had realised that their sport was relying too heavily on imported Canadian workers, and that these recruiting practices were resulting in detrimental effects in both the league and the national team. When questioned about the influence of migrant involvement, some EIHL coaches referred to former British professional ice hockey leagues in which there were “hardly any home-grown players” or “too many imports”. In this respect, it appeared that EIHL coaches were being proactive in their approach to the development of indigenous talent.

For EIHL coaches, the use of migrant workers and the development of domestic talent was a case of balance. It was a case of traversing a fine line between maintaining standards of competition and providing a product which would be desirable to the audience, sponsors, and the media, but which would also permit the development of home-grown talent at league and international levels. In fact, some
EIHL coaches were already starting to develop recruiting practices which addressed the apparent paradox which was raised by the player agent, Jason, in this study, and which had previously been identified by Maguire (1988b, 1996). It is a paradox which questions the very purpose of professional basketball and ice hockey leagues in Britain. As Maguire (1988b) put it with respect to the transformation of English elite basketball in the 1970s and 1980s:

Centrally involved in these processes was a conflict between the desire of the club owners to provide an instant commercial product to ‘display’ to spectators and the aspirations of officials of the English Basketball Association (EBBA) to build the foundations for the long-term ‘playing’ success of ‘English’ basketball. (p.309)

Arguably, what coaches in the EIHL would seem to be attempting through their recruiting practices is to galvanise both the ability to provide a spectacle to audiences, and the ability to develop indigenous talent.

To achieve an appropriate balance between spectacle and development, EIHL coaches and other representatives argued that migrant workers were fundamental to the development of the professional league. They recognised, however, that these ‘pioneers’ (Maguire, 1996) were not only significant in terms of providing the necessary spectacle. They were also fundamental in raising the standards of competition in the league and in the development of domestic talent. In this respect, EIHL coaches were beginning to recognise that, whilst Canadian migrant workers were fundamental to the development of the league, opportunities had also to be provided for domestic British-born players. Crawford (2002) argued that this was already the case in the old Super League:

If the success or failure of arena-based ice hockey is to be based on whether it can generate the same kind of national and regional loyalties seen in other British spectator sports, such as rugby, cricket and in particular football, possibly the key to this will be the creation of a greater base of British born and trained players in the Super League. (p.33)
The development of such a framework would seem to create an appropriate global-local interplay in which the desire for team victory and spectacle in which migrant workers are seen to be pivotal is balanced by the involvement of 'local lads' who the audience favour on account of their civic and national allegiances (Falcous & Maguire, 2005).

Whilst the importance of creating a balance between spectacle and development is significant for coaches in the EIHL, a similar balance has also been seen to be significant in other highly skilled employment spheres. In this respect, for countries who traditionally assume the role of host for highly skilled workers, the primary emphasis is placed on traversing a fine line between promoting economic growth whilst still protecting jobs for local employees. To achieve such a balance, research examining the migration of the highly skilled has moved away from arguments which traditionally conclude that one of the primary effects of highly skilled migration is a 'brain drain' to arguing that, in a contemporary context, processes of 'brain exchange' or 'brain circulation' (Beaverstock, 2005) are more likely to be occurring as greater numbers of highly skilled workers migrate within the increasingly flexible global labour market. These are processes which appear to be occurring in the EIHL where the skills and knowledge of migrant workers are actively being circulated and exchanged to help educate and develop indigenous workers. In this respect, in the same way in which Bale (1991) conceptualised a process of 'brawn drain', it may be possible to conceptualise processes of 'brawn exchange' or 'brawn circulation' in the EIHL from the findings in the present study.

What becomes clear from a study of the effects of migrant involvement in British basketball and ice hockey is that both sports are enmeshed in complex political economies which are contoured by a series of power arrangements in which competing groups vie for attention. Whilst some of the members of these groups, which include governing bodies, commercial investors, consumers, sponsors, officials, and players, wish to develop the sports as commercially and financially sustainable products, others seek to place emphasis on indigenous development. In
some cases the need to create a balance between economic stability and indigenous development is deemed most significant. The point here is that the manner in which power is distributed between the various groups enmeshed in the political economies of each sport may explain why the leagues currently operate with seemingly contradictory recruiting policies. In the BBL, it can be argued that emphasis is placed upon financial sustainability rather than indigenous player development. In this respect, it may be the commercially oriented team owners, sponsors, and investors who hold greater power rather than the governing body. In the EIHL, however, an emphasis is being placed on creating a balance between financial sustainability and indigenous player development. In this league, it may be possible to argue that a more even distribution of power between the commercially oriented team owners, sponsors, investors, and the governing body exists. To establish if these contentions are accurate more research is required to examine the specific power relationships between the leagues and their respective governing bodies. What can be argued, however, from the findings of this research, is that the majority of BBL and EIHL coaches, both British and North American, agreed that the number of migrant workers permitted in the leagues needs to be reduced. Hopefully, recommendations may be made from the data in this thesis which will help the leagues and governing bodies to make an educated decision as to whether or not this is the right way forward.
CONCLUSION

This research project has examined the issue of athletic labour migration from a number of angles in an attempt to provide a more complete representation of the athletic migration figuration than has hitherto been provided. Rather than focusing on any single element of the migration figuration, this study has examined both ends of the migration flow, the processes which facilitate athletic migrant movements, and the effects of migrant involvement on the host nation. The intent was to bring existing athletic migration research up to date, to create new knowledge in the area of athletic migration, and to develop a synthesis with work from the area of highly skilled migration more generally in order to establish whether or not similarities exist in the movements of athletic migrants and other highly skilled migrants. From the critical case study that has been adopted in this study, it can be argued that these ends have been met. The purpose of this concluding chapter is three-fold. It will summarise the key findings with respect to the areas for analysis and the critical case study, it will discuss the synthesis which has been constructed between research in the areas of athletic migration and the migration of the highly skilled, more generally, and it will discuss the practical and sociological contributions that can be made from the findings presented in this study.

North American Migrant Workers in the BBL and the EIHL:
Some Concluding Observations

A developmental account of basketball and ice hockey in Britain shows that both sports have fluctuated in popularity for most if not all of their existence. The development of the sports has been shaped by a series of processes which have resulted in periods of relative stability and periods in which the sports have struggled to maintain an existence. Throughout their development, basketball and ice hockey have been seen in Britain as ‘imported’ sports. They are ‘North American’ sports which have little historical or cultural tradition for either competition or participation when juxtaposed with Britain’s core sports cultures. Basketball and ice hockey are peripheral sports in Britain which have failed on numerous occasions to break into the consciousness of the wider British sporting public. As a consequence of this, their
‘place’ is never fully guaranteed. They have neither tradition, nor an expectation of permanence.

Neither the BBL nor the EIHL has been able to create a stable platform from which to build in Britain. As a consequence of this, clubs have been forced to relocate or disband, on some occasions after short operating periods, on others after many years of competition. The fragility of the BBL was shown strikingly during the development of this study. Whilst the Thames Valley Tigers had been one of the founding teams of the BBL in 1986 and had been very useful in providing relevant data for this study, they struggled throughout the 2004/05 season with ownership problems and, at the end of the season folded. Interestingly, the team re-emerged in the BBL for the 2005/06 season, not as the Thames Valley Tigers but as the Guildford Heat; a resurrected franchise that had dropped out of the BBL some years earlier. A similar case could be observed in the EIHL. The Manchester Storm had been one the teams originally competing in the Super League until they folded due to lack of funds. The team was eventually to resurface in the EIHL as the Manchester Phoenix for the 2003/04 season. However, their involvement was short-lived as the new Phoenix franchise folded prior to the start of the 2004/05 season. For the 2005/06 EIHL season the Manchester Phoenix once again ‘rose from the ashes’ to demonstrate the somewhat discontinuous patterns of development that occur in this league. These examples show that the instabilities that have been evident during both leagues’ development are still very much in evidence in the contemporary context.

Whilst a developmental account was used to establish a temporal dimension to this research project, a statistical component contextualised the movement of migrant workers in basketball and ice hockey across space, specifically across Europe. This statistical component began to attend to the extent of the involvement of North American workers in European basketball and ice hockey leagues. To establish if any trends were evident in the statistical data, a typology of European league ranking was created. This typology was used to establish the relative power of the various leagues in Europe. Using a series of variables including income, spectator support, media
coverage, player salaries, and the performance of teams in European competition, it was possible to show that both the BBL and the EIHL operated on level four of the typology, the lowest level. It was also possible to show in this connection that not only do the sports of basketball and ice hockey operate on the periphery of British sporting interest, they also operate on the periphery of their respective European economies. These ideas have to be kept in mind when considering various elements of the migration process.

Even without being able to obtain data for those players who could be described as 'dual national' or 'naturalised', when statistical data reflecting the involvement of migrant workers in basketball and ice hockey were analysed, they began to reveal the extent of North American migrant involvement in Europe. In some countries, very few North American migrant workers were employed. However, when considered in the overall European context, the involvement of workers from the United States and Canada was seen to be highly significant. In both basketball and ice hockey, the number of North American migrants approximated to the total number of migrants from all the other nations combined. When considered with respect to the British leagues, the involvement of North American migrant workers was seen to be even more significant.

In the BBL, exactly half of all the contracted workers could be described as migrants. This statistic in itself was not particularly significant when compared to other leagues. What was significant, however, was that, of the 76 migrants who were employed in the league, 59 were American. This figure, as a percentage, meant that more American migrant workers were employed in the BBL than in any of the other leagues examined in Europe. In the EIHL, migrant workers outnumbered indigenous workers. 83 of the total 120 workers in this league could be defined as migrants. The majority of these migrants, 64, were Canadians. Similarly to the BBL, more Canadian migrants were employed in British ice hockey than was the case in any of the other European leagues that were analysed.
But why should so many North American migrants select the BBL or the EIHL as their migration destination, particularly if these leagues are seen to exist on the periphery of the nation's sporting interest and on the lowest level of the European hierarchy? It became clear from this study that mono-causal approaches could not be used to adequately capture the motivations of the migrant workers. Therefore, to argue that North American migrants were motivated to ply their trade in Britain by a single factor such as financial gain, was not only inaccurate but also simplistic and distorting. The data obtained from the interviews showed that the factors influencing North American migrants to select the BBL or the EIHL as their migration destination involved a complex mix of processes. This mix of processes was representative of migration at two distinctly different points in the careers of the migrants.

It became clear from an analysis of player biographical data, that the majority of American migrant workers employed in the BBL were at the beginning of their professional engagement with their sport. Many of these migrants were being employed professionally for the first time since leaving a North American college. Conversely, Canadian migrants seeking employment in the EIHL were not at the start of their professional engagement with their sport, but in the middle or, more commonly, coming towards the end of their professional careers. As a consequence of this, the mix of processes affecting the migration decisions of these migrant workers differed.

For the young, relatively inexperienced American migrants selecting the BBL as their migration destination, the factors influencing their decision were varied. For some of these migrants, the BBL was seen as an ideal first ‘port of call’ (Maguire, 1996). It was a league which enabled them to get their ‘foot in the door’ with respect to a professional engagement with the sport. For these migrants, their movement to the BBL was based upon a structured decision which reflected their abilities and the opportunities available to them at the beginning of their career, when employment in other, more prestigious leagues may have been out of their reach. Arguably, however, employment in these more prestigious leagues was what these players were seeking in
the longer term. In this respect, for them, and for many other American migrant workers, the BBL represented the first ‘rung’ on a professional career ladder.

It became clear that few of the American migrant workers in this study were seeking to pursue long term careers in the BBL. They merely used the league as a ‘stepping stone’ to the more prestigious and lucrative basketball economies either in Europe, or, on occasion, in North America. For most of these migrant workers the intention was to spend as little time in the league as possible. Therefore, during their time in the league, these migrants took advantage of being on Europe’s ‘doorstep’ to seek out employment in the more prestigious leagues. Another group of migrants sought to achieve the same end. This group, however, were happy to spend more time in the league attempting to qualify for a British passport in order that they might be able to move on in that way. Whichever strategy was adopted, it became clear that little loyalty was offered by ‘mercenary’ (Maguire, 1996) workers to the teams of the BBL or the league itself. To exemplify this point, witness in fact that, in the season following data collection, only two of the BBL players interviewed for this study remained in the league, and both of these players had relocated to different clubs.

Whilst the manner in which the BBL was used in a transitory fashion in an attempt to achieve more lucrative contracts in more prestigious leagues was significant for American migrant workers in the league, processes of cultural similarity had also to be seen as significant. For migrants who intended spending little time in the league, being able to take advantage of specific cultural similarities such as language, meant that the BBL could be viewed as a ‘league of convenience’, one which provided a transitory function to potentially more lucrative contracts in more prestigious leagues, but one which also required the least effort in transition. In this respect, for American migrant workers in the BBL, their motivation to migrate was seen to reflect a mix of both economic and cultural processes.
For Canadian ice hockey players migrating to the EIHL, the motivation to relocate reflected a far more complex mix of processes. These migrants were not only, like their BBL counterparts, motivated by the opportunity to be able to take advantage of financial rewards and the benefits of cultural similarities. They were also influenced by self-preservation as the consequence of a less physically demanding playing schedule and the possibility of engaging with cosmopolitan cultural encounters. Given this range of motivating influences, it was possible to establish that some of the factors identified by Maguire (1996) in his analysis were still in evidence in the contemporary context. Maguire had also observed how the migration motivations of this group were diverse and varied.

Beyond the more tangible benefits that could be taken advantage of by Canadian migrants plying their trade in the EIHL, however, what also became clear was that these workers were motivated by both a series of relationships which facilitated a flow of information about the league, and the manner in which the league had developed with distinctly Canadian influences. Migrant workers were enmeshed in complex networks of relationships with other migrant workers, be they players or coaches, and as a consequence of these relationships were constantly in dialogue regarding potential employment opportunities. When jobs became available in the league, friends would often facilitate a flow of communication which could provide important information about the league and the migration process. Moreover, using these networks to communicate, coaches were also able to provide opportunities for Canadian migrant workers.

To add a further layer, migrant workers were also motivated by the manner in which the EIHL involved a distinctly Canadian 'ethos' (Maguire, 1996), given the numbers of Canadian migrant workers employed in a number of capacities in the league. The development of a Canadian style of play and the Canadian styles of coaching, management, and administration, all served to further fuel the motivations of Canadian migrant workers, influencing their decision to select the EIHL. Canadian players felt that their style of play would better 'fit' the EIHL. When this factor was
coupled with the ability to be able to surround themselves with other Canadian workers and the various other more tangible factors, migrants were motivated to select the EIHL as their migration destination over other leagues of comparable quality.

When attention was switched from the players’ perspective in the migration flow to that of the recruiters, the significance of the number of North American workers employed in the leagues could be more readily identified. It can be argued that the overproduction of basketball and ice hockey labour in the United States and Canada served to create significant talent pools (Miller et al., 2003; Falcous & Maguire, 2005) from which players could be selected to provide ‘instant help’ (Bale, 1991). In this respect, coaches recruited North American players given that these players could not only improve their team more quickly, but also because they could be recruited more cheaply than migrants from other locations given their relative numbers. What also became apparent, however, was that consistent recruitment from these talent pools had affected the BBL and the EIHL to a point where the recruitment of North American workers was seen as leading to processes of self-perpetuation.

A developmental analysis of basketball and ice hockey in Britain shows that as a consequence of the persistent involvement of North American migrant workers, both sports have developed with strong North American influences (Maguire, 1988b, 1996; Crawford, 2002). The development of these influences and the North American ethos that can be seen to exist in the leagues, proved to be highly significant, contributing to the creation of a recruiting structure which enabled the employment of North American workers, but which restricted and constrained the employment of indigenous workers, or migrants from locations outside of North America. It became clear that, as more North American migrants were recruited into elite leagues in British basketball and ice hockey in a number of roles over time, so the contrasts observable in playing style, coaching, management, and administration between the North American and British sport forms could be seen to diminish. As these first processes developed, so, as the study of migrant motivation shows, the leagues began
to become more appealing to further North American migrants who believed that their abilities and playing style would ‘fit’ better in the British leagues. Coaches shared this sentiment, arguing that North American players could be assimilated more successfully into the North American dominated subcultures than migrants from other locations. As more North American migrants were recruited to the leagues, so the developing North American ethos could be seen to intensify further. Thus, coaches perpetuated their recruiting strategy by employing more North American migrants. The intensification of what were, in effect, self-perpetuating processes could, over time, be seen to increase the North American migrants’ position of power in the figuration, as indigenous workers and migrants from locations other than North America were increasingly identified as outsiders in an established North American community.

Whilst it became clear that the self-perpetuating nature of migrant recruitment in the BBL and the EIHL served to place North American workers in positions of greater power, the mechanisms through which the recruitment of these workers was facilitated seemed to enhance this position further. Recruitment in the BBL and the EIHL was not facilitated through more formal channels. Agents were rarely used to gain knowledge about or recruit migrant workers. Instead, recruitment in the leagues and the circulation of knowledge regarding players and employment opportunities were facilitated by dynamic constellations of people. Coaches took advantage of networks comprised of coaching colleagues and current and former players in their attempts to gain information about and recruit migrant workers. These networks can be seen as originating in, or as flowing from or through, North America. That is, the dominant flows of information in these networks related to North American migrants. Information with respect to migrants from non-North American locations was not considered. The structure of recruiting in the two leagues could, therefore, be identified as another way in which the power of the North American migrant worker was maintained.
Studying the motivations of migrant workers, the recruiting motivations of coaches and the mechanisms by which migrant recruitment was facilitated showed that the mix of processes evident in the migration of athletes to the BBL and the EIHL served to favour the North American group on a number of levels and in a number of dimensions. The development of these processes is reflected in the contemporary context where both sports have become increasingly reliant upon North American workers and where large numbers of North American migrants are recruited to the teams of the BBL and the EIHL each year. The effects of recruitment in this manner for indigenous talent development at league and national team level are varied.

In the BBL, the involvement of American workers has been identified, in the past, in negative terms (Maguire, 1988b). The persistent recruitment of large numbers of migrant workers has been seen as restricting the opportunities for indigenous players to develop. Increasingly, the employment of migrant workers has seen the role of the indigenous player change, as these players have become increasingly marginalised. Little seems to have changed in British basketball since Maguire’s analysis. In the contemporary context where even greater numbers of American migrant workers are permitted and recruited, indigenous players still find themselves ‘riding the pine’ or making up the numbers in practice. Little, if any, emphasis is placed on the development of these players either in the league or in the national team. More worryingly, however, is the suggestion that the changing role of the indigenous player that has been identified in previous research and in this study, is now being seen to occur in the lower leagues of British basketball. Evidence presented in this study can be used to argue that the prolonged involvement of American migrants in the nation’s top league has filtered over time into the league below.

For British ice hockey, the situation was different. Attempts have been made for some time now to address the issues of migrant involvement and indigenous development. For the coaches of the EIHL, the problem lies on the one hand, in traversing a fine line between creating an entertaining product which would appeal to
fans, sponsors, and the media, and on the other, in providing opportunities for indigenous players to develop both in the league and in the national team. To achieve such a balance, EIHL coaches argued that migrant workers, whilst central to the enhancement of the product, had to be used in conjunction with indigenous players. In this respect, migrant workers were seen to act as ‘pioneers’ (Maguire, 1996) in some respects, providing an educative function, one which could be used to develop British players. EIHL coaches argued that, without the involvement of home-grown talent the sport, would struggle to create any significant fan base in the future.

Examining the migration of North American workers in the BBL and the EIHL by focusing upon a number of interdependent elements of the figuration shows mono-causal explanations cannot be used to adequately capture what is happening. In this respect, adopting a more processual form of analysis considerably enriches the understanding that can be generated with respect to the migration process. Such an approach points to multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and multi-processual dynamics to better encapsulate the manner in which migratory movements are actually occurring. To further enhance this study, a synthesis was constructed between research in the area of athletic migration and the migration of the highly skilled. The intent in constructing this synthesis was to establish whether athletic migrants, who, using contemporary definitions, can be justifiably described as highly skilled, share any characteristics of other, previously researched, highly skilled groups. It can be concluded that, on many levels, similarities were evident. The next part of this concluding chapter will explore these similarities.

**Conceptualising the Athletic Migrant as Highly Skilled**

Within each of the various dimensions explored in this study, it was possible to establish that similarities existed between the athletic migrants being examined and other highly skilled workers. In this respect, it was possible, based on the findings of this study, to establish that athletic migrant workers not only fitted the definition of what constitutes a highly skilled worker, but also shared many of the migratory characteristics of workers previously defined within this category. Examining the
migration figuration showed that similarities exist in migrant motivation, recruiting motivation, knowledge circulation, movement mechanisms, and the effects of migrant involvement.

When examining the area of migration motivation, it was difficult to establish specific similarities between those elements which motivated athletic migrants and highly skilled migrants to relocate to ply their trade. Similarities were difficult to identify because little research has been conducted which specifically examines the migration motivations of highly skilled workers. Rather, up to now, developmental studies have argued that the contemporary model of global highly skilled migration is reflective of the increasing numbers of highly skilled workers who migrate to more developed nations in order to be able to take advantage of positive wage disparities (Fischer et al., 1997; Bohning, 1984). In these models, the movement of workers is seen to occur towards core economies. This thesis has shown that migration does not always occur in this manner, identifying how the movement of North American workers to the BBL and the EIHL reflects a move to more peripheral economies.

Whilst the movement of North American migrant workers into the BBL and the EIHL involves a move towards peripheral economies, this does not imply that these workers did not still seek to take advantage of positive wage disparities in one form or another. EIHL players argued, for example, that they were able to secure more lucrative salaries in Britain when compared to the salaries that they could command, for their ability level, in North America. Moreover, whilst migrant workers in the BBL realised that little money could be made in that league, they did appreciate that more lucrative contracts were available in the more prestigious European economies. In this respect, whilst these players did not seek to directly benefit from positive wage disparity in the BBL, they did seek greater financial rewards, using the league as a stepping-stone to achieve this end. Thus, whilst it can be concluded that migrant motivation reflects a complex series of processes, it is possible to identify that the movement of migrant workers in an attempt to enhance earning potential is one motivating element that is shared by both groups.
Whilst the desire to secure greater financial rewards was one element of migrant motivation which was shared by athletic and highly skilled migrants, the possibility of being able to take advantage of human mediation in the recruiting process, and thus to benefit from what Meyer (2001) had termed the 'bridgehead', was another. Bridgeheads, which had previously been seen to be influential in facilitating migratory movements for highly skilled workers can also be seen to be performing a similar function for the athletic groups examined in this study. In many cases, the North American migrants, particularly those situated in the EIHL, had been motivated to select the league because a friend or colleague, operating as a bridgehead, had been vital in providing information about the host location and significant in creating a relationship with an employer that might not otherwise have existed.

Beyond the specific manner in which migrants were motivated to select a particular host destination, changes in the structure of the global labour market can also be seen to be similar for both the athletic and highly skilled groups. Researchers in the field of highly skilled migration have argued that the increasing flexibility of the global labour market had resulted in a shift in migration patterns from traditional settler migration to more transient forms of temporary migration for highly skilled workers (Beaverstock, 2005). Such patterns were evident for the athletic migrants also, particularly those workers seeking employment in the BBL. Migration into this league involved an increasingly transient group who spent very little time in the league before seeking further employment opportunities elsewhere. For some migrants, their stay in the BBL lasted only a few months. For the majority of migrants interviewed for this study, it would appear that their engagement with the league lasted only for one season. That is to say, the same shift to transient forms of migration that has been observed for highly skilled workers can also be observed for many of the athletic migrants examined in this study.
Whilst some difficulty existed in identifying specific motivating elements for highly skilled migrant workers, it was also difficult to establish similarities between the athletic and highly skilled group when considering the recruiting motivations of employers in the host location. This difficulty stemmed, again, from the dearth of research that has been conducted in either area. The only correlation that could be made related to the concept of supply and demand. Beaverstock (1991, 2005) had previously identified this process as being a significant factor in determining the composition of global patterns of labour flow. He contended that the intensification of migration for the highly skilled group was a consequence of the increasing pool of highly skilled workers who moved between the international office networks of multinational corporations to perform specific tasks and to meet specific employer needs. Arguably, similar patterns are identifiable when considering the movements of North American basketball and ice hockey migrants in the global athletic labour market.

The migration of North American basketball and ice hockey players around the globe also involves a growing pool. However, more than just being indicative of an increasing number of workers seeking jobs, the production or over-production of sports talent (Miller et al., 2003; Falcous & Maguire, 2005), including basketball and ice hockey players, in North America has significant ramifications for processes of supply and demand in the various global labour markets. The size of the talent pools for basketball and ice hockey players in North America dictates that there is a constant supply of these migrant workers available for employment. Moreover, the demand for these workers in the BBL and EIHL, which has been created as a consequence of the recruiting structures which have developed in the leagues, means that North American migrant workers can be recruited to meet specific employer needs. These processes, therefore, can be seen to be similar both for the athletic migrant groups examined in this study and highly skilled workers more broadly.
Whilst it was difficult to establish similarities between the athletic and highly skilled groups with respect to movement and recruiting motivations, it can be argued that some of the most significant similarities are identifiable regarding the ways in which migrant workers are recruited. Again, as in the study of other previous elements of the migration figuration, Meyer’s (2001) concept of the bridgehead can be applied, as migrant workers have been seen to acquire their employment via a series of interdependent connections. Indeed, further elements applied in Meyer’s research can be identified, specifically, the manner in which ‘knowledge channelling’ occurred. It can be argued that in the distinctly North American networks through which knowledge relating to migrant workers was circulated, such a process was evident. That is to say that the information circulated in these networks related exclusively to North American workers. In this respect, whilst these networks can be used to facilitate a flow of information about potential North American migrant workers, so, too, can they be used as mechanisms of exclusion (Meyer, 2001), limiting options for those migrants who were not connected to the dominant flow of knowledge.

The intent to facilitate a flow of knowledge and to share information with colleagues about potential migrant workers was something that was taken for granted in the BBL and the EIHL. Coaches in both leagues made it clear that they not only sought information about potential recruits through networks of contacts, but some also identified how they themselves were used as sources of information. A similar approach to the circulation and sharing of knowledge has been identified for highly skilled groups. Mullan (1989) observed how, in some highly skilled migrant networks, an ‘unwritten code’ existed that stipulated that knowledge and information essential to facilitating the migration process should be shared. A similar unwritten code was seen to exist in the circulation of knowledge in the networks observable in the BBL and the EIHL.
It became apparent that the channelling of knowledge which was occurring in the networks maintained by the coaches was facilitated through a series of 'translocal communities' (Beaverstock, 2005). Therefore, in the same manner in which employers of highly skilled labour have been seen to facilitate a flow of knowledge about potential employees using networks maintained with both physical and technological connections, so similar processes can be seen to be at work for the coaches of BBL and EIHL teams. The coaches were not only developing local connections in Britain via face-to-face contacts with other coaches and players, they were also strengthening a series of transnational bonds via regular telephone or e-mail contacts with coaching colleagues and players in North America. Coaches observed how the coaching fraternity was a 'little community', even though it was 'worldwide'. In this respect, the development of recruiting practices in this manner can be seen to reflect the developing 'network society' (Castells, 2000) that has previously been identified for the recruitment of migrant workers in the highly skilled sphere (Beaverstock, 2005).

Whilst similarities can be identified between the migration of athletic migrants and highly skilled migrants when considering the motivation to migrate, the motivation to recruit, and the mechanisms through which migration is facilitated, it became apparent that similarities also existed regarding the effects of migrant worker involvement on indigenous worker development. The first of these similarities was reflected in a common paradox which seemed to present a problem for both athletic and highly skilled employers. In the highly skilled sphere, this paradox was used to emphasise the problem which receiving nations face in traversing a fine line between promoting economic growth and protecting jobs for local employees (Iredale, 2001). In the athletic sphere, a similar paradox is evident. However, in the athletic context this paradox was reflected in the need to achieve a balance between creating a product which would be appealing to fans, sponsors, and the media, but which would also provide opportunities for indigenous workers to develop. When viewed side-by-side the differences in the approach to the involvement of migrant workers in a host location differ little. Essentially, both in the athletic and highly skilled spheres, there
is a recognition that sustainable operations must be developed alongside development opportunities for local workers. With respect to the latter, a further link between the athletic and highly skilled groups can be identified.

In the EIHL, it became clear that coaches used their migrant workers to help pass on knowledge and to transfer certain key skills to indigenous players. In this league, the effects of migrant worker involvement were not seen to marginalise the usefulness of home-grown workers in the ways that they were in the BBL. In British ice hockey, coaches recognised that whilst migrant workers were central in the creation of the ‘product’, they were also pivotal in the development of indigenous talent. In this respect, the circulation of knowledge between migrant and indigenous workers could be seen to exist in the same ways that it did in some highly skilled environments where capitals and skills circulate (Beaverstock, 2005). The circulation of knowledge in the EIHL can be seen, therefore, to more readily reflect the process of ‘brain exchange’ that has been identified for some highly skilled groups.

Examining the various elements of the migration figuration showed that a number of similarities existed between the athletic migrants being studied in this thesis and highly skilled workers. These similarities existed when considering the migrants motivations to relocate, the employers’ motivation to recruit, the manner in which knowledge was circulated with respect to migrant workers, the manner in which migrant workers were recruited, and the effects of migrant worker involvement in the host nation. In this respect, when considering these specific elements, athletic migrants should not only be labelled as highly skilled in a definitional sense, they should also be seen as sharing many of the migratory characteristics of those highly skilled workers who have been studied in the broader highly skilled employment market. Given that such similarities exist, theoretical and conceptual contributions can be made in a number of areas. It is to these contributions that this concluding chapter now turns.
Theoretical and Conceptual Contributions

The purpose of this study was to examine a number of areas of the athletic migration figuration within a global framework. The intention was to synthesise work from the sociology of sport and the sociology of highly skilled migration, and to underpin this synthesis using a theoretical framework informed by a figurational approach. It is believed that such a theoretical and conceptual synthesis has been developed successfully, and, in this respect, the findings from this study can be used to make a range of contributions in a number of areas, particularly the areas of globalisation, migration, and figurational sociology.

Chapter One of this thesis set out a number of broad arguments with respect to the development of global processes over time. However, one of the central contentions observed in this chapter argued that globalisation is manifest in the development of multiple global networks, or global figurations, which have the capacity to both enable and constrain the actions of people. Approaching the concept of global development in this manner showed that social structures are not comprised of loosely connected spheres (Maguire, 1988a), but, rather, are relationally dependent upon one another. The findings from this study can be used to support such a contention. This study has drawn attention to the webs of interdependence that exist between North America and Britain in the specific contexts examined. It has shown how, over time, these bonds have developed and intensified, how they have enabled flows of knowledge, people, and ideas, and how the distribution of power evident in these interdependent global flows has affected local sports cultures.

Through using the concept of interdependence this study lends weight to research which has already been used in the debate relating to the contemporary development of global flows. This study can be used to show how a complex enmeshment of interdependent flows globally has resulted in the increasing flexibility of the global labour market (Beaverstock, 1991, 2005). With greater regularity, workers in a number of fields, including athletes, are traversing the globe in search of the best possible employment opportunities. With fewer national regulations for
migrant workers (Iredale & Appleyard, 2001) and a more global approach to the workplace, highly skilled labourers can search for employment on a global and not just on a local, level. Showing that this is the case, this study can be used to add weight to research, such as that by Beaverstock which has already contended that a globalisation of the labour market is occurring. This study has shown that North American athletic workers are not restricted to an immediate geographical locality. Rather, they are attempting to seek employment in Britain and various other leagues around the world. This group of workers use global forms of travel and global communications to search out employment opportunities and to make themselves available in a global rather than local marketplace.

Whilst the findings from this study can be used to make a contribution in the area of globalisation, it is in the area of labour migration that some of the most significant contributions can be made. These contributions can be made on a number of levels. They can be made within the sociology of sport where existing research has been brought up-to-date, and where new knowledge has been generated, and they can be made within the sociology of highly skilled migration where the global movement of athletic workers remains an under-researched area. Within the sociology of sport, the work of Maguire (1988, 1996) and Bale (1991) has been particularly valuable. Drawing on elements of their research, the intent in this study has been to revisit certain key contentions and to examine whether these contentions have value in the area of athletic migration in a contemporary context. The answer to this question has been yes. Indeed, Maguire’s work has proven to be particularly valuable as a framework from which to develop this study. Maguire’s studies examining the movement of North American migrant workers in British basketball and ice hockey leagues have been applied throughout this work, their value being felt on a number of levels. In the areas of migrant motivation, and migrant effect on local sports cultures particularly, similarities can be drawn between this work and that of Maguire. In both areas, whilst some small change over time is evident, for the most part, the findings of this study reaffirm the conclusions drawn by Maguire previously, namely that migrant motivation is multi-processual in nature, and that the effects of migrant involvement
create a paradox whereby the need to create commercially sustainable operations is balanced closely with the need to develop indigenous talent.

This study has been able to contribute to debates with respect to the migration motivations of migrant athletes and the effects of migrant athlete involvement by revisiting research that has already been conducted in those areas. This study has also been able to address previously under-researched areas by focusing on the recruiting motivations of club coaches and the mechanisms through which migrant workers are located. Prior to this study, the only work which had been conducted with respect to athletic workers in this area had been carried out by Bale (1991) as one small part of his broader analysis of foreign athletes in American universities. Using Bale’s work, it has been possible to show that recruiter motivation is, like player motivation, multi-processual in nature, and that migrant workers are recruited through informal networks of social relationships. In this respect, studying the previously under-researched areas has facilitated the development of new knowledge and permitted a new contribution to be made to the sociology of sport.

More than making a contribution to the sociology of sport, however, the intention in this study was to develop a synthesis and to make contributions both to the sociology of sport and the sociology of highly skilled migration. It is believed that this study can be used to make contributions in both of these areas. Up until now, the sociology of sport and the sociology of highly skilled migration have remained separate and independent areas of academic enquiry. Within the sociology of sport, very little research, other than that conducted by Maguire (1996), has sought to draw on research which examines the movement of workers in non-athletic fields. Equally, very little research has been conducted by sociologists in the area of highly skilled migration which draws on the experiences of athletic workers. Within the highly skilled sphere, the focus has remained on those professionals based in various sectors of international business, such as information technology, finance, banking, accounting, or law. Arguably, much can be learnt by drawing on theoretical and conceptual components located in both areas. By drawing on the work of
Beaverstock (1991, 2005), Castells (2000), Meyer (2001), Iredale (2001), and Mullan (1989), this study is able to show that the migrations of the athletic workers examined are, indeed, similar to the movements that have been identified in the highly skilled sphere. As the preceding section of this concluding chapter showed, in the areas of migration motivation, recruitment motivation, migration mechanisms, and migration effects, similarities between both groups of workers are evident. In this respect, by showing the value of a conceptual synthesis, the findings from this study can be used to generate new knowledge which will benefit both the sociology of sport and the sociology of highly skilled migration.

Beyond the synthesis which has been offered between the sociology of sport and the sociology of highly skilled migration and the contributions which can be made on the basis of this combination of approaches, this study also adds weight to research which is underpinned by figurational sociology. The value of such an approach has been highlighted throughout this research project. At various points it has been argued that mono-causal and reductionist approaches have little value when considering each of the elements of the migration process that have been examined in this study. The substantive chapters of this thesis have shown that a more processual form of analysis considerably enriches the knowledge and understanding that can be generated. Beyond simple push or pull factors that have been described as facilitating migratory movements, or the significance of macro-level determinants in the supply and demand of human capital, the value of a figurational approach lies with the manner in which migratory movements can be seen to be multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and multi-processual in nature.

Using a processual approach, this study has been able to show that the contentions made by Bohning (1984) and Fischer et al. (1997) fall short of fully capturing the processual nature of migrant motivations. Rather than being motivated by financial gain alone as these writers suggest, the motivation to migrate for the athletic workers identified in this study at least, reflects a far more complex mix of processes. Such an approach should be seen to be consistent when considering
recruiter motivation also. Whilst research in the highly skilled area contends that supply and demand ultimately dictate the global flow of labour (Beaverstock, 1991, 2005), the findings from this study suggest that the motivation to recruit migrant workers is actually far more complex, as also are the effects of migrant involvement on local sports cultures. Arguably, without the application of a theoretical perspective which endorses a processual approach, such conclusions could not be drawn. When combined with the significance of interdependence both in terms of the development of global flows, and as a mechanism through which migrant workers are located and recruited, a valuable contribution to figurational sociology can be made.

More than operating as a conceptual framework for the substantive elements of this study however, the value of the figurational approach has also been felt at the level of methodology. Chapter Two of this thesis discussed a broad range of considerations which the researcher should remain sensitised to during the research process. However, it is believed that without the understanding and application of the figurational methodological model adopted during the various phases of the research process for this study, the data presented here would have lost much of their value. Significant in this process was the understanding that more traditional approaches to the development of knowledge are both simplistic and distorting. In this respect, a figurational method was used to add value to the research process in a number of ways. Firstly, it has guided this study by navigating a path between approaches which endorse either an inductive or deductive approach to the relationship between theory and evidence. In this study it has been argued that a constant interplay exists between the two, that they are interwoven and indivisible from one another. Secondly, it has highlighted the need for a sensitivity to processes of involvement and detachment. It has made the researcher aware that they are a member of a particular social configuration, that they are part of the social world themselves, and that they are central to the research process. Thirdly, the figurational methodological approach has emphasised questions relating to the nature of the evidence obtained. It has shown that evidence is not created in any sort of homogenous vacuum. Rather, it is bound in a complex spatial and temporal web, and enmeshed within a power geometry.
Arguably, this study has emphasised the significance of a figurational approach to the study of human migration on two levels. At the conceptual level, the application of a figurational approach can be used to show that migratory movements are multi-processual in nature, that they are reflective of an increasingly complex global enmeshment of interdependent movements, and that these complex webs are balanced by dynamic and changing power geometries (Maguire, 2005). At a methodological level, the application of a figurationally guided methodology can be used to enhance the research process on a number of levels and in a number of dimensions. It is in these respects that such an approach should be advocated for research in this area in the future.
REFERENCES


Appendices
APPENDIX I - INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Interview Schedule
Players

Date:
Time:
Place:
Interviewer name:

Interviewee name:
Date of birth:
Place of birth:
Nationality:
Club represented:
Time at current club:

Introduction

• Many thanks for sparing your time to be involved in the study.
• Brief introduction to study, and how interviews fit into overall framework.
• Assurance of confidentiality.
• Make clear that interview will be recorded for follow-up purposes.
Theme - What are the Motivations of Migrants?

Sub-theme: Recruitment Networks/Processes

1. Is this your first foreign team? In Europe? In the UK? (please provide details).

2. Can you describe how you found out/became aware of the opportunity at your current team? Were you sought, or did you seek out the opportunity?

3. Can you describe how you were recruited to your current team? Can you explain the dynamics of this process? Who would you describe as having the greatest power in your recruitment and migration? (e.g. player, agent, coach, club).

4. Was an intermediary involved in your knowledge of and/or move to this team? (e.g. agent, friend, colleague, coach). If yes, how did this help/hinder the move? What was the role of the intermediary?

5. How does your recruitment to this team compare to recruitment to other teams (if any)? In the UK? In Europe? Home nation/elsewhere?

6. How would you describe the organisation of your move to your current team? (e.g. well organised, partly organised, unorganised). Why would you describe it this way?

7. Who was responsible for your contract/work permit/visa? Were these things dealt with appropriately? Were they organised/unorganised? Did they pose any problems?

8. How much information were you provided with during your recruitment and migration? Who provided this information? Where did it come from? Was it accurate?
Sub-theme: Specific Migration Motivations

9. What were your primary motivations for migrating to play your sport?

- On this occasion?
- On previous occasions (if applicable)?

10. Why, specifically, have you chosen the EIHL/BBL as your migration destination on this occasion?

11. Why did you select the particular team you play for now?

12. What were your perceptions of the EIHL/BBL prior to your arrival? What were your perceptions/understandings of the following specific elements?

- Prestige of league in European context
- Quality/standards of play
- Audience numbers
- Salary levels (How do these compare to other non-UK leagues?)

13. How did your perceptions/understandings affect your motivation to migrate to the EIHL/BBL?

Sub-theme: Knowledge Networks Influencing Motivation

14. Where/how did you gain knowledge of the UK, and the EIHL/BBL before arrival? Was this knowledge accurate?

15. Have friends/colleagues/family members played in the EIHL/BBL before? If yes, how did this help motivate your decision to migrate to the UK, and how did it help/hinder the migration itself?

16. Were friends/colleagues/family members resident in the UK prior to your migration? If yes, did this help motivate your decision to migrate, and did they help/hinder the migration itself?
17. Have friends/colleagues/family members migrated to, or been resident in the UK in the past? If yes, did this help/hinder your decision to migrate? How?

18. Who do you think was the controlling influence in your decision to migrate, who was most powerful? (e.g. player themselves, players family, club, agent, coach). Why do you think this is the case?

Sub-theme – Experiences of Living and Playing in the United Kingdom

19. Can you describe how you have adjusted to living in the UK. Have you faced any issues/problems/challenges? (e.g. accommodation, language, maintaining relationships, making friends, loneliness, boredom). If yes, what are they, and how have you addressed them?

20. Has anyone else helped/hindered your dealing with issues/problems/challenges resulting from your migration? (friends, family members – in UK or host nation, agent, club). How have they helped/hindered?

21. How could the experience of living and playing in the UK be improved for foreign players in the EIHL/BBL?

22. What are your future plans? Would you like to continue living and playing in the UK with your current team or another EIHL/BBL team? Or do you think that you will migrate again, or return to your home nation? What motivations have helped shape this decision?

Summary

- Many thanks for your time and co-operation.
- Are you aware of anyone else who would be interested in talking to me about this area of interest.
APPENDIX I – INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Interview Schedule
Coaches / Owners

Date:

Time:

Place:

Interviewer name:

Interviewee name:

Place of birth:

Nationality:

Club represented:

Position:

Introduction

- Many thanks for sparing your time to be involved in the study.
- Brief introduction to study, and how interviews fit into overall framework.
- Assurance of confidentiality.
- Make clear that interview will be recorded for follow-up purposes.
Theme – Why Recruit Migrants?

Sub-theme: Recruitment Motivations

1. Can you describe the qualities you look for when recruiting foreign players? (e.g. ability to improve team more quickly, spectacle, ability to fit in).

2. Can you describe what you think the primary differences are between foreign and indigenous players? (e.g. differences in playing quality, professionalism, ability to settle in team, respect for staff and other players). How does this affect your motivations to recruit foreign players?

3. Can you describe the primary differences between foreign players of different nationalities? (e.g. do certain nationalities pose specific problems/issues/challenges?).

4. What are the financial implications for foreign and indigenous players? (e.g. are foreign players cheaper, financially, to recruit in the long term?). How do these differ?

5. How difficult/easy is it for you to recruit foreign players to your team? What are the legal/contractual requirements? How do these affect the overall process?

6. At which point in a foreign players career are they most likely to be recruited to your team, to the UK/Europe? Why do you think this is so?

7. Can you describe the problems/issues/challenges of recruiting and employing foreign players? Do these differ based upon the nationality of the foreign player? If yes, why?

8. Do you think that your motivations are reflective of other teams motivations in the league more broadly? (e.g. do you think the pattern/dynamics that you describe are typical of the league in the UK, or in European leagues more broadly?).
Sub-theme: Knowledge Networks

9. Can you describe the ways in which you gain knowledge about and recruit foreign players? (e.g. via an intermediary, word of mouth, direct contact from player). Are some sources more accurate than others?

10. Is it common for foreign players to have agents, or for EIHL/BBL clubs to have scouts? If yes, how do these agents/scouts facilitate the migration process?

11. Do you have any specific links with foreign clubs or coaches which provides knowledge of available players? How are these links established/developed, and how are they maintained? What are the advantages/disadvantages of having/using such links?

12. How would you describe the gaining of knowledge about, and recruiting of, foreign players? (e.g. well organised, partly organised, lucky). Why would you describe it this way?

13. What sort of knowledge is it most important for you to have about foreign players? (e.g. playing ability, coachability, discipline record, ability to adapt to new surroundings, social profile).

14. Do you, or have you ever, used personal relationships to gain knowledge about, and/or recruit foreign players? (e.g. overseas contact, friends, coaches, existing player, past player). Has this method proved successful? Why?

Sub-theme: Recruitment Networks/Tactics

15. Who would you describe as having the most influence in the recruitment of foreign players to EIHL/BBL teams? (e.g. players, agents, coaches, clubs).

16. Who are you competing with in the recruitment of foreign players? Are you able to compete for the players you would really like?
17. How do you persuade foreign players to play in the UK for your club?

18. Do you think that your recruitment practices are reflected in the league more broadly? Do you think other teams recruit in a similar manner?

19. How, if at all, could the recruitment process be improved for clubs, and foreign players?

Sub-theme – Impact of Migrant Players

20. How do you think the involvement of foreign players affects the EIHL/BBL?

21. How do you think the involvement of foreign players affects national team development?

22. Do you think that the introduction of foreign players encourages indigenous talent into the sport? If yes, how? If no, why? What are the ramification of this?

23. Do you think the use of foreign players in the league reflects a demand for them in the UK by the fans, media, and sponsors? How do these groups respond?

24. How, if at all, do you think the league/sport would be different if foreign players were not involved in the UK?

Summary

- Many thanks for your time and co-operation.
- Are you aware of anyone else who would be interested in talking to me about this area?
INT: Okay, can I just get you to state your name for me please?
RES: Yeah. ******.
INT: And where were you born?
RES: I was born in Carroll, Iowa.
INT: Okay. And so your nationality is...?
RES: United States.
INT: Okay. And Club Representative?
RES: **********.
INT: And what's your position at ************?
RES: I'm the Head Coach.
INT: Okay. And what previous clubs have you been with?
INT: Okay. First question; Can you describe for me the qualities you look for when recruiting a foreign player? The sort of things I'm thinking about, the ability to improve the team or quickly to fit in, and so on?
RES: Yeah. I think the biggest thing probably is the ... is how they fit in the puzzle. You've kind of got to take a look at it as kind of ... whole, you know, the teaching method, whole part, whole, I know that's a teaching method but you've got to kind of look at the whole picture of your team and where it's going, and then look to see if they fit the part and then make sure that it comes back that the whole picture's completed the way that you want it to. So ... I mean the first things you look for is, from my standpoint, what I do is this. I go basically by again, at supply and demand and the size of the pool, so I'll look to get my ... and the biggest pool out there is the American players, so I'll look to get my ... my choices, or my list of choices in the other areas first of all. The English players, the non Work Permit players, I have a good idea where I'm going with that originally, because that will determine which direction you go with in picking your Americans because you know, you can
normally find Americans at all five positions, you know, point guards, forwards and the centre position and you’ve got to pick the Americans based on what you think you’re going get at those other spots, so I usually leave the Americans till last, to see how they’re going to fit into the picture and then we look and make sure they fit, that the slots that are left we need to get a balance team.

INT: Okay. And can you describe to me what you think the primary differences are between foreign players and home-grown indigenous English players?

RES: Well, the biggest thing is in terms of recruitment. There’s just a lot more of them. You know, there’s just a ... the pool is really never ending for the foreign players and it’s quite small for the home-grown players, that’s the first thing. In terms of playing, you know, you would think, you know, the market ... the most ... the best English players aren't going to play in this country.

INT: Okay.

RES: That’s just the way the Bosman ruling has really changed that, and began the financial structure of our league versus the leagues in Europe, you know, obviously the best players are going to go and play there because the money’s greater. The matter ... there are some things not really based on recruitment but just based on coaching methods more than anything, I think the players here have been coached to ... players are influenced a great deal on how they’ve been coached growing up, okay? And they’re definitely influenced here differently than they are in the States. An example would be you can really ride or motivate an American player more ... in a more stern manner, like you can get on them a little bit more than you could maybe an English player. They need a little bit more confidence boosting, reassurance, pat on the back, where an American player may be more motivated if you, like I said, get on their case a little bit more ... sternly I guess would be a good way of putting it.

INT: Sure. So do you have players of different nationalities here, beyond American and English players?

RES: Yeah, we do. I mean ... I would say they primarily fall into those two categories, but we do have guys from different nationalities but most of them are influenced by the English ... you know, we’ve got Ajou Deng who’s, you know, he’s from Sudan, but he’s lived in London most of his life, so he’s you
know, he falls under ... he doesn’t fall under an English player, but he falls under probably the English mentality or he’s been brought up with that. And we’ve got guys from other parts, but not, you know we’ve got a French kid, we’ve got an Irish kid, we’ve got ... things ... but they’re again, similar to the English more than they are American.

INT: Sure. So these individual nationalities don’t pose any difficulties in any particular ways?

RES: Not really, I mean I would say again, we’ve got some subtle new answers, we’ve got a player from Barbados that fills one of our foreign spots. Again he’s not ... you know, he’s not again a typical American stereotype player, because he’s not from here. But he’s not far away, and so ... there are some subtle things you’ve got to take into account with some of these guys, but for the most part you could pretty much generally group them into two categories I think.

INT: Sure. What are the financial implications for you as a Head Coach, in respect of the recruitment of foreign and indigenous players? Is it cheaper in the long term to recruit foreign players, or is it cheaper to develop indigenous talent? How does it work out? Because obviously you work on quite a tight budget here, so...

RES: It’s definite ... developing players is a costly venture, and it doesn’t work as it does in football where if you develop somebody you might reap the rewards of selling them on and the transfer market just doesn’t work that way. So that pretty much takes that out of the equation to be honest, but I mean you’ve got ... you’re going to take some seasoned guys, you’re going to take some guys that have been in the league before, because your return is immediate, what can they do for you on the court, most of the contracts are one year so it’s not like you’re building for the future either, so again it’s really a short term vision that you’re working towards.

INT: Sure. And how difficult or easy is it for you to recruit foreign players? What sort of problems are associated with the recruitment, particularly of Americans?

RES: Well, it’s not ... I’ve got to be careful here. It’s not ... ‘easy’ is the wrong word, and ‘difficult’ is the wrong word, okay? So again there’s a big pool, you’ve got to have some experience and know what you’re doing, you know,
there's a lot of factors that come into it. One of the biggest factors that I look at is, I don't take too many first time guys, okay? I have done this year probably more than I ever have, but again our budget was pretty tight this year, so ... and the reason for that, Richard, is you just don't ever know how they're going to adjust. You know, it couldn't be a much easier scenario for them to just come over from America to England but it is again a foreign country and there is cultural differences and culture shock things if they're not used to being away from home. The biggest problem we've got, Richard, is probably ... there's guys coming out of big-time colleges in the States, are really probably taken care of in a first class manner, you know, from everything they need, waited on hand and foot and it's just not that way here. We're going to ... you're going to have to do a lot of things on your own and adjust to the culture on your own, and things like that, so that's my first thing. I look for some guy that has some overseas experience, some BBL experience is always helpful, again it just saves you on the learning curve of you know, what's it like when we've got to go to Milton Keynes to play. Well, if the guys have been through it they know, you don't have to get them ready for the floor, or the back wards, or the referees, or the way we travel, or any of those things which you're going to try and cut down the learning curve as much as you can by taking some guys with some experience. On the other hand I don't think it's all that difficult again just because of the numbers of players, the contacts that I have, I think I can read into situations fairly well from what they do in one week in America, how it will translate to what they're going to do here, and again we like to create a pretty good team atmosphere, we like to coach them so they know they're getting better and those are the kinds of things that are important to them.

INT: Sure. And with respect to both your club here and the BBL more generally, do you think there's specific point in a player's career when they're most likely to move to the BBL to play in Europe?

RES: No, I think it differs a lot for most of them. I think a lot of them would see this as a stepping stone league to come here and play and we've got ... I've got probably 15 to 20 guys, I haven't counted it up lately, that have played for me in England that are not playing in Europe. So we try and sell them on the fact that it is a chance to move up the ladder, you know, and go from there.
But the point is, it’s the right time, right place for a lot of them, if there’s jobs available, if we get the right contacts and place for them, etc., we can move them on. But again, the jobs are few and far between, you’ve got to understand that two Americans for a team down there, a lot of them keep their jobs, another 300 or 400 players come out of school every year and the market gets tighter every year. Eastern Europeans now can play in Europe, the (unclear 0:09:18) players from the Islands and the African-Asians can now play in Europe, so the market tightens up on them, so it’s really a lot about right place, right time, and getting the opportunity.

INT: Sure. So do you think your motivations to recruit foreign players here are reflective of the BBL more generally, or do you think that the way you kind of do things here maybe is a little bit different?

RES: No, I think we probably do it on a similar thought to the rest of the BBL, you know, the BBL takes a little bit of flack for having so many foreign players, but it’s kind of with the market and enabled the clubs to survive and that’s most important. Clubs surviving, and putting a good product out there. I think the product always surprises everybody. New players come into this league, always think that this isn’t that great a league and this league is good, I mean our … what we did in Europe least year is a definition or a testament to how much better this league is than probably it’s viewed across the continent or even in the United States. It’s viewed at a lower level only based on the salaries that people are paying, not viewed on competition, like I said our teams would line up very well against a lot of the European leagues which our team proved last year, it’s just … people say, “They don’t get paid much, so it must not be a very good league.” It’s not really true.

INT: Okay. I just want to spend a little bit of time looking at how you find out about foreign players.

RES: Yeah.

INT: Can you describe for me the ways in which you gain knowledge about and recruit a foreign player?

RES: Yeah. A bunch of things, really. But first of all the usual and most obvious way is to watch the other teams play in their league, you know, and see who might fit in to your system. The second thing is … probably the most for me … is I’ve got a number of contacts, be it coaches, agents, managers from
abroad that I’ve got to know over the years, and they’re a really good source of players. And the third thing is you get out there yourself and watch games. You spend a little time in America watching games, you watch the league score going on in America, you watch the other European leagues because there’s players there that could maybe transfer over to us. So ... but you know, I would say my primary thing is I watch teams in our league and then I talk to the people I know that I’ve built relationships with over the last decade.

INT: Okay. We’ll come back to the relationships in a minute because that’s really important, something I’m looking at. You mentioned one thing, is it common for foreign players to have agents in this league?

RES: Yeah. Yeah, most of them do.

INT: Okay, and how do the agents tend to facilitate the migration process? How do they help in the recruitment of the player, what’s the role of the agent?

RES: Well the role of the agent obviously is to find the player a job, so the agent’s got to know what job is available. Most of them ... it’s kind of such a mass meat market now, there’s so many agents and things, and I don’t really deal with guys I don’t know very often, you know, I go to my few guys who usually have a number of players and they know the deal here and they know they’re going to put them on a decent programme, a decent coach, and that kind of gets the ball rolling. You know, it starts ... a lot of them just send completely blind, I guess, unsolicited emails, that’s where a lot of it starts and they see if you’re looking for players and I don’t take much notice of that to be honest, I just ... well like I said I work with my guys and if my guys don’t have what I’m looking for they’ll send me to somebody that does.

INT: Okay. So building on the relationships part earlier, do you have any specific links with foreign clubs or coaches that you’ve built up over the years that provide knowledge of available players?

RES: Yeah. I mean I’ve got a number of ... a number of links with coaches, mostly, a few general managers of other clubs but ... you know, coaches are a good source of information from the standpoint of if I find a kid that’s playing in Belgium, I’ll call somebody that I know that coaches in Belgium or Germany or whatever, wherever they came from to get a pretty good read on what they’ve done and that speeds things up pretty quickly for you.

INT: Sure. And how were these links established?
RES: Well, it's a lot of things. It's ... you know, the coaching fraternity is pretty small, to be honest, and you just ... got to get to events over the years, play against them maybe, you've exchanged film with them, you ... you know, just guys you get to know, and they just remain contacts. And a lot of it comes from their side, a lot of it comes from them calling you about players. I mean I probably field ten times more calls than I make. I get a lot of calls from people, because I know a lot of people ... everybody that's played in England I'll get a call from. You know what I'm saying? So they'll call me and I'll tell them about guys that played at Chester or Sheffield or The Towers or whatever, so ... and whenever you need the favour returned to you, you call them back, you know, they're fine guys. But a lot of guys come through England, you know, like I said it's a stepping stone league so that's probably why I field so many calls.

INT: Sure. So how would you describe the gaining of knowledge about, and the recruiting of foreign players? Would you describe in the BBL as well organised, partly organised, lucky to a certain extent?

RES: Mine or everybody else's?

INT: Yours.

RES: Well...

INT: ...Firstly.

RES: Yeah. Well I would say this. I would say listen, I'm not going to dismiss the luck thing at all, because, you know, and ... but you know, let's talk about how you view luck, you know, the old thing ... the harder you look, the luckier you get ... comes to mind. I mean, I spent a lot of time, a lot of time, cultivating these relationships back when I was younger. In the summers I spent a lot of time in the LA Summer League, the Traveso Summer League, coaching in the USBL, following the NBA Circuit, you know, free agent camps, and things like that where I got to know all these people. And players. And that has paid off to me and maybe made me lucky. You know, because I can make moves really quickly, you know, our last player we just signed, Cheyne Gadson for example, that all took place in about an hour. Never seen the kid play, I was looking for this position, got vouched from one coach to an agent to him, he just happened to play for a friend of mine who coached him two years ago, and coached him ... so it took about an hour in total, but a lot
of conversations took place in that hour and yeah, he’s a good player. And we’re lucky we got him, yeah, we’re lucky we got him. But then after hoofing it five years ago, I wouldn’t have known some of the guys to put me in contact to get him, so I think that a lot of time prep has gone into it. I don’t do as much now as I used to, because I can pull it off in an hour now because of the work we did five or six years ago.

INT: Sure. So, with respect of gaining knowledge of players, what sort of knowledge is it most important for you to have, particularly if you don’t have very long with a player at all? Coach ability, their playing ability, discipline record, ability to fit in? Those sorts of things?

RES: Well, first of all I think you’ve got to have a good understanding of how their numbers, their statistics from a certain league will translate into our league. You understand me? You can look at you know, 10 points a game playing in the big 12 conference would translate pretty well most of the time, and look at specifically some minutes played, statistics, injuries, if they played a full amount of games throughout the year, sister turnovers, you know, the kind of borrowing, you know, you’ve got to delve into some of those things. That’s probably the biggest thing, is being able to translate what they’ve done in their respective league and how you’re going to get them to translate to yours.

INT: Sure. Okay. So who would you describe as having the most influence in recruitment of foreign players to the BBL? I’m talking … I mean, is it the player that tends to make the decision, will the agent push hard for the player? Do you, as the coach, have the say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, you make the decision? The player’s family?

RES: Probably the coach. If you had to pick out of all that group, I mean I’d say definitely my situation … my thing is, is again Richard, I don’t mess around too long. It’s not like I’m going to … you’ve got to find guys who are ready to go before you go too far, you know what I mean?

INT: Yeah, sure.

RES: I’m not going to spend weeks watching tape, doing a contract, talking to the agent, talking to the player, talking to his girl, you know, to find out that no, the girl didn’t want him to go in the end. You know, before we even probably make a financial offer I ask the question, “Are you ready to go, and are you ready to go by the end of this week?” You know what I’m saying?
INT: Yeah, sure.
RES: So I guess it becomes ... if they tell me they're ready then I'll progress it and then it's obviously up to me to finally sign the deal and put him on a plane and get him over here.
INT: Sure. So who are you competing with in the recruitment of your foreign players?
RES: Normally I don't compete too often with anybody. You know what I'm saying? I don't get into too many bidding wars, we're just not going to win those, and we've got a very successful club and we've got a big club or whatever, but we're just not ... you know, I'd still say we're middle of the pack to lower of the pack on what we're paying our guys compared to what other teams are paying. So if I'm going head to head with London, Sheffield, Newcastle, I just back out.
INT: Right.
RES: I really do, I just go and find somebody else.
INT: Okay.
RES: And I'm just not going to ... I don't want to get into those wars. If an agent tries to get me in those wars then they're not coming here. If he says to me, "Here we've got an offer for an awful lot of talent, what are you going to do about it?" 99 times out of 100 I'd say "tell them to take that offer."
INT: Okay. So in that case, can you complete the players that you would really like to have here?
RES: No.
INT: And why's that?
RES: I just, you know, if I could ... like if you're going to say I can hand-pick these guys it's going to come down to finances and we're not going to do it. London Towers will do that, that's about it.
INT: So in which case, if ... economically you can't sometimes get players in, are you able to persuade players to come here in other ways? And how do you do that?
RES: I'd say the biggest thing we do we treat as ... again, one, if they've got other offers I tell them to take them, two, the other thing is, the stepping stone thing that I talked about. I don't think anybody's had as much ... I've been around a lot longer than some of these guys, but certainly these guys have contacts, all
a success for some guys into other jobs. And we win a lot in general, we win a lot and the players get a lot of attention, so that helps. That helps and that's one of the things we do to persuade them, plus it's a nice city to live in, and they generally win a lot, players like that, so yeah, we do offer a few things.

INT: Okay. So how, if at all, do you think the recruitment process could be improved both for you as a club, and also for the players? Is there anything that can be done to smooth it on at all? You mentioned Bosman there actually, earlier on as well, how has that affected things?

RES: Well, it's affected things from the standpoint of English players have a lot more options in places of play, you know, that is ... that could demand for a great deal ... if that wasn't the case any more, these guys would be a little bit more ...or the market [inaudible: 0:21:15] not as expensive, it almost becomes unknown to them, so take a deal, maybe it's not as good as they want because they need a deal rather than no deal. What could smooth it out? Well, I think a lot of things could make it better. In most of the financial bid it would be great if you could watch a little bit more tape, fly them in to try them out, fly over and watch them play a little more, you know, those kind of things could, you know, instead of having a very, very, very small recruiting budget you could have a £100,000 recruiting budget and spend that easily.

INT: Yeah. Sure. Final few questions, generally about the impact of foreign players in the league. How do you think the involvement of foreign players affects the BBL?

RES: Well I think it's certainly necessary, I just think that with our understanding ... the guys again, it's not ... it's a tricky, tricky question to comment on, it's ... there's just is not enough talent for the English players [inaudible: 0:22:19] we're not going to have any. I mean you look at the one league down from us and they supposedly have two English or two foreign players and the rest English, and sadly, I watched their Cup Final after ours, and it's not young virgin talent, it's old guys. Former BBL players. It's a bunch of Americans that have British Passports now. It's just ... there just isn't enough English players to go around and that's the consequence of what we've done. I actually give the league credit, our league credit, for one, being able to keep it going at a pretty good talent level, I also think that they've saved some jobs for English players. We have to have four or five English players on our
roster and [inaudible: 0:23:15] the Belgian team theoretically to play two Americans and ten Germans if they wanted to, and I think I give our league credit for at least saving some jobs for these guys...

INT: Okay. How do you think the involvement of foreign players affects national team development, positively or negatively?

RES: It really shouldn’t have much effect on it. I think the national team is a real separate energy to any league play, I mean if the national team or the federation had money, they could do whatever they wanted to as well. They could bring ... they would look at the English football team, they bring guys from all over, a lot of the [inaudible: background noise 0:24:02] aren’t in England any more, and it’s the same scenario if they can afford to do it. That’s the problem. Afford to bring them in, afford to put some quality training sessions, afford to get some quality coaching in place, that’s more the reasons rather than...[trails off 0:24:18]

INT: Sure. Do you think that the introduction of foreign players encourages home-grown talent into the sport?

RES: I don’t know, I would think that you know, that’s supposed to be the case. If it wasn’t the case then no leagues would ... say for example, no leagues would let foreign players come in if that was affecting their national team progress. I think they’d bring them in to heighten the level of talent, give the home-grown players something better to aspire to. Do I think there’s too many in this country? Yeah, I do. I think there probably should be more guys playing on a level ... on a starting five, rather. I think that would help national team...[trails off 0:25:08]

INT: Okay. I just want to talk about a number of certain groups and just how foreign ... the use of foreign players in the league is reflected on the demand by those groups. Firstly, so you’ve already mentioned this pretty much, but just to reiterate why the clubs ... what is the need for foreign players?

RES: It’s to keep the quality high and the cost low.

INT: Okay. How about by the fans? You think the audience would be affected if there weren’t foreign players involved?

RES: That’s a tricky one. I think that ... well, let’s put it this way. I think the fans are interested, I think they view it as a bit of an American sport so I think it does give them some interest, to have some ... where that line gets crossed
and you do it for bait that we're in right now. I think some makes it interesting, too many maybe makes it a turn off.

INT: Okay. How about by the sponsors?

RES: The same as the fans, I think. Maybe sponsors like it a bit, I think again you've got to watch the line that's not down for questions. One of the perceptions here, Richard, is that it's all Americans. All the sponsors say, "Well, what have you got, all Americans playing?" And you say, "No, we've actually got half Americans and half English guys. That's the rule." "Oh, oh, we just assumed it would be all Americans." Where that comes from ... it's probably just their perception of it's an American sport more than ... they don't really know what the make up has been, is, why, or anything, they just think it's an American sport and kind of paint it with that brush quickly.

INT: Sure. How about the media?

RES: Well, you know I think the media ... I say this with a grain of salt ... you can never make them happy. You know, they're always looking for the negative story, aren't they? There's too many Americans after their story and it's a development. If there's too many English people the quality's low, that's what they're going to write about. I think they jump on the too many Americans thing rather quickly, and don't look at why, and don't look at solutions. That's my big thing, when media people start asking me about it, you know, you start explaining to them why it's that way. They don't hear that very well. And when you ask them for solutions they don't want to delve into that, either. You know, the fact of the matter is Bosman has taken our best players abroad. That's the fact. How do you fix it? You can bowl a real low standard of English player or you can bat it and do the best you can with some foreign players and that's kind of the way it's gone.

INT: Okay. Final question. How would the BBL be different if no foreign players were involved? If foreign players were removed totally from the game, it's all English guys?

RES: Yeah, I don't know, Richard, I think that's an interesting ... it's an interesting concept and maybe one that should be experimented with. I think, on the face of it, I think that the quality would be ... of the game would drop substantially. But I don't know if that means anything or not, I don't know. I don't suppose the average punter would be happy watching a substandard player, I don't
know, we just still ... I think if we could keep our attention on Europe which we won't be able to then the quality would be okay, but you're talking about playing second or third tier English guys, when there isn't very many first tier to begin with. It becomes a really watered-down league. I just don't think the quality, at this stage, would be ready for ... to have the punters, the media, even the club owners would be happy with.

[End of recording]
APPENDIX III – INTERVIEW CODING INDEX

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<th>Theme – Why Recruit North American Ice Hockey Migrants?</th>
<th>Sub-Themes:</th>
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<td><strong>Standard of British Players</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tradition</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(IC5, 21) There’s not that many British players at the moment of an import level.</td>
<td>(IC3, 9) We just have to stick with what works.</td>
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<td>(IC6, 1) The problem is that there’s a lack of talent of British players here.</td>
<td>(IC5, 4) There’s always been imports and obviously the leagues brought in some rules to try and reduce that.</td>
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<td>(IC4, 8) Our home-grown kids just don’t score as much.</td>
<td>(IC2, 3) Hockey in this country has adopted a Canadian style of hockey, it’s very physical, very aggressive, and that’s unique in Europe.</td>
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<td>(IC4, 10) I think that there is some really good home-grown talent, but I don’t think that there is enough to make up a good team.</td>
<td>(IC2, 4) The games only ever been big, when there’s been a large contingent of Canadians playing here.</td>
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<td>(IC3, 2) Kids over here don’t start playing hockey until their 13 or 14 years</td>
<td>(IC6, 1) Those eleven imports are our best eleven</td>
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<td><strong>Cultural Similarities/Style of Play</strong></td>
<td><strong>Problems with ‘Real’ Migrant Players</strong></td>
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<td>(IC3)  A lot of players like coming to England because there’s no language barrier.</td>
<td>(IC1, 1) So when you’re a foreign player coming to a foreign team your kinda like an outsider. (Referring to Slovakians).</td>
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<td>(IC2, 3) Because Canada and England has such a strong relationship there’s a lot of Canadians.</td>
<td>(IC3, 3) Slovakians are the biggest group if you’re going to bring in like a ‘real’ foreign player.</td>
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<td>(IC6, 3) But the elite league is a very North American League, it’s a very tough, gritty style of hockey, very North American.</td>
<td>(IC1, 2) At the start we had a Czech player, and he was a good player but at the end of the day he just didn’t really fit into what we were trying to do here.</td>
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<td>(IC2, 3) Hockey in this country has adopted a Canadian style of</td>
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<td><strong>Financial Implications</strong></td>
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<td>(IC4, 2) There’s a lot of imports out there who would like to come over, so you can pick and choose and you won’t have to pay as much money.</td>
<td>(IC5, 5) If you’re getting guys new to the country they tend to be cheaper, they come in for a lower salary.</td>
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<td>(IC2, 1) Foreign players, for their ability, are cheaper than domestic players.</td>
<td>(IC6, 3) The league below us they tend to spend a little less money and they get Czech and Slovak players who will come for less money.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(IA1, 9) I think you’re only</td>
<td></td>
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old, so they develop a lot later, and it's difficult to catch up.

(IC3, 8) There are too few top-quality British players out there at this time.

(IC5, 4) The top British players can still command good salaries as much as the imported players... (but) there's only a few that can do that.

(IC6, 4) We tried to do try outs at the start of the season and it wasn't good really, we got a lot of guys who were nowhere near good enough for the team.

(IP7, 6) British players are developing, but they also know that they are a lower calibre.

(IC3, 9) As a fan... you want to see the best possible game on the ice.

players, and their all Canadians. It's not really a question of whether it's more expensive, you just have to do it, because the other teams are doing it.

(IC5, 20) I'm saying no doubt you need them (migrants) I mean it's, it's an entertaining business first and foremost.

(IP7, 6) I think that they (the fans) would rather pay to see a good game rather than a bunch of British guys.

IA1, 7) There's a very big bias towards North American, well they're North American coaches, so they chose North American style players, and by that I mean Canadians.

IA1, 21) If your job is to have the best product

hockey.

IA2, 4) The EIHL style of play is much closer to North American if you compare it to the other leagues in Europe. There are many players from North America that really would not suit other European leagues.

IA2, 8) European players coming from, let's say, Scandinavia or Eastern Europe, just somehow their style doesn't suit the EIHL as much as Canadian players.

going to get a certain type of player here, and that's financial... that's dictated by the financial situation.
.. that means that we have foreign players on the ice. (IA2, 8) Canadian or American, they bring a little bit of experience and expertise with them, that perhaps British players don't generally sometimes have.

| available, then yeah, you bring in as many imports as you can, because if that’s what’s going to bring fans in then you do that. (IA2, 3) They’ve had so many North American hockey players especially that they seem to know the North American market quite well. |
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APPENDIX IV – DATA SHOWING MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Basketball – Typology Level 1 (Highest)

Spain

Italy

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APPENDIX IV – DATA SHOWING MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Greece

Basketball - Typology Level 2

France
Basketball - Typology Level 3

Germany

Serbia & Montenegro
APPENDIX IV – DATA SHOWING MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Croatia

Basketball - Typology Level 4 (Lowest)

Hungary
APPENDIX IV – DATA SHOWING MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Ice Hockey – Typology Level 1 (Highest)

Sweden

Ice Hockey – Typology Level 1 (Highest)

Sweden
APPENDIX IV – DATA SHOWING MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Czech Republic

Ice Hockey – Typology Level 2

Switzerland
APPENDIX IV – DATA SHOWING MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Germany

Ice Hockey – Typology Level 3

Austria
APPENDIX IV – DATA SHOWING MIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Ice Hockey – Typology Level 4 (Lowest)

Hungary