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Book review

Czech Sport Migration: Push and Pull Variations Between Sports and Cultures

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For several years, authors from different countries have discussed sports migration (Rojo, Ribeiro & Starepravo, 2021). Maguire and Falcous (2010) analyzed this phenomenon from perspectives rooted in economics, history, sociology, geography, and political science. Regarding sports, a mapping identified 32 disciplines that have drawn researchers' attention, with majority studies primarily focusing on soccer (Rojo, Marques & Starepravo, 2022).

About the research in the field, Maguire (2013) traces the origins of social studies within sports back to the 1980s, with investigations into sports migration. However, over recent decades, this area has developed to expand its focus, covering a broader range of topics, analyzed countries, methodologies, and theoretical-methodological approaches (Rojo, Marques & Starepravo, 2022).

The book “Czech Sport Migration: Push and Pull Variations Between Sports and Cultures”, authored by William Crossan and published by Charles University in Prague, Karolinum Press, explores the diversity of sports migration across disciplines, linking it to cultural significance and the global sports hierarchy. Additionally, it examines the effects of sports migration on key stakeholders, including athletes, national federations, teams, and fans (Crossan, 2024).

The book's organization includes 11 distinct parts: an introduction, a conclusion section, and 9 analytical chapters exploring migration in sports and its diverse relations with the Czech Republic. Another notable aspect of the book's presentation is the individual profile reports of athletes who have experienced migration in sport at the end of each chapter in the analysis of their sport.

In the introduction, the author shares his personal experience as an American athlete who moved to the Czech Republic, becoming a key figure in the migration network between the two countries. This narrative reflects a close connection to the subject under analysis and offers a unique perspective that enhances the researcher's approach.

The first chapter, “History of Czech Sport Migration Prior to 2004”, examines historical data from four sports, highlighting the influence of shifting national borders, increasing professionalism and politics during the period analyzed. The findings also indicate that sports

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migration into and out of Czech Republic territory has become increasingly diverse and accelerated, as defined by globalization theory (Harvey et al., 1996).

In the chapter titled “Migration Variance Between Sports,” the author relied on three analytical frameworks to examine variations in migration patterns and their effects: sending/receiving data, cultural and sports positioning, and World-Systems Theory. The analysis focuses on soccer, ice hockey, basketball, volleyball, and baseball. However, the author presents that the survey showed diverse results, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions, much less provide guidance to stakeholders and professionals to help them make decisions (Crossan, 2024, p. 71).

The phenomenon of migration occurring in the particularity of Ice Hockey is the subject of chapter three. The main objective of this part of the book was to investigate how the migration of junior ice hockey players affects their potential careers in the NHL. In the case studied it was observed that the reality has shown that the players were acting differently than that proposed by other studies, which encouraged players to wait patiently in the European national leagues for their lucrative NHL opportunities.

In the fourth chapter, ice Hockey returns to the researcher's attention. However, this time, it focused on the foreign players who were in the Czech Republic. In order to analyze the motivation and satisfaction of these players, the author sought his data through interviews with players, managers, and coaches.

“Football: Oh the Places You Will Play!” is the title of chapter 5, which aims to examine the destinations to which Czech football players migrate, the levels of play in those locations, and what attracts them to these foreign fields. In conclusion, the author points out that, unlike the broader population, football players view destinations such as the USA, Japan, Israel, and China as better options at the end of their careers and prefer the financial advantages they have established in Europe.

The sixth chapter maps the origins of foreign players who joined the Czech league between 2004 and 2022. Additionally, the author examines fans' perceptions of using foreign players and coaches based on searches conducted in the fall of 2018 and 2023. The results show that while major football nations send players to the Czech Republic, they are not their stars, and these players rarely rank among the league's leading top scorers.

In the seventh chapter, the success or failure of the Czech basketball migration based on the long-term effect on his career as a player was the main content analyzed. For this purpose, the league level, the duration of the international career, and the overall career length were the major factors examined of the Czech players who migrated between 2010 and 2020.

Chapter eight focuses on volleyball, analyzing how sports migration between 2010 and 2022 influenced the success of the Czech national team. The study examines the impact of foreign players joining the Czech league and Czech players competing abroad. The findings reveal a decline in the national team's performance, increased league's competitive balance, reduced migration of Czech players abroad, and an increase in foreign players in the country.

The final chapter explores the impact of foreign players on the Czech national league. It also analyzes variables related to the development of athletic talent in baseball and the pandemic's impact on the sport. In his conclusions, the author emphasizes that while push and pull factors



are crucial for understanding sports migration, the personal motivations additionally proves to be significant.

The studies presented in the book explore the Czech reality concerning the phenomenon of sports migration. In summary, the book demonstrates that movement patterns can be different in different sports. More than just economic factors can shape them, but also elements of sporting culture and individuals' ability to act on their choices and motivations to migrate.

Considering the book from a methodological and scientific point of view, it makes relevant contributions because the research presented offers a rich and diverse set of sources and research tools used by the author. In other words, the author based his research on data from a wide range of sources and a variety of methodologies. This aspect highlights the complexity of the phenomenon of sports migration and contributes to future research for new researchers in the field.

In addition, the book is an academic work of significant analytical depth, addressing a gap in studies on the sports migration. This type of research has reached an advanced stage, particularly regarding the sporting and economic context that exists beyond the major economic powers or the exclusivity of the dominant soccer leagues.

It can be concluded that the book offers significant contributions to advancing knowledge about the phenomenon of sports migration on a global scale. More broadly, the book is likely to appeal to readers and researchers from different parts of the world, as it illustrates the reality of Czech sports in dialogue with global sports culture, highlighting the effects of migration can have on a country like the one analyzed.

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