William Crossan

Czech Sport Migration

Push and Pull Variations Between Sports and Cultures

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Introduction

On May 22, 1993, I finished in 9th place in the NAIA marathon. In my final effort to become a U.S. university All-American, I had missed 6th place by 3 minutes. Three of the All-American spots ahead of me were won by Kenyans representing other U.S. universities. Five days later, on May 27, I moved to the Czech Republic to begin my own journey as a sport immigrant. Given the context of my own story, it is logical that I would end up studying sport migration. Just like most other stories, mine is not simple, and the nuances of my own story help to present a broader picture of the push and pull forces of globalization which influence sport migration. My last-ditch effort to achieve All-American status resulted in a debut marathon time of 2:47, far behind the world record at the time of 2:06:50, or even the 2:08:52 American record held by Cuban-born American Alberto Salazar. In the USA, if you graduate from university in virtually any sport other than American football, basketball, baseball, soccer or ice hockey, and if you are not already amongst the top five sportsmen in the nation, then it is time to find employment outside of your "elite" sport career, as it is essentially over. As a 2:47 marathoner, I could not even find a sponsor who would give me free shoes. However, the Czech Republic, like many European countries, has a well-developed club system where teams in virtually every sport compete against each other at various league levels. I could therefore continue my "running career" by moving from one system to another, precisely because of this variance in sports systems.

While the process of taking advantage of the imbalances between systems sounds rather simple, it actually requires good knowledge of the system as well as the networks between the systems, and motivation. At the time, I only possessed motivation. Throughout this book, we

will examine how global sport systems interact and create push-pull mechanisms for sporting migrants. We will also strive to understand the networks in place which allow foreigners to flow into the top Czech sports leagues from all over the world and pull top Czech athletes into the top leagues around the world, such as the NHL, NBA and English Premier League. It is clear that I lacked the genetics to be recruited by such visible world leagues, which begs the question: through which network was I "discovered"?

Historically, the spread of sport worldwide can be attributed to three primary means: colonization, corporations, and Christianity (Mangan, 1993). The last one is often forgotten, even though the role of the YMCA and the muscular Christianity movement in spreading sport to Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, whether it was through introducing the YMCA-created sports of basketball and volleyball, or through using organized sport to get youth off the streets, is undeniable (Guedes, 2013; Tlustý, 2015; Zhang et al., 2017). While this movement peaked in the early 1900s, many of the sport migrants Maguire (1996) labels as pioneers and settlers are still migrating for religious reasons. I was one of them, and the experience provided me with knowledge and a network base. I spent the summer of 1992 training at the Czech Olympic training center in the city of Nymburk. Little did I know at the time that I would come to spend much time there in subsequent years helping American basketball players coming to play with the Nymburk basketball team, or that I would spend days there teaching Czech coaches how to coach from a values-based leadership framework.

I was a long-haired kid looking for an adventure, and a Christian sports organization had created an eight-week training camp at the Olympic training center of the Czech Republic. While the communist-era facility was very underwhelming compared to the university facilities I was accustomed to, the opportunities to train alongside top runners from Czechoslovakia, the Middle East, and Africa were inspiring. At the time, I was a better trainer than racer, so I was able to hold onto an aging Czech runner, Radim Kunčický, who had been a silver medalist in 1500 meters at the European Championships. Apparently, just after the fall of communism in the early 1990s, an American who could withstand a few trainings with an aging star at the Czech Olympic training center was enough to impress the Czech coach Pavel Moravec. Consequently, he invited me to relocate to Czechoslovakia to train with and compete for the PSK Olymp athletics club. One year later, I moved to the Czech Republic. Thankfully at the time, it was difficult to officially register an

American in the system, and so I had many months to shine in training before I could disappoint the team in my first race. Even in the winter of 1994, an American in the race was perceived by bettors to be exotic. Their bets on me, however, eventually resulted in their monetary losses.

While I did not come to embody the great hope my Czech team originally placed in me, I did haphazardly prove to be a useful cog in the global network for the Czech Olympic team. In December of 1995, I moved back to my hometown of Atlanta, Georgia in the USA, just a few months before the world would come to my city to drink Coca-Cola and compete in the 1996 Olympic Games. I was able to assist the Czech Olympic team in finding a place for their pre-Olympic training camp and housing for the 16 coaches who did not fit within their allotted spaces in the Olympic Village. Caring for these coaches during the Olympics would, in turn, provide me with a network to help bring more than 50 basketball, track and field, American football, baseball, ice hockey, and soccer players to the Czech Republic to compete in Czech's top leagues over the years that followed. As I earned trust as a professor at the sport university in Prague, I was able to assist many Czech athletes in getting the attention of, and then obtaining scholarships to compete in American universities. So, I have become a part of the very sport migration network this book will untangle.

I have begun this book with the story of my own experience as a sport migrant. Similarly, in the following chapters, I will introduce the story of a Czech athlete who emigrated for sporting purposes, or the story of a foreigner who has found their way to the Czech lands as a sport migrant. After laying the foundation in the first two chapters, the book will examine both in-migration and out-migration within five sports disciplines: ice hockey, football (soccer), basketball, volleyball, and baseball. Each chapter will employ a different methodology to analyze the particular sport migration that is taking place, as well as the various consequences of this migration. My goal in using these varied methodologies is to provide future researchers with a variety of tools which can be used to understand and compare sport migration and its unequal effects. Before we begin our journey examining the individual sports, Chapter 1 will be aimed at gaining an understanding of the various forms of historical migration within each sport, beginning with the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 through to the Czech Republic's ascension to the European Union (EU) in 2004. Joining the EU consequently opened up the free movement of labor, including that of sporting migrants. Following the introduction of the history of sport

migration in the Czech lands, Chapter 2 will compare the sport migration flows, both in and out, between the five sports under examination. Chapter 2 will also introduce us to some of the terminology used when researching sport migration, placing each sport as it is played in the Czech Republic, into the context of the global system, and acquaint us with some of the common effects of sport migration.

I am grateful to my colleagues, thesis students, and the sport federations which have aided me in obtaining the secondary data presented in the chapters which follow. In academic writing, common practice is to use "we" rather than "I." My use of "we" in the chapters that follow represents a collective effort, primarily with my thesis students. I have been collecting secondary data on sport migration across all sports since I took my first steps within the academic domain in 2007. When my students expressed interest in researching an aspect of sport migration for their final theses, I handed over as much data as I could to aid them. We discussed various aspects of sport migration and suitable methodologies before they added to the dataset and embarked on their own analysis and interpretation. It is these students, their insight, and research that make up the collective "we" in the chapters that follow. Particularly, I would like to thank Jan Bureš (2020) and Polina Petrenko (2021), who helped gather data for ice hockey, Martin Chalupník (2018) and Jakub Riedl (2019, 2021) for their help researching Czech football, Blahomír Donát (2022) and Alena Mrázová (2019) for the work they did gathering and analyzing data for basketball, Dominik Garreis (2022) and Ondřej Lenc (2018) for the research they did in volleyball, and Lukáš Ercoli (2021) for baseball. And I am indebted to my lifelong friend Shirsten Dreyer, who supported me in my running journey throughout high school and college, and then through proofreading this book along with many other academic articles along the way.

I hope that you will find me an unbiased guide; 30 years after arriving in the Czech Republic for the first time, I remain an American, but my sporting loyalties more often fall with the Czechs whom I have taught, helped, and mentored. It is my aim to see the benefits and pitfalls of multiple sport systems as they interact in global sport and play my part in helping sport become a healthier environment for an increasing number of people.

Chapter 1
History of Czech Sport Migration Prior to 2004

Growing up in the USA in the 1970s and 1980s the first I heard of Czechoslovakia was when watching Martina Navrátilová and Ivan Lendl, who had escaped from behind the Iron Curtain to propel their tennis careers to global stardom. Navrátilová and Lendl's departure from communist Czechoslovakia was driven by their ambition for fame and financial success in the world of tennis. However, their defections not only propelled their careers to new heights but also underscored the allure of Western opportunities, showcasing the pursuit of wealth and recognition as powerful motivators amidst the constraints of communist regimes. Navrátilová and Lendl were not the first Czechoslovak global sport nomads, as we outline in this chapter, nor did all who came before or after them necessarily desire or achieve the fame and wealth of these two tennis legends. Years before Navrátilová and Lendl, Jaroslav Drobný, renowned for his prowess in both tennis and ice hockey, defected to the West in 1949, subsequently representing both Czechoslovakia and Egypt in tennis and the United Kingdom in ice hockey. Drobný, a Wimbledon champion, defected from Czechoslovakia in a different era, driven less by the pursuit of fame and money in sport, but more by political disillusionment and a desire for personal freedom amidst the post-World War II geopolitical landscape (Drobny, 1955). While all three athletes sought opportunities outside of their homeland, Drobný's motivations were rather rooted in ideological differences and a longing for autonomy, highlighting the diverse motivations prompting individuals to leave their native countries.

These three tennis exiles developed their skills in an era different from the present, before migrating and displaying their talent to the world. Drobný's sport foundations in ice hockey and tennis were laid before communism came to Czechoslovakia, during a period when the nation

was flourishing as an emerging nation-state, while the latter two were fully products of the Soviet-influenced Eastern Bloc sport system. All three had sport roots in the nationalistic Czechoslovak Sokol movement (Eliot & Goodman, 1988; Navratilova & Vecsey, 1986; Drobny, 1955). The Sokol movement, founded in 1862, emphasized physical education and national consciousness among Slavic peoples and would spread all around the world through Czechoslovak migrants (Rechcigl, 2000). Sokol emerged during a period of Czech national revival after 200 years of Habsburg repression, working towards physical and mental rejuvenation through its motto: "Equality – harmony – fraternity" and "A healthy mind in a healthy body" (Rechcigl, 2000). The Sokol movement shaped Czechoslovak culture and was a sporting ideal that migrants took with them as they travelled the world.

Similarly, sporting ideals came into Czechoslovakia through sporting immigrants from the YMCA beginning in 1921. The YMCA, established in London in 1844 with the aim of fostering the spiritual, mental, and physical development of young men through various activities, including sports, was invited to Czechoslovakia by Alice Masaryková, the wife of the first Czechoslovak president, Tomáš Masaryk (Tlustý, 2015). Both Sokol and the YMCA would play crucial roles in the development of basketball, volleyball and baseball in the Czech lands. Both organizations served as platforms for nurturing athletic talent and fostering a sense of community. Sokol focused on building Slavic identity at home and around the world, while the YMCA exported new sports and trained physical education teachers and coaches, exemplifying early endeavors of globalization. The convergence of these institutions, together with the flow of sporting migrants further enriched sporting landscapes. Both Navrátilová and Lendl honed their skills in facilities built by the YMCA before emigration (Navratilova & Vecsey, 1986; Eliot & Goodman, 1988), while Drobný found refuge and training opportunities within YMCA networks (Drobny, 1955). These athletes' journeys underscore the interconnectedness of sports communities across borders (Carter, 2013), transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. The intertwined histories of YMCA, the Sokol movement, and the migration of sporting talents exemplify globalization, wherein sporting endeavors serve as conduits for cultural exchange and mutual enrichment on a global scale. The Sokol movement represented distinct Czechoslovak sporting ideals flowing out, and the YMCA, a British and North American conduit for people, money and sporting ideas flowing in.

Mapping Globalization in Czech Sport

Globalization is most concerned with the movement of money, people, and ideas at increasing rates across increasingly greater distances. The actual movement of sportsmen is not a new issue, however, as we will see in this book, the number of sportsmen moving has increased significantly in recent decades, and the motivations for their going and coming has shifted. In this first chapter, we will examine four sports in their Czech context: the two primary Czech sports of ice hockey and football, and two parallel secondary sports of basketball and volleyball. Due to the comparatively shorter history of the emerging sport of baseball, which observed no migration up until several years after the collapse of communism, discussion of this sport will be picked up in Chapter 2. The cultural significance of each sport for the Czech people will be emphasized in later chapters, but first we must address the role of the Czech or Czechoslovak state in the process of sport movement.

In order to structure this chapter, I have chosen to break the timeline into three relatively distinct periods. In each time period, I will outline the number of sportsmen migrating, the primary reasons for their migration, and the stance of the government toward sporting migration during this time. The three time periods examined are as follows: 1918–1948, 1948–1989, 1989–2004. For each of the four sport disciplines, each time period will be reviewed in terms of sport emigration and sport immigration.

Before we can begin to understand what "Czech sportsmen" may be moving into and out of, it is necessary to briefly introduce the Czech land's historical background. Between 1867 and 1918, what is now the Czech Republic existed as a part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Upon its defeat in World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire ceased to exist, and Czechoslovakia was formed as a democratic state in 1918. Just before World War II, Czechoslovakia was handed over to Germany with the signing of the Munich Agreement in 1938, and Hitler consequently conquered the Czech lands in 1939. The war ended in 1945, and in 1948, the Communist Party took complete control. Czechoslovakia existed as a totalitarian, communist state until 1989, when the country returned to democracy. In 1993, the Republic split into Czech Republic and Slovakia as two separate countries. Thus, it should be apparent why I have chosen to divide this retrospective into the three time periods of 1918–1948: "the First Czechoslovak Republic," 1948–1989: "the communist Czechoslovak Republic," and 1989–2004: "post-communism Czechoslovakia and

emergence of the Czech Republic." This last period will be covered in more depth in later chapters, but it is of significance to note that in 2004, the Czech Republic became part of the European Union, thus allowing and legislating the free movement of labor, also in sport, within the EU.

While defining our time periods based on political history is easy, obtaining reliable information from the earlier two periods is no simple task. As we will come to observe further on, during the first time period, sport was a much smaller entity. Sport from 1918–1948 was not the global business that it is today. During this time period, very few people made their living from sport, and thus sport was rarely a primary motivation in the migration decisions of sportsmen. Rather, the opportunity to continue a relatively high level of sport participation in a new land was a bonus. Yet, it remains important to study sport migration during this time, as the foundations for today's sport development were being laid, the rules of the game were being codified, and governments were beginning to see the value of sport both for the masses and in terms of international competition. Both Sokol and the YMCA played crucial roles in Czech sport during this time. It was through sport that Sokol was fostering a sense of pride in Slavic culture and heritage, and those who emigrated, both throughout this period and the next, would carry this with them as they developed 'Sokols' virtually everywhere they went. This period also saw the beginnings of national and international sport governing bodies, often at the behest of YMCA instructors such as Josef First, who were trained and educated beyond Czechoslovak borders. These national and international governing bodies would have a significant say over who could officially compete, and for what nation, upon migration.

The second period is also troublesome in terms of the obtainment of reliable information, as the totalitarian state was not so forthright in either endorsing sport migration or in stating a clear position on sport migration. The totalitarian state co-opted Sokol, attempting to leverage it to propagate communist ideology, and confiscated YMCA training facilities, mitigating their connections to Western Christian principles. Many have described the sport system during this time as chaos even though externally, this system appeared to be very successful. The interventionist state significantly influenced the emigration of individuals, including Drobný, Navrátilová, and Lendl, as previously noted, along with numerous others yet to be introduced. Nonetheless, emigration during this era frequently entailed concerted efforts by the state to suppress any information regarding the subsequent achievements of these athletes, thereby rendering it challenging to access comprehensive records of

these sporting migrants, even to this day. For this reason, I rely heavily on information gained from interviews done with those who migrated and participated in sport at a high level during this time.

Westerbeck and Smith divide the diffusion and growth of sport into three time periods which are similar to mine, though their work is global in scope, and identify significant markers in each time period (Westerbeek & Smith, 2002, p. 80). A summary of their efforts is displayed in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 – Markers of globalization over time

Period	1850–1914	1918–1980	1980–2000
Principal objective	Morality, education, values	Spectacle	Commerce and communication
Institutional and legal framework	Non-profit independent clubs	National and international federations	Commercial corporations
Scope of competition	National	International	Global
Number Olympic Games Countries	13 (1896)	59 (1948)	197 (1996)
Principle media	Written media	Radio	Television
Number of international competitions	20 (1912)	315 (1977)	700 (1996)
Principle financing	Participants	Spectators	Television, corporations and shareholders

(Westerbeek & Smith, 2002, p. 80)

Waic (1995) states that during the 1920s, the development of material support for physical education and sport was positive in Czechoslovakia, with an official Council of Advisors overseeing sport development in several areas. During this time, development occurred in the areas of school physical education, physical training corporations, and sport clubs, with scientific research and material support for all of these areas. Both the nationalist Sokol movement and the imported YMCA movement played significant roles in each of these aspects. However, with the economic crisis that began in 1929, the entire sport system collapsed in the 1930s (Waic, 1988). For the purposes of our discussion, it is interesting to note that throughout the 1920s, debate raged over the proper placement of winter sports and tourism within the government structure. The battle

was between the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of National Health and Physical Education, and the Ministry of National Defense.

One area where we will see this to manifest is during the communist period, when the most skilled athletes were centralized on teams administered by the Department of Interior (police sport clubs) and the Department of Defense (army sport clubs). Then, as sport acquired an even more global dimension and the possibility to migrate for sporting purposes emerged, the regime established Pragosport as a conduit through which all inflows and outflows from sport were regulated. Finally, consistent with Westerbeek and Smith above, Pragosport became a private, for-profit company whose purpose was to act as a sport agency and a producer of goods for sport after the fall of communism in 1989. Thus, we turn our attention to the migration of Czech sportsmen across these three eras.

Football

In Czech and Moravia, football began to be played at the end of the 19th century. The oldest Czech clubs, AC Sparta Praha and SK Slavia Praha, began to compete with the introduction of official football rules in 1897, and as the sport spread outside the capital city, the Czech Football Federation (CSF) was formed in 1897. Czechoslovak football was already in the process of being exported around the world with a Slavia team established in Chicago in 1915, Sparta in 1917, and Bohemians in 1921 (Rechcigl, 2000). In 1921, the CSF was expanded to include Slovak football as the Czechoslovak Association of Football (CSAF). In 1993, with the split of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the federation became the Cesko-Moravian Football Federation (CMFS), of which the top league is the Fortuna League and is composed of 16 teams.

Emigration

From 1918 to 1948, players who emigrated did so primarily for reasons of seeking better employment or living conditions, and therefore not for reasons primarily connected to sport. The Czechoslovak teams in Chicago were primarily made up of recent immigrants seeking familiar cultural community. Even so, in 1923 the Sparta team was able to sign several good players to semi-professional contracts, allowing the team to

become one of the elite teams in the Chicago league, which at the time was considered to be the best soccer league in North America. During the interwar period, many of the top Czechoslovak football players were forced to stop playing football. Stanislav Hrabě, the chairman for history and statistics of the football federation, reports that many Czech football players crossed the closest borders to ply their sporting prowess (Hrabě, 2009). However, they primarily travelled to Austria to participate in just a few games before returning to their home clubs in Czech. Most of these players played for the Slovan Vienna team. These exchanges did not operate as classic transfers as we think of them today, and they generally entailed no contractual obligations. Rather, Czech players generally played as complete amateurs without financial remuneration at home. However, they took advantage of the opportunity to compete in Austria for a few matches in exchange for financial compensation. Because they were not professional players, their home clubs in Czech could not prohibit their exodus. The first professional league in Czech began in 1925, which complicated this process and brought efforts to formalize the transfer process, but it did not slow the process down, as more money could be made in Austria than in the home league. It must be remembered that prior to 1918, these players going from Czech to Austria to play for a few games was not technically emigration, as it was very transient, and the players were merely traveling within the bounds of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Hrabě (2009) reminds us that numerous early officially documented international transfers from Czechoslovakia after 1918 were essentially players returning from the clubs they represented in the Czech lands to their cultural origins following the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. For example, Géza Kalocsay and Ferdinand Fazcinek, who were both born in Slovakia, returned to Hungary, the home of their ancestors (Šálek, 2000). The opposite occurred when Ferenc Szedlaczek returned from Hungary, and Josef Bican and Rudolf Vytlačil returned from Austria. Both Bican and Vytlačil had represented Austria first under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and then Czechoslovakia. Both played for Slavia, and it is reported that Slavia paid 150,000 Kč for Bican's transfer fee (Šálek, 2000).

Hrabě reports that consistent with what others have noted, most transfers in this period were for non-sporting reasons (2009). For example, Antonín Fivébr transferred from Sparta to the Italian Brescie in 1920 and later to Spain, where he became a well-respected coach. However, Fivébr's motivation lied not in sport, but rather in art; Fivébr was

a painter and is said to have been looking for inspiration among more established art communities (Šálek, 2000). Additionally, in the 1920s many Czech players played for Sparta Chicago, in the USA, where they had moved seeking work, while playing football on the side.

The first emigration which appears to be purely grounded in economical and football-related motivations was Josef Silný's in 1933 (Šálek, 2000). He transferred from Sparta to FC Nimes in France. However, he returned to his home country after just one season.

After World War II, a number of Czech football players transferred to teams in the West. Karel Finek headed to France's St. Etienne in 1945, leaving Slavia. In 1946, the Italian team Juventus recruited Čestmír Vycpálek from Slavia and Július Korostelev from ŠK Bratislava. One year later, Juventus obtained Ján Arpáš, also from ŠK Bratislava.

It is important to recount the story of Ladislav Kubala to demonstrate that even during this era, while money had begun to play a role in transfers, other significant factors also played a pivotal role in shaping player movements. Kubala was born to Slovak parents in Budapest, Hungary. He began his football career in the Hungarian league, but in 1945, he moved to Slovan Bratislava in order to escape Hungarian military service. He also represented the Czechoslovak national team on seven occasions. But in 1948, he fled back to Hungary, again evading military service. There, he was drafted to the Hungarian national team. A year later, in 1949, he fled Hungary for Austria to escape the communist rule, then moving to Italy, and finally to Spain. In each country, he played for the top teams, even receiving a record high salary for the time from FC Barcelona. He eventually adopted Spanish nationality and served as both a player and a coach for the Spanish national team. While this story is indeed unique, it effectively illustrates that although strong economic motives existed during this period, they were clearly not yet the primary force shaping migration decisions.

The beginning of the socialist regime brought the movement of players to a halt. Players were no longer considered professionals. Those who lived outside the borders of Czechoslovakia were now considered enemies of the state, even though they had left legally. No word was heard about them back home, despite the fact that some had achieved significant accomplishments. Eventually, the Communists realized that they could profit from the sale of these players, leading them to permit players to seize opportunities to play beyond the country's borders. Hrabě says that firm rules were put in place about who was permitted to leave to play outside of Czechoslovak borders: Players at least 30 years of age, who

had at least 35 starts with the national team (including participation in the World Cup or European championships), or at least 350 top league starts (Hrabě, 2009). All the transfers were done through Pragosport, with the majority of the proceeds going to the state, and a small portion going to the clubs they left behind. Under such conditions, each of the players presented in Table 1.2 emigrated.

Table 1.2 – Pragosport football migrations 1967–1989

Player	Foreign club	Years played (Club returned)
Josef Kadraba	SC Hinteregger (AT)	1967 (did not return)
Viliam Schrojf	Slavia Melbourne (AU)	1967–1973
Josef Masopust	Crossing Molenbeek (BE)	1968–1970
Ivan Mráz	MVV Maastricht (NL)	1968–1970 (Dukla)
Tomáš Pospíchal	FC Rouen (FR)	1968–1971
Andrej Kvašňák	KRC Mechelen (BE)	1969–1972 (Sparta)
Adolf Scherer	Nîmes (FR)	1969 (did not return)
Jozef Adamec	Slovan Vienna (AT)	1977–1980 (Spartak Trnava)
Jan Klimeš	Slovan Vienna (AT)	1979–1988
Karol Dobiaš	KSC Lokeren (BE)	1980–1984 (Spartak Trnava)
František Veselý	Rapid Vienna (AT)	1980–1984 (Slavia)
Anton Ondruš	FC Bruggy (BE)	1981–1989
Antonín Panenka	Rapid Vienna (AT)	1981–1983 (Bohemians)
Pavel Mačák	FC Schalke 04 (DE)	1983–1987 – illegally
Zdeněk Nehoda	SV Darmstadt (DE)	1983–1993
Marián Masný	Neusiedl am See (AT)	1983–1984 (ZŤS Petržalka)
Oldřich Rott	EPA Larnaca (CY)	1983–1984 (Slavia)
Ladislav Jurkemik	FC St. Gallen (CH)	1984–1991 (Inter Bratislava)
František Štambachr	AEK Athens (GR)	1984–1985 (Mladá Boleslav)

Note: Only the first foreign club where a player competed is listed.

In 1988, things began to change, and athletes who were younger than 30 years of age were allowed to emigrate. By this point, it becomes evident that the athletes' motivations were primarily driven by the desire for improved economic and playing conditions.

The following football players (Table 1.3) emigrated during this period.

Table 1.3 – Football migrations under relaxed standards

Player	Foreign club	Years (Return club)
Ladislav Vízek	Le Havre AC (FR)	1986–1988
Jan Fiala	Le Havre AC (FR)	1987–1988
Karel Jarolím	FC Rouen (FR)	1987–1991 (Slavia)
Ivo Knoflíček	FC St. Paul (DE)	1988–1993 (Slavia) – illegally
Ján Kocian	FC St. Paul (DE)	1988–1993 (Dukla Bánská Bystrica)
Luboš Kubík	Florence (IT)	1988–1995 (Slavia) – illegally
František Straka	Borussie Moenchengladbach (DE)	1988–1998 (Sparta)
Jozef Chovanec	PSV Eindhoven (NL)	1989–1991 (Sparta)
Stanislav Griga	Feyenoord Rotterdam (NL)	1990–1993

1989–2004

According to the official registration records of the Českomoravský Football Federation (CMFS), the exit of football players following the end of socialism was hardly more than a trickle from 1989 to 1999, with a total of 61 players emigrating. Then, from 1999 to 2004, the gates opened,

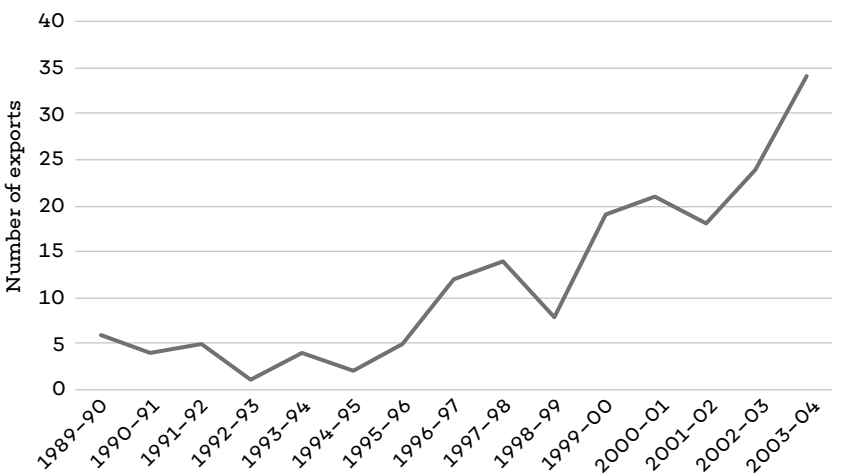

Figure 1.1 – Czech football players outside Czech 1989–2004

with a total of 116 players exiting during those years. The chart below illustrates the exit of players during the first two decades of freedom. It only accounts for players leaving the Czech league to play abroad each year, excluding those who departed in previous seasons. These numbers also do not represent players who lived near borders and played for both Czech and foreign clubs (German or Austrian).

These players went to teams in 27 different countries, with the majority going to countries bordering the Czech lands: Germany (78), Slovakia (51), and Austria (48). Table 1.4 illustrates where the first Czech football emigrants went and the number of clubs in those countries with Czech players.

Table 1.4 – Destinations of Czech football players 1989–2004

Country	Number of players	Number of clubs with CZ players
Germany	78	26
Slovakia	51	14
Austria	48	32
France	19	10
England	18	10
Russia	16	7
Belgium	16	8
Netherlands	14	9
Italy	11	8
Spain	6	3
Switzerland	6	6
Portugal	6	4
Turkey	5	5
Israel	5	3
Finland	4	2
Greece	3	2
Slovenia	3	2
Latvia	3	3
Cyprus	3	2
Croatia	2	2

Note: Additionally, Belarus, Bosnia, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, Scotland, and Sweden each had one player in one club.

Immigration

With the professionalization of sport in Czechoslovakia in 1925 and the strong economy at home, Hrabě says there was little reason for players to leave (Hrabě, 2009). In fact, Sparta and Slavia were wealthy clubs which could afford to import players from other countries. One such example was Raymond Braine, a Belgian striker who was considered to be an amateur in his home country but could be well renumerated by Sparta (Šálek, 2000). Šálek reports that he signed to play for Sparta in 1928 for a transfer fee of 60,000 Kč (2000). He played in Czech through to the end of 1936, when he controversially returned to Belgium to play for the newly professional team Antwerp Beerschot. It is said of Braine that he was not only an excellent player but also quickly mastered the Czech language, a sharp contrast to players in the present era. It should also be noted that Braine was brought to Sparta from Belgium by the English coach of the Sparta team, Johnny Dick.

While the above example aligns with our modern-day perspective of globalization, where players move to better leagues for financial reasons, it seems to be a relatively isolated case. More typical immigration patterns are exemplified by Hungarians Géza Kalocsay and Béla Guttman. We will begin with Kalocsay, as his story sheds light not only on the role of football but also on the influence of the state and historical context on player movement.

Kalocsay was born in 1913 in the city of Beregszasz, which at that time was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. In 1918, Beregszasz became part of Czechoslovakia, which allowed Kalocsay to acquire Czechoslovak citizenship and represent this country in the World Cup. However, his home city then became part of Hungary, and he lost his Czechoslovak citizenship and gained Hungarian citizenship. In addition to his inclusion in the Hungarian national team, this indicates that he was registered as having played in the Czechoslovak league for two seasons as a Czechoslovak national (1932–1934) and three seasons as a Hungarian national (1934–1937). His hometown is now considered to be part of the Ukraine. Thus, we observe that this situation is more about border changes than player immigration.

Béla Guttman is an interesting second example, primarily because he was Jewish, which necessitated him moving frequently to escape persecution. He played or coached in 16 different nations. Another intriguing consequence of his Jewish heritage is the inconsistency in records regarding his playing history, as certain clubs during the Second World War

erased all traces of Jewish players from their records. He was born into the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Budapest in 1899 but began his professional career in Vienna. Again, while this aligns with our contemporary understanding of sports migration, it's worth noting that he was simply traversing a newly drawn border which had appeared since his birth. He is said to have played a few games for Bratislava before the war broke out (Kuper, 2006).

The immigration of players into the Czechoslovak league appears to have stopped from World War II through the communist era. The war and ensuing regime also led to a great loss of Czechoslovakia's economic and political power, which greatly influenced the quality of the home football league. As democracy was ushered in, so were foreign players back into the Czech league, as is illustrated by Table 1.5 below, which begins in 1993, when Czechoslovakia split into the separate nations of Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Table 1.5 – Foreigners in the Czech football league 1993–2004

Season	Total Foreigners	Slovaks	Non-Europeans	Countries Represented
1993/1994	8	6	1	3
1994/1995	26	23	1	3
1996/1997	31	21	3	6
1996/1997	31	21	3	6
1997/1998	31	20	5	11
1998/1999	25	13	8	8
1999/2000	26	20	3	6
2000/2001	48	33	7	11
2001/2002	39	28	6	11
2002/2003	51	39	6	10
2003/2004	63	39	10	14

The above table demonstrates an overall rise in the number of foreigners coming to play in the top Czech football league. This fits the commonly discussed phenomenon of globalization leading to increased movement of workers to new and developing areas (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007). The number of Slovaks playing in the Czech league remained consistently between 35 and 40 until recent years. This can be

attributed to the fact that the Czech Republic, with its larger population and a stronger economy, has been able to sustain a more robust professional football league compared to Slovakia. However, the Czech league is still notably weaker compared to other leagues in the West, where the best Slovak players often choose to compete.

The second observation we can make is that the number of countries represented in the top Czech league has also steadily increased. This aligns with the definition of globalization as leading to increased variety (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007). If we were to examine the origins of these players more closely, as we will do further in Chapter 5, we observe several more trends regarding the sources of inflows of these immigrant football players. Initially, the players came from the poorer and geographically close countries (Slovakia, Russia, Ukraine), next from poor African nations (Cameroon, Gambia, Nigeria), and then from wealthier countries where football is not a primary sport (Denmark, Sweden). When Czech became part of the EU in 2004, lower quality players from European countries where football is the primary sport began to arrive. Eventually, players from the football super-powers of Brazil and Argentina began to find their way to Czech. Undoubtedly, these players were third-or-fourth-level players in their home countries and were not good enough to play in the football super-leagues in England, Spain, Italy, and Germany, nor good enough to make a living playing at home. Finally, the Czech league began to look far and low for quality players from yet untapped countries such as Togo, Ethiopia, Uzbekistan, and Benin.

I have not yet noted that the Yugoslav countries (Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia) have had a consistent presence in the top Czech league. This is due to the similarity in languages between these countries and Czech (which is also true of the Slovaks). Thus, we see the trends from earlier time periods, in both emigration and immigration, of players going to neighboring countries and countries with similar languages. This is consistent with the well-researched trends observed by Lafranchi and Taylor across time and place in the football world (2001).

Ice Hockey

We turn our attention now to the sport which is perhaps the greatest source of pride for Czech sport fans, that of ice hockey. While we will observe similar patterns to those seen in football, the number of emigrants is far greater. However, we still face the historical realities that before

1948, the primary reason for sport migration was generally something other than sport, and during the communist era, accurate records of these exits either were not kept or are unavailable. Finally, we will see that since the opening of the borders in 1989, the number of Czech ice hockey players who have plied their trade in other nations is far higher than in any of the other Czech sports. For the reasons mentioned above, we will primarily focus on Czechs who played on the national team or were very visible to the Czech public. My primary source for the first two time periods was an interview conducted in November of 2009 with Karel Gut, the former head of the Czech ice hockey federation, as well as his book, "100 let českého hokeje" (100 Years of Czech Hockey) (Gut & Prchal, 2008, Gut, 2009).

Emigration

For the period of 1918 to 1948, I was able to obtain information about seven national team players who emigrated, however, all of them emigrated in 1948. Gut speculates that prior to this time, the Czechoslovak team was one of the best in the world, and the conditions found on teams in this league were equal to, and even better than, those found elsewhere (Gut & Prchal, 2008). Of particular interest, the stories of many players highlight the stark contrast between what it meant to play hockey "professionally" in that era and what it signifies today.

This is illustrated by the following quote from Zdeněk Marek (2006), who would become one of the first to emigrate in 1949:

"Let me tell you something about hockey in Czechoslovakia: people who play hockey now have no idea how much fun it was to play hockey in the 1940s. You know, we never practiced, I mean really practiced! I don't think there was anyone on any team who ever lifted weights or anything like that! We just had fun; it was unbelievable!" (2006)

Although being a professional at that time differed significantly from being one today, players were still well-compensated for playing hockey. These factors will resurface later when we explore how, during this period, even Americans and Canadians immigrated to play hockey in Czechoslovakia.

Thus, we find the names of seven players who emigrated in 1948: Karel Hromádka, Oldřich Kučera, Josef Maleček, Milan Matouš, Zbislav Petrs, Miroslav Sláma, and Oldřich Zábrodský. All of these players were national team players at some point in their careers, and most of them played