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Women on the Move: The Migration of WNBA Players to Overseas Basketball Teams

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Barbra Nalani Butler entitled "Women on the Move: The Migration of WNBA Players to Overseas Basketball Teams." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Sport Studies.

Lars Dzikus, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Joy DeSensi, Leslee Fisher, Ronald Taylor

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

**Women on the Move:
The Migration of WNBA Players to Overseas Basketball Teams**

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Barbra Nalani Butler
August 2015

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the people who have had the greatest impact on my life and who have always had my best interest at heart. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family including: My mother, my father, my brother, my grandma (Ma), my Tutu, my Oma, my niece, my Babu, and my Opa. I would not have pursued my doctorate if it were not for these people.

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blessed to know her and call her my friend, colleague, and mentor. She has set the standard for who I aspire to be as a person and as a professional and I thank her for guiding me through this journey on so many different levels.

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Abstract

Through this study, I investigated the migration of American Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) players to professional club teams overseas. International migration of professional women athletes has been occurring for decades, yet little is known about the experiences of these labor migrants apart from women's soccer (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014). Research examining sport labor migration has largely focused on the experiences of men (Maguire, 2008).

The study has filled in gaps in the literature, giving voice to women's experiences as sport labor migrants, specifically in reference to women's professional basketball players. Historically, many WNBA players have chosen to play two seasons in the course of a year because they have been able to make more money overseas, even though they have gained more media attention in the WNBA (Woods, 2012). Men playing in the National Basketball Association (NBA), however, tend to play in only one season.

Findings from this current study have contributed to the development of a typology characterizing the motivations of WNBA transnational sport labor migrants. Also, results from this study provide insight and context for how WNBA players experienced professional basketball overseas on and off the court. Specifically I found that the majority of WNBA transnational sport labor migrants preferred to play overseas versus playing in the WNBA, the majority had a better quality of life playing in Europe in comparison to playing in Asia, and the agent of the athlete played a significant role in their career path. A qualitative exploratory case study methodology was employed (Yin, 2009), which included semi-structured interviews with 10 WNBA players who had played consecutively in the WNBA and overseas for at least one

year. The theory of transnationalism (Carter, 2007) was used as a framework for inquiring about and understanding the experiences and motivations of the participants from their grounded perspectives.

Keywords: *sport labor migration, case study, WNBA, women and sport labor migration, transnationalism, qualitative exploratory case study*

Preface

This dissertation came about because of my love for sport and my desire to explore sport through a more critical lens. This dissertation sheds light on some of the world's best athletes. By this I do not mean best women athletes, but best athletes in general. I was able to include testimonials from WNBA rookies as well as WNBA legends about their experiences as sport labor migrants.

I explored the lives of professional WNBA players who had traveled overseas, far away from family and friends, to pursue career opportunities and experiences that would not have been accessible to them within the U.S. I hope this dissertation empowers young women athletes to pursue their dreams in sport, and to move beyond their comfort zones to explore the world and all it has to offer. I hope this current study does justice to the stories of the women who participated in it shared, and creates dialogue about women and their experiences in sport. I believe that the most valuable insight the findings from this current study offer are that sport can be used as a vehicle for empowerment that can create unimaginable opportunities and experiences for both its participants and its spectators.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The globalization of sport has afforded many athletes, coaches, managers, and administrators the opportunity to travel around the world. These sport professionals have often been referred to as sport labor migrants (McCree, 2014; Olin, 1984). Although labor migration in sport is not a new phenomenon, research within the discipline has grown only recently, with the majority of sport labor migration research focused on the sport of men's soccer (Cornelissen & Solberg, 2007, Darby, 2007; Frick, 2009; Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 2004; Maguire & Pearton, 2000; Maguire & Stead, 1998; Poli, 2006; Stead & Maguire, 2000) and the experiences of women in seasonal sports (Agergaard & Bothelo, 2010; Thorpe, 2014).

Among the justifications for such studies, Maguire and Stead (1998) mentioned, "sports labor migration is, in part, a reflection of pre-existing social, political and economic power arrangements in sport" (p. 60). Further, sport labor migration has provided a rich area of study for the empirical examination of how "globalization can be analyzed culturally, economically, politically, and institutionally" (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003, p. 253). Therefore, examining the phenomenon of sport labor migration can provide more insight into how we construct, perceive, and consume sport within a globalized social world. Sport labor migration research allows us to see the global fluidity afforded to those involved in the sporting world and to critically analyze global sport migration patterns of sport labor migrants.

Within the area of sport labor migration, the experiences and motivations of women athletes as sport labor migrants have received limited attention and more research is needed (Maguire, 2004). According to Maguire and Bale (2013), "sport labour migration is not, then, a uniform experience. It has its own political economy" (p. 77). Therefore, only understanding the

experiences of men as sport labor migrants might leave us with a skewed perspective on the sport labor migrant experience, because of the scarcity in scholarly research and literature on the experiences and motivations of women as sport labor migrants. It is imperative that the participation and experiences of women as sport labor migrants be theorized and examined empirically as central to the study of sport labor migration. This is because sport labor migration is a reflection of dynamics within our broad social sphere and a microcosm for understanding how politics, economics, and culture are intertwined (Maguire & Stead, 1998). This recognition and addition within scholarly research and literature allow for an understanding of the motivations and experiences of sport labor migrants that includes both men and women.

Sport Labor Migrants and Migration

International sport labor migration was documented soon after the inception of modern sport. In the latter nineteenth century, for example, England sent her men to the United States (U.S.) to encourage the spread of the game of cricket, (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005) and A. G. Spalding organized tours of American baseball players to England in 1874 and around the world in 1888-89 (Levine, 1985). In another example, the Football Association (FA) was under investigation when Preston North End in Britain imported elite soccer professionals from Scotland in 1884 (Szymanski, 2006). Even then, managers went for readymade foreign players who promised instant success within the sports arena (Maguire & Falcous, 2010). Since then, the international acquisition of players has brought up several issues including amateurism, citizenship, and national identity as athletes have been migrating to various countries around the world to play their sport (Coakley, 2009).

As defined by Falcous and Maguire (2005), sport labor migrants are “athletes who travel around the world for sporting opportunities and encounter varying circumstances, barriers, and incentives” (p. 138). Within the sport studies literature, “terms such as sport labor migration, athletic labor migration, athletic laborers, and migrant labor have been used to describe this athletic migratory process” (McCree, 2014, p. 73). Various scholars have critically analyzed the global flow of athletic talent, with Bale (1982) and Maguire (1988) contributing much of the early research on elite sport labor migration at the international level. However, only a few scholars have focused on issues of race and gender within the area of sport labor migration (Klein, 2007; Agergaard & Bothelo, 2010).

Early on, Bale (1982) wrote about athletic talent migration among Kenyan long distance runners and how migration played into stereotypes surrounding race and athleticism. Bale discussed how Kenyan runners were being trained in Kenya by foreign coaches and recruited by National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) institutions because of their skill for long distance running. Bale’s work has influenced scholars such as Darby (2000) and Poli (2006) who have researched the migration of African sport talent to North America and Europe. These scholars used a racialized lens to understand the dynamics of sport labor migration.

Most notably, Darby (2000) and Poli (2006) added on to Bale’s (1982) work with their own line of research on African sport labor migration. Darby and Poli conducted extensive research on African football academies and the polarization of the European soccer labor market. Their research has since shed light on the exploitation of African soccer talent through African football academies (Darby, 2000; Darby, 2007; Poli, 2006). Bale, Darby, and Poli have helped to set a framework for understanding race and nationality within the context of sport labor

migration, specifically focusing on African talent pipelines and the exploitation of African talent. To add, Klein (2007) has researched race and sport labor migration in connection with the U.S. and Latin American countries. Klein studied the migration of Latin American baseball players to the U.S. and how America's pastime of baseball has been culturally changed because of the influx of Latino players to Major League Baseball (MLB). His work focused on sport labor migration through the establishment of baseball academies in the middle part of the twentieth century, set up by MLB. According to Klein (2007), MLB academies in Latin American countries have produced professional baseball talent for North America for over the past 50 years through the use of talent pipelines. Klein's work investigated how the exploitation of the labor of third world Latin American countries have created multi-billion dollar success in the U.S. through the academy system, similar to Darby (2000) and Poli's (2006) work on African soccer academies. Klein (2007) "termed this kind of phenomenon 'testicular globalization', because it simply continues the hegemony of North American baseball, in this case by cultivating the international labour market in a neo-colonial fashion" (p. 289).

Bale, Darby, Poli, and Klein have helped to create a framework for understanding sport labor migration through the lens of racialized masculinities, mainly by using male sporting experiences in the sports of track and field, soccer, and baseball. However, research on the racialized experiences of women of color as sport labor migrants to and from North America and Europe, is limited (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014). In this respect, there are significant gaps and omissions in the sport migration literature. This current study was designed to address these gaps and omissions through empirical work on the transnational migration experiences of women who play professional basketball.

Recently, scholars have paid more attention to women and their experiences within global sport labor migration (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014; Agergaard & Bothel, 2010; Agergaard, 2008; Botelho & Agergaard, 2011). Research on women and global sport migration at the elite level, however, is still very limited. For example, research regarding women and sport labor migration has yet to explore women and their involvement in the sport of basketball, one of the most popular global sports (LaFeber, 2002). Much of the scholarly literature on women and sport labor migration has focused on women who have been involved in individual sports as seasonal transnational migrants, which included sport labor migrants who traveled internationally for their sport during certain times of the year (Thorpe, 2011). More recently, there has been research conducted which has focused on sport labor migration and women's team sports such as handball (Agergaard, 2008), soccer (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014; Agergaard & Botelho, 2010; Botelho & Agergaard, 2011), and cricket (Perry, 2013). Studying the migration of American WNBA players has added to our understanding of women's participation in international sport, particularly women playing team sports.

Statement of Problem

Women's sport labor migration has received limited scholarly attention. The majority of data on sport labor migration, including existing typologies, is based on the experiences of male athletes (Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996; Lafranchi & Taylor, 2001; Stead & Maguire, 2000). Specifically research on women's professional basketball and sport labor migration within peer-reviewed literature is non-existent. This is surprising, since basketball is a major international team sport for women and many current and former WNBA players choose to play overseas in addition to playing in the U.S. For instance, when compared to their counterparts in

the NBA, the additional workload has the potential for increased risk of injuries and burnout for women professional basketball players, yet they still go overseas for work. Moreover, little has been known about how these women basketball players have adjusted to life within other cultures, on and off the court and what motivated them to migrate internationally for their careers, until now.

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this current study was to research the motivations and experiences of women sport labor migrants. This current study explored why WNBA players were motivated to migrate internationally for employment opportunities and how they experienced life as transnational sport labor migrants. Studying American WNBA players has provided more insight into women's experiences as sport labor migrants and the motivating factors that have influenced transnational migration. For sport sociologists, the strong presence of men as sport labor migrants playing basketball overseas has provided a compelling context for a gendered analysis of these women's experiences (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2013; Bale & Maguire, 2013). The racialized nature of sport labor migration has also provided an important topic of analysis as well, since the majority of WNBA players in this current study identified as African-American (Lapchick, 2013). Many of these American sport labor migrants played basketball overseas in contexts where race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender converged to solidify their minority status even more so than within the U.S.

Findings in this current study were important for a number of audiences. Athletes who might consider playing overseas can now learn from the experiences of their peers and make more informed decisions about future career moves. Administrators, athletic trainers, sport

studies academics, and sport psychology consultants in women's basketball also benefit from the findings of this research, from a sport practitioner point of view. In addition, improved understanding of the experiences and motivations of the women in this current study has the potential to create a more satisfactory environment for future players who willingly participate in international sport migration.

This current study has challenged the already existing sport labor migration typologies (Maguire, 1996; Magee & Sugden, 2002) by providing a better understanding of what has influenced and motivated the international migration patterns for women athletes, specifically American WNBA players. Findings from this current study have assisted in confirming, challenging, and expanding on the existing typologies of sport labor migration, which in the past, have mostly been based on the experiences of male athletes (Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996; Lafranchi & Taylor, 2001; Stead & Maguire, 2000). In summary, this current study added a gendered perspective to the existing typologies of sport labor migration within the sport studies literature. The findings helped to create a more nuanced typology of sport labor migration motivations through an exploration of the experiences of WNBA transnational sport labor migrants.

Research Questions

Within this dissertation, I employed transnationalism as a theoretical frame. In contrast to a globalization framework, transnationalism focuses attention on the everyday lived realities and experiences of labor migrants in a globalizing world. I was able to access these facets by employing a qualitative case study methodology. The integration of the theory and methodology provided the conceptual and empirical tools that allowed me to address the following research

questions:

RQ1: Why do American WNBA players choose to play basketball outside of the U.S.?

RQ2: How do American WNBA players experience professional basketball in the U.S. and overseas?

The first research question allowed me to ask why some American women WNBA players have chosen to play in two leagues in one season; the WNBA and overseas. By questioning, I was able to understand if women sport labor migrants shared similar motivations to male sport labor migrants, basketball sport labor migrants, and/or other women sport labor migrants. The second research question allowed me to ask about how these women experienced basketball in the U.S. and overseas. The semi-structured interview protocol provided for me to ask the research participants about their careers and about their life on the court as well as off the court. Both research questions were very important for gaining a more holistic understanding of how these women experienced basketball within two or more cultures and how playing basketball in the U.S. and overseas affected their basketball career and personal lives.

Epistemology and Positionality

I identify with the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm and used this as my epistemological approach throughout my research study because this paradigm was most consistent with my beliefs as a researcher. According to Williamson (2006), “constructivism is one of several interpretivist paradigms and is concerned with the ways in which people construct their worlds” (p. 85). I believe the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm provided me with the conceptual tools to work with, because I believe that there are multiple realities. Every individual is unique and those unique qualities and characteristics enable us as human beings to experience life differently.

Within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, there can be multiple truths (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Throughout this current study I did not look for one truth, but a range of perspectives from WNBA players about why they migrated overseas to pursue career opportunities in basketball as well as the motivations that inspired them to seek opportunities abroad. After data collection and data analysis, I was able to present my findings by using analytic generalization (Stake, 2005). I compiled all similar experiences of these women and also wrote about the differences in experiences based on: (a) physical characteristics, (b) elite athletic ability, and (c) countries where these women played basketball. This way of categorizing the data allowed me to group similar experiences and motivations together, while at the same time acknowledging the individual experiences of the participants. Each participant's story helped guide the research and helped make this current study holistic.

Creswell (2012) noted, "the interpretivist/constructivist researcher tends to rely upon 'participants' views of the situation being studied" (p. 8). Thus, interpretations of data have been based on the lived experiences (Hatch, 2002) and motivations conveyed to me by the participants. In addition, the interpretation of the data was influenced by how I positioned myself in this current study (Rose, 1997). Personally, I identify as an African-American woman who has played the sport of soccer at a high-level. My race, gender, and athletic identity played a role in how I interpreted the data as well as how participants engaged with me in the research. I found that being a college soccer player and playing at an elite level, under professional athlete, afforded me the opportunity to connect with these women based on our athletic ties to college. Many women in the study talked about their college experiences playing basketball, which ultimately led them to pursue a career in professional basketball. In the majority of cases, playing

college basketball influenced many of the women to pursue coaching within the U.S. collegiate system, after their career playing basketball.

I interviewed both current and former WNBA players. Depending on the stage of the participant's career, some were already coaching basketball or mentoring young basketball players as part of their current careers or in their downtime. Other study participants who were rehabbing an injury during the WNBA off-season and could not go overseas, chose to stay in the U.S. and focus on their WNBA career instead of going overseas, or were retired from the sport of basketball altogether and were living in the U.S. College basketball had a profound influence on these women throughout their careers and after, since many had dreams of being a college head basketball coach or continuing in athletics in one form or another. As for my relating to these women on a college-athlete level, although I have no desire to go into coaching, I have been inspired to stay in the field of athletics because of my experience playing college soccer, however, I am involved in athletics from an academic side.

I differed from the participants because I have never played the sport of basketball and do not have any direct ties to the women's basketball community. I have never spent more than a few months in a different country and I have not been employed in a country where I did not know the language. The women who played overseas shared a common bond and after conducting this current study, I think there will need to be more research conducted on this elite group of women athletes.

Positionality

I am aware that my own biases and dispositions influenced this current study. I entered this current study by first acknowledging that my past experiences have influenced the questions

I asked in the interviews, how I interpreted the collected data, and how I presented the data. In fact, some of my past experiences from a previous study that I conducted on American professional men's basketball players migrating to Europe for employment opportunities influenced some of the questions I asked in this current study (Butler & Dzikus, 2014).

To monitor my biases I created an online reflexivity journal in which I documented the dissertation process once I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The journal was kept on Google Documents and was only available to the four people on my dissertation committee. According to Morrow (2005), "researcher reflexivity provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand how her or his own experiences and understandings of the world affect the research process" (p. 253). Within the journal, I discussed my interactions with participants and how identity and experience influenced the interviews. Keeping this journal allowed me to share my experiences with my committee members so that they could actively comment on how I was approaching the research study and there was transparency throughout the period of the study.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my study and described why this current study was relevant to the discipline of sport studies and how this current study will contribute to related areas of research, such as sport labor migration and women and sport labor migration. In Chapter One, I introduced sport labor migration and how it is related to global sport. I defined the term sport labor migrant and how the term will be used throughout the dissertation. I stated the problem, outlined how my study would fill gaps in the literature, and described how my research would

significantly contribute to sport labor migration knowledge. I concluded Chapter One by outlining my research questions and my personal epistemology and positionality.

In Chapter Two I will provide an expanded review of literature including research on women and basketball, women and migration, sport labor migration, and women and sport labor migration. In Chapter Three I will discuss the methodology I used, including the methods and theoretical frameworks (e.g., case study and transnationalism). In Chapter Four I will present the findings from my collected data with WNBA players who identified as transnational sport labor migrants. In Chapter Five I will provide a discussion of the findings, specifically how they confirmed, challenged, and/or expanded on previous scholarly work within sport labor migration research. In conclusion, Chapter Five will discuss possible implications for practitioners and scholarly researchers to address in the area of sport labor migration.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this dissertation, I defined the following key terms as follows:

(African-) Americanization: A phenomena in which African Americans have been able to have a significant influence within various cultures and/or organizations worldwide, despite being historically marginalized within American society.

Agency: Ability of an individual to act on their own accord in which the individual's actions shape their experiences (Carter, 2013).

Ambitionist: A sport labor migrant who has a strong desire to be a professional and moves to a better quality league to improve his or her career (Magee and Sugden, 2002).

Bosman Ruling: European Union (E.U.) ruling that set a precedent in 1995, which allowed free-agent players freely move to different sports teams throughout Europe and negotiate their salary;

Increased sport labor migration of foreign nationals throughout the E.U.; Enabled club teams in Europe to field players from various countries outside of host country (Frick, 2009).

Bridgehead: Sport labor migrants that do not need agents because they are able to migrate internationally through their own network of personal contacts (Maguire, 1996).

Case Study: A research methodology used to explore a phenomenon in-depth using intensive examination of a unit of analysis (Yin, 2009).

CAQDAS: Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

Exiled: A player who opts to leave his or her country of origin voluntarily or by force for opportunities in sport (Magee and Sugden, 2002).

Expelled: A player who is forced to migrate abroad for opportunities in sport (Magee and Sugden, 2002).

Exploratory Case Study: A form of case study in which the purpose is to develop ideas and propositions for future research and/or to examine a phenomenon that has not yet been examined (Yin, 2009).

FIBA EuroBasket Women: Bi-annual basketball tournament held between European nations with the inaugural season starting in 1938. (Eurobaset, 2014)

Gender: Refers to the socially constructed roles and behaviors that are influenced by society and culture in which certain characteristics are determined to be either masculine or feminine (Layton, 2013).

Globalization: “A transplanetary process or set of processes involving growing multi-directional flows of increasingly liquid people, objects, places, and information and the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows” (Ritzer, 2010, p. 270) or “an

unprecedented compression of time and space reflected in the tremendous intensification of social, political, economic, and cultural interconnections and interdependencies on a global scale” (Sage, 2010, p. 3).

Labor Migrant: Individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily migrate temporarily or permanently for opportunities that are not available to them in their original place of residence (Howard, 2011).

Labor Migration: Movement from one place to another for the purpose of work. Migration can either be temporary or permanent (Howard, 2011).

Lived Experiences: How people experience life in real settings (Hatch, 2002).

Maguire’s (1996) Typology of Sport Labor Migration: Conceptual framework illustrating the various types of sport labor migrants which include pioneers (passion or zeal for promoting sport), settlers (stay and settle in host nation in which they perform their sport), mercenaries (motivated by short-term games, lucrative contracts and have little to no attachment to host nation), nomadic cosmopolitans (nomads motivated more by cosmopolitan engagement) (Maguire, 1996).

Migration: The relatively long-term change of geographical location undertaken by individuals or groups of individuals (Terrett, 2008).

Personal Aspirationist: Athletes who migrate in order to play at the highest level and to see how far they can go professionally. These participants are motivated by personal goals and personal satisfaction.

Race: A concept that is used to signify different types of human bodies in which various cultures and regions attempt to organize groups of people based on similar skin color and physical

appearance (Cole, 2014).

Sport Labor Migrant: “Athletes who travel around the world for sporting opportunities and encounter varying circumstances, barriers, and incentives based on athletic skill, marketability, and other varying factors” (Falcous & Maguire, 2005, p. 138).

Sportlight: When special attention is given to an athlete who plays their sport in front of spectators and is rewarded based on athletic prowess.

Structure: A system that constrains and regulates the movements of a person(s) without any regard to the choice the individual(s) have in the matter (Carter, 2013).

Title IX: Education amendment put in place in 1972 which states that, “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance; increased the number of female participants in interscholastic and intercollegiate athletics; increased the number of foreign female student athletes” (Title IX, 2014).

Transculturation: “Processes by which the values and meanings of commodity change when it moves from one locality to another” (Carter, 2007, p. 17).

Transnationalism: Exchanges, connections, and practices over borders and in between cultures, which create a relationship between individuals, communities, and societies (Carter, 2014).

Unit of Analysis: This is the case that will be studied in an in-depth inquiry to gain more information about the subject (Yin, 2009).

Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA): Professional women’s basketball league in the United States founded in 1996 (WNBA, 2015).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter will provide a review of literature in the field of sport labor migration, women and labor migration, basketball sport labor migration, and women and the evolution of basketball. I will discuss how race, gender, nationality, and sport have played a role in sport labor migration literature. This literature review includes theories that have been used throughout sport labor migration research.

Globalization and Sport

Sport labor migration is an area of study within the growing field of globalization and sport. According to Sage (2011), globalization is “an unprecedented compression of time and space reflected in the tremendous intensification of social, political, economic, and cultural interconnections and interdependencies on a global scale” (p. 3). Globalization is a process that involves multiple moving flows of people, places, and information (Ritzer, 2010). These flows enable some to move in multiple directions within our social sphere and connect with various people and cultures on a micro-level. One of the many phenomena attributed to globalization is its influence on the more fluid and flexible ways people migrate and move throughout the world (Terret, 2008). According to Terrett, “migration is a relatively long-term change of geographical location undertaken by individuals or groups of individuals” (p. 954). Within sport labor migration, athletes, coaches, administrators and a number of other sport professionals are able to use their skills in their bid to migrate worldwide and have many choices given an array of employment opportunities. Globalization has enabled many people to transcend international borders in pursuit of lucrative employment; an example is transnational sport labor migrants,

who travel globally for their sport because they have skills that are highly valued in varying cultural contexts (Carter, 2013).

It is important to study global flows at both local and national levels in order to understand the experiences of transnational sport labor migrants (Maguire, 2011). According to Maguire, “people’s living conditions, beliefs, knowledge and actions are intertwined to varying degrees, with unfolding globalization processes” (p. 995). Therefore, to understand the motivations and experiences of sport labor migrants, it is important to understand how this intensifying interconnectedness integrates social processes and communication networks in connection with particular migratory patterns.

As individuals, we are influenced by many local, national, and international factors and according to Maguire (2011), “people, and nation states, are woven together in a tighter and deeper interdependency network. These globalization processes also appear to be leading people to experience spatial and temporal dimensions differently” (p. 995). Therefore, people of varying races, ethnicities, and nationalities have more opportunities to intermix culture and customs in varying cultural contexts as migrants. This has led to greater understanding of our differences and similarities at both the local, national, and international levels by creating a space where many have been able to mix and mingle.

Within the area of sport labor migration, athletes from many countries have had the opportunity to come together on one team and learn different playing styles and communication styles from teammates and coaches; while working together as one unit. These athletes keep their individual identities, but adapt to changes while coming together as one team. This amalgamation of people and places has also led to interdependency, which is when members of a

group or organization become mutually dependent on one another for various reasons (Maguire, 1994). In the case of sport labor migration, the network of interdependencies includes, “chains that are marked by global flows and uneven power relations” (Maguire, 2000, p. 1). These interdependencies bind humans together and intensify interconnectedness.

In some sport cases, teams and leagues become dependent on foreign talent and foreign talent becomes dependent on the leagues and teams. For example, Klein (2007) has focused on MLB and the recruitment of baseball talent from Latin American countries to MLB in North America. Many young men Latino baseball players come from developing nations where they battle poverty on a daily basis. Baseball has become a savior for many of these children residing in countries like Cuba, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic because baseball has provided a pipeline out of poverty (Klein, 2013). MLB has taken advantage of these vulnerable circumstances and has set up MLB baseball camps in these countries to identify and recruit the best talent that Latin America has to offer. MLB has been able to buy cheap talent in quantities and make millions off of these athletes who do not have many options for upward mobility outside of baseball. There are success stories such as Johnny Cueto and Albert Pujols who have been able to make millions of dollars for and from MLB. However, the majority, have not been as lucky.

At the other end of the spectrum, the young baseball talent in Latin America is dependent on MLB because many of these baseball academies have provided safe havens for impoverished children. These academies have provided food and shelter and an opportunity for these Latino children, to play the most popular sport in their country, with the proper equipment. This

scenario involving Klein's (2013) research has shown how the interdependence between baseball academies in Latin America and MLB teams in North America has worked throughout the years.

The global migration of people has created a shifting of ideologies, which has occurred with the reconfiguration of the balance of power with global exchanges. Frequent traveling and a shift in power balances have affected sport as much as it has affected multi-national corporations and global brands. For example, the globalization of the sport of basketball has led to the marketing of many National Basketball Association (NBA) players worldwide, such as Michael Jordan (LeFeber, 2002). The marketing campaign of Nike and Air Jordan allowed people all over the globe to see basketball as a visible American sport with superstar players serving as the faces of basketball. In the early 1990s, Nike teamed up with Michael Jordan to produce an image of African-American dominance in the sport of basketball, while at the same time, they created brand awareness of Nike through the Nike Air Jordan brand campaign. Both parties capitalized on the global market of basketball (LaFeber, 2002).

The Jordan example helps to provide context for how shifting ideologies have created a shift in power balances and how global exchange was influenced by a multi-billion dollar international company. The face of basketball has become associated with African-American male dominance because of the use of Michael Jordan, one of the greatest basketball players of all-time. Nike's marketing campaign of Air Jordan was to use the dominant image of Michael Jordan to sell Nike branded products (e.g., Air Jordans) worldwide. Nike became one of the biggest and most visible brands through this partnership, and has remained one of the most popular and powerful sports brands in both the U.S. market and the global market (Forbes, 2014). To understand the sport labor migration of professional athletes more clearly,

understanding cultural globalization provides helpful conceptual tools. Cultural globalization conceptualizes the worldwide intersection of culture and society and how individuals adapt.

Cultural Globalization

Within the field of globalization studies is cultural globalization (Maguire, 2011).

Cultural globalization is the blending of cultures from all around the world. The dynamics of cultural globalization involve people taking social practices and customs with them when they travel, and sharing those customs and practices with others around the world. They can do this while adapting to the customs and practices of other cultures, then they take those customs and practices back to their home countries to share with others (Maguire, 2011).

Sport labor migration is best understood within the field of cultural globalization because sport labor migration has involved the migration of sports people across a range of socio-cultural geographies; migration has produced and reproduced peculiar cultural impacts. For example, Brazilian soccer superstar Neymar has played for Spanish club Futbol Club (FC) Barcelona, but he has also played on the Brazilian national men's soccer team. He has played against soccer players from around the world, and learned about Spanish culture by residing in Spain. He then has taken what he has learned in Spain, both on and off the pitch, and has shared those experiences with his fellow Brazilians. Being the Brazilian and the global superstar that he is, he has been able to influence many around the world with his unique soccer skills as well as physical appearance, most notably his hairstyle. Using Neymar as an example shows how one person, a transnational sport labor migrant, can adapt and share certain cultural customs because of his ability to migrate freely and frequently. In a manner similar to Neymar, many athletes

from all over the world have traveled internationally for sport competitions and have played with and against athletes from other countries.

Neymar has been able to experience different cultures worldwide because he is a transnational sport labor migrant. Sport labor migration has afforded athletes such as Neymar and others to travel worldwide for opportunities to play sport. Travel has not been strictly for athletes, but for anyone connected to the sporting world. According to Maguire (2008):

Labour migration is an established feature of the sporting 'global village'. This migration centrally involves athletes but also includes coaches, officials, administrators and sport scientists. This movement of 'workers' occurs both within and between nations and continents on a worldwide basis. This phenomenon has been studied by social scientists with attention focusing on several sports including ice hockey, cricket, baseball, basketball and perhaps most notably, association football. (p. 45)

Sport labor migration has not just involved athletes, but personnel from a variety of sport roles (e.g., coaches, agents, managers). The movement of sport personnel (specifically athletes) migrating internationally for employment has steadily increased over the past few decades (Maguire, 2008). Notably, sports leagues, clubs, countries, coaches, etc., have been able to recruit ready-made talent to make up for any deficiencies or inadequacies that they have identified in their sport organizations. Instead of developing homegrown talent, recruiting talent from other countries has become the new strategy for developing sport talent and has, in many instances, hindered talent development in countries that have been dependent on foreign nationals for sport success (Gailily & Sheard, 2002).

In recent news, the country of Qatar had been under a cloud of controversy because of the questionable policies used to recruit foreign-born players for the national men's handball team (BBC, 2015). For instance, the naturalization process for becoming a Qatari citizen required that an athlete could be eligible for the national team if he or she had not competed in an official competition for another nation within three years (Monir & Al Thani, 2015). Qatari professional handball highlight how teams and organizations worldwide have been systematically developing policies and strategies for recruiting ready-made talent within sport, instead of developing homegrown talent. The dependency on ready-made foreign talent had allowed Qatar to become one of the top men's handball teams in the world (Ahl, 2012).

Sport Labor Migration Literature Review

Although the migration of skilled labor is not a new phenomenon, only in the last few decades has academic research concentrated on the global flows of cultural globalization in sport labor migration (Maguire, 2008). The majority of recent scholarship on sport labor migration research has been based on research by sport sociologists. However, within the disciplines such as geography, there have been articles written about the migration of athletes by authors who did not regard themselves as sport scholars or specialists and who did not publish in sport related journals, but in journals dedicated to human geography (Bale and Dejonghe, 2008). Most notably, Bale, who is a pioneer in the geographical study of sport (Keele University, 2015), has contributed much to the early research on sport labor migration. In 1982, Bale published *Sport and Place*, one of the first books about sport geography in the United Kingdom (U.K.). This work featured information on the labor migration of English and Scottish elite athletes, specifically in the sport of soccer (Bale, 1982). Bale studied the migration patterns of soccer

talent throughout the U.K. and the influences that explained those migration patterns. Bale focused on location and landscape and how economic impacts had influenced the geographical diffusion of modern sport (Bale, 2003). This was different from the sub-discipline of sport sociology because sport sociologists have tended to focus on the social phenomena of migration and study the motivating factors of the people and organizations involved in the migratory process (Coakley, 2008).

By the 1980s, research on sport labor migration by sport sociologists started to take off. Olin, a Finnish sport sociologist, started examining the migration of professional athletes to Finland. In comparison to Bale's early work, Olin (1984) took a sociological approach to sport migration by researching sport labor migration as a social phenomenon. At this juncture, professional sport was growing worldwide. The commercialization and modernization of sport changed the intentions of the athlete; to make more money or to play for the joy of the game. The commercialization of the game attracted the recruitment of highly skilled athletes interested in making a living from their sport.

Olin (1984) uncovered the motivations of athletes and the various types of athletes (basketball, soccer, volleyball, etc.) who were most likely to migrate internationally for sport purposes. Olin used the "push and pull theory" (Bogue, 1961) to understand how athletes made decisions to migrate (Olin & Penttila, 2013). Olin's research was unique and he focused on the agency of the athlete (i.e., who made the decision to migrate) rather than attributing the international movement to global structural factors alone.

Olin (1984) found that the commercialization of modern sport increased the global exposure of sports such as basketball, volleyball, and soccer, as well as increased earning power

for athletes (Olin & Penttila, 2013). In order for Olin to obtain data on the migration of athletes to Finnish basketball, volleyball, and ice hockey leagues, quantitative inquiry was used in the form of surveys and questionnaires. Olin's research subjects included 20 men's basketball players, 13 volleyball players, and 28 hockey players, of whom 66% filled out the questionnaire. At the time the professionalization of sport in Finland was a new phenomenon (Olin, 1984). This professionalization of sport, led to the migration of non-Finnish professional athletes to Finland, for opportunities in sport. Olin found that the motivations for migrant athletes were exclusive to the sport in which the athlete played and that scholars could not reduce all sport labor migrants to one generic group. Olin also found there to be variations across race, ethnicity, class, age, nationality and so forth.

In the same year, Olin conducted another study on men's professional basketball in Finland. Olin (1984) focused on the migration of basketball players to Finnish professional basketball leagues in the 1980s (Olin, 1981; 1984). Olin's research also touched on the trend of foreign professional athletes (non-basketball players) who moved to Finnish professional sport leagues (Aulio, 1989; Olin & Penttila, 2013) and how the commercialization of modern sport contributed to the dynamics of this global migration of athletes. More specifically, Olin focused on the migration of American men's basketball players to Finnish professional basketball teams, which began in 1972 (Olin, 1984). Olin mailed out a questionnaire to Finnish basketball sport clubs in which questions about the use of foreign players were posed. The clubs were asked to evaluate the use of foreign professional basketball players, and whether the importation of foreign talent was regarded positively or negatively. Olin's results indicated that the importation of American professional basketball players to Finnish basketball leagues was different

depending on league level, meaning the higher level leagues saw the importation of foreign talent as more positive than negative; whereas the lower level leagues viewed the importation of foreign basketball players as negative (Olin, 1984). Olin's research concluded that the importation of foreign players created an environment that was negative in regards to: (a) team spirit, (b) play tactics, (c) economics of the club, and (d) the success of the Finnish national team; but positive in regards to: (a) interest of audience, (b) increasing the number of spectators, (c) public relations of the club, and (d) training of young Finnish talent.

By the latter part of the 1980s, Maguire started to study the dynamics of sport labor migration as well. Citing Olin (1984), Maguire (1988) took a similar approach by focusing on the sport of basketball, specifically the commercialization of English basketball and the importation of American basketball players to England. This was the first qualitative study conducted in which basketball sport labor migrants were interviewed along with other sport professionals in the league (Maguire, 1988). Maguire took the approach of looking at the development of English elite basketball and used figurational sociology to study interdependency within elite English basketball. Maguire found that the recruitment of American men's basketball players to English elite basketball included the commercialization of the sport of basketball itself. Through basketball, England adopted American marketing techniques and playing styles, as well as American players (Maguire, 1988).

English elite basketball leagues had started recruiting American players beginning in the 1970s. By the 1980s, Americans and the American style of basketball were relied upon to generate media coverage and ticket revenue to sustain English elite basketball within the borders of England. This outside influence then led to the Americanization of English basketball in

which English basketball became dependent on American basketball talent. Ready-made American players were able to attract paying spectators and sponsors to English basketball games. The importation of Americans to English clubs became a strategy for many professional basketball leagues in England, however the influx of American players led to the under-development of the host nation player pool in England. Spectators attending games would see American players commanding the majority of playing time on the court, in contrast to the English players, who were more than likely to be sitting on the bench (Maguire, 1988). This created tension about what was more important; developing English basketball talent or increasing profit through elite basketball. Maguire (1988) noted, “the struggle between those seeking to develop the sport as TV entertainment and those who sought to promote it as a participant game has continued to mark English basketball up to the present day” (p. 318). Eventually, the league put a limit on the number of American players that could be included on a professional English basketball roster, in order to contain Americans dominating playing time on the court. This limitation led many Americans to seek dual-citizenship, so that they could be counted on the roster as an English player and not as an American player. This strategy then allowed English teams to keep ready-made American mercenary athletes on the roster through the use of dual-nationality status (Maguire, 1996).

Notably, the majority of American basketball players that were playing professional basketball in England were African-American basketball players. Maguire (1988) not only focused on the commercialization and modernization of the sport of basketball affecting athlete migration to England, but also on how African-American athletes were the main beneficiaries of this upward financial mobility through basketball. Maguire only briefly touched on the area of

race in his study, but alluded to the fact that young Black Britons had started to play the game of basketball because of the influence of African Americans.

Research on sport labor migration from sport sociologists in the 1980s focused on the sport of basketball, primarily on American basketball players who migrated to teams in Europe. Although sport labor migration was nothing new and had been documented previously (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005; Levine, 1985; Szymanski, 2006), Olin and Maguire were the first sport sociologists to go in-depth to look at the complexity of sport labor migration. Olin took a quantitative approach, examining motivations and agency, while Maguire took a qualitative approach, examining modernization and structure. Both Olin and Maguire did discuss the role that American athletes played in the modernization and commercialization of the sport. This inevitably led to the creation of dependent networks in which countries such as Finland and Great Britain were dependent on American sport talent, specifically the talent of African-American professional basketball players, to keep their teams popular and to generate profit (Maguire, 1988; Olin, 1984). Conversely, American basketball talent was dependent on the opportunities in professional basketball in England as well, which in turn created a network of interdependency (Maguire, 1988).

Sport Labor Migration in the 1990s

By the early 1990s, research on sport labor migration gained momentum. More notably, in 1994, Bale and Maguire edited a book entitled *The Global Sports Arena: Athletic Talent Migration in an Interdependent World*. The book explored the phenomenon of sport labor migration through a series of perspectives, which included: international migration, neo-colonialism, assimilation and integration, interdependency, and development (Bale & Maguire,

1994). The book's focus on elite athlete labor migration within a capitalist world economy included cases of transnational migration in relation to Welsh rugby, Asian cricket, soccer players moving to and from Europe, Canadian hockey players, Latin American baseball players to the U.S., American basketball players to Europe, and Kenyan runners migrating to the U.S. (Bale & Maguire, 1994). The book addressed methods for conducting empirical inquiry as well as the use of various theoretical lenses through which to view sport labor migration. Through assorted cases, readers were able to understand sport labor migration, with respect to different sports, regions, and how nationality and ethnicity played roles in global migration. Although Bale and Maguire (1994) compiled a comprehensive list of studies, the book barely touched on the gendered perspectives of sport labor migration because the focus was almost exclusively on the experiences of men. There was no information on the experiences and motivations of women athletes. However, in the concluding remarks, Bale and Maguire did note that more research would need to be conducted in the future, that focused on women as sport labor migrants. It should be noted that this book was published right before a landmark ruling in 1995, the Bosman ruling, which had a significant impact on elite athlete migration within Europe (Büch, 1998).

Bosman ruling. Research on sport labor migration took flight post-1995 (Büch, 1998). This can be attributed, in part, to the Bosman ruling of 1995, which set precedent for the unrestricted migration of professional athletes within the European Union (E.U.) The Bosman ruling came about when professional Belgian soccer Jean-Marc Bosman took legal action against the Union Royale des Societes de Football Association ASBL. At the time, athlete movement between professional sport teams was restricted, and if athletes wanted to sign with another team after the completion of their contract, a transfer fee would have to be paid by the club offering

the new contract. Bosman sued for the right to transfer for free once his contract with his current club team expired. Bosman won the case, which set precedent allowing athletes to migrate across borders after the end of their contracts, without being penalized with a transfer fee (Büch, 1998). The ruling led to the fluid migration of E.U. elite athletes, specifically, male soccer players, to countries other than their country of origin (Marcén, 2014).

The Bosman ruling influenced international migration as well, since professional athletes who had E.U. citizenship were able to migrate across European borders for employment opportunities without penalty (Marcén, 2014). Many non-E.U. athletes' saw this as an opportunity to gain European citizenship in order to become dual-nationals, which then enabled these athletes to freely negotiate contracts and migrate to play their sport within Europe. This landmark case has enabled teams to "get around" the system, by counting dual-national athletes as E.U. citizens while adhering to the quota system. Dual-citizen athletes then became more marketable.

After the Bosman ruling and throughout the mid-1990s, Maguire was the leading author in studies regarding sport labor migration and he published multiple peer-reviewed articles on sport labor migration, which addressed issues in geography and sport and the sociology of sport (Maguire, 1995). The focus of his research was on: elite sport labor migration using a sociological perspective (Maguire, 1996), identity and sport talent migration within the sport of cricket (Maguire & Stead, 1996), and Canadian ice hockey and talent migration (Maguire, 1996).

Maguire's research on Canadian migrants and ice hockey established a model for how sport sociologists and other sport researchers would view the motivations for sport labor migrants in the future. This typology first appeared in 1996 and has been used in various sport

labor migration studies to understand the motivations for why certain athletes in certain sports migrate internationally for employment opportunities. Maguire used the terms *Pioneers*, *Settlers*, *Mercenaries*, *Nomadic Cosmopolitans*, and *Returnees* after the work of Bromberger (1994), Lafranchi, (1994), Maguire (1993) and Maguire & Stead (1996) to discuss and map out patterns for why migrants journeyed across various sporting landscapes in general and specifically to characterize how Canadian ice hockey players fit into the model. Within Maguire's (1996) *Typology of Sport Labor Migration*, all the typologies were fluid and intersecting. Maguire's typology has since influenced the creation of other typologies of sport labor migration, within sport specific contexts (Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996; Lafranchi & Taylor, 2001; Stead & Maguire, 2000). I will go into more detail on this under the section heading, *Typology of Sport Labor Migration*.

Maguire's research in the 1990s influenced a variety of empirical studies focused on various sporting contexts including: geography and the culture of Kenyan running (Zakus & Horton, 1998), transnational migration as a right of passage for international cricket players (Stead & Maguire, 1998), the international migration of soccer players (Magee, 1998; Büch, 1998; Carmichael et al., 1999), and Samoan rugby players and identity issues involving global migration (Macpherson, 1999). Research on diversity and ethnicity in sport labor migration picked up momentum during this time by incorporating research on the migration of athletes from African countries, Latin and South American countries, and Pacific Islander countries to Europe and/or North America. This early research established how sport labor migration research would be viewed and written about in the 2000s. During this time, researchers began to examine the role of identity, culture, globalization, and transnationalism within international

sport migration. However, the experiences of women sport labor migrants still remained at the margins of sport labor migration scholarly literature with the focus on men sport labor migrants still dominating.

Sport Labor Migration in the 2000s

By the 2000s, sport labor migration scholarship had established itself within the discipline of sociology of sport and was recognized in the *Handbook of Sport Studies*, a book edited by Coakley and Dunning in 2000. Bale and Maguire contributed to the text; Bale wrote about human geography and migration within sport and Maguire discussed globalization and sport labor migration (Coakley & Dunning, 2000). Both Bale and Maguire had solidified transnational migration of sports people as a significant topic within the discipline of sport studies. After this publication, research on sport labor migration started to increase from researchers around the world. No longer were studies focused solely on athlete migration to and from countries in North America and Europe, but on sport labor migration worldwide.

Throughout the early 2000s, empirical investigations and research on elite soccer talent dominated sport labor migration research and research in other areas of sport migration began worldwide. This research included: Stuart and Nicholson (2001) addressing the international migration of elite Australian talent to overseas leagues and how the mass migration had led to problems with local talent development and appeal in Australia. Darby (2001) focused on the issue of race in Africa and the migration of African talent to European teams with Darby closely following a reverse neo-colonial model. In the same year, Chiba et al. (2001) touched on the assimilation of foreign talent to Japanese professional leagues and the acculturation process of these sport professionals. In 2002, Gailily and Sheard (2002) examined the Americanization of

Israeli professional basketball players and touched on religions impacts on sport labor migration and citizenship in Israel. Shin and Nam (2004) researched Korean players and the LPGA tour, which was one of the few articles that discussed women and sport labor migration.

Shin and Nam focused on the globalization of sport and national identity within the sport sphere and they explored the issues of race and ethnicity that Asian women golfers faced. Within the context of sport labor migration, Shin and Nam touched on the availability of golf and education in the U.S. and how Korean families sent their daughters to the U.S. at an early age to learn the fundamentals of golf and to obtain a prestigious American education. This success had ripple effects for women athletes in Korea and led to multiple Korean women participating in the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) tour. At the time, Korean women golfers had migrated to various countries worldwide on a basis to pursue opportunities in golf (Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rose, 2001). Though the article targeted the shift of cultural ideology within Korean culture as it related to women and sport, the article illustrated how this shift in ideas about sporting women had contributed to global migration in sport more generally.

Adding to the discussion of race and ethnicity in sport labor migration, Hernandez (2004) researched the Dominican migration to the U.S. in the sport of baseball and Poli (2006) focused his work on African soccer academies and a capitalist economy. Molnar (2006) went on to focus on the western European country of Hungary and the migration of soccer players after the fall of communism. Grainger (2006) touched on the Pacific Island of Samoa and the migration of rugby talent all around the globe. Bedford (2006) explored the migration of talent to and from New Zealand. Carter (2007) concentrated on socio-political relations of communism and its impact on Cuban baseball and transnational migration. Hognestad's (2009) research centered on the

migration of soccer talent to and from Scandinavia while Dimeo and Ribeiro (2009) were the first to study the sport of futsal in-depth and how Brazilian futsal players migrated to European leagues. By 2014, Thorpe (2014) spotlighted the seasonal migration of athletes involved in action sports. Finally, Agergaard and Tiesler (2014) compiled and edited the book *Women, Soccer and Transnational Migration*, which was the first book to focus on the transnational migration of women athletes in team sports.

All of the publications mentioned show how far the area of sport labor migration has come in the discipline of sport studies. However, research in the area of soccer and the global migration of elite sport talent to and from Europe and North America is still a main focal point in much of the scholarly literature on sport labor migration. Since the 1980s, there have been numerous empirical studies on the dynamics of sport labor migration within countries all over the world such as: South Korea, Samoa, Japan, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Hungary, and Brazil. In addition, the focus on sport specific research has started to attract a diverse group of researchers worldwide who have focused on sports such as: cricket, rugby, golf, baseball, basketball, volleyball, netball, handball, and futsal. No longer is sport labor migration research limited to the experiences of athletes going to and from North America and Europe nor is it limited solely to the sport of soccer.

Over the last decade, research has started to include the voices of scholars from almost every continent in the world; not only from North America and Europe. An ethnically diverse group of researchers from various backgrounds in the social sciences now observe and research sport and athlete migration. However, women as researchers and as research subjects, are still notably underrepresented. Only in the past few years has research explored the migration

patterns and experiences of women athletes all over the world, and there is still a need for more research on the experiences of women athletes.

Typology of Sport Labor Migration

Maguire's (1996) *Typology of Sport Labor Migration* (see Appendix A) made its debut in a publication entitled, *Blade runners: Canadian migrants, ice hockey, and the global sport process*. The article was about the role of Canadian professional hockey players who migrated to Great Britain for professional hockey employment. The author explored topics of migrant identity, motivations, and experiences. Maguire touched on previous research that pertained to sport labor migration in the sports of soccer, golf, tennis, and basketball and he discovered how motivations of sport labor migrants differed according to sport. Through these differences in motivations for migration, Maguire created the *Typology of Sport Labor Migration* and stated, "I am aware that the categories identified are not rigid and that, in the lived experience of migrants, these dimensions overlap and shade together in different combinations" (Maguire, 1996, p. 337). Within the *Typology of Sport Labor Migration*, Maguire identified five types of sport labor migrants, which included: *Pioneers*, *Settlers*, *Mercenaries*, *Nomadic Cosmopolitans*, and *Returnees* (Maguire, 1996). The patterns were theorized to be overlapping and fluid at any given time within any given sport, and yet, very much interconnected. According to Maguire, *Pioneers* were distinct because of their "passion and zeal" (Maguire, 2008, p. 448) in promoting their sport, such as those involved in the twentieth century YMCA movement (Maguire, 1996). *Settlers* were considered athletes who stayed and settled in the host country in which they performed their talent. *Mercenaries* were motivated by short-term gains and lucrative deals and *Mercenaries* moved to a country because of economic incentives and had little to no attachments

to the host nation. *Nomadic Cosmopolitans* were defined as nomads motivated by the social engagement and interaction that came with sport migration (Maguire, 1996). The typology was proposed to help map out patterns in the migration of athletes in both individual and team sports, but has since been the prototype for how sport labor migration researchers have categorized the motivations of the athletes that they have studied within sport labor migration research (Love & Kim, 2011; Takhashi & Horne, 2004).

Adding on to Maguire's 1996 typology, Lafranchi and Taylor's (2001) *Moving with the Ball: The Migration of Professional Footballers* analyzed the migration patterns of professional soccer players. The focus of the publication was on three types of soccer migrants, which included: *Itinerants* (transient migrants), *Mercenaries*, and *Settlers*. The authors focused on the structural and institutional control that influenced the migration of elite soccer migration, and suggested that economics, not player agency had the greatest impact on the motivations of players to migrate transnationally.

A year later, Magee and Sugden (2002) (see Appendix B) developed a revised version of Maguire's (1996) conceptual framework on the *Typology of Sport Labor Migration* using the sport of soccer as a basis. Magee and Sugden were very critical of the typology employed by Maguire and took a different approach to Maguire's typology. Magee and Sugden employed a grounded approach to their study and focused on a "single sport using primary data" (Magee & Sugden, 2002, p. 429). Magee and Sugden added the categories *Exile*, *Ambitionist*, and *Expelled*, to the list, and they attempted to use grounded information to explain motivations for sport labor migrants in English league football (soccer) (Magee & Sugden, 2002). According to Magee and Sugden, an *Ambitionist* was someone in English soccer who wanted to improve their career by

moving to a better league. The *Exile* was someone who migrated because of personal or political reasons or because of political instability in their original home and the *Expelled* was a player who was forced to migrate to play soccer (Magee & Sugden, 2002). It should be noted that Magee and Sugden came up with their typology conceptually and there were no English soccer players who fell into the category of *Expelled*.

Both Maguire's (1996) typology and Magee and Sugden's (2002) typology have been used throughout various sport labor migration studies. For example, Love & Kim (2011) and Takahashi & Horne (2004) used the previously mentioned typologies to characterize sport labor migration in different sports and in different cultural contexts. This influenced others to adopt and/or revise both Maguire and Magee and Sugden's typologies in reference to sport labor migration. An example of adding on to the typology would be Takahashi and Horne (2004). Takahashi and Horne identified the term *Taster* as a characteristic to describe a Japanese elite male soccer sport labor migrant who migrates in order to experience elite soccer with an established club team in a foreign country (Takahashi & Horne, 2004). In another example, Love and Kim (2011) used Magee and Sugden's typology within their study on intercollegiate sport labor migrants. Both examples provided, show how both the typologies by Maguire (1996) and Magee and Sugden (2002) can be used in a variety of sport labor migration research. The existing typologies used were diverse and overlapping i.e., not mutually exclusive. However, these typologies were created from research on the male sport labor migrant experiences and motivations and they did not consider the experiences and motivations of women sport labor migrants.

Most recently, Agergaard, Bothelo and Tiesler (2014) have contributed to understanding the experiences of women sport labor migrants and how women sport labor migrants may fit into sport labor migrant typology frameworks. According to Agergaard, Bothelo and Tiesler (2014), “in the existing literature various typologies for sports migrants have been suggested based on empirical studies of men athletes migrating into Anglo-American societies” (p. 191). With that being the case, studies in sport labor migration research have not been inclusive of women, specifically women migrating away from Anglo-American societies. The work of Agergaard, Bothelo and Tiesler has added to the literature on women soccer elite athletes and migration patterns, yet, outside of soccer, there has hardly been research to help understand the motives and experiences of women athletes who migrate for sporting opportunities, or women athlete’s involvement in the migration process. This research on American WNBA players migrating overseas has created a new typology framework by adding on to pre-existing typologies of sport labor migration.

Up until this point, research has indicated that the motives and experiences of women sport labor migrants have differed from that of men and may not fit into the pre-existing types (Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996; Lafranchi & Taylor, 2001). Recent research had started to incorporate the experiences and motivations of women sport labor migrants (Agergaard, 2008) and according to the research conducted by Agergaard, Bothelo and Tiesler (2014), “sport labor migrants tend to start out as sojourners and then later on may become settlers or transnational mobile athletes” (p. 208). Meaning, for some women athletes, the motivation to migrate in their sport was fluid throughout their career and differed from the motivations of male sport labor migrants.

Women and Sport Labor Migration

Studying women and sport labor migration was important because the experiences of sport labor migrants allow us to understand how sport migrants travel and move around the globe. Understanding the factors that have contributed to sport migration will help future women sport labor migrants, coaches, managers and others involved with international sport labor migration. This current study has helped to improve cultural understanding among coaches, administrators, and teammates who are a part of the international women's professional basketball community (as discussed in Chapter One). Women athletes have yet to become significant research participants within the sport labor migration scholarly literature. The scholarly literature on women as sport labor migrants is marginalized, because it has only women's experiences as domestic partners of male athletes. According to Maguire (2011):

The movement of sport labour is predominantly, though not exclusively, the preserve of men. Men's ability to move over time and across space is based on a patriarchal structure portrays women as the ones performing domestic labour, whether in the company of their traveling partners or waiting 'at home.' (p. 1000)

Women's experiences, at times, have been characterized as the experiences of the domestic matriarch who has supported her migrant athlete husband in his athletic endeavors (Finch, 1983). Prior to recent studies that focused on actual women athletes (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014; Botelho & Agergaard, 2011; Agergaard, 2008), the literature on women in sport labor migration was largely limited to examining the domestic roles of the male athletes' partners, as wives, who cooked, cleaned, and reared children (Roderick, 2012). Women's roles as athletes in sport labor

migration were relatively un-documented and rarely were they critically examined until recently (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014; Botelho & Agergaard, 2011; Agergaard, 2008).

Scholars studying multiple team sports have focused on the intricacies of gender roles and athletic migration in sports such as American football (O'Toole, 2006), soccer (Clayton and Harris, 2004), and baseball (Farole, 1996). In some ways, male athletes who have migrated internationally for their sport have relied on their partner for stability, which has come in the form of domestic duties. Also, these women played a feminine role in relation to their male athlete counterpart. This feminine role has at times, exacerbated feelings of male entitlement because of the men's status as a professional athlete (Ortiz, 2006). Many of these women had characteristics of a sport labor migrant because they had led lives related to the work travel of their husbands (Roderick, 2012), but were left in the shadows of their spouses "spotlight" (spotlight is a term that I coined to describe how a modern day athlete experiences sport and I will go into more detail about this term in Chapter Five).

Research on professional women athletes as sport migrants was sparse until the latter part of the 2000s. In 2008, Agergaard published the first peer-reviewed journal article on women as sport labor migrants in the sport of handball. Using the theory of integration and citing the work of Bale, Maguire, and Stead, Agergaard found that when she used Maguire's (1996) *Typology of Sport Labor Migration* to categorize the participants in her study of Danish women's elite handball players, the majority of participants fell into the category of *Ambitionist*. Agergaard (2008) defined *Ambitionist* as follows:

The ambitionist can be subdivided into three types. First of all there is the player, who takes the opportunity to achieve a professional career. Second, there is the athlete, who

has dreamt about playing in a particular country and perhaps even a particular club through his or her childhood or youth. Third, some sports migrants are ambitious about playing in a club with the highest possible sporting level giving them the possibility of improving their career and receiving more medals. (p. 7)

Meaning, being an *Ambitionist* was far more complex than just looking to be on the best sport team (Magee & Sugden, 2001), but that there were dimensions to a sport labor migrants' motivations to migrate and one must keep that in mind when looking at the entire migratory process.

Agergaard has been the lead scholar in investigating and writing about women in sport labor migration and has called on scholars to study this phenomenon. For instance, Agergaard, Bothelo, and Tiesler have published a number of works on the migration of women soccer players internationally, both independently and in collaboration. Agergaard (2008) published work on Danish women's handball and has collaborated with Bothelo on examining the migration of women soccer players to Scandinavia for employment opportunities in soccer (Agergaard, 2010; Bothelo & Agergaard, 2011). Tiesler (2011) has also contributed to the literature and has broadened the scope of women's soccer and sport labor migration, by researching women from around the world, most notably, women from the continents of Africa and South America.

Drawing upon research on sport labor migration and women and migration, these scholars formed a strong foundation for how women's sport labor migration research may be conducted and represented in the future. Recently, Agergaard and Tiesler (2014) published an edited book, *Women, Soccer and Transnational Migration*, in which cases of women's soccer

sport labor migration were compiled and edited to showcase the diversity of experiences and motivations that international professional women's soccer players have had. The edited book touched on many topics including: women as highly skilled transnational migrants (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014), motivations of women soccer migrants traveling internationally (Williams, 2014), women athletes migrating to U.S. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) universities (Booth & Liston, 2014; McCree, 2014), the migration of Brazilian (Rial, 2014), Japanese (Takahashi, 2014), and Scandinavian women (Bothelo & Skogvang, 2014) soccer players, and how women factor into the pre-existing typology of sport labor migration (Agergaard, Bothelo, Tiesler, 2014). Outside of Agergaard & Tiesler (2014), more research has emerged in the sport of cricket (Perry, 2014) and in extreme sports (Thorpe, 2014).

This recent scholarship has expanded our understanding and has left room for further research on sport labor migration for women who have participated in team sports and there is still much ground that needs to be covered. Areas that still need to be covered in the area of women and sport labor migration include: (a) how women athletes influence the various typologies on sport labor migration; (b) how the experiences and motivations of women sport labor migrants differ between sports; and (c) how race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender influence and impact transnational migration.

Gendered analysis of sport labor migration literature. Gender is shaped by social and cultural influences to determine what is masculine and feminine as opposed to sex, which is typically seen as rooted in biology (Butler, 1999). According to Engh and Agergaard (2013), "athletic mobility is an on-going process, a commodity that must continuously be achieved...studies of sports labor migration have afforded little attention to analyses of how

individual athletes relate to historical and macro-structural power relations and forces” (p. 1).

This dissertation emphasizes power relations with this marginalized group at both the micro- and macro- levels within a range of cultural contexts. The focus in this current study was on how women experienced such power relations and what motivated these women to migrate.

According to Agergaard & Tiesler (2014), “studies on women and sport labor migration may be useful when understanding the crucial mechanisms in globalization and migration processes in sports...and may serve to point to new perspectives on women’s migration and migration of the highly skilled” (p. 4). Such research has helped to develop our understanding of the factors that have driven these women to “cross geographical and socio-cultural boundaries” (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014, p. 4) in the name of sport. For the most part, labor migration studies that have referenced or researched the experiences of women and have focused on women as unskilled workers (Kofman, 2004). Women’s professional basketball players in this current study were considered skilled workers because of their elite athletic ability. In all cases, women were, in fact, recruited to play basketball abroad because of their athletic prowess. As stated by Kofman (2004), “skilled migration covers an enormous diversity of kinds of employment with distinctive conditions of entry, access to work and working conditions and practices” (p. 52). Skilled workers are workers who are imported into a country because of a shortage of experience or expertise in the industry or area of study. Therefore, women’s professional basketball players, in this current study, fit Kofman’s definition since they were able to migrate to countries worldwide because of their unique skill-sets and talent in the sport of basketball. In the next section I will discuss women and international labor migration.

Women and International Labor Migration

Research on international migration since the 1970s has included both studies of women immigrants and the analyses of gender (Sinke, 2006). Women have always been a part of migration flows at both the national and international levels, yet scholarly literature has pushed women to the margins, and has failed to explore and document the breadth of their experiences. There has even been less documentation on the experiences of women as skilled labor migrants. Women and migration for domestic duties and opportunities for better wages, family advancement, or marital opportunities are the primary themes reflected in studies of older immigrant streams (Sinke, 2006).

Historically, the ideologies, that have conditioned explanations about women and migration, have hindered their mobility. In the past, communities and families did not support women and/or girls migrating alone to a new country because of fears of sexual exploitation. Early research on women and labor migration almost always addressed the sexual exploitation of women workers and had left out the complexity and array of their experiences, and had never disclosed the myriad patterns their migrations had taken (Silvey, 2004). Patriarchal hierarchies and authority have played essential roles in the restriction of the mobility of women. In some cases, even when women were able to obtain passports and/or visas to go abroad, women were unable to travel abroad without their husband's permission or accompaniment, and many governments only saw fit to offer jobs of employment to men, which left women out altogether (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). Employers, policy makers, and legislators have all played a role in shaping the rules, which have influenced the gendered dynamics of transnational migration. Curran et al. (2006) noted, "migration disrupts gender relations and the institutions that reinforce

gender relations and cultural expectations about gendered behavior” (p. 213). Migration and mobility have helped to contour social orders and geographies of inequality and power relations at both the micro- and macro-levels.

Migration studies have only recently looked at migrant identities and motivations and documented how those motivations were reflected in the experiences of women. These conceptual frames were invaluable for exploring and understanding the experiences of women as sport labor migrants and women were more often at a disadvantage because of the domestic and international patriarchal structures in place, reinforced by laws and policies. The country and the gendered ideological frames reflected in the politics and histories have influenced the experiences of the woman sport labor migrants.

Skilled labor migration has included the migration of women within professional careers, such as that of sport labor migrants. An analysis of how gender has played a role in transnational migration is still needed in scholarly literature and Maguire (2011) noted, “global flows and practices are also bound up in questions of gender identity—family, sexuality, desire and male power. The phenomenon of sport labour migration is a case in point” (p. 1000). Through the lens of sport labor migration, we have been able to illuminate the intersection of multiple identities throughout the migration process, most notably that of athletic identity formation. These identities have played a role in the motivations of an individual to migrate and how the sport labor migrant experienced transnational migration.

Studies on labor migration have viewed the migration of women through the lens of “gendered geographies of power,” which is “a framework for analyzing people’s social agency—corporal and cognitive—given their own initiative as well as their positioning within multiple

hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains” (Mahler & Pessar, 2001, p. 445). Therefore sport labor migration of American WNBA players does in fact fall into this category of skilled labor migrants with these women professional basketball players experiencing multiple hierarchies of power through their athletic profession and through these gendered geographies of power. For example, Title IX has enabled many women athletes to pursue athletics at an unprecedented rate, however, the coaches and administrators of women’s sports have been governed by men. According to Greenwell (2012), “female coaches have become a casualty of the same law that provided such huge benefits to female athletes. In 1972, more than 90 percent of the people coaching women’s teams were women. Today, that number is 43 percent” (p. 1). This example has shown how the governance and structure of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and National Federation for State High School Athletics (NFHS) are structured by patriarchal dominance, in which women and girls have been allowed to participate, yet are under-represented in coaching and administrative positions; typically positions of power and governance.

Looking at migration through a lens of empowerment has allowed for a more holistic view of how experiences and motivations have been constructed within various cultural contexts. According to Mahler and Pessar (2006), “ideological representations of gender and sexuality are central to the exercise and perpetuation of patriarchal and class domination” (p. 38). This has allowed patriarchy to be reproduced with the potential to shape and influence employment patterns and possibly allow the patterns of patriarchal dominance to continue, unless there is a radical dismantling of the patriarchal hierarchy.

Skilled women sport labor migrants have had advantages over many other women labor migrants, in the sense that they have been able to negotiate their roles as athletes and are able to be employed in a vocation with more opportunities. Taking a gendered perspective is imperative when researching labor migration because gender is part of one's identity and factors into how an individual experiences transnational migration. According to Silvey (2006), "migration research that centers on questions of gendered places and identities views the migrant as produced through a range of intersecting forces and processes, and emphasizes the human agency migrants have in the production of places and identities" (p. 72). Women professional basketball players are considered skilled migrants and have been able to use their capital as an athlete and as a transnational migrant, to travel across international borders for the purpose of skilled employment in athletics. Specifically, WNBA players are in a highly visible profession where they are essentially performers.

The spectacle of sport and the visibility of these women have allowed them to find identities unique to their occupation and location in the social sphere. According to Kofman (2000), "migrants are seen as the jetsetters; they demonstrate the reality of globalisation and a borderless world" (p. 53). Many women professional basketball players have been able to make more money in one year than the average woman in the U.S in one year (BLS, 2015). The fact that in many ways, professional women's basketball players have not been restricted by borders and boundaries has allowed them to create networks for themselves outside of the U.S., that women working strictly in the U.S. may not have had the ability to do. Therefore, their motivations and experiences have been varied based on their athletic ability as well as their ability to migrate.

Research on the international migration of skilled professional women is limited. According to Kofman (2000), “skilled migration has thus been studied only partially...it would therefore be desirable for feminist research on international migration in Europe to pay attention to the migration of professional women” (p. 55) and conducting this research on said study has helped to fill in the gaps in knowledge, in the area of skilled women in international labor migration globally.

History of Women and Sport Labor Migration

International sport labor migration for women blossomed with the inception of Title IX in the U.S. in 1972 (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014). Title IX is an educational amendment that was put in place to provide women and girls the same opportunities in education as men and boys (Title IX, 2014). This applied to scholastic and intercollegiate athletics as well as academics. The benefits of Title IX were attractive to many international athletes because it allowed women from other countries to come to the U.S. and perform their sport and obtain a U.S. education. Most countries outside of the U.S. do not have intercollegiate athletics (Popp et al., 2010). Countries that do offer intercollegiate athletics do not offer the same incentives as the U.S. such as athletic scholarships, access to state-of-the-art facilities, or elite level of competition. In countries outside of the U.S. that do not offer intercollegiate athletics, both men and women athletes must choose between becoming professional athletes (if they even have the talent and opportunity to do so), continuing on to higher education (without athletics and this is very expensive in many countries) or getting a job (Garant-Jones et al., 2009). With so few opportunities for women in professional athletics, the NCAA has been able to provide a great option for women athletes all over the world who want to come to the U.S. to play sports. In fact, between 2009-2010 a total of

17,653 nonresident aliens (both men and women) competed as amateurs in the NCAA, which is the top-level of intercollegiate sport in the U.S (Zgongc, 2010).

While collegiate opportunities have drawn many young women athletes to the U.S., many professional opportunities for women in sports are available outside of the U.S., especially in team sports like soccer, basketball, volleyball, hockey, and handball (Agergaard, 2008; Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014; Botelho & Agergaard, 2011; Scranton et al., 1999). American female who have had a desire to play at the highest level, have often ended up leaving North America in order to play their sport professionally (Agergaard, 2008; Woods, 2012), whereas, many American male athletes have been able to stay in North America because the U.S. has some of the highest level of competition for men in professional sports such as basketball, baseball, and American football. Usually, men who play team sports go abroad in sports like soccer, rugby, or cricket. This is because countries outside of the U.S. have been able to offer competitive opportunities to play these sports at the highest professional level. However, many professional men's basketball players have ventured abroad, because there are too many men's professional basketball players, and the NBA does not have enough roster space to accommodate all intercollegiate basketball players who want to play professionally in the North America (Butler & Dzikus, 2014). Since the NBA has 30 franchises and roster spaces for 15 players, this has only allowed for 350 players to play at the highest professional level in North America. The limited number of NBA teams has led to many American players leaving North America to play, mainly in Europe. According to the Eurobasket database, 6,717 American men's basketball players competed in leagues abroad in the five years prior to 2014 (Eurobasket.net, 2014).

Women's Basketball in the U.S.

In 1891, Dr. James Naismith created the game of basketball in the U.S. By 1892, Senda Berenson adapted the rules of Naismith's basketball and introduced the game to women at Smith College. Although the name of the game was the same, for both men and women, the style of play was very different and women were required to play the game in a style in which less energy was exerted (Owen, 2010). During the nineteenth century, the ideology, which surrounded the participation of women and girls in sport, held that women and girls were weaker than their male counterparts (Vertinsky, 1990). As a result of this widely held belief, the sport of basketball for women was vastly different compared to men (Owen, 2010). Society at the time felt that the fast paced nature of the game of basketball was unhealthy for women because of the physicality of the game. In addition, rules of the game limited the amount of activity these women would have on the court and it was thought to be imperative for women to protect their femininity as well as their reproductive systems. Medical experts at the time felt that women and sport was a misfit and saw great risk in women participating in physical activity. According to Rosenberg (1973), "women, nineteenth century orthodoxy insisted, were starkly different from the male species. Physically she was frailer, her skull was smaller, her muscles more delicate" (p. 344). Women were viewed as being inferior and medical and biological inquiry at the time, rationalized and justified women being too fragile to take part in or be taken seriously when participating in any type of recreation or physical activity. This mentality was not only prevalent in the U.S., but was held in other countries worldwide (Cox, 2012; Vertinsky, 1990).

As time progressed so did the changes in ideologies about women and physical fitness. By the turn of the twentieth century, women had more opportunities to play sports. After the

implementation of a women's basketball team at Smith College in 1892, more colleges and universities started to follow suit by creating basketball programs for women (Hult & Trezell, 1991). Even with the implementation of women's basketball at Smith College, there was still a lack of participation among women as well as resistance for women to compete against one another.

By 1926, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) sponsored the first national women's basketball championship in which men's rules were used for the first time (Theriot, 1978). This breakthrough challenged beliefs and perceptions about women and physical activity and helped to initiate the change in perception of women as athletes. As time progressed, women attempted to increase their participation in sports. Monumental changes within the U.S. during the twentieth century, such as the Great Depression, World Wars, and the Civil Rights Movement, helped to transform ideologies in society and the role of women, because these ideologies had been tested during these times of uncertainty and found faulty as best (Ryan, 2013).

In the 1930s the Great Depression had hit and the opportunities for employment were limited. During this time, women started to take on new roles that challenged traditional gender stereotypes about women and education, and more women started to participate in athletic activities (Flannery, 2010). Through the pursuit of education came the pursuit of recreational activities such as swimming and basketball (Flannery, 2010). More and more women not only sought higher academic educations, but also a comprehensive education that included recreational activities. This need for an all-encompassing experience in higher education led to the implementation of more women's basketball programs in colleges and universities across the U.S. (Grundy & Shackleford, 2005). By the 1940s, World War II had men off fighting, causing

women to leave positions as homemakers. Women contributed to military efforts and filled the athletic roles that the men had temporarily vacated. For example, while the men were off to war, the All-American Girls Baseball League (AAGBL) started, which helped women to gain visibility as athletes and showed that they could play a sport created by and for men.

By the 1950s and 1960s the status of women of color began to be reflected in the dialogue regarding women and equality (Roth, 2004). By then, the second wave of feminism and the fight for equal rights was underway and within that debate, the question of women's access to athletic opportunities was part of the conversation. In 1971, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) was created and this set the stage for the many changes that would take place in women's athletics. The AIAW functioned as the governing body for women's intercollegiate athletics and women became coaches, administrators, referees, and players (Bell, 2007). By 1972, Title IX was passed and AIAW was able to use Title IX to increase opportunities for women in intercollegiate sport. The AIAW was the supreme force behind women's participation in intercollegiate athletics and at its peak, the AIAW had close to 1000 member schools and by the 1980s, the NCAA started offering women's championships as a way to make money (Wilson, 2013). 1982 was the year of the first Women's Division I NCAA Tournament and the participation of powerful women's basketball programs in the tournament led to the demise of the AIAW. The attractive incentives from the NCAA led to the extinction of the AIAW in 1983, since the member schools of the AIAW opted to join the NCAA (Wilson, 2013). By the mid-1980s, the NCAA became the dominant governing body over women's intercollegiate sport and remains so today.

This brief history of women and sports throughout the twentieth century was relevant to this current study on American women's professional basketball players because ideologies throughout history restricted the participation of women in sport. The Title IX amendment helped to create legislation for educational institutions and provided more opportunities for women to participate in sport. This amendment influenced girls and women to pursue athletics more seriously and has allowed female international athletes to come to the U.S. to pursue both an education and an athletic career with an athletic scholarship.

Women's Professional Basketball in the U.S.

Featuring teams sponsored by businesses, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) sponsored some of the highest level of play in women's basketball from the 1920's through the 1940's. At that time, companies recruited the best talent to play for their teams in an effort to ensure worker loyalty and to create positive publicity. Though industrial players would often be given time off to travel to games, AAU rules required them to be full-time employees (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005). It would take several more decades before women basketball players could claim professional status. Women's professional basketball in the U.S. started with the Women's Professional Basketball League (WPL). The league lasted from the fall of 1978 to the spring of 1981. Over a decade later, the Women's American Basketball Association (WABA) and the Women's Basketball Association (WBA) were established and lasted three seasons (summer of 1993 to the summer of 1995) (Banet-Weiser, 1999). By 1996, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and the American Basketball League (ABL) were founded. At that point, women's basketball in the U.S. started to gain popularity because of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. During that time, the 1996 U.S. Women's Olympic Basketball team

took home the gold medal and women's basketball legends such as Lisa Leslie, Rebecca Lobo, and Sheryl Swoops led the way for the U.S. National Team to claim the championship. The media recognition and the success of the national team created a following for women's basketball and jumpstarted the popularity of the WNBA. During this time, the WNBA and the WBL were the two biggest professional basketball leagues in the U.S. for women; however, the WBL only lasted two full seasons before its demise in 1998 (Banet-Weiser, 1999). Currently, the WNBA is the most elite league for women's professional basketball with the top professional women's basketball players from all around the world playing in the WNBA. The WNBA has lasted longer than any other women's professional basketball league in the U.S. to date.

Women's Basketball Worldwide

The sport of basketball began to be played worldwide as early as the 1930s. In 1938, the Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA) Eurobasket Women (also current title for the European Basketball Championship tournament) or Eurowomen had its inaugural tournament. During this time, a bi-annual basketball tournament was held between various countries throughout Europe (Fibaeurobasket.com, 2014) in which women were able to participate in the sport at a competitive level. After the tournament in 1938, there was a hiatus in participation of women in basketball due to World War II. The next tournament would not be held again until 1950. Since then, women's basketball players have been able to migrate internationally for competition as well as to be a part of various basketball teams worldwide. Due to globalization, the popularity of basketball worldwide has inspired the migration of women basketball players to overseas teams.

Women professional basketball players have been able to migrate internationally because of the many professional basketball opportunities. In fact, many of the women who have played in the WNBA, have still ended up going overseas to play professional basketball. Some women have gone overseas because they were able to obtain lucrative contracts worth 10-times more than what they would have made in a WNBA season (Berkman, 2014). However, another appealing quality of the WNBA has been that it has given American women's professional basketball players a chance to stay close to home and compete. Even though the salary has not been able to match that of overseas teams, the popularity of playing in the WNBA and the media attention, has provided opportunities for sponsorships and endorsement deals. Some players have had endorsement deals to fulfill in the U.S market and have chosen to play in the WNBA, yet have still made a higher salary playing overseas (Steele, 2012).

Understanding the Structure of Overseas Professional Basketball Club Teams

It can be argued that the top women's basketball league outside of the U.S. is FIBA Euroleague Women. FIBA Euroleague Women is the highest professional basketball league for women in Europe and there have been a significant number of WNBA players who have played in FIBA Euroleague Women during the WNBA off-season. The league was established in 1958 and players who have been a part of this league have played for one of fifteen European club teams. These teams have usually been the best team or teams in that respective country (Euroleague, 2015).

These Euroleague teams have had some of the best and highest paid WNBA players on their rosters. Women who have competed in FIBA Euroleague Women have also competed in various league competitions within their country (Bowman, 2014). For example, UMMC

Ekaterinburg is a Russian basketball team that has a number of current and former American WNBA players on their roster including: Nolan Deanna, Candace Parker, Diana Turasi, and Kristi Toliver (Eurobasket.com, 2015). These players have been some of the best players in the WNBA and are currently on one of the best teams in Russia and in the Euroleague.

Despite the constraints regarding the limit of foreign players, a team like UMMC Ekaterinburg has been able to get around the quota rule because three of their players (Nolan Deanna, Diana Turasi, and Kristi Toliver) have dual-citizenship with E.U. countries. Once these women with dual-citizenship arrive in Russia, they have able to play on one team, but in three different competitions: FIBA Euroleague women, the Russian League, and the Russian Cup (the latter two are governed by the Russian Basketball Federation). Having a league structure where one club team is able to play in multiple competitions throughout one season is not exclusive to Russia but common in other E.U. countries like Belgium, France, and Spain. All of these competitions are different, yet the club team simultaneously plays in all of these leagues throughout the duration of the season. For instance, each European league has been able to have its own set of rules for competition, such as the number of non-E.U. foreigners that can be on the court at one time. However, during Russian Cup games, only players with Russian citizenship have been able to play on the court and during Russian League games, two foreigners (non-E.U. citizens) have been able to play on the court at the same time. Yet, during Euroleague competitions, there has not been a restriction to the number of foreigners that have been able to play on the court at the same time. Having restrictions on the number of foreigners (non-E.U. citizens) on a roster or on the court, is not uncommon in European professional sport leagues. Many European leagues and club teams have used these restrictions on foreigners so as to not

hinder talent development in the country and to allow European nationals an opportunity to advance and develop in their respective sport (Gailily & Sheard, 2002).

In addition there have been some players who have only played in either the WNBA or overseas throughout the year. For example, Skylar Diggins, a WNBA player who has been able to secure lucrative endorsement deals off the court has chosen to stay and play in the WNBA instead of going overseas to play professionally. Diggins currently has endorsement deals with Nike and Sprint (Feinberg, 2014) and was a highly sought after WNBA draft pick because “she was good in college, an elite player...beautiful, good-looking and ha[d] a strong personality” (Mandell, 2014). Diggins has been able to play one season in the WNBA and then train in the U.S. during the WNBA off-season. Even after a disappointing rookie season in 2013, Skylar Diggins has continued to have a huge following, partly because of her sex appeal off the court (Lee, 2013). Currently, Diggins has the most social media followers of any WNBA player and was the first woman athlete to sign with Rapper/Entrepreneur Jay Z’s Roc Nation management agency (Mandell, 2014). Instead of traveling overseas to play basketball in the WNBA off-season, she has been able to make appearances “from the Grammys to the Super Bowl [to] Fashion Week, [and] she’s popping up everywhere” (Feinberg, 2014).

When comparing Skylar Diggins to other WNBA players, such as Brittney Griner, who in 2013 graduated from college the same year as Skylar Diggins (and was a higher WNBA draft pick), we can see how commercial sex appeal has influenced professional women’s basketball in terms of the opportunities afforded to certain athletes in comparison to others. For instance, Griner has not had the same opportunities as Skylar Diggins in regards to endorsement deals. Even though Griner had a much stronger rookie season than Diggins, Griner has not been able to

garner the same attention as Diggins, and therefore has been playing overseas in order to obtain more lucrative deals (Mandell, 2014). Even with lucrative deals in the WNBA and overseas, women professional basketball players in the WNBA have not been able to make as much money as NBA players.

WNBA vs. NBA Salaries

The majority of women professional basketball players have made far less than men who play professional basketball. Mandell (2012) documented that men's professional basketball players have been able to make millions of dollars playing in the NBA, where as women's professional basketball players playing in the WNBA have made anywhere from \$35,000 to just under \$110,000 in one season.

In regards to men, many men who have been unable to play in the NBA, in many cases, end up going abroad for employment opportunities because there has not been enough room for them to play professionally in the U.S. (Butler & Dzikus, 2014). Even though this is the case, the experiences of men and women basketball sport labor migrants have been different because of varying factors. Men who have gone abroad to play professional basketball have only had to worry about securing contracts with one team rather than two teams in a single year (unless they were cut from the team). In contrast, WNBA players have had the option to play in the WNBA or overseas, or in both leagues because of the league schedules. American women WNBA players who have chosen to go abroad not only have had to secure a WNBA contract, but have also had to secure a contract with an overseas team, with some playing professional basketball year-round (Steele, 2012). In addition, American men's and women's basketball players who play professionally have usually identified as African-American (Lapchick, 2013).

Internationally, the identity of American basketball sport labor migrants has been that of the African-American male and female basketball player.

The (African-) Americanization of International Basketball

Since the inception of sport labor migration research, the sport of basketball has been of interest to sport sociologists (Maguire, 2011). The sport of basketball is particularly interesting because of the racialized nature of the sport. The sport is an American sport that has been developed in the U.S. and marketed to a global audience worldwide (LaFeber, 2002). Both Olin (1984) and Maguire (1988) touched on the racialized nature of professional basketball because African Americans dominated the sport by the 1980s, which still holds true today (Chalip, 2013). The migration of professional basketball players overseas has allowed African-American players to be the face of basketball globally and has even inspired other Black nationalities, such as Black Britons, to participate in the sport of basketball (Maguire, 1988).

The modernization of sport, specifically of the sport basketball, has allowed people from all over the world to have access to the sport through various media outlets, and modernization has increased the commercialization of the sport we see today (Chiba, 2013). Globalization is multidirectional and so are the people and ideologies it shapes and is in turn shaped by (Ritzer, 2010). With the fusion of cultures and ideas, through the dynamics of globalization, the power has shifted to those who have been able to adapt and become super-transnational, which has created homogeneity—ultimately a “unitary-global culture” (Maguire, 2011, p. 996). Basketball is a sport that was invented in the U.S. and spread around the world. Basketball is no longer an American sport, but a global sport, played by millions. Fans worldwide have been influenced by

the American style of play in which African-American players have dominated (Lapchick, 2013).

As stated before, the face of modern basketball is that of African-American players such as Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James (Nathan, 2008). The images we see of basketball worldwide have suggested that the face of professional basketball is that of a tall, athletic, Black American man. This dominance in the sport of basketball and the media attention worldwide has created a platform in which African-American men have been able to create a global culture. This global culture has influenced and capitalized on the global basketball market and people from various countries worldwide have bought into this idea of the modern sport of basketball. The NBA has since been able to become more than a national brand. It has become an international brand that is visible in hundreds of countries worldwide, marketed by using the image of the Black, male, American professional basketball players (NBA.com). As noted by Maguire (2011), “this process is seen to entail a shift from ethnic or national cultures to ‘supranational’ forms based upon either the culture of a ‘superpower’ or a ‘cosmopolitan’ communication and migrant networks (e.g. Americanization)” (p. 996).

For the sake of this current study, I will refer to this shift in ideology as *(African-) Americanization*. African-American males have been able to dominate the playing time in professional basketball leagues and the face of marketing campaigns worldwide (Lapchick, 2013; Eurobasket.net, 2015). *(African-) Americanization* is a phenomenon in which African Americans have been able to have a significant influence within various cultures and/or organizations worldwide, despite being historically marginalized within American society.

In the past, studies on sport labor migration and basketball have focused on the fact that the majority of professional sport labor migrants have identified as American, and have only touched on the fact that those Americans were African-American (Maguire, 1988; Olin 1984). More recently, Gailily and Sheard (2002) explored the dynamics of international men's basketball and focused on American men who migrated to Israel for professional basketball. The authors were particularly interested in examining how the importation of American men's basketball players was changing the cultural identity of the sport of basketball in Israel. Gailily and Sheard illustrated how basketball in Israel became dependent on the importation of American players in order to sell out arenas and attract sponsors for club teams. The players that were of particular focus within the article were African-American players who did not hold Zionist beliefs and who were considered to be Mercenary sport labor migrants (Gailily & Sheard, 2002; Maguire, 1996; Magee & Sugden, 2002). Gailily and Sheard also found that the recruitment of foreign nationals hindered athletic talent development at the youth level in Israel and that these foreign athletes only migrated to Israel because of lucrative incentives. As a result, club teams such as Maccabi Tel Aviv, Hapoel Migdal-Jerusalem, and others decided to place a quota on the number of foreign (mainly American) basketball players that were allowed on an Israeli team roster in any given season. The findings of Gailily and Sheard were similar to that of Maguire in terms of how Americans created a market of dependency in the sport of basketball, more specifically, African-American basketball players. The dependency was not only on players, but also on marketing strategies and the commercialization used to increase profit for the professional basketball clubs. This migration of skilled talent was not exclusive to male American players, but also female American players. For instance, during the 2013-2014 WNBA

off-season, approximately 67% of WNBA players played with an overseas club team (WNBA.com, 2014). Looking at international basketball through a gendered perspective by understanding the experiences and motives of women basketball players has helped with gaining insight into the (African-) Americanization of basketball abroad. Within this current study, the intersection with gender and race in professional basketball abroad has opened up the door about the experiences of both men and women and how gender and race have played a role in motivations and experiences.

African-American Women and Mobility

African-American women have been under-represented in various sports throughout the U.S., with the majority of these women participating in either basketball or track and field (WSF.org, 2015). Since the inception of Title IX, African-American women have been able to gain access to more sporting opportunities. For example, African-American women now make up close to 68% of all basketball players in intercollegiate athletics in the U.S. (WSF.org, 2015). There have been several theories on the reasons for the lack of participation by African-American women athletes; usually in reference to access and mobility in sport (Martin, 2014). In this section I will discuss the history of mobility and the African-American woman, to give further context to understanding the relationship between race, gender, and migration, since the majority of the participants in this current study were African-American.

Throughout history, African-American women have been trying to find their place in American society; a place where they could transcend being second-class citizens, becoming citizens with equal access and resources and opportunities. African-American women's voices were second to those of the African-American men's voices during the civil rights movement

and second to those of White women during the women's liberation movement (Baxandall, 2001). Which has raised a number of broader questions, including: what place do African-American women really have in American society? What type of influence do they have worldwide? How has the idea of what it is to be an African-American woman in American society affected the mobility and opportunities these women of color have access to? In addition to these questions, it has also been important to ask how the lack of mobility and opportunity for African-American women outside of their place of residence may be both a constraint as well an empowering factor. Some African-American women have been able to use their spatial rootedness in a community to their advantage (Silvey, 2006, p. 65). Using the lack of mobility for control in an environment based on rootedness has been both inhibiting and constraining. African-American women have often been the matriarchs within the family household, where they have been able to exhibit power in many ways, yet they have been limited from venturing outside of the community because of the lack of opportunities.

Black matriarchy is a cultural phenomenon in which the role of the Black woman has been stereotyped as a woman who has been able to possess devotion to her family and is restricted to being a pillar at home because of societal constraints due to racial oppression (hooks, 1990). Within Black matriarchy, the Black woman has historically been a caring woman who has been forced to be a beacon of hope for the household because the Black man was perceived to be undependable. Given the ideology surrounding the Black matriarch, she was required to stay close to home and shield and protect her children from the prejudices of the White world in order to survive (Anderson, 1976). According to Black Feminist scholar bell hooks, Black matriarchy is a myth, which has been used to "further perpetuate the image of black

women as masculinized, domineering, amazonic creatures” (hooks, 1990, p. 81) and “the argument that black women were matriarchs was readily accepted by black people even though it was an image created by white males” (hooks, 1990, p. 78). Although people in both Black and White spheres of life see the term “matriarch” as an endearing term, it was one that was created to represent and restrict Black women’s movement through society. The myth of Black matriarchy ultimately has turned into an ideology that has been internalized by Black women who have chosen to limit their options and mobility, clinging instead to their rootedness in their communities (hooks, 1990).

African-American women’s basketball players who migrate abroad for employment opportunities do not fit the ideological construction of the term matriarch. This was because the women in the study were able to travel abroad to various countries worldwide, essentially escaping complacency within their communities. African-American women’s basketball players created an even more unique situation for themselves because within the Black community, African-American women have been able to be sheltered from the discrimination within an unbalanced White patriarchal structure (hooks, 1990). African-American women’s basketball players have been left to create a place for themselves far away from home, which has left a sense of vulnerability and a new creation of an identity to empower them (hooks, 1990). Race, gender, and nationality have all intersected and have had an influence on these gendered geographies. Manalansan (2006) noted “transnational travel and movement have not diminished the influence of indigenous local practices and institutions but rather created situations where ideologies, identities, and practices highlight the crucial articulation between the local and the global” (p. 230). Meaning, although these women may have been involved in transnational

migration to overseas teams, they still carry cultural remnants from home and were continuously operating between local and global influences. For example, an African-American professional basketball player may have been more aware of her race when playing in a country like France where she was the racial minority in comparison to playing on a WNBA team where she was the racial majority (Lapchick, 2013).

African-American women athletes have continuously tried to empower themselves within various patriarchal structures, while at the same time dealing with the privilege of being an athlete and the disadvantage of being a woman of color. According to Manalansan (2006), “the migrant body is the site where the racialized, ethnicized, and gendered disciplinary measures employed by various states and their agents come together and is also the venue for promoting as well as repressing sexualized images, desires, and stereotypes” (p. 235). If we looked at this through the lens of an African-American professional women’s basketball player, we might say that she combats stereotypes of African-American rootedness with her agency as a transnational athlete migrant, but is still stereotyped because of her physical and cultural identity.

Theories Used in Sport Labor Migration Research

Research in the area of sport labor migration has still not fully embraced women athletes. Scholars have approached research on sport labor migration through various data collection methods. In the past, to understand the transnational migration of athletes, data collection has been matched to theories such as: (a) world systems theory, (b) theories of imperialism, (c) dependency theory, and (d) globalization theories (Maguire, 2011). All of the listed theories have provided context for understanding the structural forces that have played a role in why sport labor migrants have chosen to migrate and how they have experienced migration. Yet, these

theories have not focused on the agency of the athlete within the migration process and the role that the athlete has played in their choice to migrate.

World Systems Theory

Wallerstein developed world systems theory in the early 1970s. This theory has explored how the modern nation state has existed within the socio-cultural influences of politics, economics, and legislation. This amalgamation of influences is known as a world system, in which individual behavior cannot be strictly understood without understanding societies influence (Wallerstein, 1990). World systems theory has sometimes been used to understand the area of sport studies. For example, sports are essentially recreational activities that have, in many cases, been turned into multi-billion dollar industries governed by a capitalist centered world-economy. We no longer govern our sports at the micro-level, but have national and international federations (e.g., NBA, WNBA, FIFA, IOC) that oversee our sporting activities and set rules and regulations in place for us to follow. To understand an individual athlete and the decisions he or she may have made while pursuing athletic endeavors, we can use world systems theory to focus on the structural influences of the world system and how this structure may have influenced the agency of the individual to make decisions.

For instance, Maguire (1994) has used Wallerstein's world systems theory (1974) to understand athlete migration by focusing on the structure put in place by wealthy and powerful countries, sports leagues, and sports teams. Wealthy and powerful countries like the U.S. and Great Britain have been able to recruit some of the best athletes in the world for their leagues and have been able to pay these athletes a lucrative sum of money for their athletic contributions. In reference to world systems theory, Maguire & Bale (2013) stated, "the most talented workers, in

whom peripheral or semi-peripheral states have invested time and resources, are lured away to the core states whose wealth derives from their control over athletic labour and the media-sport production complex” (p. 2).

Meaning, within world systems theory, the structure of how a certain sport is governed both at the local and international level, can influence athlete migration. For example, a Kenyan long distance runner may be lured away from competing in and for Kenya because she may be offered a more lucrative incentive to compete at a university within the U.S. Even though time and resources within her country have helped to assist her in becoming one of the best in the world, she is still controlled and influenced by the global structures of the world and the powerful nation-states, like the U.S. For instance, migrating to the U.S. to pursue her sport, may ultimately allow her to receive more media attention from powerful companies and help to give her more exposure in her sport. That, in turn, could attract sponsors and other lucrative endorsement deals for the future.

Theories of Imperialism

Theories of imperialism refer to political, cultural, and economic relations between dominate and subordinate nations (Guttman, 1978). Within imperialism theoretical frame, the dominant nation state influences the subordinate society into creating a society in which socio-cultural values of that society promote imperialist values and structures (Houlihan, 1994; Guttman, 1994). Similar to world systems theory, theories of imperialism have focused on how the rich, dominant, and powerful countries ultimately have control of various entities throughout the world at both the local and global levels. Theories of imperialism have been used within sport to understand how dominant and powerful countries use sport to exploit the sport labor

resources of less powerful and how the structure put in place has influenced what sports we play and by whose rules. By looking at sport through the imperialist lens, we can see how nation-states have tried to push their political agenda through the use of sport.

With sport labor migration, when looking at the continent of Africa, the exploitation of African soccer talent illustrates how a continent with countries so rich with athletic talent can be exploited. Poli (2006) and Darby (1997) illustrated how neo-imperialism has created a market in which wealthy more powerful countries were able to buy, sell, and trade labor. In this sense, African soccer talent has been groomed and traded for a low price to European club teams. Once on a team, the athlete's physical capital was then exploited to secure wealth for the larger corporation. The athlete no longer owns his or her body and are literally bought and sold based on his or her athletic ability to generate profits for the European club team. This example describes how the theory of imperialism helps to provide an understanding of how the structures put in place have created a market for trade of cheap labor to wealthy powerful countries.

Dependency Theory

The idea of imperialism or neo-imperialism is closely linked to dependency theory, which has been a theory that has focused on how the importation of highly skilled athletes has led to the underdevelopment of athletic talent (Gailily & Sheard, 2002). With teams and leagues vying for ready-made talent to secure ticket sales and championships, domestic talent has been left sitting on the sidelines. This has hindered youth talent development, therefore, leaving teams and leagues dependent on the importation of athletes instead of homegrown talent (Maguire, 1988). The structure put in place by many leagues and club teams has allowed for the

recruitment of talent based on the resources that they may have had to lure the best talent to their organization that they could afford.

For example the English Premier League (EPL) has been regarded as one of the best soccer leagues in the world. The league has been controlled by powerful European entities, which has allowed the EPL to secure profitable contracts for media and advertising and to attract some of the best talent from around the globe. As of now, the EPL has been dominated by foreign athletes that have not identified as English and there has been some pushback in regards to how many foreign athletes can be allowed on a league or team roster (The Gaurdian, 2014). The league is dependent on elite talent to survive and the restriction of foreign talent could compromise how much profit the EPL is able to generate. The model put in place by the EPL shows how dependency theory has created a structure in which a league becomes dependent on foreign talent to sustain and survive.

Globalization Theories

Globalization is a complex phenomenon, which has been characterized as the “process (or set of processes), which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions” (Scholte, 2005, p.17). Globalization has allowed for the fusion of cultures and ideas and has influenced trade, transit, and transformation. Globalization processes have helped to influence sport in a variety of ways including: international spread of sport, governance of international sport organizations, and worldwide competitions (Maguire, 1990). Through these processes, there have been cultural forces that have helped to shape globalization and the multidirectional flows within the sporting sphere. People have been able to share and practice local and global customs because of the compression between time and space. Through

this communication and the amalgamation of various cultures, there has been much overlap in how globalization has affected people and how the process has made people more alike or more different. Terms like homogenization, hybridization, and polarization have helped to create a language for critiquing the processes of globalization. In ways, the global American economic market has influenced some cultures and people around the world. This has been because of its dominant position within the world economy and how it has had the ability to change a society's beliefs and values because of its global influence (Sage, 2010).

Theories in globalization, such as cultural globalization, have focused on the hybridization of global cultures and how the world economy has influenced this international integration, again focusing on the world structure. For example, the global migration of athletes has allowed for international travel and the sharing of ideas and playing styles through face-to-face interaction. Due to the compression between time and space, a soccer player from Argentina can now travel to France and play with and compete against talent from all over the world. This hybridization of global soccer styles from various countries may seem to be unique, but by the same token, because of globalization processes, many elite athletes have had the opportunity to play with the best in the world and not just the best in their local community. This has created a model in which leagues and teams have attempted to recruit the best talent worldwide, where the success of a league or club was based on money and power (e.g., Boston Red Sox, AC Milan). This league structure, which has influenced migration, has focused on the global incentives that may have influenced an athlete to migrate for the purpose of sport and not necessarily on the agency of the player and their personal life; which may have also influenced this migration. Since powerful club teams with the most money have been able to recruit the best talent, this has

assisted in creating a homogenization in how clubs and leagues worldwide have structured their organizations.

Theory of Transnationalism

Transnationalism is characterized by the process that one uses to transcend international borders and how a person's agency to migrate plays a role in their motivation and experiences as migrants (Faist, 2010). The theory of transnationalism has differed from other theories used in sport labor migration research in that the unit of analysis is the person who is migrating and not on the structure set in place. According to Carter (2011):

The majority of studies on sport migration focus upon routes and patterns that appear to confirm highly criticized explanatory theories such as development theory (Maguire, 1999) and world systems theory (Magee & Sugden, 2002). They portray these routes as a natural development of localities' historical relations, often blindly replicating colonial casualties. Such approaches effectively treat these migratory patterns as historically determined without fully taking into account how shifting arcs of power may have altered the contexts and structures of the very patterns examined, while simultaneously providing an impression of invariability and inevitability as reasons for certain countries currently acting as metropolitan and cosmopolitan centre's of global sport. (p. 11)

Thus, in sport labor migration research, it was important to research the structure put in place that may have influenced migratory patterns as well as research the agency of the person and what may have motivated the person to migrate, while taking into account how migrants themselves negotiate access across national borders.

By using the theory of transnationalism, I was able to understand how transculturation (Ortiz, 1995) contributed to how a culture merged and converged through one's experiences as a sport labor migrant. This was important in my research because in order to answer my research questions on motivations and experiences, I had to focus on the agency of the player herself, from her perspective and her internal motivations for migrating abroad. This allowed me to focus on how the person's identity and how her personal life influenced her motivations to migrate.

Summary

I have given a comprehensive overview of the evolution of research in sport labor migration studies by touching on gender, race, and nationality. I have also provided an overview of the history of basketball and the role women have played in the development of basketball in the U.S. and worldwide. I have presented information on women's labor migration and how the intersections of race and gender have affected the experiences of sport labor migrants. I have concluded this chapter with a brief overview of theories used to guide research on sport labor migration and I given a brief explanation of the theory of transnationalism in reference to this current study. In Chapter Three, I will delve more deeply into the theory of transnationalism and how it was used to guide this current study. I will also detail the case study methodology and how I used the methodology to conduct the research for this dissertation.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical framework of transnationalism that was used in this dissertation. I also go into detail on my chosen methodology of case study and how I incorporated this method throughout this current study. To conclude the chapter, I outline the methods used for data collection and data analysis.

Theoretical Framework: Transnationalism

The theoretical framework of transnationalism guided this current study. Scholars have used an array of definitions when discussing the theory of transnationalism. Authors such as Dahinden (2010) preferred to analyze mobility and locality as a combination of factors that have influenced migration, while Faist (2010) viewed transnationalism as traveling back and forth to one's country of origin and to other countries, because of multiple ties to cultures, communities, and social networks. Captured succinctly by Vertovec (1999), "transnationalism broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (p. 447). This framework has involved understanding the motivations and experiences that people have had when migrating to certain locales throughout their lifetime. Unlike the theory of globalization that has focused on social structures (Carter, 2014), the theory of transnationalism has focused on the experiences of the transient migrants as they have moved. According to Carter (2014), "the transnational perspective allows for greater understanding as it focuses upon the actual movements of people" (p. 161).

Using the transnationalism framework has allowed me to focus on the person who has migrated as the unit of analysis, as opposed to the social structures that have influenced the migrant's migration patterns and choices. Within the theory of transnationalism, structure refers

to “any relatively stable pattern of social behavior” (Macionis, 2008, p.12). Such patterns have pressured people to conform to written and unwritten norms (Hanson, 2005), but structures cannot only constrain, but also enable actions. Using the metaphor of a door in a room, one can see how structures constrain our ability to act (e.g., leave the room) but also they have allowed us to do so (Dzikus, 2013). Gender and race are examples of social structures. Related to these structures, individuals have been able to have agency or “degree of free will exerted by the individual in social actions” (Hanson, 2005, p. 307).

Sport labor migration literature has historically focused on structural aspects of the phenomenon (e.g., race, gender, economics, leagues and federations) (Maguire, 2011). Researchers who have worked within the literature have also been able to examine sport labor migration through the frames of globalization theory, world systems theory, and dependency theory. These theories have focused on institutionally structured sport practices as opposed to the agency of the sport labor migrant and the role of the sport labor migrant in migration practices (Maguire, 2011). The theory of transnationalism is focused on agency rather than the structure of the social world that may have influenced, made available, or have limited the choices that the person may have had within the social sphere (Carter, 2014). This has been important to my study on sport labor migration and women because my study focused on the motivations and experiences of American women WNBA players who have migrated abroad for opportunities to play their sport professionally. In my research, I looked at the choices these WNBA players made to be transnational sport labor migrants. I chose to use the theory of transnationalism because this theory helped to produce a rich understanding of what the participant had

experienced during the migration process (Carter, 2014).

Transnationalism and Globalization

Theories of globalization and transnationalism are interrelated. Globalization can be defined as “a transplanetary process or set of processes involving growing multi-directional flows of increasingly liquid people, objects, places, and information and the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows” (Ritzer, 2010, p. 270). Global sports, such as women’s basketball, have been theorized within the frame of cultural globalization. Cultural globalization focuses on “global flows and practices [which] are also bound up in questions of gender identity—family, sexuality, desire and male power” (Maguire, 2011, p. 1000). Cultural globalization looks at how the world market, labor, and capital have been heavily influenced by western culture and dominated and influenced by the ideology of wealthy nation-states (Maguire, 2011). According to Maguire and Falcoux (2010), “the study of globalization is characterized by a diversity of perspectives and competing concepts and ideas” (p. 4). Throughout this current study, I have referred back to cultural globalization specifically when I discussed how globalization was related to the theory of transnationalism.

Transnationalism and cultural globalization are interrelated because transnationalism is an extension of cultural globalization (Carter, 2014). However, the research focus within transnationalism is the agency of the participants, not the influence of societal structures (e.g., powerful nation-states). Cultural globalization uses a top-down approach to analyze the structure of this phenomenon by essentially breaking down the elements that comprise it (Creswell, 2012). An example of using a top down approach would be looking at FIBA and analyzing the various components that have created FIBA, starting with the organization as a whole and then

reviewing the organizational structure. Unlike cultural globalization, transnationalism uses a bottom-up approach (Carter, 2014), which means that the argument is pieced together bit-by-bit, through qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, until the researcher is able to gain enough information to understand the dynamics in greater detail. An example of a bottom-up approach would be coming to understand the phenomenon of basketball sport labor migration based on the lived experiences (Hatch, 2002) of those who created the activity on a day-to-day basis. Using the theory of transnationalism has resulted in a more comprehensive picture, grounded in nuanced understanding of what sport labor migration is, in relation to WNBA transnational sport labor migrants (Wainwright, 1997).

Understanding transnationalism and the bottom-up approach was important because I used an exploratory case study design for this current study (Yin, 2009). An exploratory case study investigates a phenomenon that has not yet been studied or has not been studied in-depth. Using a bottom-up approach in my research has allowed me to gather information from participants about their experiences and motivations for traveling internationally for employment. As of right now, scholarly literature does not reflect extensive research on women's professional basketball players as transnational sport labor migrants, until now. In addition, I used inductive reasoning where data was gathered to build concepts and understanding within this qualitative study (Merriam, 2009).

Women as sport labor migrants may continue to remain marginalized by structural constraints within the sporting world. However, I took a transnational approach versus a globalization approach and placed an agency-centered framework around understanding the sport labor migrant's motivations and experiences. When studying women's basketball and

international sport labor migration, I focused my attention on how the participants created their migratory experiences on and off the court. It was also important to understand the motivating factors that influenced their migration, as Carter (2014) stated, “approaching sport migration from a transnational perspective...enables us to begin to discern the power relations inherent in the production of global sport” (p. 166). By discerning the power relations in global sport, I was able to get a better understanding of the experiences and motivations of the participants and what influenced their migration overseas from their personal perspectives.

Method: Case Study

I employed a qualitative case study methodology (Yin, 2009) for this current study on women and sport labor migration. Specifically, I used Yin (2009) for my methodology to conduct an exploratory holistic case study of WNBA players as sport labor migrants. Qualitative case studies are similar to other forms of qualitative research. As with other qualitative methodologies, the researcher is the principal means for inductive investigation (Merriam, 2009). There are many working definitions on the methodology of the case study, and those who specialize in qualitative case study research have been unable to agree on one all-encompassing definition of the case study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2013; Yin, 2009). For instance, Merriam (2009) defined the case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40) and that “the unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, characterizes a case study” (p. 41). Yin (2008) defined case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident,” (p. 18) meaning, setting clearly defined boundaries has helped to understand the phenomenon in-depth and in a real life

context. On the other hand, Stake (1995) has held the belief that the focus of case study research is to identify the unit of study and for the researcher to establish an in-depth understanding of human experience through thick descriptions and naturalistic generalizations. With all the varying definitions of what a case study is, it seems that researchers such as Merriam, Stake, and Yin have all been able to agree that within the case study methodology, there has to be an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon and clear boundaries which provide focus and depth.

In this current study, I was interested in exploring the motivations and experiences of a specific group of sport labor migrants, American women WNBA players who have played basketball in the U.S. and overseas. My study was delimited to include sport labor migrants who identified as WNBA players who played in a women's professional basketball league in the U.S. and overseas. This dissertation was also delimited by including only American women WNBA players to be a part of the study. These women were the unit of analysis and the focus of the study. To summarize, the unit of analysis and the bounded system for the study were American women professional basketball players who played in the WNBA and overseas within the span of one year. Focusing on this specific group of sport labor migrants helped provide detailed information about this specific case, which has assisted in understanding the experiences and motivations of women sport labor migrants in the sport of basketball, women as sport labor migrants in general, and women and global migration patterns.

Studies in Sport Labor Migration Literature

The case study method has been used extensively within sport labor migration research and specifically in exploring women and sport labor migration. Maguire, one of the leading scholars in the area of sport labor migration, has authored and co-authored a number of written

and edited books on the topic (Bale & Maguire, 2013; Maguire & Falcoux, 2010; Maguire 2005, Maguire, 1999). Maguire has used the case study method to research hockey (Maguire, 1996), cricket (Maguire & Stead, 1996), soccer (Maguire & Pearton, 2010), and basketball (Maguire, 1988), and has been able to study sport labor migration in-depth within a variety of sports and regions worldwide.

Other scholars have taken a similar approach and have focused on investigating particular cases within sport labor migration. Scholars have focused attention on collecting data from certain populations, teams, countries, sports, and/or individuals. For example, Takashi and Horne (2006) used a case study methodology to research Japanese baseball sport labor migration, Magnusson (2001) focused on the impact of globalization on the importation of elite athletes in an array of sports within Iceland, and Snieder and Presterudstuen (2014) studied Fijian rugby players in Japan, a previously un-researched phenomena.

As stated in Chapter Two, Agergaard and Tiesler (2014) edited *Women, Soccer, and Transnational Migration*, a book on compiled cases of transnational migration in women's soccer at the international level. This book was the first of its kind to focus on women as international sport labor migrants. The entire book was a compilation of case studies that addressed issues of gender, migration patterns, and nationality. Although sport labor migration studies have usually fell under the area of sport sociology, more recently there have been publications on sport labor migration in the areas of: leisure studies (Butler & Dzikus, 2014; Simiyu Njororai, 2011), communication studies (Baines, 2014), applied economics (Allan & Moffat, 2014), exercise psychology (Schinke et al., 2013), and sport psychology (Schinke et al.; 2014). Scholars who have been interested in the dynamics of sport labor migration have taken

various approaches to researching a topic, which have included experiential, political, social, or psychological points of departure. For example, Schinke et al. (2013) focused on the acculturation of sport labor migrants from a sport psychology point of view. At the end of the study, Schinke et al. suggested that more case studies should be conducted in the area of sport labor migration and stated, “case studies ought to be constructed where scholars might provide a holistic description and interpretation of each elite sport context from various social agents in the sport context” (Schinke et al., 2013, p. 1685). Further, it was important for this type of research to have a descriptive and comprehensive understanding of the sport labor migrant experiences and to take into account the agency that these migrants have had in relation to international migration. Case studies are an appropriate form of qualitative research to use in the area of sport labor migration, because bounded cases allow readers to obtain an in-depth understanding of one aspect of sport labor migration. Understanding all aspects of migration through different lenses informs policy makers interested in visa and citizenship issues, managers interested in recruitment strategies, sociologists interested in the different typologies of sport labor migration, and sport psychologists interested in how to counsel their clients within a sport specific context.

Case Study

Case studies are not limited to qualitative investigation only; there are multiple ways to conduct a case study using quantitative inquiry, qualitative inquiry, or by a mixed methods approach (Yin, 2009). However, in my dissertation, it was appropriate that I used a qualitative approach as I conducted research to answer how and why questions. This is because qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences within their social world and how meaning is signified (Merriam, 2009). According Van Mannan (1979):

Qualitative research is an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with meaning, not the frequency, a certain more or less naturally occurring phenomenon in the social world. (p. 520)

During my research, I listened to the participants' thoughts and motivations. I wanted a rich picture of their experiences as transnational sport labor migrants. I wanted to know how participants made sense of their individual experiences within their social world. Interpretation is a large part of qualitative research. Interpretive research assumes that relativity is socially constructed and there is not just one single reality (Merriam, 2009). Interpretivism and constructivism are terms that have been used interchangeably through qualitative research and are terms that are used to describe one's epistemological beliefs and/or assumptions when one is conducting a study (Creswell, 2012). As a researcher, my epistemology has been within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm (see Chapter One for more information on my epistemology and positionality). Therefore, it was important that I used solicited responses from participants to obtain information about their motivations and experiences and made sure each participant's voice was heard within this current study.

Case Study Design: Exploratory Case Study

Within qualitative research, I conducted a case study, more specifically, an exploratory case study. According to Yin (2009), criteria for choosing to do a case study involves focusing on a contemporary event that does not require control of behavioral events and when the research questions seek to answer a how and why question. Because I sought to answer how and why questions while I focused on a contemporary phenomenon, using the case study methodology

was the most appropriate when answering my research questions. Since the phenomenon of labor migration in women's basketball has not yet been explored within scholarly literature through either quantitative or qualitative inquiry, I sought to explore this phenomenon in-depth through qualitative research.

The goal was to establish a strong foundation for the motivations and experiences of American WNBA player sport labor migrants. Historically, exploratory case studies have been used to help to develop further areas of study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); therefore, in this current study I sought to explore and provide more information on the phenomenon of women and sport labor migration, specifically WNBA players. Exploratory case studies are specific and differ in comparison to other forms of case studies. For instance, descriptive case studies focus on a detailed and comprehensive description of previous research and an explanatory case study explains an already explored phenomenon in-depth (Yin, 2009). The goal of me using an exploratory case study was to “develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry” (Yin, 2009, Chapter 5, Section 7, para. 2). Since I researched a previously unexplored phenomenon in-depth, it was appropriate to use an exploratory case study approach. The approach created a framework and foundation for understanding the experiences and motivations of these women. Now, because of my research, more research can be conducted on this population and researchers are now able to develop and form their own hypotheses about the phenomenon of WNBA players and sport labor migration, based on the results from this current study.

Exploratory Case Study: Single and Holistic Design

I used a single holistic design within the exploratory case study framework (Yin, 2009). A single holistic case study involves a single or multiple unit(s) of analysis (Yin, 2009). In this current study, I used a single unit of analysis (American WNBA player transnational sport labor migrants). Participants in the study were all American professional women's basketball players who had played in the WNBA and overseas within the span of at least one year. If I were to have studied this phenomenon using multiple embedded units, then additional participants such as non-American WNBA players or non-WNBA professional basketball sport labor migrants would have been included in this current study. Also, if I were to have studied these women in relation to other women sport labor migrants, I would have included women in various other team sports such as volleyball, soccer, and rugby. Since I only studied one group of women in a specific context within the outlined phenomenon, I used a single design and not a multiple design. According to Yin (2009), there are various rationales for using a single-case design. This happens when: (a) the researcher studies a phenomenon that could contribute to theory or knowledge building in one's discipline; (b) when the case is unique and has not been studied in-depth before; (c) when the case may represent a typical everyday occurrence; or (d) when the researcher has had the opportunity to study a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible.

Since I researched the experiences and motivations of American WNBA player sport labor migrants to overseas teams, I used a single case (Yin, 2009), and I studied a phenomenon that contributed to the theory and knowledge building within the theory of transnationalism. I conducted research on this unique case by working with a group of elite athletes (WNBA, 2015) and I was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview and analyze this population that had

“previously [been] inaccessible to social inquiry” (Yin, 2009, Chapter 2, Section 6, para. 4). I was able to gain access to this small and unique group of athletes because of my network of colleagues and associates from working in the sport industry prior to pursuing my doctorate degree.

For this current study to be holistic, I analyzed the “global nature” (Yin, 2009, Chapter 2, Section 6, para. 5) of the experiences and motivations of these women, and by global nature, I analyzed the experiences and motivations of the participants holistically. All the participants were able to migrate internationally because of their athletic skills, and I gained comprehensive understanding of what motivated these athletes to migrate and how they experienced migration on and off the court. These women sport labor migrants used their athletic capital to cross international boundaries and gain employment in multiple locations worldwide. By using the qualitative case study methodology to explore this phenomenon, I obtained a comprehensive understanding of why and how these women experienced transnational migration and what motivated them to migrate. I also explored a “contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (Yin, 2009, Chapter 1, Section 1, para. 2). This, with the fact that the case study was bounded by the analysis of a specific group of sport labor migrants, gave strong rationale for using the single holistic case study methodology. This methodology was the best fit for answering my two research questions regarding the motivations and experiences of American WNBA sport labor migrants who go overseas for employment in professional basketball.

Advantages to Using Case Study

There have been many advantages to using the case study methodology. As a researcher, I was able to focus on one particular group of subjects and looked into the phenomenon/case

more closely. Case studies tend to focus on a holistic description and explanation (Merriam 2009; Yin, 2008) and by studying one set of sport labor migrants, my inquiry went in-depth to understand their motivations and experiences through “insight, discovery and interpretation” (Merriam, 2009, p. 42). This enabled me to completely examine part of the entire puzzle of sport labor migration through the sport labor migrant’s experiences and motivations. The collected data will now help others who are interested in this subject area. Others will now have a better understanding of the human experience of these sport labor migrants through using chronologies of their careers in the U.S. and overseas from the player perspective (Stake, 1995).

There are a variety of methods that qualitative case study researchers use to collect data: interviews, observations, document analysis, and physical artifacts (Merriam, 2009). All of the mentioned data collection methods are sources of evidence for case study researchers. Through these methods, the researcher can obtain a more detailed account of a certain phenomenon through extensive research. According to Stake (2007), a “qualitative case study is valued for its ability to capture complex action, perception, and interpretation. And from the case study reports poor vignettes and narratives that feed into the naturalistic generalizations of readers and writers” (p. 3). Unlike using a survey or a questionnaire, a qualitative case study enables the researcher to have access to participants and/or materials that can give a more elaborate and detailed account of the phenomenon.

In my particular case study, I asked a series of semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix C) in which participants could elaborate on their individual experiences as a transnational sport labor migrant. By using the method of interviews, participants gave a first person account of their experience in a narrative form. I formulated a beginning, middle, and end

to the participant's life as a transnational migrant (Merriam, 2009), as some of the participants had completed their careers and were retired from playing. This form of inquiry by interview is also known as narrative analysis, which according to Merriam (2009) "extends the idea of text to include in-depth interview transcripts, life history narratives, historical memoirs, and creative nonfiction" (Patton, 2002, p. 115). Narrative analysis is one of the oldest forms of sense making through personal stories and/or narratives (Jonassen & Hernandez-Serrano, 2002), and was very beneficial in answering my research questions for this current study, since I was able to solicit responses in a more conversational and natural setting via phone call.

Naturalistic Generalizations

Conducting a qualitative case study is beneficial as well because it lets the collected data be analyzed for "naturalistic generalizations" (Stake, 1995, p. 85) which are generalizations that readers make based on in-depth reliable research. Some scholars are critical of qualitative research because the pool of participants tends to be small in comparison to that of some quantitative studies (Merriam, 2009). Within naturalistic generalization, one can generalize based on in-depth inquiry on one particular case or thousands of particular cases. In comparison to quantitative studies, which use statistical generalizations to generalize a sample population (Yin, 2009), naturalistic generalizations are based on valid, reliable, comprehensive research which according to Stake, "are conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves" (p. 85). Through qualitative case study, personal contact and experiences can be constructed and interpreted by the researcher. Therefore, it was important that I, as the case study

researcher, was meticulous in how data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted in order to be credible and reliable throughout the duration of the study.

According to Stake (1995), “case researchers need to provide opportunity for vicarious experience. Our accounts need to be personal, describing the things of our sensory experiences, not failing to attend to the matters that personal curiosity dictates” (p. 86). It was very important that as a researcher I was reflexive and that there was transparency throughout the duration of my study. As the researcher, I had an obligation to provide readers with accurate and reliable information and therefore I was upfront about stating my biases and concerns with data to make the information as credible as possible. Through this kind of surveillance, naturalistic generalizations held application for all American WNBA players who played abroad, despite the relatively small number of participants included in this current study. To sum it up, naturalistic generalizations helped me to focus on the quality of the research and clarity and not the quantity of the number of people that participated in this current study.

Methodological Concerns with Case Study

Using an exploratory case study methodology had its advantages as well as its disadvantages. As with any methodology, there are problems that can arise. For example, even though case studies can be generalized (Stake, 1995), if the commitment to generalizing is too strong, one may neglect important and unique points from the case that may have helped to understand the case itself (Stake, 1994). To combat this, I included both similarities and differences in regards to the motivations and experiences of all the participants in my study. I focused on all aspects of the interviewees’ responses and used open coding so that I could

identify the uniqueness in each participant's experiences as well as identify similarities between all of the participants.

Another potential problem that can come up with using a holistic case study design is that "the entire case study may be conducted at an unduly abstract level, lacking sufficiently clear measures or data" (Yin, 2009, Chapter 2, Section 6, para. 5). This usually happens when there is not a definable unit of analysis and the researcher is not sure what he or she will find when conducting the study. As far as my dissertation went, I had a clear unit of analysis (American WNBA transnational sport labor migrants who played in the WNBA and overseas) and the interview questions (Appendix C) were designed to explore the phenomenon in-depth.

An additional problem that could have occurred while conducting this case study was one that Yin warned of, "the entire nature of the case may shift, unbeknownst to the researcher, during the course of the study (Yin, 2009, Chapter 2, Section 8, para. 2). This could have occurred during the interview process, however, I created questions to gain insights into how WNBA players experienced sport labor migration as well as questions on what motivated them to migrate. The interview questions answered the research questions and I gained knowledge about the participants' individual experiences without digressing from answering the research questions since the realm of the research was comprehensive and all-inclusive. Since I explored this phenomenon previously, I had a sense of what I needed to ask as the researcher (Butler & Dzikus, 2014). I conducted a pilot interview prior to the study so that I could address issues and concerns with my interview questions prior to collecting the actual data from the study participants.

Pilot Interview

A pilot interview was conducted prior to the study, which allowed me as the researcher to gain clarity and familiarity with the proposed interview questions before beginning Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved data collection. The wording of questions within the interview protocol was crucial to get the desired information that would answer my research questions (Merriam, 2009), so conducting the pilot interview and getting feedback was critical. I was able to conduct a phone interview with a woman in her mid-twenties, a current WNBA player, who had played in the WNBA for four years and had played overseas for five different teams in five different countries. In the 25-minute interview, she described how her experiences in each country were very different. This alerted me to the need to ask questions about the individual experiences of players in each country and not group the experiences as being “overseas” experiences. In addition, having the participant fill out the questionnaire (See Appendix D) prior to starting the interview allowed me to ask specific questions about: gender, race, marital status, salary, citizenship, and education. This questionnaire allowed for a more free-flowing semi-structured interview that was led by the individual participant’s responses to the demographic questionnaire. This enabled me to ask the participant a series of questions within my interview protocol and I was able to revise questions as the participant responded. After the pilot interview, I restructured and revised the interview protocol to ask participants specific questions about their experiences playing basketball in each individual country that they lived in, so that I could get a better understanding of their experiences overseas.

Reliability and Validity

In order to conduct a reliable and valid exploratory case study, I used multiple tactics during data collection and data interpretation. Because case studies must go in-depth on a unit of analysis, I conducted the case study with the most accuracy possible to ensure that data was both reliable and valid. In reference to Stake (1995), as the researcher, I had an obligation to be ethical so that I could minimize any misunderstanding or misrepresentation when I analyzed the data. I validated data by using the triangulation and member checking protocol set forth by Stake, while applying the reliability and validity protocol of Yin (2009).

Triangulation protocol. According to Stake (1995), there are four steps to take within the triangulation protocol to validate one's findings, which include: (a) data source triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. Data source triangulation involves seeing "if the phenomenon or case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently" (p. 112). Within this current study I was able to find that the majority of the participants in my current study had the same or similar motivations for traveling abroad to play professional basketball overseas and had similar experiences while playing professional basketball and living overseas. However, the experiences that these individual players had were dependent on: (a) their physical characteristics, (b) where they were in their career, (c) their athletic ability, and (d) the country in which they played basketball.

Investigator triangulation allows for another researcher other than the primary investigator to look at the data (Stake, 1995). In this current study, my dissertation advisor Dr. Lars Dzikus analyzed the interview transcriptions separately from me and confirmed the themes

I had found. I was then able to proceed with the findings and conclusion after our consensus about the collected data.

Within triangulation, I used the theory of transnationalism to understand the experiences and motivations of the participants from an agency-centered perspective. I found that all participants maintained a certain amount of agency making the decision to go overseas for basketball. Participants had varying amounts of control in their decisions to migrate. How they experienced migration was based on personal factors. The theory of transnationalism allowed me to focus on the practice of people and how individuals engaged and maneuvered in social interactions (Carter, 2014). Through using this theory, I determined that structural changes in basketball and the global economy did not impact the movements of these women as much as their personal desire to experience basketball on different levels within varying cultural contexts.

Within this methodological triangulation, the researcher uses gathered data from various sources to construct a reality (Stake, 1995). Data are triangulated through sources such as observation, document analysis, and interviews. However, in this current study, I only used interview data as my collected source because this was the best way to answer my research questions on motivations and experiences. I member-checked all interviews to validate the transcriptions for “accuracy and palatability” (Stake, 1995, p. 115). Member-checking was part of both Stake and Yin’s protocol. I did this by validating the interview transcription between the participant and myself. I will go into more detail about member-checking under the heading *Interviews*.

Construct Validity, External Validity, and Internal Validity

According to Yin (2009), “case study designs need to maximize their quality through four critical conditions related to design quality: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability” (Yin, 2009, Chapter 1, Section 1, para. 1). In order to make my study reliable and valid, I addressed construct validity, external validity, and reliability, which, according to Yin, were the conditions needed to conduct a reliable and valid exploratory case study.

Construct validity. According to Yin (2009), construct validity is “identifying correct operational measures for concepts being studied” (Chapter 2, Section 5, para. 6.). Therefore, I identified certain operational measures that I adhered to throughout the research process. I created an online reflexivity journal, which allowed transparency throughout the entire dissertation process. In addition, I conducted a pilot interview prior to collecting IRB approved data, I transcribed interviews and member-checked interviews (Creswell & Miller, 2000) with participants prior to data analysis, and used Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) software to code and analyze transcriptions. I outlined the operational measures and I documented how I complied these measures throughout the duration of the research study. By me doing this, it enabled this current research study, to be transparent and valid.

External validity. External validity is “the domain in which a study’s findings can be generalized” (Yin, 2009, Chapter 2, Section 5, para. 2). In order to incorporate external validity I used the theory of transnationalism, which is a theoretical framework prevalent in labor migration studies. Since this was an exploratory case study of a phenomenon that has yet to be

written about in scholarly literature, it was important that I related my findings to the theory of transnationalism as I tested the theory of transnationalism on WNBA players and their experiences as international sport labor migrants. This strengthened the findings of my research and how the findings applied to the theory of transnationalism. Therefore, some of the findings of this current study may be able to be generalized in regards to transnationalism and sport labor migration.

Reliability. The reliability of this current study was contingent upon following the case study protocol of Yin (2009) as well as on creating an organized database for all data collected. “The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study” (Yin, 2009, Chapter 2, Section 5, para. 2). To be reliable, I employed a single holistic case study method to this dissertation. This allows anyone conducting a similar study with the same population to get similar results if they follow the same protocol and use the same research structure as I did. I also created a codebook in NVivo and I thoroughly documented my research from beginning to end using NVivo to organize and code the data collected.

Methods and Procedures

I interviewed WNBA international sport labor migrants who have played or who are playing in the WNBA and overseas. I recorded interviews, transcribed interviews, and coded data so that my study was reliable and valid. In the following sections I will elaborate further on the methods and procedures I used to conduct this current study.

Participants

I interviewed 10 WNBA players in this current study who have played in the U.S. and overseas. 10 was the number in which I reached saturation, which means that I started to obtain

similar answers from multiple participants as I got to the end of conducting my interviews (Morse, 1995). To be chosen for the study, participants had to meet certain criteria. Participants were over the age of 18 and had played in the WNBA and overseas consecutively for one year or more, meaning that participants played in the WNBA and overseas in the span of one single year. All participants in this current study held U.S. citizenship and were on the roster of both a women's professional WNBA team and a women's professional overseas team (demographic information for participants who participated in the study can be found in Appendix E).

Participants in this current study played in a total of 14 countries including: China, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Poland, Spain, South Korea, Sweden, Russia, and Turkey. Overseas, the career length of participants ranged from one year to 12.5 years, with the average overseas career lasting 6.35 years. In the WNBA, the average career was one year to 15 years, with the average WNBA career being 6 years. All interviews were conducted via telephone, with interviews averaging approximately 33 minutes in length. The shortest interview lasted 21 minutes with the last interview lasting 53 minutes. As for physical characteristics, eight out of 10 participants identified as African American with two out of 10 participants identifying as Caucasian. The average height of the 10 participants was 6-feet-2-inches, with the shortest participant being 5-feet-10-inches and the tallest participant being close to 7-feet tall.

The first contact with participants was made via email (see Appendix F for participant invitation). In addition, participants were required to sign an informed consent form before participating in the study (see Appendix G). Participants were sent the informed consent form via email and sent the signed form back before beginning the interview. Once I received the

informed consent form I set up a date and time to interview the participant. Once a date and time was set, I then called the participant and asked the participant questions from the demographic questionnaire and had the participant choose a pseudonym to go by within the study. Once this information was collected, I then conducted the interview, transcribed it, and sent the interview transcription and signed informed consent form, with my signature, back to the participant for member-checking. Participants were able to keep these documents for their own personal use.

For data collection, I used purposeful sampling to identify potential participants for this current study. According to Patton (2002), “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry” (p. 230). Using a purposeful sample selection is typical in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009) and within purposeful sampling I used the “snowballing method,” which allowed me to gain access to more participants through referral and recruitment from initial participants of the study (Noy, 2008).

To gain access to participants, I reached out to former colleagues and associates who I had worked with in the sports industry. These colleagues and associates had access to professional basketball networks, and they put me in direct contact with participants. I could then explain the research study to the participants and describe what was expected of each participant in the study. My former and current colleagues and associates were my “key informants” in the process of snowball or chain sampling (Patton, 2002). This approach helped me to identify, “information-rich key informants or critical cases. The process begins by asking well-situated people: ‘Who knows a lot about _____? Whom should I talk to?’” (Patton, 2002, p. 237). This

process made me efficient in recruiting potential participants, and the process helped me get the right participants for the study.

Interviews

Interviews are used as a form of data collection in a large number of qualitative research studies. The most common interview form is a one-on-one interview (person-to-person) (Merriam, 2009). In my study, interviews were very important because I did not use any other form of data collection.. The research questions in this dissertation on the experiences and motivations of the participants were questions that were answered strictly by using interview data. Using interview data by itself is not unusual to qualitative research, especially when the research questions can be answered with the use of one source rather than multiple sources (Merriam, 2009). During the interviews, the athletes were encouraged to elaborate on past and/or present experiences playing professional basketball in the U.S. and abroad. They were asked to describe what motivated them to travel overseas to pursue professional basketball opportunities. I used a semi-structured interview protocol (Yin, 2009) (see Appendix A), where participants were asked questions pertaining to how they have experienced playing professional basketball in the U.S. as well as overseas and what motivated them to travel abroad for employment opportunities in professional basketball.

Using a semi-structured interview protocol enabled open discussion around questions and allowed the participants to give more in-depth responses to the questions being asked. The interview protocol was different in comparison to filling out a survey or observing participants. Using a semi-structured interview protocol is not exclusive to case study research. However, it is a preferred method because it allows for follow-up questions, which may lead to comparisons of

other work or exploration of other ideologies (Wood & Kroger, 2000). A semi-structured interview protocol allowed for a fluid and flexible encounter in which emerging new concerns and topics were discussed within certain moments of the interview (Merriam, 2009).

Interviews took place via telephone call and all interviews were audio recorded during which I took field notes to contextualize the interview. Interviews lasted approximately 33 minutes with the shortest interview lasting about 21 minutes and the longest interview lasting about 53 minutes. Participants were offered the opportunity to review and revise their transcripts once transcriptions were completed. They had one week (seven days) to review the transcripts after receiving the transcript via email (member-checking). None of the participants in this current study had issues or concerns with their transcriptions after I sent the transcription back to them for member-checking.

Transcription

The interview data should capture what the participant is saying as accurately as possible, so the reader understands what is being said and how it is being said. According to Hutchby and Woofit (2008), “the transcript is seen as a ‘representation’ of data; while the tape itself is viewed as a ‘reproduction’ of a determinate social event” (p. 70). Since transcription influences the interpretation of collected data, “transcription must be comprehensive (verbatim), both because it is impossible to specify in advance which features might turn out to be important and because the details of discourse are critical for the preservation of variability and for interpretation” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 82). Therefore, I transcribed all of the interviews in this dissertation myself. I went over each interview a minimum of five times. I first transcribed the interview using Dragon Dictate (a voice-recognition software) along with InqScribe (a transcription software). Using

these two digital tools together allowed me to transcribe the interviews efficiently and accurately (Butler, 2013). I then reviewed the transcriptions a second time and compared the transcriptions to the recording, before I copied and pasted the transcription from InqScribe to a Microsoft Word document. I then color-coded the document based on who was speaking, and combed over the interview before sending it to the participant. The interviewer was color-coded in red and the interviewee was color-coded in blue. Color-coding the transcription in a word document made it easier to keep track of the speaker in the interview and made it easier for participants to member-check the transcription. After receiving the transcription back from the participants, I uploaded the transcription into NVivo and coded the transcriptions.

Data Analysis

I coded data using QSR International's NVivo coding software. NVivo is a CAQDAS, which allowed me to analyze and organize unstructured data. Even though I used a CAQDAS to organize and synthesize data, I organized and analyzed the collected data myself. Using NVivo helped me code for patterns in the interview answers and it uncovered unique characteristics in each participant's reply. According to Saldana (2012):

Coding is both natural and deliberate-natural because there are mostly repetitive patterns of action and consistencies in human affairs, and deliberate because one of the coder's primary goals is to find these repetitive patterns of action and consistencies in human affairs as documented in the data. (p. 5)

All collected data were subject to open coding. Once I created the codes from the raw data (e.g., relationship with foreign teammates), I started to group the codes together based on similarities of the data (e.g., relationship with foreign teammates and relationship with American

teammates). An example screenshot of codes created in NVivo can be found in Appendix H. After open coding, I then grouped similar codes together to create themes. I then created categories that corresponded with the themes (e.g., relationship with foreign teammates [theme] and relationships [category]) see thematic table in Appendix I). I coded for similarities and uniqueness, in order to give voice to all of the experiences and motivations of the participants. Once patterns and unique characteristics were established, categories were grouped according to the two research questions based on motivations and experiences. The headings in the results section in Chapter Four are based on categories (major headings) and themes (sub-headings) that emerged from the coding process. Lastly, direct quotations used in Chapter Four and Chapter Five were quotes that I selected as the best representation for the categories and themes that emerged from the collected data.

Delimitations

My literature review in Chapter Two focused on literature that pertained to women and migration, sport labor migration, and women and sport labor migration. Since the literature was sparse in the subject area of women as international sport labor migrants, it was important that I integrated various studies that referenced women and migration in general and sport labor migration in general. Pulling information from these areas gave a more robust overview of all sport labor migrants, particularly women as labor migrants.

Also, I decided not to use the methodological procedure of internal validity outlined in Yin (2009). Internal validity was not needed within this exploratory case study because I was not seeking to understand causal relationships between two subjects, but rather explore a phenomenon, which is a characteristic of an exploratory case study. I also chose to only collect

and use interview data for this current study and not to gather other forms of information for this dissertation. Importantly, I chose to limit the demographic information of the participants (see Appendix E). I chose to do this to keep the identities of the participants confidential and unidentifiable. Therefore, the number of seasons the participant played in the WNBA and overseas, the countries the participant played in, and the height of the participant were purposefully kept out of the demographic information shared in this dissertation. Finally, the findings in this current study were analyzed from my perspective, which further limited the findings and analysis. Thus, it was important that I was reflexive on how my epistemological assumptions and positionality framed this current study, which I outlined in Chapter One and further discussed in Chapter Five.

Summary

I outlined the theoretical framework of transnationalism used within this current study. I discussed how transnationalism was related to globalization. I described how the case study methodology was used in sport labor migration literature. I explained the execution of my single holistic exploratory case study design (Yin, 2009) and defined terms associated with the design. I touched on the advantages and concerns with conducting a case study and also talked about naturalistic generalizations (Stake, 1995).

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter of the dissertation addresses the study's findings. In total, 10 interviews were conducted with former and current American WNBA players, who have played in both the WNBA and overseas within the span of one year. The questions asked during the interviews were structured to address the original research questions, which were:

RQ1: Why do American WNBA players choose to play basketball outside of the U.S.?

RQ2: How do American WNBA players experience professional basketball in the U.S. and overseas?

In the following sections I discuss the motivating factors for why American WNBA players chose to play basketball outside of the U.S. as well as how they experienced transnational sport labor migration. I provide insight into the shared experiences, as well as the individual experiences of these women, while they played professional basketball in the U.S. and abroad. Throughout this chapter, citations from relevant empirical and theoretical works were used sparingly in order to allow for a narrative flow. The stories of the participants were told through their own words, using quotes from the participants who were interviewed. The motivations and the experiences of the participants differ, but also overlap to varying degrees. I have used parts of each participant's story to guide the narrative while at the same time integrating insights in relation to the research questions, the methodology, and the theoretical framework. Also, it is important to note that participants who had a longer career playing professionally (three or more years) had more to share than participants who were still at the beginning stages of their career, which included participants who had played two years or less.

So in some cases, quotes from certain participants may be used more than others, because they shared more about their experiences.

This chapter was organized in reference to the research questions on motivations and experiences. Six categories emerged from the collected data (also see Appendix I), which included:

- Motivations to Migrate Overseas (Motivations)
- Experiences Playing Professional Basketball (Experiences)
- Leisure Overseas (Experiences)
- Culture and Acculturation (Experiences)
- Relationships (Experiences)
- American Awareness and Views on Being Othered (Experiences)

Themes from the data were compiled to create the previously mentioned categories, which will be discussed throughout the entirety of Chapter Four. A thematic table was created (see Appendix I) to illustrate how I constructed the categories and themes as well as a few examples of the words and phrases from the interview transcripts. Lastly, I ordered the results in this chapter based on the number of participants in the study that discussed the respective topic. For example, in the section entitled *Experiences Playing Professional Basketball*; I first discuss *Experiences in the WNBA* (experienced by all of the participants) and then finish the section up discussing *Safety Overseas* (experienced by two of the participants).

Motivating Factors

This section presents the findings with regard to the first research question focused on why American WNBA players choose to play basketball outside of the U.S. This section

addresses the various motivating factors that influenced the transnational migration of these elite athletes to overseas teams. All participants answered the question about their motivation to migrate overseas and were encouraged to elaborate further, after the first level response. Various factors influenced how each participant answered the question. These factors were:

- Where the participant was in her career (rookie or veteran)
- Athletic ability of participant (if participant was highly sought after or not)

There was not one distinct reason for why a WNBA player chose to migrate overseas to play professional basketball, but multiple reasons and the motivating factors for the participants were fluid and overlapping. Themes that emerged during the coding process for motivations to migrate abroad included:

- Eagerness to Experience a Different Culture Outside of the U.S
- Monetary Compensation
- Gaining Experience for Future Careers Outside of Playing Basketball
- Staying in Shape for WNBA Basketball
- Personal Goals

In the following sections, I provide headings that correspond with the motivating factors (listed above); which contributed to the athlete's motivation to migrate overseas. Under each heading, I then expanded on each participant's individual identity and reasoning behind the participant venturing overseas to pursue professional basketball opportunities. I wrote each section in a narrative format and then elaborated further on the factor(s), which influenced the participant to migrate.

I chose to provide the information in this format because each of the participants in the study had a certain amount of agency that influenced each of them to migrate overseas. Even though the participant may be under one particular heading, that did not mean that the participant's reason for migrating was limited to that one and only reason. The motivating factors that influenced migration abroad were fluid throughout the duration of the athlete's career. I placed the respective athlete's story under the heading that described her initial motivation for venturing overseas to pursue opportunities in professional basketball. However, the initial motivation changed throughout the careers of each participant and this was carefully considered throughout the interpretation of the results. Please note that all demographic information on participants can be found in Appendix E. Referring to the tables in Appendix E will help to get a better idea of the players who participated in this current study. Again, all participants chose pseudonyms to go by in this current study so as to stay anonymous and certain specifics on demographic information were delimited to keep the identity of the participants confidential (please refer to Chapter Three for more information on the delimitations).

Eagerness to Experience a Different Culture Outside of the U.S.

All of the study participants expressed an eagerness to experience life overseas. This eagerness changed as players experienced the varying environments for playing basketball in different countries over time. Essentially, the players traveled overseas and experienced different cultures, while establishing careers playing a sport that they deeply enjoyed playing. Some players had a strong desire to travel abroad and see the world, while others preferred to stay in the U.S., closer to family and friends. Either way, all of the participants in this current study had

experience playing professional basketball at the highest level, both domestically and internationally, and experienced life first hand as an elite professional basketball player.

One participant in particular had an insatiable appetite for life and viewed basketball as an opportunity to travel to far away lands and experience a diversity of cultures around the world. Kate was a participant who started off playing overseas. She was a veteran of women's overseas basketball and the WNBA. Kate started playing professional basketball in the 1980s, before the WNBA was established.

As a participant, Kate was very personable and open about her experiences playing professional basketball overseas. She played in more than three countries over the span of her career and adapted well to the cultures and languages of the countries she played in; this was especially true of her experiences in Spain and Italy. Kate played at a time when communication via telephone was only possible and laptop computers with Skype possibilities were non-existent. During the time Kate played basketball overseas, she had minimal contact with her friends and family in the U.S. Technology such as Wi-Fi was not something that existed and in order for Kate to communicate with friends and family back home, she had to call the U.S. via a landline from her home abroad. In some cases, Kate's phone bill would be thousands of dollars a month. When I asked Kate questions about communicating with people in the U.S. she replied, "...no Skype ... or email and all of that... so yeah, telephone... good ole telephone. At certain points I averaged anywhere from \$5,000-\$15,000 a month on a phone bill." (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015)

Kate's experience overseas was very different in comparison to many of the other participants in this current study because of the time period during when Kate played. Kate had

been out of the game for a while, but had vivid memories of playing professionally in the U.S. and overseas. When I asked Kate about her motivation to go overseas she said that she wanted to travel and see the world stating, “I always wanted to see more and see the world, because I am from [hometown]... I could have gone to the universities in my home state, but I just wanted to get out and see things. I wanted to make my own way” (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015). At the time, playing in the WNBA was not an option for Kate and if she wanted to continue to play basketball at the next level, then playing overseas was her only option. Unlike today, many elite professional women’s basketball players have the choice to play in the WNBA, in another league overseas, or play in both. Kate did not have that option starting out. Therefore, Kate, decided to go overseas and explore the world while pursuing a career in a sport she enjoyed playing.

Kate took it upon herself to adapt to her surroundings wherever she was playing. She played the majority of her career in Spain and then in Italy, and in some cases she was the only American on her team. Kate discussed traveling all over Europe with friends, meeting up with other Americans in surrounding cities, and how playing basketball gave her the platform to create lifelong memories and relationships. In fact, I asked Kate about unique experiences she had playing overseas and she informed me that she started singing in a band while living abroad. According to Kate, “I did start singing every Sunday evening in a club. I started singing in this band and that was really cool. I got to do it every Sunday, consistently singing with the band” (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015).

Kate was the type of person who took advantage of her basketball career to go explore the world. She made the most out of all of her experiences and adapted to the locations where

she was playing. Although Kate loved the WNBA, when I asked her about her preference for playing in the WNBA versus overseas she said:

Wow, that is such a hard question... because I really enjoyed the European thing... and I really enjoyed the WNBA. I thought it was just great to have the opportunity because...just to be able to travel and to learn the language and to build the relationships that I had and you know the experiences, but you know the WNBA is the WNBA... so... I don't know, I would probably choose Europe. (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015)

Kate's motivation and reasoning for initially going overseas was based on a number of factors including her age, options in women's professional basketball during the time period she started playing, and her athletic ability. Kate did not have the option to stay in the U.S. and play women's basketball professionally at the highest level and when she was abroad, the technology to keep one connected to friends and family via Wi-Fi and social media did not exist. If Kate played at a later time period in her life, she may have had very different experiences. However, she was able to be immersed in the cultures overseas and had limited contact with people in the U.S. Nowadays, developments in technology and social media have made it easier for athletes to stay connected with family and friends even if they are half way around the world. Kate's appetite for life and exploring the unknown led her to Europe where she was able to play basketball, sing with a band during her leisure, and be immersed in different cultures throughout Europe.

Similar to Kate, participant World Traveler had comparable motivations for traveling overseas to pursue a professional playing career in basketball. World Traveler wanted to see the

world and experience cultures outside of the U.S. For World Traveler, money was not the main or initial motivating factor that influenced her to travel overseas to pursue a career playing professional basketball. However, as her career progressed, money did start to factor more into her decision to travel overseas.

World Traveler played over five seasons in the WNBA and close to ten seasons overseas and made double her WNBA salary playing overseas (in her last years playing). World Traveler would be considered a WNBA and overseas veteran because of her time spent in both leagues. She is now retired from playing the sport of basketball, but is still very much involved in athletics. World Traveler initially made about the same amount of money overseas as she did in the WNBA, however, as time progressed, she was able to gain more exposure and improve her performance on the basketball court. Therefore, she was offered more money throughout her years playing professionally. By the end of her career, World Traveler felt that it would have been more favorable to play overseas than to play in the WNBA. According to World Traveler:

Going back... if I could do it all over again I would have just played overseas. You know, it's really nice to be able to play in front of your friends and family... but as a professional decision... it makes more sense to just play overseas, make the money, and then rest your body in the summer. A lot of the girls played year round because you try to make as much money as you can, but then it ends up shortening your career because you don't end up giving your body the rest that it needs... so I would definitely just play overseas. (World Traveler, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

In retrospect, World Traveler felt that playing overseas in comparison to playing in the WNBA was a better career choice. The data from the current study indicates that a women's

basketball player who chose to play solely overseas was able to make a great living and was also able to rest her body in the off-season. Ultimately this allows the athlete to have longevity in her career since taking time out can help to increase her chances of preserving the health and strength of her body. Although money did play a big factor in World Traveler's decision to go abroad, her initial reasoning for going overseas was not because of salary as much as it was for the cultural and traveling aspect. Hence the pseudonym she picked out for herself, World Traveler. While overseas she was able to adapt to her surroundings and was able to become acculturated and develop relationships with her foreign teammates and the people in the towns and the cities she played in. During her career overseas, she was able to learn Spanish, Italian, and some French. In fact, she still keeps in contact with the people that she met during her overseas career and tries to visit them at least once a year. Throughout her interview, World Traveler talked about blending in overseas and adapting to her surroundings, including the food and language. As noted by World Traveler:

Whenever I had days off, I took the time to go travel and visit friends that played in other places or even experience the culture of where I was... just to get a better understanding of what country I was in and you know, just try and blend in and not just be an American that was playing. (World Traveler, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

Her passion for travel and her appetite to learn more about various cultures was what initially motivated her to travel overseas. However, she said that over time, making more money became the greater motivation. This was a common thread in conversations with all of the study participants. At the beginning of their careers, they were making about the same salary in the WNBA and overseas, so going overseas was more about the experience of playing in a foreign

country than about the money. Yet, as participants continued to play professional basketball, playing overseas became more lucrative and money started to become a main motivating factor.

In summary, both Kate and World Traveler were motivated to travel overseas because of their eagerness to experience life outside of the U.S. and to learn and adapt to different cultures. Kate did not have the option to play in the WNBA until later on in her career and also did not have access to technologies that would keep her in constant contact with what was going on at home. Kate literally had to leave her home in order to have social interaction with people in other countries compared to the present, when many who live abroad are able to have social interactions via the Internet. World Traveler on the other hand, initially wanted to experience life abroad, but as time progressed her motivations changed and she became increasingly motivated by opportunities to make more money. Overall the data supports that experience and time playing overseas increase the players' salaries. However, even though money was the major motivating factor by the end of their careers, it was not necessarily the initial factor for the motivation for the majority of these women to migrate.

Monetary Compensation

Lisa was a participant who played her entire overseas career in Asia (region known to pay a lot for elite foreign sport talent). Lisa's main reason for playing overseas was to make money. When I asked Lisa what motivated her to go abroad, she informed me that it was the money. Lisa was able to make close to two-to-three times her WNBA salary while playing in Asia. However, going overseas for the money was not the only motivating factor for Lisa. Lisa said that she played overseas to make a great living, but to also stay in shape for the WNBA season. As stated by Lisa:

Well... the money and first and foremost, but our WNBA season is just so short and it's just during the summer... our off-season is way longer than our normal season. So if you were really committed and were willing to be a great athlete... you really couldn't play in the WNBA season and just sit around all off-season and still think you're going to be on a team the next summer... it's pretty hard to do that... so... I... just went overseas to stay in shape and keep playing and to earn more money. Obviously the WNBA, the salary was good... like I could live off of it, but it wasn't amazing... so going overseas would help me make more money and stay in shape. (Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

Since money was her main motivation, she played her entire career in Asia, which is a region that is known to pay their women's basketball players more money in comparison to some European countries. Asia is also known as a region that is tough as well, since the women who play in Asia can expect to practice at least two to three times a day, be the only American on the team, and live a very isolated and controlled life. Usually making contact with only few people who could speak English (for more information about playing in Asia, please refer to the heading below entitled *Experiences Playing in Asia* and *Leisure in Asia*).

Throughout Lisa's interview, she informed me that she had very limited downtime and had a hard time adapting to the cultural differences in both Asia, primarily because of the language barrier, living conditions, practice schedules, and the food choices available. The majority of the participants in this current study had experience playing in Europe and discussed how smooth their transition to Europe was. While the participants who played in Asia talked about the difficulty in transitioning to life within Asian culture. Lisa expressed having to

compromise her quality of life by living in Asia. Yes, she made a lot of money, but outside of basketball, her interactions were very limited and she was not able to enjoy much leisure time or experience what both the Asian culture had to offer.

Making money was Lisa's first priority and staying in shape for the upcoming WNBA season was her second priority. Lisa was a player who played professionally for over five years and then retired to focus on her life outside of playing basketball. She could have continued to play professionally, but she decided to retire and come back to the U.S. and coach basketball. In addition, Lisa talked about how her body started to break down from the rigorous basketball schedule she endured in Asia. Even though she was able to make a great living, she had to endure very hard living conditions that inevitably impacted her and influenced her early departure from professional basketball.

Lisa was the only participant interviewed in this current study who stated that making money was the initial and constant motivating factor for her to travel abroad to play professional basketball overseas. For the rest of the participants, money was a factor, but was not necessarily the initial or main motivating factor until later on in their career, partly because of the disparity between WNBA salaries in comparison to overseas salaries.

Overseas vs. WNBA salaries. Many media publications have alluded to the fact that professional women's basketball players make more money playing in professional women's basketball leagues abroad versus in the U.S. (Glass, 2015). Many articles from popular media outlets have focused on superstar WNBA players that have had successful careers in the WNBA and overseas. By superstar, I mean, the WNBA players that are the top performers in the WNBA, the players who one may expect to make the All-Star team almost every season, the players who

receive lucrative endorsement and sponsorship deals, and the players that one would expect to be on the U.S. National Team roster for women's basketball. There are only a select few that reach this elite status such as Candace Parker, Brittany Griner, and Diana Turasi (to name a few). However, there are a limited number of women who may make 10-times their WNBA salary playing overseas. With that being said, the majority of the women who do play overseas do not make a million dollars during one overseas season.

Throughout the interviews, participants said that athletes who played in Russia, China, or South Korea could expect to make more money in comparison to those who played in European countries such as France, Spain, or Italy. Therefore, there are a number of misconceptions about how lucrative it is for women professional basketball players who play overseas, because the majority of articles spotlight the experiences of the select few superstar WNBA players. Some articles (Fagan, 2014; Steele, 2012) spotlight the women who make close to a million dollars or more playing overseas and not those that make the equivalent or a little more of their WNBA salary, playing overseas.

All participants in this current study were asked to answer questions presented in the form of a questionnaire to gather demographic information. In that questionnaire all participants were asked questions about their professional basketball salary in the WNBA versus overseas. Since asking questions about one's salary is very personal, I asked each participant to tell me how their WNBA salary differed in comparison to their overseas salary (see Appendix E; table 3). I used this method so that I would in turn get a high response rate and I did in fact obtain a 100% response rate from the participants. All 10 participants in this current study answered the question accordingly with some participants elaborating more than others. The salaries recorded

on the questionnaire show how each participant's WNBA salary differed from their overseas salary in their most recent or last year playing professional women's basketball (I interviewed former and current players). According to the participants, their salaries increased each season as they continued to play professional basketball. For example, a participant's salary in one season in the WNBA was "about the same" in comparison to their overseas salary in one season. However, in some cases, after about three or four years into the player's career, their salaries overseas doubled or tripled. Please note that I only asked about salary and not about endorsements or sponsorship deals, therefore the data collected does not reflect the total net income that the participant may have made in a year or a season.

The participants in this current study were all professional athletes and made a career out of playing basketball. These women made a living off of playing professional basketball and were able to support themselves financially. Yes, money did factor into their reasoning for playing basketball abroad, but for the majority, money was not the initial factor, main motivating factor, or the only factor that influenced their decision to go overseas to pursue playing professional basketball.

Gaining Experience for Future Career Outside of Playing Basketball

Mya, was a professional women's basketball player for two years and played both in the WNBA and overseas. Mya had always had a passion for coaching which she realized her sophomore year of college. She was drafted out of college for the WNBA and was able to play one season overseas before being offered a coaching position at a university in the U.S. Since coaching was her passion, Mya decided to take the coaching career path instead of the playing career path, and opted out of going overseas. According to Mya:

You can come home and you can work a job that you enjoy and you make good money... I'm all for that... which is partially why I decided not to play there because I had a chance to coach at [name of university] and ultimately coaching is what I want to do. Playing overseas or playing basketball... 10 years, wasn't my plan. So I made more money getting into coaching and that's what I decided to do... but I mean, it all depends on what you want... but I would say that... if you have the opportunity to play and it's a good opportunity... go for it. (Mya, personal communication, February 25, 2015)

Mya, was able to make about \$20,000 more overseas in comparison to her WNBA salary, but by the same token, was able to make a good living in the U.S. doing what she ultimately wanted to do, coach basketball. Mya was able to gain experience playing in both the WNBA and overseas and had been able to use her journey to help mentor and coach current college players who in the future, might want to play professionally either overseas or in the WNBA. Mya preferred to stay in the U.S. but felt that she was able to gain valuable experience during her time abroad. In fact, Mya's final advice during the interview encouraged those that had the opportunity to play at the next level, to take advantage of the opportunity to play overseas. As noted by Mya:

I would say that if you have an opportunity to go [overseas], you should go because I mean, how many times do you get to go somewhere and someone pays you to play the sport that you love to play? And... umm... although it might be tough, it is still... okay. I still feel good saying that I went over there and I can at least say that I went and I experienced it. Um and then going forward, I was able to help some players... some teammates and stuff that I knew... who were going there and be like... "hey... make sure

to put this in your contract... what about this? What about doing this?" So there were some things. (Mya, personal communication, February 25, 2015)

Mya appreciated the experiences she had as a result of going overseas, but ultimately preferred living in the U.S and starting her career outside of playing. Even with her short time as a professional player, she was still able to learn a lot to help with her career outside of playing basketball, in coaching. When asked if she would be interested in coaching overseas, Mya replied, "I am not a fan of like... living in Europe or living in Brazil or wherever people play... I like the U.S. so I would never coach overseas" (Mya, personal communication, February 25, 2015).

Mya was a player who preferred the U.S. versus playing overseas. Although her motivation for going overseas may seem unilateral, the fact that she was young and making about the same playing as she would in her coaching career, ultimately led her to forgo playing and start coaching. When asked about her preference to play in the WNBA or overseas she responded by saying:

Um... because I love the U.S. and for me... it all just depends. If you are paying me a million dollars like Diana Turasi to go play overseas... goodbye to the WNBA... it makes sense. If all was equal, I would definitely play in the WNBA over overseas... as far as like money... (Mya, personal communication, February 25, 2015)

Mya's initial motivation for going overseas was to go and play and gain experience playing at the professional level and in another country. However, this may have changed if Mya had decided to stay in the playing game longer and was able to make money like WNBA legend Diana Turasi. Mya's choice to make that jump from being a professional athlete to being a coach

was based on both her passion for coaching as well as the money she would earn while making a living.

Similar to Mya, LaShay was a participant who was young and in the beginning stages of her career as a professional basketball player. LaShay who currently coaches when not playing basketball, had dreams of one day making coaching her long-term profession. Unlike Mya, LaShay preferred playing overseas and it was always her dream to travel the world and see new things. Playing basketball and getting paid was a bonus for her and she was able to take what she learned to help her with her career in coaching. LaShay, who was in her second season as a professional basketball player was still a rookie in the world of professional basketball and was fresh out of college. Her choice of college and the rigorous schedule and expectations allowed her to make a smooth transition to the WNBA. According to LaShay:

In college, you really have to make sure that you do everything right and I think that discipline that I had learned within myself... to hold everyone accountable as well, was a big thing for me, and then that just carried over into the WNBA. In the WNBA they expect you to know everything. They expect you to know everything... the coach shouldn't have to tell you over and over again like we do in college, so I think me being at the program that I was at [Alma Mater] helped me to prepare myself, my mind, and my body for what was going to happen at the next level. (Lashay, personal communication, February 15, 2015)

Unlike the other participants, LaShay had experience living abroad at a young age because a member of her family was in the military. Her transition to professional basketball was not as

much of a culture shock as it may have been for other participants who did not have experience living overseas prior to their professional playing career.

LaShay was born into a military family and had spent time overseas playing basketball in various countries in Europe. She was able to live overseas with her family for a couple years in high school before coming to the U.S. to attend a university on a full scholarship in women's basketball. LaShay was very charismatic and outgoing and her personality allowed her to be a leader on her team in college, attract positive fan attention, and adapt to numerous cultural settings. At this point in her career, LaShay was making the same amount of money in the WNBA that she made overseas and her main reason for going overseas was to travel to see the world. She talked about being open to playing in any country in the world, as long as it was a good fit. In fact, she preferred to play overseas versus playing in the WNBA. According to LaShay:

I want to use my youth to just make money and use that in my experience to get better... to know the game and when I do get an opportunity... you know. I've been on both sides and you know... I know how to relate to the players... and some of the coaches that I have or have had... they mainly played at the high school level and that's about as far as it went. So when I'm talking to them about basketball and asking them what I should do... they give me like this generic coach answer and I'm just like "I really just need somebody that's been there and can tell me what the best thing to do is." That's really something I try to focus on... areas to soak everything out and function to how I deal with situations. Watch film, so I know what to do when I'm in a coaching position. So if somebody comes and asks me what I do in this situation, I don't just give them the

coach's perspective but I can also give them a player perspective as well. (Lashay, personal communication, February 15, 2015)

LaShay's aspirations were to experience basketball on a variety of different levels as well as to experience basketball in various cultural contexts. LaShay saw basketball as providing opportunities for her to travel the world and gain experience to help her with coaching as well as to capitalize on making money early on in her career.

Growing up, LaShay did not have coaches who could give her proper guidance to the career paths that were available to her in regards to playing after college. Therefore, she was inspired to create her own path to learn from doing, and eventually coach others that may have the opportunity to pursue basketball at the collegiate, WNBA, and/or overseas levels. Her age, her experience living overseas with her family, and her rookie status, all had a significant influence on what motivated LaShay to migrate overseas to play professionally. There were various motivating factors in LaShay's case and ultimately her reason for going overseas was to put her on track to reach her long-term career goal of coaching, see the world, and to make money in her youth.

Both Mya and LaShay realized very early on that they wanted to coach basketball. Each saw playing in the WNBA and overseas as a way to gain experience for their future careers in coaching and to help mentor future basketball players. They were able to make a good living playing professionally and felt that playing overseas provided a great opportunity that one should take if they had the chance.

Staying in Shape for the WNBA

Similar to Mya and LaShay, Leslee was motivated to go overseas because of the experience she would get playing basketball in a different country, but also because playing overseas would allow her to get in shape for the WNBA season, while at the same time playing a sport that she loved. Leslee always had dreams of playing in the WNBA and viewed going overseas as an opportunity to gain experience and exposure to make it in the WNBA. According to Leslee:

When I graduated or I will say, when I finished my senior season... I was thinking “okay, well what do I want to do?” ... and then I said... well I finished out [my college career] pretty strong... and um... I was like, “I will just keep playing basketball because I am in such good shape and I am in the best ability that I can actually play right now.” So I figured I would either get drafted or they will take me to a training camp or something... but nothing like that happened... so I said, “I will go overseas”... because I was still in really good shape for playing and my heart was still in it. So then I went over to Sweden and you know I played and I still loved it and I finished that and I got a call for a training camp and so I went to a training camp for the WNBA and I started in two pre-season games. (Leslee, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

Leslee saw going overseas as the next step after finishing college since she was unable to get drafted in the WNBA. She still had a passion for the sport and wanted to reach her goal of playing in the WNBA and therefore pursued a career overseas in Sweden. Leslee was in “such good shape” after college and was able to maintain her athleticism by going overseas and pursuing an overseas career playing basketball.

Even though Leslee was not drafted for the WNBA, staying in shape and having a good year overseas put her on the radar for the WNBA and she was eventually able to make a WNBA roster after her first season overseas. When asked if she preferred to play in the WNBA or overseas, Leslee said that she would prefer to play in the WNBA because she would get to stay in the U.S. As stated by Leslee, “I would probably choose the WNBA and that’s just because it’s America and you know... you’re in America and you get to enjoy...” (Leslee, personal communication, February 12, 2015).

Out of all the participants, Leslee had the shortest professional basketball career and opted to stop playing basketball early on to stay close to home in the U.S. and pursue an opportunity in coaching, which was her passion. Playing in the WNBA and going overseas had given Leslee first person experiences to share with current and future players who she now currently coaches. Her young age and athletic ability attributed to her decisions to migrate and eventually she decided that staying in the U.S. was a better option for her versus going overseas to pursue a career in professional basketball.

Like Leslee, Sabrina had similar motivations for going abroad to pursue opportunities in professional basketball outside of the U.S. Sabrina saw basketball as a way to stay in shape for the WNBA season in addition to seeing the world. Sabrina was a retired professional basketball player and while playing, she saw basketball as a way to stay in shape for the WNBA, a chance to see the world, and also a way to make a living. Sabrina was a player who was able to play in over five different countries throughout her tenure as a professional athlete.. According to Sabrina:

The reality is you only play four months out of the year and the money that you make forces you to go play elsewhere for two reasons. One's the monetary because you don't make enough and then two, just for training purposes. Having seven months off is not idealistic for athletes, so to not have that competition to play for seven months you know is detrimental to you leading into the next season, so you want to find an atmosphere where you're training and playing competitively. For me honestly it was also to see the world. I didn't play in countries that would pay me the most, you know I never played in the Russia's and you know China is kind of out there on the list, because of how much they pay their athletes, but I generally went to countries that I wanted to live in and um... so that was the third factor for me as well. (Sabina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

Sabrina was a player who really enjoyed traveling and learning about the countries that she played in. When interviewing Sabrina, she talked about the diversity of experiences that she had and all the people she was able to meet during her travels. Sabrina found life overseas in Europe to be relatively easy, but to be a little harder in China because of the vast cultural differences. Sabrina always took it upon herself to travel around the country she was living in, whenever she was able to get the time off. As described by Sabrina:

If we had any time off... whether we played in a city, I always just tried to walk around and get a feel. Anytime we had multiple days off, I would just take some time and travel somewhere... I would capitalize on being over in Europe, but a lot of it was learning the history of that country I was in and there was always as you know... there are always

museums and different ways to do that, which are usually easy for tourists... (Sabina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

Sabrina took advantage of her time off of the basketball court and really valued the relationships that she made with her teammates, both in the WNBA and overseas, which was a significant reason for why she enjoyed playing the sport so much. In fact, one of her favorite things about playing basketball was the camaraderie that she had with the players on her teams. So to Sabrina, having a relationship with her teammates was very important. Communicating in Europe was fairly easy and the language barrier in Europe was not a huge issue for her because she was able to usually play with another American or in some cases, her foreign teammates knew English. However, communicating with others became difficult in China because of the language barrier. Sabrina's Chinese translator helped her in most situations, but still it was a third party facilitating the conversation between Sabrina and her teammates, so she was never really able to have one-on-one conversations with her Asian teammates in comparison to her European teammates.

Staying in shape and traveling around the world were not the only factors that motivated Sabina to go overseas to play, the money she made playing professionally factored in as well. Sabrina played in countries where she wanted to live and experience the culture, not the countries where she would get paid the most. European countries do not pay as high of a salary as the Asian countries do (based on the data collected in this current study), so she was making less money than what she could have made if she had chosen to only play in China, South Korea, or Russia. Although she eventually played in Asia, her experiences were very different than her experiences in Europe due to the intense practice schedule, the language barrier, and the all-

around life style. All told, Sabrina was able to travel around the world and stay in shape for the upcoming WNBA season.

Sabrina is now retired and has continued to work in basketball and has been able to use her experience overseas in various international settings. The motivations she had for playing basketball overseas has helped to set her up for her career outside of basketball. Sabrina was a player who had the opportunity to play in several partial seasons overseas. Like Sabrina, study participant Tonya had similar motivations for pursuing a professional basketball career overseas, which were to improve her basketball skills for the WNBA and use her overseas career to stay in shape for the WNBA season. Both Sabrina and Tonya were top women's basketball players and had more options available to them in comparison to other participants in the study. Tonya was a player who dreamed of being a professional basketball player even before the WNBA existed in the U.S. According to Tonya, "I had made the goal that I had wanted to be a professional basketball player in the NBA... [during] college, the WNBA actually came about and my goal changed from the NBA to the WNBA" (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015). Tonya had always had dreams of becoming a professional basketball player in the U.S. and when she was afforded the opportunity, she took full advantage of becoming a professional both domestically and internationally.

Tonya, has been able to make a very lucrative living on the court and with various sponsorship opportunities in the WNBA. She has been able to play in numerous leagues throughout Europe and has also played professionally in Asia. Tonya's success on the court has allowed her to solidify her status as an elite player and she has been able to capitalize on her success in various ways worldwide. Regarding her career overseas, Tonya was able to make a

great living playing basketball outside of the U.S. while only having played one full-season overseas, “I only really played one season for eight months... all of the other seasons I went over after Christmas” (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015). Unlike the other players who were overseas for the whole season, Tonya was able to stay home and celebrate American holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas and had the option of going overseas for part of the year. Her main motivation for traveling overseas was to stay in shape for the WNBA season, travel, and experience different cultures as well as make money by pursuing a career that she could enjoy. According to Tonya:

For me, being able to play basketball overseas... for one it was just kind of like a way for me to stay in shape and also be able to travel the world. Also, when you look at... from a money standpoint too... it's not really an opportunity that you can allow to pass by. It is something that you kind of have to take advantage of... but even now... I tell players... “look... this is a great opportunity for you to get out and branch out and travel the world and get paid.” You know I love the fact that I get to meet so many other players from different cultures and then you get to play with them and it's just a whole different style. You know it was fun being over there. (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015)

Tonya took advantage of going overseas because she wanted to see the world, stay in shape, and was able to make about three-times as much money as she was in the WNBA. As we can see from the perspective of Tonya, money was not the only factor that influenced her decision to play overseas. In fact, as of recently, Tonya had opted to stay in the U.S. and focus on her life outside of overseas basketball stating:

For me... I just got to the point where I was tired of moving overseas... you know... and trying to finish my career out here and looking at life after basketball and trying to figure out things I wanted to do. You know it was one of those things where... these are the things I want to do and in order for me to be able to do it, I have to conserve my body... so that was kind of where I was. (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015)

For years, Tonya was able to use her option of playing overseas as a way to improve her game in the WNBA. However, more recently, resting her body for the WNBA was more important than going overseas. Tonya had played professional basketball in the WNBA over 10 seasons and overseas for almost 10 seasons. Her age, elite athletic ability, her veteran status, led to her decision to focus on her WNBA career and to sit out playing overseas, even though at first, she was motivated to go overseas to improve her game in the WNBA.

Personal Goals

Coach K was a retired WNBA player and said that she always had a passion for the sport of basketball and was always driven to play and compete. When I asked about what she loved most about playing, Coach K stated:

You can't dwell on the last thing... you have to continue to move on and sometimes you have to go with instincts in your gut and there's always a plan, but sometimes that plan doesn't always work out... so being able to go off of good instincts and intuition. I think that's what's exciting for me. (Coach K, personal communication, March 3, 2015)

The above quote sums up Coach K's outlook on her career while she played professional basketball. Throughout her career she was always driven by instinct and intuition. After suffering debilitating injuries throughout college, she did not know where she stood regarding her ability

to play basketball again at the elite level. Doctors were very uncertain about her future as a player and one doctor even told her that she would be using a cane by the time she turned 40. However, she was able to push forward through the injuries and have a long and successful career in professional basketball. Her major motivation for pursuing a career overseas was her passion for playing basketball and her ability to continue to move forward. When I asked Coach K why she chose to play overseas, she told me that she wanted to push herself and see how far she could make it. As noted by Coach K:

I just wanted to keep playing... you know it was just one of those things where I didn't know if I could... and I had made it to the last cut for the [WNBA team]... I made it to the last cut and I thought to myself... if I made it to the last cut of the [WNBA team]... and they just won a championship... so I basically competed with the best... you know... for the national championship... if I did that, then I can still play... so that's kind of how I did that and I went after it. (Coach K, personal communication, March 3, 2015)

Coach K was able to play in five different countries during the course of her career. She was able to reach her personal goal of playing at the highest professional level in women's basketball in the U.S. and was able to travel all around the world for opportunities. As she spent more time overseas she started to adapt to her surroundings within the cultures and the places that she traveled and was able to share experiences with family members that came to visit her in every country that she played in. As noted by Coach K, "I have had the opportunity to balance basketball and to be a good person and to become a good person... and travel the world for over a decade... and my family was able to come too" (Coach K, personal communication, March 3, 2015).

Coach K's experiences as a professional basketball player had helped her to grow and experience basketball in various cultural contexts, which has helped her in her coaching and administrative career as of currently. Coach K's motivations were not based on the money, but based on personal self-satisfaction; to show that she could play at the highest level professionally. She played because it was something she loved doing, a career where she could push herself physically, and an opportunity to travel around the world and experience different cultures and make a lifetime of memories.

Just like Coach K, study participant Aly, had similar goals. Aly was a player who wanted to play at the highest level and her main motivation for going overseas was because she wanted to see how far she could go, playing professionally both domestically and internationally. Her personal goal of trying to reach the highest level led her to a professional basketball career in Israel where she had spent the entirety of her overseas career and was able to connect with her Jewish ancestry and even obtain dual-citizenship through her career in the sport of basketball.

Aly was a player who enjoyed playing basketball. She started playing basketball in high school, because it was something she could do between playing fall and spring sports. Playing professional basketball was a personal goal for Aly because, once she started playing the sport, she wanted to excel at the highest level. When I asked her what motivated her to go overseas to play professional basketball, she replied:

Because I wanted to be a professional... when I was in college... I didn't really even know I had a chance to play professionally... I wasn't really... I'm not going to say aware, but... I mean... I kind of wasn't. I wasn't aware of the different opportunities that women had overseas... so for me... obviously playing basketball in college... I wanted to play at the

highest level and so that and being able to make a living for myself... umm... you know, it's my job... but it's something I love to do so... it was a no brainer. (Aly, personal communication, March 9, 2015)

Like the other study participants, Aly had multiple motivations for going overseas to play basketball. She had the personal goal of wanting to play at the highest level professionally and she was able to make a living out of playing a sport that she enjoyed. Her passion for playing at the highest level and her ability to make a living led her overseas. In addition to being able to play at the highest level and to make a career out of doing something that she loved, Aly was able to obtain dual-citizenship in Israel because of her Jewish background which allowed her to be more marketable.

Since Aly had dual-citizenship, she was been able to compete for roster spots with the best Europeans, which meant that she did not have to compete with the best American women basketball players and this gave her an advantage. As noted by Aly:

You have a restriction on how many Americans you can have on your team. You can have as many Europeans or Bosmans on your team... so it kind of raises my stock because now I am not competing against the best Americans now. I am just competing with some of the best Europeans and that helps my case a little bit. (Aly, personal communication, March 9, 2015)

Aly was able to achieve her personal goal by playing at the highest level, while at the same time making a living playing a sport she loved. She was also able to connect with her Jewish ancestry and has since opted to stay and play in Israel (I will go into more detail about Aly's case under the heading Dual-Citizenship). Like all of the other players, her motivations for traveling abroad

for professional basketball were complex and it was not for one reason, but for multiple reasons. Aly was very happy living in Israel, but was thinking about going to another country to play, for reasons related to having dual-citizenship. According to Aly:

For women's basketball players overseas, all the clubs pay your taxes. It's kind of like a standard, so you don't have to worry about that. It's only if I play here in Israel that I would have to begin to... I would be like a real citizen if you will... like pay taxes based on the money that I make. (Aly, personal communication, March 9, 2015)

As you can see, Aly's dual-citizenship enables her to play in other countries in the E.U. where she does not have to pay taxes. Her motivations for migrating to different countries overseas for the purpose of playing basketball were dependent on her own personal life and connections she had made through transnational migration. She was at an advantage because of her dual-citizenship, so she had the ability to play in multiple countries as an E.U. citizen or as a "Bosman." If she decided to stay in Israel, then she will have to start paying taxes and may ultimately start losing money.

Summary on Motivations

In the above section I discussed the motivations for all 10 WNBA participants who played professional basketball in the WNBA and overseas. I focused on commonalities as well as unique aspects that shaped the migration of the participants in this current study. In summary, the participants motivations for migrating included: (a) eagerness to experience a different culture outside of the U.S, (b) monetary compensation, (c) gaining experience for future careers outside of playing basketball, (d) staying in shape for WNBA basketball, and (e) personal goals.. I focused on each of the stories of the 10 participants and illustrated how each story was unique

in it's own way, but at the same time how each story either aligned or overlapped with the motivations of the other participants in the study.

All participants in this current study were motivated to migrate overseas based on various factors. As we can see from the stories of the participants, their motivations were dependent on factors including, where they were in their career and their athletic ability. In other cases, individual reasons influenced their agency to migrate overseas to certain countries. For example, ethnic heritage played a significant role in Aly's life. Aly was able to obtain dual-citizenship because of her Jewish ancestry and her ethnic heritage is currently playing a role in her future choice for which country she may want to migrate to next. In another case, experiences living in another country at an early age influenced adaptability, like LaShay, who was a participant who was very comfortable living abroad because she had experienced living in Europe with her family and playing in various countries throughout Europe during her teenage years.

All participants in this current study made a living playing professional basketball and were able to pursue a career that they enjoyed playing and could make living from. The current study results indicate that motivating factors for transnational athletes, specifically WNBA players, were not limited to making more money and/or love for their sport. Motivations for migrating were fluid and overlapping over the career spans of their professional basketball playing careers. Further information for how these results tie into the literature, existing typologies of sport labor migration, implications for research, and practice and policy will be addressed in the discussion in Chapter Five.

Introduction to Experiences

In this section of the dissertation, I provide the findings of this current study in which I answered the second research question posed in the dissertation which was:

How do American WNBA players experience professional basketball in the U.S. and overseas?

This section addresses the answers to questions I asked pertaining to experience within the semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C). In the following sections, I will discuss the answers of the participants under various headings and I will address the similarities in experiences that the participants' had while playing professional basketball in the U.S. and overseas. Further, I will outline the many factors that contributed to their experiences as well as address the unique experiences of some participants.

My goal in this section was to give the reader an idea of how these professional athletes experienced transnational migration and what life was like for a WNBA player who chose to play in the WNBA and overseas. As in the previous section on motivations, references to various peer-reviewed literatures will be limited. I will summarize the experiences of the participants and also give examples of how a participant experienced life as a WNBA transnational migrant under the respective heading. Please keep in mind that the answers to this research question were obtained through the use of the semi-structured interview protocol. Since the interview protocol was semi-structured, it allowed for an open and less formal interview style. Therefore, additional questions were asked to some participants based on their answers from the semi-structured interview protocol. So, answers from these additional questions were also included in the findings of this current study.

Experiences in the WNBA

All of the participants in this current study played in the WNBA and on an overseas team. For the most part, all of the participants felt very positive about their experience playing in the WNBA. Participants expressed that playing at the WNBA had afforded them the opportunity to play with the best talent in the world and that while playing in the WNBA, they were able to play at the highest level, fulfilling a life-long dream of being a professional basketball player. Participants also expressed that when traveling abroad to play professional basketball overseas that in most cases, they were either on a team with another WNBA player or played against teams with a WNBA player on the roster. Participants in this study felt that the WNBA had the best talent in the world and that was why overseas teams aggressively recruited American players to play on overseas club teams. For instance, according to LaShay:

As far as talent wise, I would say that the best of the best are in the WNBA... that's why they asked us to come over there, it's really the Americans against the Americans. If your American can beat their American then you'll be good. I mean of course the natives there, if they're good... that's a plus! At the end of the day it's all about the Americans... which is kind of a motivator, but it kind of sucks at the same time because if you lose it's just like "it's your fault" and I am like "I already had like 40 [points] and 12[rebounds]... what else you want me to do?" (laughs). (LaShay, personal communication, February 15, 2015)

LaShay felt that overseas teams placed a huge emphasis on recruiting Americans as well as also depending on Americans to win games for them. As you can see from her statement, there was a

lot of pressure for the American players in every match because usually they would be matched up against each other and expected to “beat the other American” on the opposing team.

In terms of overall perception of the WNBA as a professional basketball organization, participants in this current study had similar issues when asked about the WNBA and how the league was operated. Participants expressed concerns about: (a) the short WNBA season, (b) the amount of money they made while playing in the WNBA in comparison to playing overseas, and (c) disparities in compensation and travel in comparison to their male counterparts in the NBA.

For example, some participants expressed motivating factors for traveling overseas to play were because they needed to stay in shape for the WNBA season. The WNBA season was so short, that it was hard for a player to expect to make a WNBA roster if they did not play throughout the year. However, it had been achieved and even some participants in this current study, like Tonya, had the ability to play in just the WNBA for the year and not travel overseas to play. Athletes that had that ability to only stay and play in the WNBA were the athletes that were considered WNBA superstars and could subsidize their overseas salaries because of sponsorship opportunities and other lucrative career ventures afforded to them in the U.S. Therefore, elite athletic ability enabled certain athletes to have the option to sit out for an overseas season.

Although not necessarily an initial motivator at times, money was a very attractive option for many of the participants in this current study to migrate overseas. This was because the majority of the participants in this current study made more money playing overseas than playing in the WNBA. I asked some participants why they thought overseas teams were able to pay them more and many referred back to how professional sport was structured in the WNBA versus

overseas. For example, I asked World Traveler why she thought overseas teams had more money to give and her response was:

They [overseas club teams] have been doing it longer and they have a different structure, in which they have like branding and marketing opportunities which the WNBA has started to do... but they have been doing it for longer and so the money that they get and they raise, they got it figured out. (World Traveler, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

World Traveler felt that the structure of the clubs overseas as well as the fact that overseas club teams have been in existence longer had enabled the overseas teams to pay the players more money compared to the WNBA.

Other players felt the same way about the difference in the structure of overseas teams in comparison to WNBA teams. Players also touched on why they may have made more money playing overseas. For example, Kate discussed the structure of the overseas teams and how the local players would not get paid as much as the foreign players. She felt that the foreign teams had found a successful way to pay some of the players stating:

I just think that... I think that they found a way to keep the overhead down and to not make it as expensive as maybe the WNBA. When you think about the budget to run a team and flying here and flying there, you know the salaries and things like that. I think number one, I think the local players... they probably earn just like a stipend. They might make like... if it's not a national team player for example, one of my Spanish teammates... if she wasn't on the national team then she might make like a couple of hundred dollars well... like nothing... but if she played on the national team then that would be her job and

that would be her salary, so she might make... thirty or forty thousand [dollars]... you know whatever... and then you would just have to pay the Americans. So you can find a sponsor... and you would find one sponsor that would just pay the salary of the foreign players and then you might find a sponsor that pays the rest of it so... (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015)

This seemed to be a theme when talking with other players as well. Not everyone on a team made the same amount, and in many cases the biggest discrepancy in salaries were the foreign players' salaries versus the domestic players' salaries. The domestic players may have made a stipend, but in many cases, playing basketball was not their full-time job. Some domestic players attended academic classes or had other obligations to fulfill outside of basketball, unlike the American players who played basketball for their full-time job.

For example, in Israel, some of the Israeli women who played on the team attended school as well as served in the Israeli military. In the case with the domestic players in Israel, their lives did not revolve around basketball because they were not able to live off of the salary they were making playing professionally. For instance, I asked LaShay about her experiences with her foreign teammates in Israel and she talked to me about their relationship and how it was strained in a sense, because of the locality of the non-American players on her team. The domestic players were close to home and had friends and family around, and many of their priorities were outside of basketball. LaShay, who played in Israel, gave an example of how the age of her teammates and how their responsibilities outside of basketball affected her relationship with her foreign teammates. According to LaShay:

Some of our teammates were younger and the school system is weird and then they have to join the Army... the girls have to join it for two years and the boys after doing it for three years right after they finish high school and they go to college. So they would either be dealing with the Army or would have classes and then the weekends for Shabbat.

(LaShay, personal communication, February 5, 2015)

As you can see from LaShay's statement, the domestic players had lives outside of basketball whereas the American players did not have such obligations like the military, taking classes, or observing religious holidays. The priority for the American players was to play basketball because that was what they traveled overseas to do and that was what they were getting paid to do.

Fans Overseas

Participants in this current study expressed that they had received great fan support in both the WNBA as well as when they played overseas. However, the majority of the participants in this current study did express how the fans overseas, in both Europe and Asia were very passionate and that they were very surprised to see the large amount of fan support they received while playing basketball abroad. Based on the interviews, it seemed that participants had more of a celebrity status while playing professional basketball overseas. All participants agreed on the fact that they received more fan support playing overseas than in the U.S. For example, Kate who only had experience playing overseas in Europe and the U.S. shared that she received a lot of fan support while abroad stating:

I would say the European fans were way more passionate and you could tell that by soccer... you can see the whole European vibe by soccer. You know they are serious

about soccer... You know, you play in a town and then they come out to the games and you have the fans that are crazy. We go and play against certain teams and it's like "whoa... oh my God!" You know... so passionate is what I would say. (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015)

Kate felt like the culture of sports overseas was more passionate because of the culture that surrounded soccer and therefore the fandom transcended to all sports including women's basketball. Sabrina, who had experience playing professional basketball in both Europe and Asia felt that the fans in Asia were larger in numbers than when she played in Europe. She mentioned:

Fans in China and South Korea are surprisingly large in quantity... so I think every team is responsible in filling their arena, so you get actually the loud atmosphere, playing in actually larger arenas in those two countries than you do throughout Europe. (Sabrina, personal communication, March, 11 2015)

Kate agreed that she was able to have a lot of fan support while playing overseas, but felt there were larger numbers of fans in Asia. This seemed to be true for other participants who played overseas in Asia. In fact, Tonya, who played throughout Europe and Asia, had a positive experience playing in Asia in comparison to Lisa, who had a negative experience. Tonya said that the fans in Asia were what made her happy and that was why she thinks she enjoyed playing in Asia so much. According to Tonya, "the fans have been awesome and that's probably why I liked [city in Asia]... because they would rock the house... like every night. Like all the fans that supported us in [city in Asia]... were amazing" (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015). Out of all the places Tonya played, she enjoyed playing in Asia because of the fans and other aspects that she was afforded that made her transition to Asia smoother than the other

participants in this current study. Please note that Tonya was a participant who was considered a superstar athlete and her experiences overseas were different than the participants who did not have the same celebrity status as she did, more discussion on this can be found under the heading Celebrity Status.

Europe: Experiences Playing

Nine out of 10 participants in this current study played professional women's basketball in Europe at one point in their career. Participants who played in Europe played in the following countries: Czech Republic, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Russia, and Turkey. Participants in this current study seemed to feel that playing basketball in Europe was a relatively smooth transition in comparison to playing in Asia. Participants expressed how it was relatively easy to get around the country while playing in Europe as well as making friends. This was because there were at least a few people who knew how to speak the English language with whom they could communicate with.

Participants who played in Europe seem to have had a more positive experience playing in Europe versus playing in Asia. Participants felt that residing in Europe was not as much of a culture shock as it was in comparison to going overseas to a country like to Asia. Participants who played in Europe were able to travel around either by car or train and were able to have downtime to see historic sites in various countries throughout Europe, because of the proximity of the countries. More information about the European experiences of the participants will be written about throughout remainder of the chapter.

Asia: Experiences Playing

Four of the participants in this current study played in Asia and Europe, while one participant in this current study only had overseas experience playing in Asia. All of the participants that had experience playing in Asia felt that playing in either China and/or South Korea was a great learning experience. Participants who played in Asia talked about the long and intense season in which they would have multiple practices a day and very few moments of downtime to enjoy life outside of basketball. Even participants who did not play in Asia described hearing about the intensity of playing in the region, such as LaShay. When I asked LaShay about countries she would want to avoid playing in, she said that she would go anywhere, but that if she went to South Korea, she knew it would be a tough transition because of the experiences that her former college teammates had. LaShay stated, “I know that some of my teammates from college they’re over there in Korea now and in their first year... and they’re just burnt out... and this year they’re still burnt out” (LaShay, personal communication, February 15, 2015). LaShay went on to say that she would be willing to go to South Korea and play, but that she had to mentally and physically prepare herself for what she would endure both on and off the court.

Lisa, who was a participant whose experiences overseas only included playing in Asia. Lisa described her experience as being controlled and very intense and her time in the country of China was spent living in a dorm style arrangement with the rest of her teammates and having her time in and out of basketball, controlled by the coach. Lisa experienced a hard time adjusting to the culture including: (a) the living arrangements she was provided, (b) the coaching style, and (c) the food. As stated by Lisa:

It is very difficult and there are a lot of negatives with the whole China experience... and even in Korea, the culture is just totally different. The way that they are raised and the way that they want to do things, I don't know... to be blunt and honest, I am just going to be blunt and honest... but Asian people are very stubborn and they're very bull-headed... it's their way or the highway. So thinking back... I played in the WNBA back home and I played on USA basketball... like I played at the top in Asia. China or Korea, they have never played at the top... like their league is never at the top... and the WNBA always is... and what they would tell me was that I needed to play this way... like I could not dribble... I could not do this move... like I had to do this move all the time. It's just very frustrating because you have to do what they want you to do because they're paying you. You know if you don't do what they want you to do then you're going to get cut... but you know what they're making you do and what they're wanting you to do is wrong.

(Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

Lisa felt very strong about her experience playing in Asia. She was a participant whose number one motivation for playing professional basketball abroad was to make money. It seems that from the data collected that her experience was compromised because she was able to get paid a lot more playing in Asia than if she had pursued a career in Europe however, she had a very controlled and overall negative experience in Asia. In some instances, leisure was even controlled for participants who chose to go to either Asia to play basketball. For example, Lisa was not allowed to go out and explore the city even if she did have time off from basketball.

According to Lisa:

Let's say that they gave you the morning off and you still had practice in the afternoon, you're not allowed to do anything in the morning and you had to stay in your hotel because they were giving you that morning off to rest, so the day after a game, we would always have the morning off and practice in the afternoon... or vice versa... practice in the morning or the afternoon off... but on those type of days... they're giving us that practice off to rest, so they didn't allow us to leave our hotel. We had to stay there and rest. (Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

The coach controlled Lisa's downtime however, in some instances she was able to go to the movies or a "western restaurant" with other American professional basketball players who also played in close proximity to her.

Please note that this was just one experience of a participant living in Asia. In fact, the other participants who played in Asia had an altogether positive outlook on their time spent there. For instance, in the case of Tonya, Tonya had a good experience playing in Asia because of how welcoming the culture was. In fact Tonya said that out of all of the regions she played in, playing in Asia was her favorite experience. This could have been for a number of reasons considering she was a superstar athlete and her experiences overseas differed from the other participants in varying degrees.

Celebrity Status

The participants in this current study were all professional athletes who played both domestically and internationally. All of the participants were recruited for women's basketball at the collegiate level and played at the highest level of basketball that the U.S. had to offer. Their visibility within their sport had allowed for spectators to literally watch these athletes perform on

the court on a continual basis. Each athlete's ability to be recognized as an elite professional, played into the experiences of all these women throughout their careers in the U.S. and overseas.

This current study incorporated the experiences of well known/famous WNBA players as well as less well-known WNBA players. The experiences of the participants varied because of the participant's athletic ability and their celebrity status. For instance, Tonya and Sabrina were very well known players who had been able to play in the WNBA and overseas. However, unlike the other participants, their overseas experiences were very different because of their WNBA celebrity status. In fact, they only played partial seasons overseas and did not consistently play full overseas, like the other participants in this current study.

In many cases, participants talked about celebrating American holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas overseas with their teammates, but for Tonya, she was able to go overseas after the holidays, and stay in the U.S. to celebrate with her family. Specifically, Tonya was able to play in the larger cities in Europe and Asia versus the smaller cities and towns that the majority of participants in this current study played in. While in Asia, Tonya was invited to the American military base to conduct basketball clinics and was also able to have a driver to drive her around when she was residing in Asia. In Tonya's case, she was the focal point of the team and enjoyed the perks of being a celebrity abroad. Her experience was very different because she received the best treatment that the club team had to offer. Tonya was very appreciative and gracious about her time abroad. She was able to enjoy her time abroad and have positive experiences because of this celebrity status that she achieved from excelling on the basketball court.

Agents

Participants in this current study were asked about what advice they would give when talking to future players who may want to migrate overseas to play professional basketball. Some participants talked about the benefit of having a great agent. To the participants, a great agent was one who would advocate for them from the beginning to end, meaning the agent would find the best situation for the player as well as make sure that the participant was able to have all financial and living accommodations met throughout the entire process. Based on the results, it seemed that having an agent really helped with the experiences of the participants overseas because the players were able to focus more on the playing side of the game versus the financial side of the game, which their agent dealt with. According to some statements made by LaShay and Lisa, having a good agent from beginning to end was very important when deciding to go overseas as well as being overseas. According to LaShay:

Make sure you have a good agent like someone that... I mean obviously you want them to be good at their job but someone that you can build a relationship with. I know a lot of people that don't really have a relationship with her agent because their agent has so many other clients that they're kind of just like shuffled around in that's actually really annoying. The thing with me is that I'm real like... personal with mine. (LaShay, personal communication, February 15, 2015)

Lisa had similar feelings and felt that an important quality of an agent was to be an advocate throughout the duration of one's stay overseas, as Lisa stated:

I would say... find the best agent that you can and don't go with just any agent that mails you something in the mail. Overseas is kind of like the wild wild west, you know? You

may get paid one month and then you may not get paid... and your coach may treat you like trash and you need someone that is going to be there to speak for you so that you don't have to put yourself in that mix. You don't ever want to have to approach your coach or GM [general manager] overseas and you know mess... with the business stuff, like you use your agent to deal with that. (Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

In the case of Coach K, she had a situation where she was cut from a team and was not notified by the club she was playing with. In this scenario, Coach K's agent was able to communicate with her and keep her in the loop about what was going on. Here is an excerpt from my interview with Coach K in which she described the role her agent played during her time overseas:

Coach K: I was actually fired without my knowledge... for no reason at all. So yeah... so it was kind of peculiar on the court because I was fired at two o'clock in the morning and didn't know anything about it. I go to practice the next day... actually my agent called me that morning... and told me that they had just released me... and I told him that I did not know that. He was like 'okay, so you're going to go to practice like nothing ever happened... until they give you your contract that you've been cut... because the moment that you don't show up for practice is the moment that they will say that I breached it.' When in actuality, they had cut me. It was one of those things where I was able to... you know I had a really great experience off of the court.

Me: So with your contract, you just had to keep playing until they told you that you were released?

Coach K: Yeah, they cut me and didn't notify me. They notified my [country she was playing in at the time] contact over there and he called my American agent and my American agent called me and he said... "You go and you practice until they cut you." So when I walked out there the next day and they said, "what are you doing here?" and I said that "I have no notification that I have been cut by you... so until you give me a piece of paper and my money... I am still on this team." (Coach K, personal communication, March 3, 2015)

Coach K's agent played a very important role because he was the liaison between the club team overseas and Coach K. Participants in this current study acknowledged issues with being paid at all or on time, as issues one may face playing professional basketball overseas. In addition, cultural relativism came into play here. A contractual agreement in the U.S. may have different provisions than a contractual agreement with an overseas club. Coach K's agent was familiar with how contractual agreements worked in Israel and her agent was able to notify his client that she had to go to practice until the team confirmed on paper that she was in fact dismissed from the team.

Dual-Citizenship

Half of the participants in this study discussed the benefits of having dual-citizenship such as being able to be more marketable overseas and/or having the opportunity to make more money. However, only one participant in this study actually had dual-citizenship, which was participant Aly. Aly's basketball career led her to Israel, however her basketball career was also able to connect her to her Jewish ancestry on her mother's side and she was able to obtain dual-citizenship through her Jewish ancestry.

Aly's paternal grandfather was Jewish and although that was not the reason she wanted to play in Israel, playing in Israel allowed her to connect to a part of her heritage. When Aly arrived in Israel she was able to make connections with her teammates through on and off the court interactions. Through a conversation with one of her Israeli teammates, in which she informed her teammate of her Jewish ancestry, her Israeli teammate informed her about the "law of return," which was a way that Aly could obtain dual-citizenship in Israel because of her Jewish ancestry. According to Aly:

My rookie year I played here [Israel] as an American and one of my teammates... my Israeli teammates found out that... well we were having a conversation about my grandfather being Jewish... and so they went to my agent and told him that... and in Israel it is called the "law of return." Pretty much it just says that anyone that has Jewish heritage in their family has the right to come to Israel and obtain citizenship. So that is the route I went to get mine... and because it was my mom's dad... that helped my case a little more because you're not considered Jewish unless your mother is Jewish... and so because he is my mom's dad the process I went through. I had to fill out some paper work and then I had to have a Rabbi sign off and confirm that I was Jewish because of my grandfather who was my mother's father... and he had to put all of that in there. So I got my citizenship my second year here and the advantages of it... when I am over here I play as an Israeli, so that makes whatever team I am on stronger... um... and then... for me... I can go over to other countries in Europe and play... called the Bosman. (Aly, personal communication, March 9, 2015)

Aly was able to obtain dual-citizenship because of her Zionist heritage, which made her more marketable as a player and allowed her to be counted as an Israeli citizen versus an American citizen. Aly referred to the “Bosman” which is a rule that allows E.U. citizens the ability to play in countries throughout Europe without restrictions (see Chapter 2 for more information).

Safety Overseas

The interview protocol did not explicitly address questions about safety issues or concerns the participants had while playing basketball abroad however, participants felt obliged to talk about their safety and well-being while playing professional basketball outside of the U.S. Although this was not an original question from the interview protocol, this is an example of how using a semi-structured interview protocol during an interview can lead to other questions when exploring a particular case, using an exploratory case study methodology.

Both Aly and Coach K experienced concerns with safety while living abroad, Aly in Israel and Coach K in Russia. Aly who played in Israel endured Middle East conflict, which affected her at times. At one point, Israel was getting bombed while Aly was living there and she recalled a time when the bombings were too close for comfort. According to Aly:

The last year I played here before this year... there were bombs reaching Tel Aviv and stuff and they never... like they have always been under control and like never reached that far before, but then they started reaching in Tel Aviv... so that makes me a little nervous, but other than that for the most part, I feel pretty safe. (Aly, personal communication, March 9, 2015)

Although Aly felt nervous at times, overall, she enjoyed living in Israel and felt “pretty safe” outside of that one year. In addition, Coach K had issues with safety while living in Russia. Her

status as an American professional basketball player made her a target and she had to worry about her safety at times. Coach K shared:

Russia was okay, sometimes it wasn't the best at times... especially when I was hanging out with a lot of male basketball players, because the Russian culture... it's either that you're very rich or you're very poor. So they knew why the Americans were over there... to play ball, because everything was on TV. So you would have people try to rob you or literally cops would pull you over to rob you. The only way you get out of getting a ticket was just to give them rubles. (Coach K, personal communication, March 3, 2015)

As you can see, there was corruption with police and crime on the streets, so Coach K had to be very careful during her time in Russia.

These were the only two instances in the study where participants talked about safety. Both Aly and Coach K had an all-around good experience playing basketball abroad, but their experiences with global conflict and local corruption just shows the diversity of experiences a transnational sport labor migrant may have abroad.

Leisure Overseas

Each participant in this current study was asked about how she spent her time outside of playing professional basketball while living overseas. All participants answered this question accordingly based on the country in which they resided in. Based on information collected, participants who played professional basketball in Europe were able to have more free time than participants who played professional basketball in Asia.

Leisure in Europe and Asia

While in Europe, participants talked about getting a chance to be immersed in European history and opportunities to go sightseeing. Participants discussed their experiences going to museums and various other sites for shopping and sightseeing. Participants who played in Europe took advantage of the close proximity of the countries in the E.U. and would either drive, take a train, or fly to destinations during their off-days or after the season. These women would usually have one-to-two days off during the season and would travel with teammates or friends and family who came to visit from the U.S. According to Tonya, “we would go see... in different places... ‘sites that you have to see’ while you’re there and the different cities and then... and you know... just like in America, we would have road trips and stuff too” (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015). Tonya’s experience during her downtime was similar to those of the other participants. Participants would meet up with teammates or other people overseas and go on tours, eat at restaurants, go shopping, enjoy the nightlife, or visit museums during their leisurely time.

More specifically, participants who played in Israel seemed to have a very enjoyable quality of life outside of basketball because of the location of the country and the climate in Israel. In Israel, participants had access to American goods and many of the people in Israel were able to speak English, so it was fairly easy for them to communicate with the locals. Participants who resided in Israel were also able to go see the “Holy Land” and explore the country easily because of the size of the country. LaShay really enjoyed playing in Israel and stated, “I just went to different cities and looked at historical things, here from the Bible and whatnot... you know just explore. Everything was close together and I didn’t realize how small Israel was”

(LaShay, personal communication, February 15, 2015). LaShay's experience was similar to the other participants who played in Israel because most all participants who played in Israel felt very comfortable and really enjoyed living in Israel and playing basketball, because of the all-around great quality of life they experienced outside of basketball. Study participant Aly felt uncomfortable at times because of the Middle Eastern conflict, but still enjoyed living in Israel and had an all-around good experience.

Participants who played in Asia discussed the lack of downtime that they had outside of basketball, because of the rigorous practice schedule. In many cases, these women would practice two, three, or four times a day and would be too exhausted to do anything outside of basketball. In one case, a participant described how when she did receive time off from playing and practicing, the coach would dictate how that time was to be spent and usually it was mandatory for players to stay in their rooms and rest.

Culture and Acculturation

Culture and acculturation was a category that emerged from the collected data. Participants in this study were asked questions about holidays, cuisine, and their experience with language overseas. Through the use of a semi-structured protocol interview guide, participants discussed these topics and how they adapted to local culture and customs while playing professional basketball abroad. Participants in this current study seemed to be open to the various cultures while living abroad. While some immersed themselves more than others, the majority of the participants enjoyed the opportunity to learn and/or take part in various ways.

Holidays

Participants were asked questions about holidays and if they celebrated American holidays abroad as well as if they celebrated the local holidays in the country that they resided in. All participants in this study celebrated Christmas (even Aly who identified as Jewish) and most all participants celebrated Thanksgiving while abroad. Many participants in this current study did not have the opportunity to come home because of the busy basketball season and were forced to celebrate away from friends and family in the U.S. (except for the case of Tonya). In many cases, participants would celebrate American holidays and would sometimes invite their foreign teammates to partake.

Some participants also celebrated non-American holidays while they were abroad or celebrated American holidays in a way that was culturally different than how the holiday was celebrated in the U.S. For instance, many of the participants who played in Israel talked about celebrating or observing Shabbat on Fridays. For example, LaShay, who did not identify as Jewish, observed Shabbat and sometimes partook in the festivities. According to LaShay:

Shabbat dinners... everything shut down Friday night until late Saturday evening... everything was just shut down. So we would just kind of go grocery shopping on Friday morning or Thursday night... took up a good meal, have our little Shabbats together.

(Lashay, personal communication, February 15, 2015)

Those that observed the holiday did so because in many cases, stores and shops were closed, so they did not have a choice but to observe the holiday. Those that celebrated the holiday usually did so with their Israeli teammates, usually by invitation. Other participants discussed celebrating

Three Kings in Spain and popping grapes, celebrating the Korean New Year, and other occasions exclusive in certain countries or in certain cultures.

Experiences with Local Cuisine Overseas

Food was a theme that emerged throughout all of the interviews with participants. Participants discussed how they either enjoyed or detested the food choices that they had while living abroad. Food and eating is a part of everyday life and staying healthy and having the proper nutrients is particularly important for professional athletes. Adapting to the local cuisine was a big part of the migration process. Some participants were able to adapt to the local foods available to them with some even preferring non-American food to cuisines on other continents. According to Coach K:

A lot of times I said, people don't want to come out of their comfort zone. They want to continue to eat hamburgers, because they think it's safe... when in actuality the food in Europe is actually a hundred times better than the food in America... because there are no preservatives, but honestly you wouldn't know it if you did try it... you got to try to open yourself up, you know? (Coach K, personal communication, March 3, 2015)

Some participants were fans of certain countries cuisines and others were not. Take Lisa, she was not a fan of the food available to her while living in Asia. According to Lisa:

[In Asia]... the food is ridiculous... for six months I lived eating just white rice pretty much as a diet and then just fish here and there. Chicken was pretty much all I ate... fish, rice, and chicken... for six months and then they are yelling at you because you are losing too much weight. Well how do you stay and keep your weight when you're practicing

three times a day and only eating fish, rice, and chicken? I probably lost about 30 pounds every time I would go over... (Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

Coach K preferred the food overseas in comparison to the U.S. while participant Lisa preferred American food versus what was available to her in Europe. In fact, Lisa preferred going to “western restaurants” than partaking in the local cuisine in Asia.

Issues Involving Language

The majority of the participants who participated in this current study were monolingual. However, a few of the participants in this current study were able to adapt to life overseas and two participants were able to become fluent in a language other than English. An additional two participants were able to develop a working knowledge of the languages spoken while playing basketball abroad. The participants who were fluent in another language other than English were World Traveler and Coach K, with Kate and Sabrina having a working knowledge of another language outside of English.

Language did play a role in how each of the participants experienced professional basketball while overseas however, participants had an easier time communicating on and off the court while playing in Europe in comparison to playing in Asia. Participants who played in Europe talked about how teammates and various other locals in the area usually had a working knowledge of English, so it was not as difficult to get around, outside of basketball. Participants who played in larger cities or closer to larger cities had an easier time finding individuals who spoke English versus participants who lived in smaller towns in Europe

On the basketball court, participants usually had a translator or a teammate who spoke English that could help them to understand what was being said. In addition, participants felt that

it was fairly easy to pick up on terms used by coaches during games and practices, such as when to shoot, rebound, or pass the ball. In all of the cases, the basketball coach in each country usually coached in the language of the country unless he or she was an American then they coached in English. Some coaches did have an understanding of the English language, but preferred to coach the team using the language of the country that they were residing in. This may have been because the majority of the players on the team were local and only a couple or a few players were non-local or American.

Language seemed to play a significant role in the participants' experiences living abroad but at the same time, the majority of the participants were comfortable living abroad and not knowing the language fluently. The only participants who discussed major issues with the language barrier were the participants who played in Asia, because it was hard to find anyone there that spoke English. Whereas in Europe, you could find someone in the town or city who had a working knowledge of the English language. For instance, participant Lisa had a difficult time communicating with others while residing in Asia, even with a translator. According to Lisa:

The last two years in China, my translator didn't know English very well. In Korea, my Korean translator knew English very, very well, like almost as well as I did, but in China, my translator barely knew any English and trying to... I felt a lot of times like I was a human thesaurus. Everything that I would say... I don't know... like the first time that I said trashcan... you know like, "where is the trash?"... and he is like "trash?" You know and I am like playing charades and being a thesaurus at the same time, trying to get him to understand what I wanted to say, so the six months like that were really hard... like not

being able to communicate with absolutely anyone. After a while I picked up that their English is British... you know so “trashcan” is “rubbish.” I just wanted to know where the bathroom was and they’re like “bathroom... toilet?” And then they are like “wash-closet?” which is British... but little things like that were hard... obviously too... in China and Korea too. (Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

Language also played a role in the relationships that the participants had with their teammates. Based on the interviews and results, it seemed that participants who played in countries where there were more English speakers, had a more well-rounded and positive quality of life than those that were in places where the English language was known by only a few. For example, participants in Israel felt very comfortable living there because they were able to get around easily, because for the most part, many of their teammates and the Israelis were familiar with the English language. Participants who played in Asia could not communicate with hardly anyone but the translator at times.

Sabrina was one participant who valued the relationships that she made playing professional basketball so not knowing the language of the host country made it difficult for her on some occasions, to have that bond with her teammates, especially when she was playing in Asia in comparison to Europe. According to Sabrina:

It was a bit challenging, more from the communication aspect and also the fact that you only have one American on those teams [in reference to the teams in Asia]. Throughout Europe, you usually have another American and in Europe, most of your teammates speak English, which makes it a lot easier to communicate. In China and in Korea, there is very limited English. It’s hard for somebody that loves the team aspect of the sport and

building relationships, you know I felt really challenged to find ways to do that without you know... through our translator or just honestly non-verbal communication became essential... but very different cultures obviously [in reference to Asia], so it was very eye-opening in that regard to see just kind of and compare my experiences with Asia versus Europe. (Sabrina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

In addition, usually an American player that plays in Asia is the only one on the team, as opposed to European teams that have additional Americans on the roster. Therefore, the number of Americans or English speakers on a team can be limited depending on the country one plays in because of quotas.

Relationships

All participants in this current study were asked questions about their relationships while playing professional basketball. Throughout the duration of the interview, I asked participants about their relationships with their foreign teammates as well as their American teammates and the dynamics of those relationships, both on and off of the court. All participants answered the questions, with some elaborating about their relationships more than others. In addition, participants that had a family member or a spouse living with them or close by were asked additional questions.

American Teammates

Participants in this current study were usually the only American on their respective teams or had one to two more Americans on the team. Participants seemed to be closer to their American teammate(s) because of cultural similarities like being from the U.S. and being able to speak the same language. Participants who played in Europe had at least one teammate on their

team that identified as American or someone on their team that could speak English, so communication was not as difficult in comparison to a participant's experiences in Asia.

Participants in Asia discussed being the only American on their team and meeting up with other Americans that played on other teams throughout the country that they were residing in.

Foreign Teammates

Participants in this current study seemed to have a relatively good relationship with their foreign teammates. In some cases, participants were invited to spend holidays with their foreign teammates or participants would invite their foreign teammates to spend holidays with them. The data indicates that the participants connected more with their teammates who had a working knowledge of English versus the foreign teammates who were not as familiar with how to speak the English language. Therefore, participants who played in Europe seemed to have a closer relationship with their teammates in comparison to participants who played in Asia. In Mya's experiences, she would usually travel and go to cities with her American teammates and when she was in town and wanted to be social, that usually involved getting together with everyone including both her American and foreign teammates. As stated by Mya:

We did hang out, you know... when we all [all the teammates] went out, we would hang out with them [non-American teammates]... but when we went to different cities and such, it was just usually me and my American teammates, but if we were like... went to a club or something like that, I would go with them [non-American teammates]. (Mya, personal communication, February 25, 2015)

Mya's experiences overseas with her foreign teammates were similar to the other participants' experiences. In many cases the other participants would travel around the country with their

American teammates or other Americans that may not have been familiar with the lay of the land and were interested in sightseeing and hang out with their foreign teammates while they were in town.

American Military Overseas

Some participants in this current study were able to make friends with Americans serving in the military overseas. Participants were able to have access to various military bases in Europe and in Asia due to the personal relationship they formed with those in the military overseas. In Kate's experience, she was able to link up with people in the military and go on the military base for groceries and also to see her friends. According to her:

We would always try to hook up with the military people, so we could always go and get groceries and certain things we might want... and things like that. If we wanted to go and party for the weekend, you know or something, we would go on base and hang out and we had friends and we could stay over [with]... so yeah, it was pretty cool. (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015)

Kate was able to be friendly with other Americans on the military base who were serving the U.S. abroad. In another instance, World Traveler had a sister who served in the military and was stationed close to where World Traveler played basketball. World Traveler was considered to be a military family member and was able to have a pass issued to her and to have access to the military base, without having to be escorted on the premises as a guest. As World Traveler shared:

When I played in [name of country in Europe] my [family member] was stationed there for two years too... so I was able to get a military ID because I was family (laughs) so I

could get on base... and when I was in [name of country in Asia] I stayed at my [family member's] house more than I stayed at my own, because she stayed on the base and it was only eight minutes away from my own place. So I took advantage of all opportunities. (World Traveler, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

World Traveler was able to have family close by, which was an asset to her in more ways than one. Lastly, Tonya was a participant that was invited to the military base in Asia to conduct a basketball workshop, which she really enjoyed participating in. As stated by Tonya, "In [city in Asia], we actually did [go on the military base] and I also did a basketball camp when we were in Seoul at the army base... so that was a lot of fun" (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015). Participants either made friends, had family members, or were invited to the military base by other Americans. This relationship allowed them to meet people from the U.S. who were also living abroad and also to have access to American goods shipped over from the U.S. that they would not necessarily have, if they did not form these relationships or already have these relationships in place.

American Expatriates

Participants in this current study discussed meeting up with other Americans while they were overseas. In some cases, participants would meet up with American military personnel, American students studying abroad, Americans on the men's basketball teams, or other American tourists or expatriates. In some instances, the participants would celebrate holidays with their American counterparts abroad and were thankful to have other Americans abroad to help with the transition of living overseas. World Traveler even went as far to say that, "Americans have a natural bond" (World Traveler, personal communication, February 12, 2015).

So, according to the results from this current study, when Americans went overseas to play, they were more comfortable and familiar with one another. In addition, participants were able to benefit from their relationships with other Americans overseas, such as befriending American military personnel and having an opportunity to go on the American military base.

Partner Overseas

The majority of the participants did not have a significant other or partner living with them while abroad. In fact, the majority of the participants in this current study were not married and did not have children during their time as a transnational sport labor migrant playing professional basketball. Based on the results from this current study, it would be fair to say that the typical WNBA transnational sport labor migrant is not married or has children, while they are in the midst of their careers. Participants in this study talked about waiting until after their career to have a family.

Only one participant in this current study had their significant other living with her when playing professional basketball overseas and waited until after her career playing, to start having children. This participant was Lisa and Lisa had her husband from the U.S. live with her while she played basketball overseas. In this current study, I refer to Lisa's husband using the pseudonym Bob.

Bob lived with Lisa for two seasons abroad while she played in Asia. At the time, she was playing for a team in a country in Asia and the coach of the team did not feel comfortable having Bob live with Lisa in the country in Asia, because the coach felt that Bob would have been a distraction. As it turned out, Bob was in the field of athletics, so the team ended up

putting Bob on staff and allowed Bob to work with the team that Lisa was on, because of his unique skill set. According to Lisa:

The first year he came over, they weren't too excited about that because they didn't know him and they just thought it was going to be a distraction for me and I wouldn't play hard or he was just going to get in the way... so they weren't too excited about it... So Bob was [in the field of athletics] and as soon as they saw him and saw how he was built... they said "Oh... you can [work with] the girls!" They were like "you strong!".... So the first two years I was with the same team, and that was his "job" he didn't get paid for it or anything... and they didn't even want him to come at all and they weren't going to pay for his travel, like if we were to fly to a different city... all of that would be coming out of my account, like out of my paycheck to try to deter him from coming. But after we were there and they saw that it wasn't a big deal, then they said that they would pay for his travel and food as long as he [worked with] the girls, so that is kind of how he was compensated for that, which he would have done it anyway, because what else is he going to do? He was bored. (Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

Lisa had a very unique situation abroad. She lived in a dorm style setting and while she was residing in Asia, Lisa and her husband lived in one room together. The only person Bob communicated with other than Lisa was the translator and his life revolved around Lisa's basketball career. Bob was able to use his skill set to work while he was abroad even though he was not compensated with money, he was able to travel with the team and have his room and board paid for by the organization Lisa was playing for.

Lisa's relationship with her husband overseas allowed her to have an additional person to communicate with, but at the same time, he was also one of the only people that she could communicate with outside of her translator, because of the language barrier. She felt that living abroad with her husband in that cultural setting really put their relationship to the test. She even shared:

If you really want to get to know who you marry and see if you're compatible... like we didn't live together before we were married. So if you want to see if you're compatible, go to a different country where you can't speak to anyone but that person and you have to live in a hotel room with that person for six months. You'll be able to tell right away if you are going to get along or not. (Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

Lisa's relationship was really tested going abroad. She was married at the time and in order for Lisa to be together with her husband, they had to compromise with Bob living abroad for a couple of years. Eventually Lisa decided to retire early due to a number of factors, one being her relationship with her husband and being close to him in the U.S. In addition, Lisa's experiences abroad were very isolated because of the differences in food and language.

roster.

American Awareness and Views of Being Othered

Participants in this current study were asked questions about how their perception on how race, nationality, and gender, played a role in their experiences overseas. Therefore, I coded for words and phrases related to how their personal identity played a role in their experiences abroad. Participants mainly discussed being the only American on their team or one of two or three Americans on the team. Both African-American and Caucasian participants discussed how

race played a role in their experiences in both Europe and Asia as well as how they felt discrimination and/or racism while they were oversea. In addition, some participants discussed how their height also played a role while they were abroad.

Quotas

Participants in this current study discussed playing overseas and how the quota system worked as they played basketball abroad. According to the participants in this current study, depending on the team and country one played for, only a certain number of foreigners could be on a team roster and usually the players who were foreigners were American players. According to the participants' responses, it seemed that more foreign players were allowed to play on club teams in Europe in comparison to club teams in Asia. Each team, league, and country had different rules for the number of foreign players that could be on a roster and in some cases, further restrictions or exceptions were made depending on the game or tournament the team was competing in (Please refer to Chapter Two for an explanation and example on how quota systems work). In Appendix E, you will find a table with information on the number of foreign nationals allowed on each team according to country (information was based on responses from this current study). As you can see from the table, more American players or foreigners were allowed on professional club teams in Europe versus Asia. Again, this was based on data collected between February and March of 2015, from participants who have had experience playing professional women's basketball from the 1980s until present. Rules may have changed in regards to quotas and foreign players on team rosters and/or playing in certain games. The purpose of the table was to give readers an idea of the quotas in women's professional basketball throughout Europe and Asia.

Nationality

All participants in this current study were asked questions about their nationality and how that played into their experiences playing professional basketball abroad. All of the participants in this current study identified as American with one participant having dual-citizenship. Participants talked about their experiences with their American teammates as well as other Americans that they would meet during their travels abroad. In addition, participants were asked questions about how being an American abroad affected them on and off the court and if they felt like their nationality was an advantage or disadvantage when living abroad and playing professional basketball outside of the U.S. For the most part, participants felt that being an American was a benefit to getting selected to play on an overseas club team. For instance, LaShay discussed how it was “all about the Americans” during her time playing in Europe and Tonya discussed how excited she would get to “see another American” while she was living in Asia. Participants were constantly reminded of their nationality either by others or were aware of it from just living and residing in a country outside of the U.S.

Awareness of Race

Eighty percent of the participants in this current study identified as African-American with twenty percent identifying as Caucasian. Since the majority of WNBA players identify as African-American (Lapchick, 2013), it was not too much of a surprise that the majority of the participants that I was able to recruit for this current study also identified as African-American. Part of the semi-structured interview protocol in this current study included questions in which I asked participants how their race affected them while playing abroad, whether it was on or off

the court. Both African-American or Caucasian participants experienced issues with race while they played abroad.

The African-American participants were aware of their race while playing in both Europe and Asia, whereas the Caucasian participants were more aware of their race while playing professional basketball in Asia. Take Sabrina for example; she was a participant who was tall and identified as Caucasian. She was able to blend in more when she played in Europe in comparison to playing in Asia. Sabrina's experience with race is as follows:

I would say that the complete atmosphere in Asia had the most obvious just because I was... I mean I was the only American that they saw... and this was a relatively large city and I mean, you just don't even pass somebody that looks like you. In Europe you can kind of see descendants of maybe my heritage, but of similarities... most people ask if I'm from Europe, but in Asia... and I'm 6'5"... there are a lot of reasons why I would stand out. (Sabrina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

Sabrina became aware of her race while playing in Asia whereas the African-American participants were more aware of race while playing in Europe and in Asia. For example, when I asked Kate about her experience with race she talked about not only being American, but being African-American and how that made her stand out even more. Kate said:

Not only being American, but being Afro-American... so you would get a lot of stares, especially my earlier years... especially in Spain. The town that I played in was a small town, so you get like a lot of stares and people would say "look look look!" [in Spanish]... so you know, some days it would be cool and then some days you would be

like “what are you looking at?” Like they act like they never seen a person, you know?

(Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015)

Kate was fully aware of her race and nationality while playing in Europe. Even though Sabrina and Kate identified as different races, they were still aware of their “otherness” while traveling abroad. According to the participants in this current study, this otherness stemmed from being a superstar, to their race, height, and/or even their nationality of identifying as American. For the most part, participants did not feel as if they were being discriminated against, but were being othered because of their physical appearance in comparison to other people in the community, that they were residing in.

In the case of Leslee, who played in small towns in two different countries in Europe, people in her town were not accustomed to seeing a Black person so in many instances they would stare and focus the attention on her. She was sometimes mistaken for someone from the continent of Africa and not North America. As Leslee stated:

They um... literally just stare and stop and stare at us as we walked down the street to go wherever we were going. So trying to figure out why a Black person is there... it was a small town... you know? We were just kind of like, “okay, you never see Black people before” (laughs)... but we made it through... and Sweden... um, there were actually no problems... they love Black people, they love people in general. The thing I realized about Sweden was that... um... a lot of things that I thought... there are a lot of Africans there... I mean Black people and then there are a lot of... kind of... a lot of bi-racial people. There are a lot of bi-racial players, or bi-racial couples, or a Black and White

person, it wasn't anything new... seeing Black people wasn't new. (Leslee, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

So depending on the country, city, or town one played in, played a role in how the participant experienced race. In more metropolitan settings, race appeared not to make as big of a difference versus when a participant was playing in a smaller town where the residents rarely saw people that did not have the same skin color as them. Sabrina who was Caucasian felt that people in other countries were in some cases ignorant about what exactly an American was.

According to Sabrina:

I would say that a lot of it was ignorance in the sense of this perception of Americans, not ever having met one before... honestly I was probably the only American that a lot of people had met besides the ones that they had seen on TV... and so I never felt like it was a racial attack as much as lack of awareness. (Sabrina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

Sabrina's experience with race and nationality was similar to the other participants and their experiences. Most observed that their experiences were not necessarily discriminatory, but were based on the lack of awareness of Americans and American culture and more so based on media perceptions that Europeans and Asians may have formed via television and Internet. In the case of Aly, she was a participant who was able to "blend in" with her surroundings, but did witness the role race played in her experiences abroad when observing her American teammates. When in Israel, Aly noticed how some Israelis would stare at her teammates who were taller and identified as African-American. She noticed the attention that some of the women received and felt that it was in a way, negative. Aly noted:

I think it's more of inquiring than anything, just because you don't see them [African Americans] very frequently over here... and because they are super tall... so of course that just draws even more attention... um, but I don't know because I think it is just more of an inquiry than anything... but it's just rude that they stare. (Aly, personal communication, March 9, 2015)

Although Aly felt that the attention her African-American teammates were receiving abroad was inquiring, she also felt that the staring from the Israeli citizens was rude as well. In addition, although Aly's account is not a first person account of how she was treated, it was a first person account of what she observed while she was abroad. In this case, I thought it was important to include an observer's perspective, since the athlete's in this study that did identify, as African American did not discuss how race affected their experiences in-depth when given the opportunity to elaborate.

Perceived Discrimination and Racism

All participants in this current study were asked questions about race as well as how they may have experienced discrimination while playing professional basketball overseas. Participants talked about various issues they experienced because of their nationality and/or race. Although all participants described their time abroad as being enjoyable, some did experience some instances of discrimination that they felt were either race-based, nationality-based or the intersection of both.

Some participants talked about being discriminated against in basketball because of their American nationality and how referees would not call fouls for American players, to the point where it became an issue of well-being. Both Tonya (African American) and Sabrina

(Caucasian) discussed having referees not call fouls for American players. Here is what Tonya had to say:

I definitely feel like you get to some places you go to... you're the American so you should be able to handle this... you know... and I am not used to getting shoved... just to get shoved... it's not really... that's not really something that interests me... I mean, I could possibly get hurt because you're not calling the fouls and you should be, so I would have to say from that standpoint... that was disturbing. (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015)

Tonya felt that sometimes the referees were biased against Americans. This was true for Sabrina as well, as you can see from her statement below:

I would say that there are always going to be instances whether on the court... especially because you're the "super-star player" they recognize that they are paying Americans more to come and there's only one or two of them and depending on the country, officials are going to be biased towards you. (Sabrina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

Both players experienced entitlement from being a superstar American WNBA player, but also discrimination because of their U.S. nationality, which in these cases, played out on the basketball court.

As far as racism, some of the African-American participants in this current study experienced racism when playing professional basketball abroad. Usually this came about when the players were outside of the basketball environment. World Traveler talked about a time when she experienced racism outside of basketball, while shopping. According to her:

I remember one time in particular... on Mondays we would normally have a day off, so when I was playing in Italy we would go... like all the girls from the different places, we would all meet in Milan and go shopping. So we would go shopping and we would go into the boutique store and I saw a jacket... this jacket... and this lady would not help me and I kept asking like you know, “what size is the jacket?” She was just like, “you can’t afford it.” I was like... “wait a minute lady, I just asked you what size it was!” So there have been instances where there’s been some racism. (World Traveler, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

As you can see, she experienced racism outside of the basketball arena. This was similar to an experience that Kate had outside of basketball as well. Kate was trying to withdraw her money out of an overseas bank and the bank manager literally locked her out the bank until he realized she was the “basketball player.” Kate shared:

Yeah one time, I mean a couple of times for sure! You know people would just kind of look or they would act like they don’t hear you to wait on you, but one time they didn’t want to open up the door to the bank and my president had deposited my first check. I was trying to go and I told him I was the basketball player... and he was like “oh oh oh...” At the time I had \$10,000 in their bank, right? So I took my money and I told them, “give me my check... I will not bank with you” and they were like ‘no, we’re sorry, we’re sorry.” I was like, “no”... had I been a regular person... if that’s the way you treat regular people... I don’t want my money in your bank, so I switched banks and everything. (Kate, personal communication, March 4, 2015)

Kate's celebrity status allowed her to remedy the situation by getting her money out of the bank but at the same time, if she had not had the status as a basketball player, the situation may have turned out differently.

With these examples, it is important to note that discrimination occurs on every continent and in every country. Although the participants did experience discrimination abroad, World Traveler noted, "I didn't experience a whole bunch, but I don't think it's anymore than what I experienced in the states you know... like relatively speaking... I think people are silly all over the place..." (World Traveler, personal communication, February 12, 2015). Although discrimination was experienced overseas, racism for some participants was experienced in the U.S. as well, regardless if the participants were in the U.S, Europe, or Asia, they may have experienced one form of discrimination or another.

Physical Characteristics

The participant's height and/or race played a role in how fans as well as people outside of basketball interacted with the participant. All of the participants in this current study were at least 5-feet-10 inches with the tallest participant being close to 7-feet tall. Participants who were above 6-feet tall, talked about how their height played a role in them initially getting involved in the sport of basketball as well as standing out when in Europe, but more so in Asia. Both Caucasian and African-American participants felt that they stood out more in Asia than in Europe because of the huge cultural differences with race and height. In many instances, participants were not sure if it was their race, height, or nationality that made people stop and stare at times. In some cases, people would either point or stare at the participant when they were overseas.

For instance, Lisa's appearance made her stand out while she was playing basketball in Asia. According to Lisa:

Being tall, White, [and] female... I stick out like a sore thumb. Everyone is short, dark hair... it almost got to the point where I couldn't leave the hotel... because they knew where our team stayed and my team was pretty successful and my husband had to go out and do stuff... he had to go to the store... it was almost like a paparazzi type thing...

(Lisa, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

In Asia, Lisa looked very different from everyone else and she was treated as a celebrity. In Lisa's opinion it was because of her appearance and the fact that many of the Asian people were not accustomed to seeing such a tall female who self-identified as an American basketball player. In this instance, an amalgamation of her height, race, gender, nationality all played a role in how she was treated while living in Asia to play professional basketball.

Gender

Throughout this current study, players were asked about how they felt their experiences differed in comparison to male basketball sport labor migrants. In some cases participants said that their experiences were very similar to male sport labor migrants who played overseas, but very different when comparing the WNBA to the NBA. Sabrina succinctly illustrates her awareness of gender issues in reference to professional basketball. As noted by Sabrina:

I would say that there are more similarities overseas than there are obviously here in the United States in the NBA, especially if your team [overseas] had a brother team... you know that had some Americans. Usually those would be the people that you would hang out with the most. So I mean, the format's the same, I mean they practice twice a day

everyday like you do, they travel... they play in the same gym, you know they take the bus, they take the train, they take these little flights, where the differences here in the NBA and in the WNBA not only salary differences, but the way that they train, the facilities that they have, the way that they fly privately, the hotels that they stay in, so I would say internationally, that narrows the gap a little bit. (Sabrina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

In summary, players in this current study felt that playing professionally in the WNBA in comparison to overseas differed because of the league structure as well as the fact that the WNBA was still a relatively new league and still needed time to build a league that in the future, may have longer seasons and pay the women athletes more money. Tonya felt very optimistic about the WNBA getting to the point where they would be able to offer more money to the athletes, but in the mean time she understood the monetary motivations for players to migrate overseas saying:

I mean... I think that eventually the money will definitely be better [in the WNBA]... you know I see it being a perk for people... for players, you know... I think that they [WNBA players] have to... to get money... you play in the W[NBA] and you get a certain amount of money, but when you can get double or triple for playing overseas... that's one of the things that you can't make up for that... (Tonya, personal communication, March 12, 2015).

In fact, when I asked players if they preferred to play overseas or in the WNBA, the majority of the players in the study stated that they preferred overseas in comparison to the WNBA, because the longer season allowed them to: (a) make more money, (b) have the option to rest during the

short WNBA season, and (c) travel and see the world during their time abroad. Sabrina summed up the reasons for why so many players chose to play professionally overseas by stating:

[Overseas] I was making way more money... and you know... I just feel like you were treated a lot better... I mean my experiences... it gave my family and friends... if they wanted to come over... they had an opportunity to travel and to see other things and stuff like that, it was good. You didn't have an eight-month season packed into three-months [like] in the WNBA. Basically you were playing every other day and you were practicing in between that. In the WNBA you're lucky if you get three maybe four days off during the whole season... (Sabrina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

Participants in this current study had the similar reasons for playing overseas versus playing in the WNBA. Some participants even referenced famous WNBA player Diana Turasi who is currently sitting out the 2015 WNBA season, because her Russian club team overseas, is paying her to take a break from the WNBA and rest her body (Fagan, 2015). Players in this current study enjoyed playing in the WNBA because it was the pinnacle of their career and they were able to play with some of the best in women's basketball history. However, even though this was an advantage, there were more advantages for the majority of the players to play overseas in comparison to playing in the WNBA.

Summary

I contextualized the answers I received from the participants about their motivations to play professional basketball abroad as well as their experiences playing professional basketball in the U.S. and overseas. As you can see from the results, the experiences of the participants were based on a number of factors. These factors included: (a) physical characteristics, (b)

athletic ability, and (c) the participants' motivations for going overseas for employment opportunities.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The current study examined the motivations and experiences of WNBA transnational sport labor migrants who chose to play in the WNBA and overseas. Information was compiled using a semi-structured interview protocol designed to investigate the experiences and motivations of U.S. women professional basketball players, playing within the U.S. and abroad. An exploratory case study methodology interfaced with the theory of transnationalism was used to understand the motivations and experiences of these women, and how race, gender, nationality, and athletic ability played a role in their decisions to migrate internationally, as well as how they experienced transnational migration as a professional athlete. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss the results from Chapter Four, reconciling the findings with the study's research questions:

RQ1: Why do American WNBA players choose to play basketball outside of the U.S.?

RQ2: How do American WNBA players experience professional basketball in the U.S. and overseas?

In this chapter, I will explain how the findings either confirm, contradict, or expand on previous research on sport labor migration and/or women and sport labor migration. I will interpret and explain the results in this section and will conclude with a discussion of the study's implications and limitations and my recommendations for future research in the area of sport labor migration.

Understanding the Motivating Factors

While conducting the current study I asked participants about their motivations for playing in the WNBA and for playing professional basketball overseas. Participants answered interview questions about the motivating factors that influenced their migration to overseas

teams, even though they already played with a team in the WNBA. Based on results, participants' initial motivations to migrate included:

- Eagerness to experience a different culture outside of the U.S Monetary compensation
- Gaining experience for future careers outside of playing basketball
- Staying in shape for WNBA basketball
- Personal goals

Although these are listed as distinct and initial motivations for participants to migrate transnationally, they were discussed as being fluid and overlapping throughout the participants' career as a sport labor migrant. For example, a participant may have been more inclined to migrate at the beginning stages of her career because she wanted to travel to see the world. Therefore, playing in the WNBA and overseas may have allowed her to stay in shape and see the world while making a living. However, by the end of the participant's career, her motivations would have changed because: (a) she was making twice her WNBA salary playing overseas; (b) she had already accomplished her personal goal of playing in the WNBA and because of this; and (c) her goals shifted as she progressed through her career. This was just one example of how motivations for transnational migration could be both overlapping and fluid, changing throughout the athlete's career.

Typologies of Sport Labor Migration

Previous literature on the typology of sport labor migration and the motivating factors that influence an athlete's migration have mainly focused on the migration of men. This current study was unique in that it focused on the team sport of professional women's basketball. It only

included American WNBA players who played in the WNBA and internationally. Therefore, these women athletes were not only the elite athletes in professional women's basketball, but also had the option to play in one or more leagues throughout the year, both domestically and internationally.

A key finding was that WNBA sport labor migrants' experiences did not completely fit in with the already established typologies of sport labor migration research presented by Maguire (1996) and Magee and Sugden (2002). Based on Maguire and Magee and Sugden, some motivations for migrating were similar, but transnational migration was dependent on where the athlete was within the span of her career. To represent the motivations for the participants in this current study, I created Figure 4, which is *The Typology of American WNBA Transnational Sport Labor Migrants* (Appendix J), to further illustrate the findings from this current study.

Figure 4 reflects the motivations for migration of participants in this current study. The illustration shows why the study participants chose to migrate internationally to play professional basketball overseas, even though they could play elite professional basketball in the U.S. Four factors contributed to the incentives that motivated these women to go abroad however, these incentives changed over time. In Figure 4, any one motivating factor or all motivating factors could be present at any time, but motivations for migrating were always fluid and overlapping. All migratory factors were dependent on the agency of the participant.

The Typology of American WNBA Transnational Sport Labor Migrants

I created Figure 4 to illustrate findings from the data collected for this current study. Some of the types were consistent with previous research on sport labor migration including categories such as: *Mercenary* (Maguire, 1996), *Nomadic Cosmopolitan* (Maguire, 1996, Magee

& Sugden, 2002), and *Ambitionist* (Magee & Sugden, 2002). However, I added another category to the typology framework, *Personal Aspirationist*. This new type describes a participant who achieves personal satisfaction by maximizing all aspects of her professional career for self-satisfaction and personal attainment. I also expanded the definition of *Ambitionist*, which I will discuss in more detail under the heading *Ambitionist*.

The Typology of American WNBA Transnational Sport Labor Migrants has overlapping definitions, and the theory is based on the typologies created by Maguire (1996) and Magee and Sugden (2002). However, within *The Typology of American WNBA Transnational Sport Labor Migrants*, I expanded the pre-existing types by incorporating the specific findings from my study. My findings confirmed that several motivating factors were similar between sport labor migrants, but that some aspects of motivation were dependent upon the personal agency of the athlete.

Settlers, Expelled, and Exiled

Unlike in the work conducted by Maguire (1996) and Magee and Sugden (2002), the participants in the study did not have a desire to settle in the place that they performed their labor. They were constantly traveling between the U.S. and overseas to play professional basketball, but their motivations to migrate and their experiences abroad never influenced them to stay in one country for the purpose of employment. All participants appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to travel abroad and make a living, but all sought to eventually come back to the U.S. to live. In addition, participants were not *Expelled* or *Exiled* (Magee & Sugden, 2002) from their country of origin and did in fact have a choice to stay in the U.S. and play professional basketball, but initially chose to play professional basketball both in the WNBA and abroad.

Therefore, my study showed that American WNBA players are not transnational sport labor migrants that look to settle in the place where they perform their labor. The eagerness to settle permanently in the U.S. may have been due to the fact that these women were constantly moving between the U.S. and overseas and were still able to maintain ties to the U.S., despite the constant traveling.

This finding was similar to Agergaard and Botelho (2010) and Bothelho and Agergaard (2011) in that their results showed that women's professional soccer players who migrated to Scandinavia did not have a desire to stay and settle either. These findings show that the inclination to not settle abroad may be unique to women sport labor migrants. Though more research is needed, this current study has helped to add onto previous findings regarding female transnational sport labor migrants and settlement.

Eagerness to Experience a Different Culture Outside of the U.S. (Nomadic Cosmopolitans)

Participants in this current study were eager to experience a different culture outside of the U.S. This theme fit in with Maguire (1996) and Magee and Sugden (2002)'s definition of *Nomadic Cosmopolitan*. This was because at one point in their career, the participants were motivated to migrate by a desire to travel and interact with others. Therefore, WNBA transnational sport labor migrants showed similarities to other sport labor migrants in team sports, as in the case of women's soccer players who migrated to Scandinavia (Agergaard & Tiesler, 2014), Canadian men's hockey players who migrated to Europe (Maguire, 1996), and male soccer professional soccer players who migrated to Europe (Magee & Sugden, 2002).

Monetary Compensation (Mercenaries)

Even though the type of *Settler* did not apply to the sport labor migrants in this current study, there were some types from previous research that confirmed that there were unique types of transnational sport labor migrants. At some point all of the participants were motivated by monetary incentives to play professional basketball outside of the U.S. Desire to become a sport labor migrant for monetary compensation corresponds with the previously established type of Mercenaries (Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996). Initially, however, the majority of the participants were in fact not motivated to migrate just because of monetary incentives, but were influenced by a number of other factors, including: (a) eagerness to experience a different culture outside of the U.S. (Nomadic Cosmopolitan); (b) personal goals (Personal Aspirationist); (c) gaining experience for future careers outside of playing basketball (Post-Career Ambitionist); and (d) staying in shape for WNBA basketball (Current-Career Ambitionist). However, at some point, money did become a primary factor, which influenced all the participants to migrate. In one case, money was the only factor. In other cases, money played a significant role.

Monetary compensation as a main reason for migrating for the majority of the participants in this study was not a theme that emerged in the data. This contradicted what previous scholars (Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Maguire, 2008) found in relation to the motivations for transnational athletes to migrate abroad for employment opportunities. This finding shows how complex the migration process is and how fluid motivating factors are within the span of a transnational sport labor migrant's career.

Gaining Experience for a Future Career or Staying in Shape (Ambitionists)

Ambitionists was a theme that emerged in the data in a few instances, but was very complex. All participants in this current study agreed that playing in the WNBA was the pinnacle of their career because the WNBA was an opportunity for them to play with the best talent that women's professional basketball had to offer. Participants viewed playing basketball overseas as a way to: (a) stay in shape for the WNBA season (Current-Career Ambitionist) or (b) gain experience that would lead to future career opportunities (Post-Career Ambitionist). In regards to previous literature, participants in my study did not fit cleanly into Magee and Sugden's (2002) definition of *Ambitionist*, as someone who wanted to improve their career by moving to a better league. Some participants were either drafted into the WNBA after college, or they played overseas first before being picked up by a WNBA team. However, participants wanted to improve their careers, but not necessarily by moving to a better league. They were motivated to stay in shape for the WNBA or sought to improve understanding of the game of basketball for a different career outside of playing. Playing overseas did not always result in the participants being up against the best talent, but it did result in them making money during the WNBA off-season and staying in shape for the WNBA season.

As a result of this emerging theme, I have re-configured the definition of *Ambitionist* to now include two embedded sub-types: *Current-Career Ambitionist* and *Post-Career Ambitionist*. Dividing *Ambitionists* into two types provides nuance to the previous definition of *Ambitionist* by Magee and Sugden (2002). The more nuanced definition incorporates: (a) transnational sport labor migrants who desire to improve themselves, not so much to move to a better league, but to

maintain athletic ability; or (b) to improve their understanding of basketball on a global level for their lives after playing.

To add, Agergaard (2008) studied the elite migration of athletes playing Danish women's handball and found, "sports ambitions are the primary motive for the foreign player, but other dimensions must also be mentioned" (p. 13). My current study's findings were similar to those of Agergaard in that ambition was a primary motive for some of the women to migrate and ambition took complex forms (see Figure 3). Although the findings of my study may relate only to WNBA players and/or other transnational sport labor migrants who play in two or more leagues per year, they do contribute sub-categories to the previous literature on sport labor migration and ambition and motivations for women and sport labor migration in general.

Personal Goals (Personal Aspirationist)

Some participants in this current study were motivated to play professionally because of personal goals for themselves. *Personal Aspirationists* were women athletes who wanted to play at the highest level and to see how far they could go professionally. These participants were motivated by personal goals and personal satisfaction. This was an important finding because it provided evidence that transnational sport labor migrants were not always motivated solely by structural forces, but were also influenced by their own agency. The participants in this current study continuously showed how intersecting motivating factors for pursuing a professional career transnationally were influenced by the individual's personal life and personal aspirations. I have illustrated this in Figure 4 by including the category of *Personal Aspirationist*.

In my research, each study participant expressed a sense of autonomy when making the decision to migrate. The participants in this current study were the elite of the elite since they played in the WNBA and overseas. They had many choices, for instance: (a) to migrate to play in both the WNBA and overseas, (b) to play only in the WNBA, (c) to play only overseas, or (d) to not play professional basketball at all and pursue a different career. Each participant had more options than most female and male transnational sport labor migrants have within team sports (Thorpe, 2014). Comparatively, NBA players do not have the option to play in the NBA and play overseas. They must choose to do one or the other because of the length of the NBA season. Those who play in the NBA are usually the best men's basketball players in the world and those that go overseas are those that did not make the final cut for a NBA roster. There are opportunities to play professional basketball in the U.S. for men outside of the NBA, but those opportunities are not as lucrative as playing overseas (Schlosser, 2014).

I would like to point out that all of the women in this current study were college graduates who held a bachelor's degree or master's degree from an American University. Although this was not a pre-requisite for the study, all participants in this current study had played intercollegiate basketball at a Division I university. All of the participants in this current study were college educated and had the ability to obtain a good job outside of playing basketball. They had the ability to live in the U.S and enjoy a good quality of life, but chose to continue to play basketball at the highest level that was available to them. Participants were either drafted after their college basketball career or they hired an agent out of college, to help them pursue a professional basketball career. Participants were motivated to pursue a career playing domestically and internationally, and were not motivated by one single factor, but

multiple, fluid, and overlapping factors. Priorities and motivations were different, depending on where the participant was in her career and in terms of her athletic ability.

Understanding the Experiences

Participants in this current study were asked questions about their experiences playing professional basketball in the U.S. and overseas. In this section, I will first discuss the experiences of the participants in the WNBA in comparison to overseas. I will then explain how the experiences of the participants overseas relate to scholarly literature. I will discuss how the experiences of the participants confirm, contradict, or expand on previous findings on the experiences of transnational sport labor migrants.

The format of this section on *Understanding the Experiences* is similar to the format in Chapter Four. I organized the discussion based on the categories I created from the findings. However, some headings are a reflection of the themes that emerged and other headings are merged with another heading. In some cases the heading is more descriptive than the heading in Chapter Four. I did this to show how certain findings overlap with others.

Playing in the WNBA and Overseas

Participants discussed their experiences playing professional basketball both domestically and internationally. I asked participants how playing in the WNBA was both similar to and/or different from playing overseas. Participants explained how basketball was the same no matter where one played and that is why they felt basketball was a great profession. Although playing the sport was relatively the same no matter where one chose to play, the experiences in each country, city, league, and club team differed between North America, Europe, and Asia. Based

on my findings, the majority of the participants agreed that playing in the U.S. versus playing overseas was different because of the following:

- The level of competition in the WNBA was higher than overseas;
- The structure of the WNBA was different from the structure of overseas leagues (schedule and salary);
- Fans overseas were more passionate than WNBA fans.

Level of Competition

Although scholarly literature does not reflect in-depth research on women sport labor migration in basketball, reporters such as Steele (2012) have written about WNBA players and their migration to overseas professional club teams. One fact that was confirmed by study participants is that the WNBA was consistently referred to as the highest level of women's basketball in the world. Collectively, the WNBA has the top women's basketball talent and therefore, the results of this current study confirm that women that play in the WNBA are some of the best women professional basketball players in the world. Based on the participants' experiences and assessment, this current study validated that the level of competition in the WNBA was higher than the level of competition in other leagues overseas (Brennan, 2014).

Structure of the Leagues

Media outlets have compared the structure of overseas leagues to WNBA leagues by describing the different lengths of the seasons and by focusing on the salary differential between WNBA players and overseas players (Berman, 2014). The concerns that the study participants had about the structure of the league were re-affirmed by media publications because the WNBA season is in fact shorter than many overseas seasons, and the compensation for players overseas

is usually about the same or more for professional women's basketball players who play outside of the WNBA (Berman, 2014).

Dedicated and Supportive Fan Base

Participants in this current study discussed how fans of the WNBA and overseas leagues were very committed, but that overseas fans were much more passionate than WNBA fans. Participants felt welcome in the cities and countries they migrated to, because of the supportive fan base. This interaction on and off the court contributed to a positive experience for the participants because they were recognized as celebrities. Participants enjoyed the strong fan base overseas with one participant (Tonya) even saying that was the reason she enjoyed playing in a specific country.

An athlete's reaction to fandom has not been largely included in sport labor migration literature. Scholars have almost always focused on the motivations of sport labor migrants, with few focusing on the experiences of the players. This current study has opened up further inquiry into how fans can play a role in the sport labor migrant experience and how important it is to understand fan behavior in sport labor migration research. Based on the interviews, positive and passionate fans contributed to participants having a positive experience overseas.

Experiences Playing Overseas: Europe and Asia

The participants that took part in this current study played in either Europe or Asia, though there are other professional women's basketball leagues in South America and in Australia. Participants who played in North America, Europe, and Asia discussed how culture played a role in how they experienced professional basketball. Literature on professional basketball players has almost exclusively focused on the experiences of players who have

migrated to European countries to play and not Asian countries (Elliot, 2014, Elliott & Bania, 2014; Ferguson, 2012; Fletcher & Walle, 2014). In addition, previous literature has focused attention on the motivations of male professional basketball players (Maguire, 1988; Olin, 1984), experiences of the basketball players (Meisterjahn & Wrisberg, 2013), or their leisure activity outside of basketball (Butler & Dzikus, 2014), but has not touched on the more comprehensive lifestyle of the American professional basketball player who plays professional basketball abroad.

Participants in this current study discussed their experiences playing professional basketball overseas in either Europe or Asia (some played on both continents). All participants agreed that basketball was still basketball, no matter where the sport was played, even though some of the rules on the court were a little different. Participants in this current study mainly focused on the following experiences while playing basketball abroad:

- Agents
- Dual-Citizenship
- Safety Overseas

Agents

The role of the agent has been written about in scholarly literature (Maguire, 1996; Poli, 2010; Shropshire, 1995). Poli identified agents among the intermediaries within migration transfer networks in men's professional soccer. A number of factors determine how much a professional athlete depends on his or her agent. For instance, Maguire discussed the migration of professional hockey players in the U.S. to play in Scandinavia. The impetus for their migration was that they were at the end of their professional careers so migration to European

teams had little to do with the agent and more to do with their connections through bridgeheads, which are sport labor migrants that do not need agents because they are able to migrate internationally through their own network of personal contacts (Maguire, 1996).

For the participants in this current study, agents played a crucial role from the beginning through to the end of their careers. The agent negotiated contracts before the participant set foot on the plane, throughout the duration of the participant's stay, and even after the participant had come back to the U.S. (this was usually the case if the participant's contractual agreements were not met). It is noteworthy that the participants in this current study were not asked specific questions about having an agent. The participants brought up the subject matter at the end of the interviews when I asked the participants a question about advice they would give to other women basketball players who were interested in pursuing a professional basketball career overseas. Based on interviews, it seemed that participants had little to no information on what to anticipate when arriving in a new country to play their sport; other than information obtained from talking with other overseas basketball players. The agent played an important role in the migrant's transition overseas and helped the athlete to somewhat prepare for their journey to go abroad. It appears, however, that agents could do more to prepare their clients for the cultural adjustment in the target country. Such information would also add to the players' agency, as they could make more informed decisions about their career. I will discuss similar implications of this study later in this chapter.

Based on the study results, WNBA players needed their agent to be an advocate for the duration of their professional basketball career and also to negotiate the initial contract before they went overseas to play. Unlike other professional transnational sport labor migrants

(Maguire, 1996), the role of the agent for the WNBA players was significant no matter where the participant was in her career (e.g., rookie or veteran). Therefore, this current study has expanded on the knowledge of the role of the agent within transnational sport labor migration and women and transnational sport labor migration, specifically the role of the agent for WNBA transnational sport labor migrants.

Dual-Citizenship

All participants in this study were asked about citizenship and if they held citizenship in any other countries outside of the U.S. Only one participant in this study held dual-citizenship (Aly had dual-citizenship with the U.S. and Israel). However others discussed the benefit of having dual-citizenship as a transnational sport labor migrant.

Though not a new phenomenon, the results of the current study emphasize the importance of dual-citizenship in sport labor migration. Having more than one nationality gives athletes options in regards to what countries they can play in and what country they want to represent internationally, if they qualify for a national team. Dual-citizenship enables athletes the ability to switch allegiance from one country to another (Njororai, 2011). Though still structurally constrained, having dual-citizen status can increase an athlete's agency and marketability. Thus, some sport labor migrants in particular seek dual-citizenship so that they can make more money while they are abroad (see Aly), because then they are counted as a citizen of the country that they are playing in and not counted as a foreigner.

Dual-citizenship plays a major role because of the limitations put in place on the number of foreigners allowed to be on a team and/or play on the court (Gailily & Sheard, 2002). Specifically, athletes who have dual-citizenship in the E.U. are able to play in any E.U. country

(for more information about the Bosman Ruling see Chapter Two). Therefore, many non E.U. transnational sport labor migrants seek dual-citizenship in E.U. countries because of the benefit of not being limited to one country. Citizenship is country specific and all countries have their own legislation that regulates who is able to obtain citizenship and with which countries they offer dual-citizenship (Dumbravă, 2007). Depending on these regulations, there could be various avenues to obtain dual-citizenship. For example, persons might be able to change citizenship or obtain multiple citizenships, if they:

- Qualify through a relative's citizenship status;
- Were born in another country than the one they have citizenship in;
- Through marriage with someone from a different country;
- Through naturalization after a certain amount of time of residency;
- Or certain religious beliefs linked to a specific country.

This study helped to shed light on the benefits of having dual-citizenship as a WNBA transnational sport labor migrant. I was able to find a participant that was willing to share her story on how she became a dual-citizen and the advantages and disadvantages of having two passports. Aly was able to become a citizen because of her family's ancestry and because the laws of the country, specifically "the law of return." Therefore, she was able to obtain dual-citizenship by having religious and family ties to the nation of Israel.

Safety Overseas

Although questions about safety were part of the original semi-structured interview protocol for this current study (see Appendix C), issues of safety and well-being came up in some of the interviews. Sport labor migration literature has yet to examine the safety concerns

that athletes might have before migrating as well as concerns while playing their sport in another country. In this current study, players who migrated to Russia and Israel talked about safety concerns within those countries.

Safety has started to become a bigger concern within the area of sport labor migration. Although not written about in academic literature, safety of sport labor migrants has been touched on in popular media outlets. For instance, in 2014, WNBA superstar Brittany Griner was attacked by a man wielding a knife, while she was living in China to play basketball (ABC, 2014). In 2011, American professional men's basketball player Chauncey Hardy was killed in a bar fight while living abroad to play professional basketball in Romania (Associated Press, 2011). According to Karen and Washington (2015), "many athletes in poor countries migrate to developed or politically stable societies to attend college, to access better training facilities, to live in safer and more democratic societies" (p. 536). This statement does not apply to the population in this current study. As the example of Coack K's experience in Russia illustrated, some American athletes might become targets of crime abroad. This is particularly the case for athletes who stand out in the "spotlight" because of their physical characteristics (e.g., race or height) and media exposure. Thus, safety should be a concern for sport labor migrants who go abroad and this study pointed out specific safety concerns from the WNBA transnational sport labor migrant perspective.

Leisure in Europe and Asia

Participants in this current study tried to have an active lifestyle outside of playing basketball. In order to fully understand the WNBA sport labor migrant experience, I asked participants questions about how they spent their time on and off of the court. Participants

discussed various ways in which they spent their leisure including (a) shopping, traveling, sightseeing; and (b) meeting up with friends and family outside of basketball.

Participants in this current study seemed to have more free time outside of basketball when they played in Europe versus Asia. Regardless of which continent they were on, participants still tried to enjoy life outside of playing basketball. Participants talked about traveling around to cities and towns that were in close proximity to where their team was based, as well as going shopping and sightseeing when they had the opportunity to do so. In addition, participants met up with friends and family members who lived close by or who would fly over from the U.S. to visit. Participants seemed to be more active when they were able to have a companion to spend their leisure time with them.

Within sport labor migration scholarly literature, the leisure time of transnational sport labor migrants has been rarely discussed. Butler and Dzikus (2014) outlined the leisure habits of American men's basketball sport labor migrants and discussed how leisurely time of this population was affected by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). The findings pertaining to WNBA transnational sport labor migrants show many similarities to Butler and Dzikus's study. Based on the research, participants seemed to explore the host country more when they had friends or relatives come visit or if they lived in a place in close proximity to other Americans, such as being close to a university or an American military base. Although participants in this current study were able to play basketball in a foreign country and experience a different culture, in many instances, they were constrained by having to prioritize playing basketball (i.e., work) before anything else. Other activities revolved around

their basketball schedule and they had limited time to experience life outside of the basketball environment.

Just like the male professional basketball players in Butler and Dzikus's (2014) study, WNBA transnational sport labor migrants experienced intrapersonal constraints from the stress of having to constantly perform at the top in basketball and dealing with injury and exhaustion. They had interpersonal constraints from not having a constant companion to engage in activities with, especially when the participants played in Asia. Lastly, they had structural constraints because of their lack of downtime to explore the culture abroad because of their practice and game schedules.

In this current study, however, WNBA players seemed to adapt more to their surroundings and they spent time with people from all cultural backgrounds including foreign and American teammates. This may have been because of the relatively small number of American players that were on each women's team. Therefore, participants were essentially forced to adapt as opposed to the men's basketball players (Butler & Dzikus, 2014) who had more Americans on their team to interact with. In addition, 40 percent of the participants in this current study were either fluent or had a working knowledge of a language outside of English in the current study, unlike the male basketball players in the study by Butler and Dzikus (2014), who only spoke English, further inhibiting their communication while abroad in this study. The results of this current study added to the literature on sport labor migrants' life experiences outside of basketball and gave the point of view from the WNBA transnational sport labor migrant.

Culture and Acculturation

Participants discussed the role culture played in their lives while they were overseas. All participants in this study had to adapt to the culture in their host country in one way or another. When asking participants questions about their time abroad, the following experiences came up in regards to culture and acculturation including:

- Eating the local cuisine and/or observing or celebrating non-American holidays
- Learning the language or figuring other ways to communicate

Experiences with the Local Cuisine Overseas and Holidays

Participants in this current study discussed food in-depth. All participants talked about food and the role that meals and food choices played in their daily lives. As a professional athlete, nutrition plays an important role in the athlete's life. Participants in this study discussed going to a U.S. military base and being able to shop for food, similar to the male professional basketball players in Butler and Dzikus's (2014) study. References to food included: Having a McDonalds close to every area that they lived in, going to the army base to shop for food, going to western restaurants for food, adapting to the local cuisine, and preferring the local cuisine to American food. Through food choices, participants were able to adapt to the host culture when choosing to eat food that was local to the town, city, or country they were residing in. In some cases more "western" food choices were available and participants were able to go to a McDonalds or a Hard Rock Café and eat, and feel a connection to America, even when they were so far away.

How athletes experience transnational sport labor migration is rarely discussed in the literature, which puts more emphasis on the motivations of the athlete to migrate. This current

study illustrated how WNBA player transnational sport labor migrants experienced holidays while abroad and how they celebrated American holidays with friends abroad (both American and non-American), but also how they observed or celebrated holidays of the host country. Holidays were usually celebrated through the gathering of friends for a meal and/or celebration of some sort. Regardless of religion or personal beliefs, athletes seemed to be respectful of the holidays in the host country that they were residing in. During these occasions food was also shared where American athletes would sometimes share their American food with friends and teammates from the host country while celebrating a local holiday. Eating the cuisine and partaking in holidays plays a big role in how a transnational sport labor migrant experiences life overseas. Through cuisine and holidays, transnational sport labor migrants can adapt and share culture in various ways. Although not written about in sport labor migration literature, the role that food plays in the acculturation process of migrants is significant in how they adapt to their new places of living as well as how they maintain ties to their culture and home from afar (Burns, 2004; Rezaho & Burns, 2006).

Language

The majority of participants in this current study did not experience issues with language when playing basketball on the court, but as we know from the results of this current study, some did. In fact, two participants were fluent in a language other than English, and an additional two had a working knowledge of a language outside of English. The participants usually had a translator or someone on the team who could tell them what was going on if they did not understand. For the most part, women's professional basketball coaches overseas spoke the language of the country, unless the coach was American, and then the coach usually spoke

English. According to participants, basketball was basketball everywhere, but the language did in some cases hinder the relationships between American players and their foreign teammates. It should be noted, that in previous research (Butler & Dzikus, 2014) coaches in men's professional basketball overseas spoke English to accommodate the influx of the American players on the team roster.

Language has always impacted the experiences of sport labor migrants (Elliot & Maguire, 1998; Maguire, 1996) but for these participants, not knowing the language did not restrict them from being able to play the sport of basketball but more so, restricted the development of relationships with their fellow-teammates who were not American and/or did not know English. The results of this current study reaffirmed that regardless of language, sport labor migrants were able to migrate without being fluent in the language of the host country. Sport labor migrants are considered skilled workers because of their athletic ability (Elliot & Maguire, 2008) and do not necessarily need to know the language of the host country to perform their labor.

Relationships

Relationships formed while abroad and relationships maintained while abroad were a big part of this study. Participants in this study were asked about relationships with their teammates, friends and family outside of basketball, and about their significant other/partner. The findings show the following relationships as being significant to the participants' experiences while abroad playing professional basketball:

- Teammates (American and Foreign)
- Other Americans abroad (American military and/or Expatriates)

- Partner/Significant other

Teammates (American and Foreign)

Sport labor migration literature has yet to focus on relationships and the connection that sport labor migrants make with teammates. Athletes who play team sports have a built-in network of people with whom they have the opportunity to get close to once they get to their overseas team. However, thus far there is in-depth research to see how acculturation works within the constraints of the team. Participants in this study were able to adapt and make friends with both their American (if applicable) and their non-American teammates. It seemed that the participants were able to get along with their foreign teammates, but that they did feel closer to their American teammates in many cases, as noted by Sabrina in Chapter Four. Understanding acculturation and how teams and organizations facilitate those relationships are important to sport labor migration research, because team relationships have the potential to affect team performance and allegiance.

Other Americans Abroad (Military and Expatriates)

Many participants were able to connect with other Americans abroad who did not play basketball. These Americans consisted of military members stationed overseas, American students studying abroad, and American expatriates. Either way, these athletes were able to maintain relationships with other Americans while abroad. These particular athletes were unique in that they were constantly moving and never had an opportunity to build a transnational community (Smith, 1998) within their home away from home. However, while abroad, they were able to make connections to other Americans and maintain ties to the U.S through these relationships that they built. These relationships allowed participants to feel a sense of familiarity

with people who also identified as American and spoke the same language as they did. Some participants were able to connect with other Americans who were serving in the military abroad and were able to access American items at the Military base commissary. Therefore this enabled some participants to have access to American goods through their connections with other Americans abroad. This finding adds to the literature on sport labor migration in regards to how transnational sport labor migrants acculturate when abroad as well as how they maintain relationships with other Americans while living outside of the U.S.

Having a Partner Overseas

Sport labor migration literature has mainly focused on the experiences of male sport labor migrants and heterosexual relationships with their female partners. Research has focused on the role women as domestic caretakers (Roderick, 2012). However, in this current study all of the athletes identified as women and the partner of one of the athletes lived with her for two years while she was overseas. Her partner was able to be her companion while she was abroad and was even able to take his skill-set and start working for the team she was playing for, Ultimately, however, his life revolved around her basketball-playing career.

Sport labor migration literature has not touched on the role of the partner in relation to gender. In this case, the man was playing the role of the domestic caretaker and not a woman. We often think of athletes as being men and their spouses being women, but not in this case study (Butler & Dzikus, 2014). This current study added to the literature on domestic partners and sport labor migration by illustrating the role that a male domestic partner had in a woman sport labor migrant's life. This study has helped to expand knowledge on the intricacies and

dynamics of a domestic partnership in regards to female sport labor migrants and their traveling partners.

American Awareness and Views of Being Othered

Throughout this study participants were asked questions about their identity and their perception of how their identity played a role in their experiences abroad. Participants in this study discussed the role of nationality, race, height, and gender and how those identities affected them while they were abroad. In addition, participants discussed the role of quotas in regards to nationality as well as how they experienced instances of discrimination, perceived to be based on race and/or nationality.

Experiences Based on Identity: Race, Nationality, and/or Height

All of the participants in this current study were WNBA players and were diverse in physical appearance in terms of race and height. Compared to other sport labor migrants in team sports such as soccer, rugby, or cricket, elite professional basketball sport labor migrants are usually taller and the majority identify as African American (Lapchick, 2013). This was true in this current study with the women ranging in height from 5-feet-10 inches to almost 7-feet with 80 percent of the participants identifying as African-American and 20 percent identifying as Caucasian. Standing out was both positive and negative for participants. Some of these women were treated as superstar athletes and were identified as basketball players in the city or town where they played basketball. However, some of the women were discriminated against because of their physical appearance and/or nationality as in the case of World Traveler and Kate. The African-American participants experienced more issues in regards to discrimination when they were outside of the basketball environment.

Being in the *spotlight*, as I have termed it, can have its benefits for WNBA players who identify as African-American, but outside of the basketball arena some of the participants experienced discrimination because they stood out more than others because of their skin color, and/or their height, and/or nationality. Participants who identified as both African-American and Caucasian described instances when they were discriminated against on the court due to nationality, but only the African-American participants described experiencing discrimination off the court. Both African-American and Caucasian participants talked about how they stood out in the countries they were playing in, more so in Asia than in Europe.

Race

In reference to race, a sport labor migrant who identifies as being a Black woman and who is a star professional soccer player might not experience racism or sexism like other women who identify as Black. This could be since the professional soccer player is able to use her celebrity status as capital (Bourdieu, 2008) to overcome certain racial and sexist stereotypes because of the media attention surrounding her. Historically, women of color have been marginalized because of their gender and race (hooks, 1999). However, American WNBA players who go overseas for professional sport opportunities and who identify as African-American experience race and gender differently in a sense, because of their local celebrity status. For example, the participant in this current study named World Traveler described feeling welcomed in every country that she played in. She felt a sense of familial bond in the majority of the countries that she traveled to and resided in for basketball. The times that she did experience racism abroad were times when she was outside of the basketball environment, such as when she was out shopping. During these instances she experienced racism; however, within the confines

of her team and her community, she was regarded as a sport figure and a celebrity and did not have the same experiences with racism. This was similar to the ideology surrounding Black matriarchy, in that these African-American women were susceptible to discrimination once they stepped out of their basketball environment while abroad (hooks, 1990) and were not as prone to racial discrimination within their basketball environment. This *sportlight* that athletes experience can in some ways put blinders on how race, gender, and nationality play into sport labor migration and discrimination (please refer to Chapter Two for more information on Black matriarchy).

Studies on sport labor migration have touched on the role that race has played (Darby, 2007; Klein 2013), but have not explored how athletes experience discrimination both on and off the court based on physical appearance, outside of race and nationality. Scholars such as Darby and Klein have focused on race and ethnicity in regards to sport labor migrants from developing countries, but scholarly literature has yet to explore how physical identity and national identity play a role in discrimination against sport labor migrants from more affluent countries.

Sportlight and being a local celebrity. Participants in this current study were considered celebrities in the community where they resided, and they were treated well within the basketball realm. Professional athletes often experience a sense of entitlement (Brennan, 2010), in part, because they have an occupation that is highly visible. Fans and spectators watch professional athletes at work. The celebrity status that these women received while playing abroad can be labeled as *sportlight*.

With the commercialization and media publicity of modern sport, athletes are no longer just athletes, but are also seen to have a certain celebrity status on and off the court, field, or

pitch. Athletes are constantly in the spotlight because of their visibility on various media platforms (e.g., television, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram). Professional athletes are sometimes held to a different standard because of their celebrity status and in some cases are seen to have more entitlement than the average citizen (Barbie, 2012). Athlete exceptionalism allows athletes to feel a certain type of privilege because of their celebrity status as sport figures. This celebrity status and spotlight can be attained at local, national, and international levels.

Although the American WNBA players in this study felt welcomed abroad by the passionate fans and the positive attention from the basketball community, they were still foreigners in a far away land. Playing overseas can be lonely at times and the participants who played professional basketball in Europe were fortunate to have at least one or more American(s) on their team. They were able to share the experience of being in the spotlight with each other. This was different, however, for the participants who played in Asia, who were often the only American on their team.

Quotas and the Number of American Players on the Team Roster

Participants discussed team dynamics while playing overseas. All participants were asked questions about their interactions with their American teammates (if there was an American on the team) as well as with foreign teammates, and how that contributed to their all-around experiences playing basketball. Participants made it a point to say that they had more Americans on their European teams than on their Asian teams. Having another American on the team made the participant feel comfortable during their transition abroad, because they felt a sense of closeness to the other American because of culture and language. Participants who had an additional American on their team seemed to have an all-around better experience than

participants who were the only American on their team, as was the case for participants who played in Asia.

Sport labor migration literature has touched on quotas in relation to men's team sports (Falcous & Magiure, 2005; Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996; Maguire, 1994), but not women's team sports. This current study brought to light the quotas put in place for foreign players in both Europe and Asia for American women professional basketball players.

Gender Gap

Players in this study discussed how they were treated to a different standard in comparison to their NBA counterparts. By this I mean that players discussed how WNBA players do not get paid as much as NBA players and do not have as many opportunities for lucrative contracts with sponsors (Woods, 2012). However, I have yet to find previous research or comparative studies on the experiences and motivations of men and women overseas professional basketball players. Based on participant responses in this current study, the gender disparities between professional men's and women's basketball players in the U.S. appeared wider than overseas. Participants discussed seeing men's basketball players out at the same places (e.g., restaurants, clubs). They also shared basketball facilities with men's teams while abroad. There are no comparative studies on the experiences of men's and women's professional sport labor migrants and how their experiences are similar and/or different. This study has helped to expand on the experiences of women basketball sport labor migrants, which can be used to help with comparative studies of professional basketball sport labor migrants in general.

Perceived Discrimination

Participants who played in Europe and Asia touched on the discrimination they endured while playing professional basketball overseas. Participants pointed out that referees on both continents were liberal in calling fouls against American players, essentially discriminating against American players because of their nationality. Scholarly literature in sport labor migration has touched on the issue of discrimination in regards to racial and ethnic exploitation (Darby, 2007; Klein, 2013) and on quotas that have been put in place in sport leagues worldwide (Campbell, 2011; Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996). My study pointed to the fact that regardless of race, some athletes felt that they were discriminated against because of nationality. Furthermore, these athletes were elite professionals who benefited from their elite athletic ability (Seippel, 2008); yet they were also stereotyped and sometimes held to different standard because of their American nationality.

A number of reasons existed for the perceived discrimination such as World Traveler's experience shopping in Italy and Kate's experience trying to withdraw her money from a bank in Europe. Literature has not focused attention on how American athletes who go abroad are discriminated against in sport because of their nationality. Literature has touched on the fact that some American athletes, most notably male basketball players, feel a sense of entitlement because they go overseas for monetary means and do not assimilate to the culture within their host country (Gailily & Sheard, 2002). These men migrate to play basketball and leave for the next best opportunity without establishing a connection to the community. Some participants in this current study explained that some Americans that go overseas tend to keep to themselves, which has created a bad reputation for other Americans. According to Sabrina:

Our American teammates, we don't always have the greatest reputation overseas... you know I think that a lot of countries see us as kind of egocentric coming over there just getting paid and only caring about ourselves... and a lot of these cultures, especially throughout Europe are very much more kind of family-oriented, more because they are all connected and so I think that in general... our girls could understand these cultures a little better as well. (Sabrina, personal communication, March 11, 2015)

Thus, she felt that some women sport labor migrants could do a better job of assimilating to the culture because in many ways Americans were stigmatized because of their egocentrism.

Regardless, more research is needed to understand how American professional athletes who go abroad, experience discrimination while playing their sport as well as how people in international host communities perceive their interactions with American professional athletes. Participants in this current study felt that, as Americans, they had extra pressure to perform at the top of their game because that was what they were recruited to do. Many felt that Americans were recruited to be the superstars and had higher expectations than the domestic players on the team.

Using the Theory of Transnationalism within Sport Labor Migration Research

This current study was guided using the theoretical framework of transnationalism. When researching sport labor migration, it was important to understand how autonomy and individual factors influenced and contributed to the sport labor migrant experience. Using the theory of transnationalism was beneficial for understanding the participant's experiences and motivations and how their individual agency contributed to the process of them migrating.

Within this current study, the theory of transnationalism was used to understand the motivations and experiences of WNBA player sport labor migrants. By using the theory of

transnationalism, I was able to focus on the participants as the unit of analysis. The migratory paths of each participant and how each participant experienced transnational migration can be attributed to the participant acting on her own accord and making the decision to migrate to a certain team located in a particular country.

Based on the results, each participant experienced transculturation differently (Ortiz, 1995) due to their (a) physical appearance, (b) athletic ability, (c) where they were in their playing careers, and (d) the locations they resided in. Although outside factors such as the player's agent had an influence on where the player migrated but the player had much input and power when deciding when and where to play. Unlike many other sport labor migrants, WNBA players had a choice to play professional basketball year-round or to play overseas or in the WNBA.

My current study was able to use empirical data to understand the motivations and experiences from the participant's point of view. I have helped to add onto how the theory of transnationalism is used in sport labor migration research (Carter, 2013) as well as in migration studies (Vertovec, 2009). This current study has helped to lay a foundation for how scholars and practitioners understand transnational migration through the lens of sport, gender, and nationality and how WNBA players experience transnational migration from beginning to end. Before now, the motivations and experiences of WNBA players were analyzed using structural frameworks. Previous reports such as Steele (2012), had attributed migration to salary and focused on the superstar WNBA transnational athletes. Therefore, by purposely focusing on the individual athlete and their agency in migration, I was able to give voice to athletes' motivations and experiences by incorporating a diverse group of participants. This ultimately has helped to give a

more holistic picture of WNBA transnational sport labor migration and enabled me to create a typology from the findings of my current study's research.

In this current study we have learned that structural aspects, as focused on in globalization or imperialism theories, do not solely dictate a sport labor migrants movement to and from a country. These professionals shape and regulate their movements through their own agency and their trajectories are not exclusively determined by structural constraints. Using the theory of transnationalism in sport labor migration research is fairly new (Carter, 2007).

Recently, there has been a shift in how scholars have approached the research. Scholars such as Carter have called on future researchers to start incorporating a transnational perspective, which I have done.

My current study was the first of its kind to focus on the experiences of American WNBA transnational sport labor migrants using a transnational theoretical framework to understand the experiences and motivations from the perspective of a diverse group of elite sport professionals. Through this study, we have learned that athletes are motivated to migrate for various reasons and monetary incentives play a factor in their motivations to migrate, but are not always the main factor or the initial factor. These motivations are complex and all of the athletes in this current study had multiple reasons for migrating, which were fluid and overlapping throughout their career. This study has added to the literature by providing information on this select group of elite sport labor migrants through the use of their own words and through the theoretical lens of transnationalism.

Implications

This current study was an in-depth exploratory case study in which I used a qualitative methodology and employed a semi-structured interview protocol to understand the motivations and experiences of WNBA players who chose to play in the WNBA as well as pursue career opportunities in professional sport abroad. The results of this current study can be used to assist others who are interested in learning about sport labor migration research, specifically as it pertains to women, and/or WNBA player sport labor migrants. Throughout this current study I have touched on how others can contribute to knowledge in the area of sport labor migration, however, in the following sections I will further explain how the information collected in this current study can be applied or further research in the future for: (a) academic scholars, (b) sports agents, (c) the WNBA, (d) overseas coaches and managers, and (e) women's basketball players.

Academic Scholars

Academic scholars in the area of sport studies will be able to use the findings from this current study to apply to future research in sport labor migration studies. As stated before, this research is the first study to focus attention on WNBA players and sport labor migration. The data collected in this exploratory case study can be used to create a typology to reach more women professional basketball sport labor migrants who may not play in the WNBA and may not identify as American. This current study was designed to focus on elite women professional athletes who had the ability to stay in their home country and play at the highest level of sport in the world, but sought to pursue playing career outside of the U.S. Future scholars in this area can focus on including women athletes that have fewer options to play professionally in their chosen sport and how they move throughout the world to achieve their goals of playing professionally.

Further, this research has provided an understanding of the experiences and motivations of women sport labor migrants and has focused attention on the issues of race, gender, nationality, and athletic ability in relation to American WNBA players. This current study can be used as a template to further understand how race, gender, nationality, and athletic ability play a role in the motivations and experiences of other sport labor migrants.

Sports Agents

This current study focused on the experiences and motivations of WNBA players migrating overseas and found that sports agents played a significant role in the lives of these women sport labor migrants. In fact, when participants were asked about advice that they would give to future professional women's basketball player transnational sport labor migrants, many participants talked about the importance of having a good agent. Agents can use this current study to help them understand how to advise their clients. Agents will be able to use this information to place participants on the teams that would be the best fit, depending on where the client is in her career, her athletic ability, and how well she may be able to adjust to life outside of the U.S.

The WNBA

The WNBA will be able to use the findings from this current study to understand why players who play in the WNBA choose to migrate overseas during the WNBA off-season. The WNBA may be able to use the findings of this current study to understand the intricacies of the motivations and experiences of their league players and to create a structure, which is more appealing for WNBA players to play solely within, instead of going abroad. The structure of the overseas professional basketball leagues schedule along with the fact that the women get paid

more overseas has contributed to many of these women going abroad for employment opportunities (according to the findings from this current study). These WNBA transnational sport labor migrants are more prone to injuries and burnout because they choose to play year round by playing both overseas and in the WNBA. This current study may help to bring more perspective and assist the WNBA in creating a league that is more appealing for players to stay and play in, versus going overseas to play.

Overseas Coaches and Managers

Throughout my current study, participants touched on the fact that traveling overseas involved cultural adjustment for them. Coaches and managers of overseas teams can use this current study to understand how American WNBA players adjust to life overseas and what they can do to help recruit players and keep players happy, so that they can recruit the most talented players for their team. As we can see from the findings, American WNBA players had multiple motivations for going abroad for opportunities to play in a league outside of the U.S. that did not include money as the main motivation. If coaches and managers of overseas teams can make their teams look more appealing, then maybe they will be able to recruit the best talent, regardless of how much money they are able to offer to the athlete.

Women's Basketball Players

American women WNBA players were the main focal point of this current study because they were recruited to participate and questions about motivations and experiences were asked to them exclusively. This current study can be used to help future professional women's basketball players who are looking to go overseas for employment opportunities in their sport. The results of this current study will enable women's basketball players to be more aware of how they may

experience life overseas and what to expect if they go to Europe or Asia. The findings of this current study allow future women's basketball players to have ideas about what to anticipate when playing overseas and how they can choose and make decisions that are good for them, when choosing to go abroad.

Limitations

This current study was conducted using an exploratory, single embedded case study methodology (Yin, 2009) in which American WNBA players were recruited to participate. Participants were asked questions about their motivations and experiences playing in both the WNBA and overseas throughout the semi-structured interview. I was able to answer the two original research questions about motivation and experience by using only semi-structured interview questions however, there were some limitations to the study that I will address in the following sections.

Timing of Study

Data were collected during February and March of 2015 therefore many of the participants who are currently playing overseas are in fact overseas and were in the middle or end of their season. Participants who were currently playing were very hard to reach and I was only able to recruit two current players who play in both the WNBA and in an overseas league. I was able to interview many former players about their experiences and motivations and I was able to collect some rich data but I think going forward, it would be beneficial to access the perspectives of current players in order to keep this information as up-to-date as possible.

Collecting data in the fall between September and November would be ideal for this purpose. This is because the women are either still in the U.S. and preparing to go overseas or

just arriving overseas. I noticed that a lot of the women that I reached out to were in the middle of their post season and therefore were very busy. By contacting the women at the beginning of the season I think I would have had a better chance of recruiting current players to participate in the study.

Finally, I had a limited amount of time for data collection after receiving IRB approval from the university. Luckily, I was still able to still have access to a diverse group of participants even with the delay, and I do not feel that the results of this current study were compromised by the short span of time I had for data collection and analysis and I was still able to obtain rich data about the participants motivations and experiences.

Using Only Interview Data

I only used interview data from the participants in this current study. Therefore, the data was not triangulated with other forms of data such as observations or documents. Using only interview data for a qualitative research study is not unusual (Merriam, 2009), and I determined that this was the best method to use to answer the research questions. The purpose of my study was to learn about the experiences of the participants and to discover what had motivated them to migrate, from their perspective. Therefore, it was important that I focused on the experiences and motivations from the participants' point of view.

I think in the future, it would be beneficial to collect additional data, perhaps, maybe in the form of observations or documents and archives. This is because it would help to contextualize how these women experience life abroad by triangulating all of the data sources. Observing these women in the WNBA and overseas would help to provide more of an outsider's perspective on how these women experience life as a sport labor migrant. This would help to

provide a more robust understanding of what these women have to go through as international sport labor migrants on and off the court.

American WNBA Players

Only American WNBA players were recruited for this current study. In the future, it would be beneficial to get the perspective of other professional women's basketball players who may not identify as American or who may not play in the WNBA. I limited the study to only include American WNBA players because I was interested in researching sport labor migrants that had choices on where they wanted to play their sport as well as understand how sport labor migrants adjusted to cultural differences. In the future, I think allowing a player perspective to various groups of women's professional basketball players will only help with understanding the motivations and experiences of many women's basketball player sport labor migrants and not limiting the research to a specific set of participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

Exploring transnational migration through the experiences of women basketball players who play in the WNBA and overseas has contributed to the areas of sport labor migration, women and sport labor migration, and women and migration. In addition, findings from this current study have helped to confirm and expand upon the motivations and experiences that transnational women athletes have as they pursue opportunities in sport, specifically WNBA transnational sport labor migrants.

My current study focused on the agency of the participant and the participant's individual role within the migratory process. Understanding the experiences and motivations of women athlete transnational sport labor migrants is important because sport labor migration is a

reflection of social, political, and economic power relations in sport (Maguire & Stead, 1998).

Therefore, it is important to include women in this dialogue in sport labor migration research or the research will continue to be compromised by only including the motivations and experiences of men.

More Research on Women in Team Sports

Researchers have studied soccer, cricket, handball, and now basketball as it relates to sport labor migration and women competing on team sports. More studies need to be carried out on the range of professional sports such as softball, volleyball, netball, American football, and ice hockey. More empirical work needs to be undertaken in order to understand the motivations and experiences that women sport labor migrants go through when migrating transnationally. In addition, studies need to examine how physical characteristics (e.g., race, height, body type), nationality, and athletic ability, and gender, play a role in the motivations and experiences of these women.

More Research on Women's Professional Basketball Players

More work needs to be completed on women's professional basketball players in relation to sport labor migration. Again, this was an exploratory case study in which I studied a phenomenon that had not yet been researched in-depth. The results of this current study can be used to create typologies for future data collection as it pertains to women's professional basketball sport labor migrants inclusive of non-WNBA players and non-American players. This was a qualitative study and more work using a quantitative methodology or mixed methods approach could be used to collect data on the experiences and motivations of women's professional basketball players from a variety of perspectives.

Using the Theory of Transnationalism

More emphasis in sport labor migration research needs to be put on agency and experiences versus structure with regard to globalization. The theory of transnationalism supported this approach in this current study (Carter, 2007). I agree with Carter (2013) that more scholars should adapt the theory of transnationalism when understanding the motivations and experiences of international sport labor migrants. Much of the literature we read puts emphasis on using globalization theories and dependency theories but it is important to examine how individuality places a role as well. As in this current study, the participants were heavily influenced by individual factors in their lives, which ultimately contributed to where they ended up migrating to and how they experienced international migration.

Gender Differences

There has yet to be a study in which the experiences of men and women sport labor migrants are compared. Participants from this current study felt that the disparities in the gender gap were narrowed more so overseas than in the U.S. By understanding the experiences of men in comparison to women, we will be able to understand how gender may affect professional basketball players in the U.S. and overseas and what each league can do to narrow the gender gap and create an equal playing field for both men and women. In addition, more research will need to be conducted on the role of the domestic partner of the woman sport labor migrant. Understanding the role that gender plays in and outside of the sport labor migrant's life is crucial to getting a holistic picture of the female sport labor migrant's experience.

Reflexivity

Writing this dissertation has been one of the most challenging, yet rewarding feats in my life. I have learned a lot about myself throughout this past year and how I, as a researcher, approach research from the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. Personally, my favorite part of this whole process was the data collection and writing the results section of the dissertation. I enjoyed connecting with participants and communicating with them about their experiences as transnational sport labor migrants. It was very humbling listening to their stories and how they balanced life as a professional athlete constantly on the move. I felt that the questions in my semi-structured interview protocol were all appropriate. With that said, in the future, I would like to include additional questions to ask participants based on their answers.

My Perception of Participants

I tried to be reflexive and transparent as possible throughout the entire research process. I did this by keeping a Google Document online and using it as a blog throughout the duration of my research, once I received IRB approval. I consistently updated the blog after I interviewed participants to discuss the themes that I had come up with, so that I could share it with all of the members of my committee. I kept members of the committee updated on emerging themes as well as gave committee members a brief explanation of the participants that I interviewed. I also discussed my own biases that materialized as I conducted the interviews and how they could potentially influence the results. One topic that I touched on in my blog was that I felt like an outsider before and during the interviews. I did not have any direct connections to professional women's basketball players and third parties put me in touch with all of the participants in this current study.

At times I felt like the women were giving me generic answers to some of the questions I had asked. I felt that, in their eyes, I was a researcher and reporter and I felt that in some cases they either did not feel comfortable opening up to me completely or were cautious about the information they shared. Many of the participants who played in Asia would say “it was tough” or “harder” to play in Asia, but did not go into more detail about why it was so challenging. It was not until my interview with Lisa that I understood why playing in Asia was so challenging. She was one participant who was very open with her experiences playing abroad, and that is why I chose to share her direct responses in length throughout the dissertation.

I am not certain that participants felt that I was an outsider, but this is just how I felt personally. This could be based on the fact that I am an outsider and they do not know me personally. To add, I would like to remind readers that I was studying professional athletes who are constantly in the spotlight. Some of these women have had professional public relations training on how to answer interview questions. This may have influenced how the participants in this current study responded to me and the research questions I asked.

In the future, before interviewing athletes, I will ask them a question on if they have had professional public relations training on how to deal with members of the media as well as how to answer questions. I will also end the interview by asking if they think their public relations training had influenced their responses, just to get an idea of how they perceived their responses. I think this will help in understanding why some participants may hold back on going in-depth about certain topics where as others may seem very open to elaborate. I understand that I am not a member of the media, but I am a researcher and writer, and the results of this current study will be shared with others. Even though I may not be a part of a media affiliate, I was still an outsider

trying to obtain personal information from each participant, with the intent of sharing that information with a broader audience.

Keeping a blog. As for feedback from my blog, my advisor Dr. Lars Dzikus did make a few comments on the blog about how my identity played a role in the entire process and encouraged me to think about how my experiences abroad played into my biases. Based on previous research on men's basketball players, I wrote about participants feeling a sense of entitlement while abroad because of their physical stature as an American women's basketball player and how participants would most likely feel a sense of celebrity based on being an American professional athlete. I did find this to be true with some of the participants.

Participants discussed interactions with fans on and off of the court and how people were constantly stopping and staring or taking pictures. In these cases, because of the language barrier, participants did not fully understand why they would get so much attention. Some thought it was because of their celebrity status, others attributed it to their height, while some felt that they received more attention because of their race (Caucasian participants in Asia and African-American participants in both Europe and Asia).

Unlike professionals in other occupations (academics, business, healthcare), professional athletes are highly visible (Carter, 2007) and receive attention from others who recognize them from their sport. As for professional basketball players, many from my current study identified as being over 6-feet tall, and felt that they stood out because of their height. I can understand this from a personal level because I have been in situations where I have been walking with a basketball player and people have come up to get an autograph, take a picture, or stare at the player.

Being reflexive throughout this process and being able to keep a journal of my thoughts helped me to go back and see my thought process throughout the current study. I was able to obtain feedback from my advisor throughout the process and address concerns he and any of the other committee members had while I was conducting the data collection (please note that only my advisor commented on the blog).

Challenges with writing a dissertation. I really enjoy qualitative research because of the richness in answers one gets from interacting with participants. I am a very social person and I have always enjoyed being around people and hearing their stories. Being a qualitative researcher has allowed me to reach out to people who I admire in the area of sport and ask questions that I personally have as well as questions that can contribute to the knowledge of sport professionals in general. I learned that as a researcher it is very important to be close to one's data and to set aside time to transcribe, code, and write the results as soon as one is able to interview the participant. This method works well for me and I felt that I was able to understand and learn about the participants by staying close to the data and being efficient in compiling the data and piecing it together to make sense.

The hardest part of this process was putting together my data and making sure that it made sense to everyone else. To me, I am so immersed in my data and familiar with all of the participants and their stories, so everything I wrote made sense to me. When writing the dissertation, I had to think about all of the audiences that would be reading my work and how I could stay true to myself and what I wanted to write, but at the same time address the needs and concerns of the audiences, more specifically.

Lastly, I have not had anyone to talk to about sport labor migration and connect with them on a personal interest level. In the future, I plan to attend conferences and set up meetings with people who share a passion for sport labor migration research. Not having anyone to talk to about my research has been very isolating and I did not realize this until a doctoral student from England reached out to me in the beginning of April. He had read the Butler and Dzikus (2014) article and found the study to be applicable to his dissertation and the direction he was interested in heading with his research. At that point, I realized that I do have the capability to influence and inspire others in this area. I have since stayed in touch with this person and through conversations, we realize that we do not need to isolate ourselves because our research interests do not line up with those in our universities but that we can collaborate and communicate afar, so that we can support one another in various respects. The dissertation process can be lonely and tedious, and having someone to talk to that is familiar with the literature is very helpful. Also, having colleagues who are willing to read one's work that are not familiar with the literature can be very helpful as well. In the end, I realize that writing a dissertation and conducting research needs to be an experience that one can share with others.

Conclusion

This current study was the first of its kind to go in-depth to understand the motivations and experiences of WNBA transnational sport labor migrants. I was able to create a new typology of sport labor migration exclusive to WNBA players. I expanded on the definition of *Ambitionist* (Magee and Sugden, 2002) and added the term *Personal Aspirationist*, based on my findings from interviews with WNBA transnational sport migrants. I contributed to the area of sport labor migration research by obtaining a transnational player perspective in regards to

experiences both on and off the court. Specifically I found that the majority of WNBA transnational sport labor migrants prefer playing overseas versus playing in the WNBA, the majority had a better quality of life playing in Europe versus playing in Asia, and the agent of the athlete played a significant role in their career. I was also able to lay a strong foundation for how future research in the area of sport labor migration can be conducted. Specifically, I pointed out to how implications for this current study, contributed to the knowledge of (a) academic scholars, (b) sports agents, (c) the WNBA, (d) overseas coaches and managers, and (e) women's basketball players. I included future recommendations for how scholars could add onto my research by researching: (a) women in team sports, (b) various groups of professional women's basketball players, (c) taking an agency-centered approach through using the theory of transnationalism, (d) exploring ways to conduct comparative studies in the case of gender, and (e) understanding how safety plays a role in the players decision to migrate.

Based on my findings from this current study, I would advise future women's basketball players to be familiar with how professional basketball operates in the U.S. and overseas. I would encourage these women to talk to others who have experienced playing in both the WNBA and overseas and to not solely base their decision to go overseas on money alone. I plan to continue down this research path by including various populations of women in team sports. I plan to use the findings from this research to write publications for peer-reviewed journals as well as present these findings at national and international conferences.

More specifically, I plan to reach out to scholars in the same area of research as me and hopefully collaborate with them on future projects. Most importantly, I will be reaching back out to the participants in this current study to share my findings. Many of the participants were

excited about this research and were interested in working with me and giving me ideas that would help them to understand the sport labor migration experiences of WNBA transnational sport labor migrants. I hope to work with some of the same participants and conduct research that will be applicable to their needs as sport labor migrants as well as add to scholarship within academia.

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Appendix

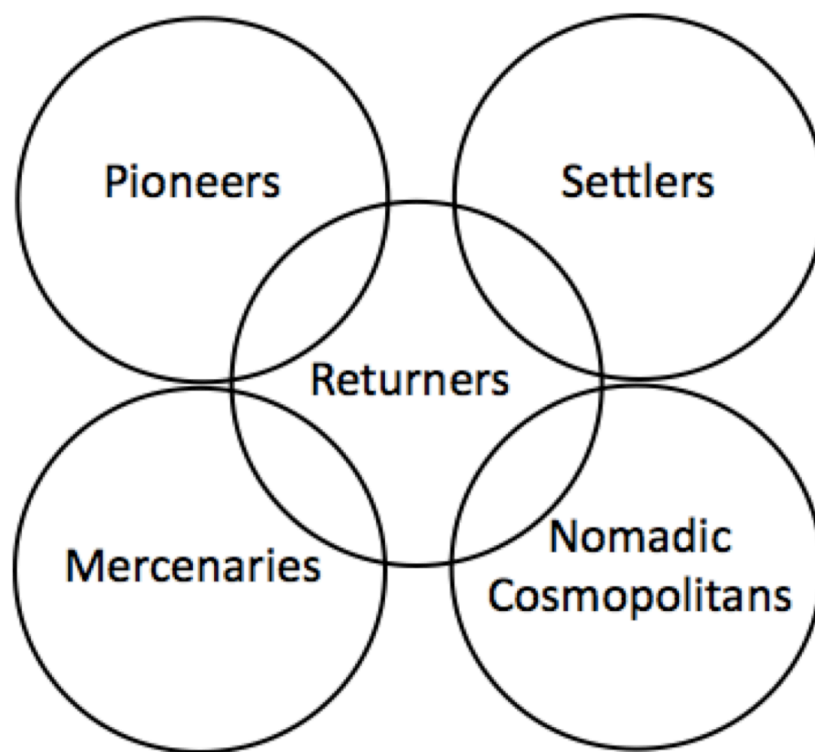
Appendix A

Figure 1. Maguire's 1996 Typology of Sport Labor Migration

Appendix B

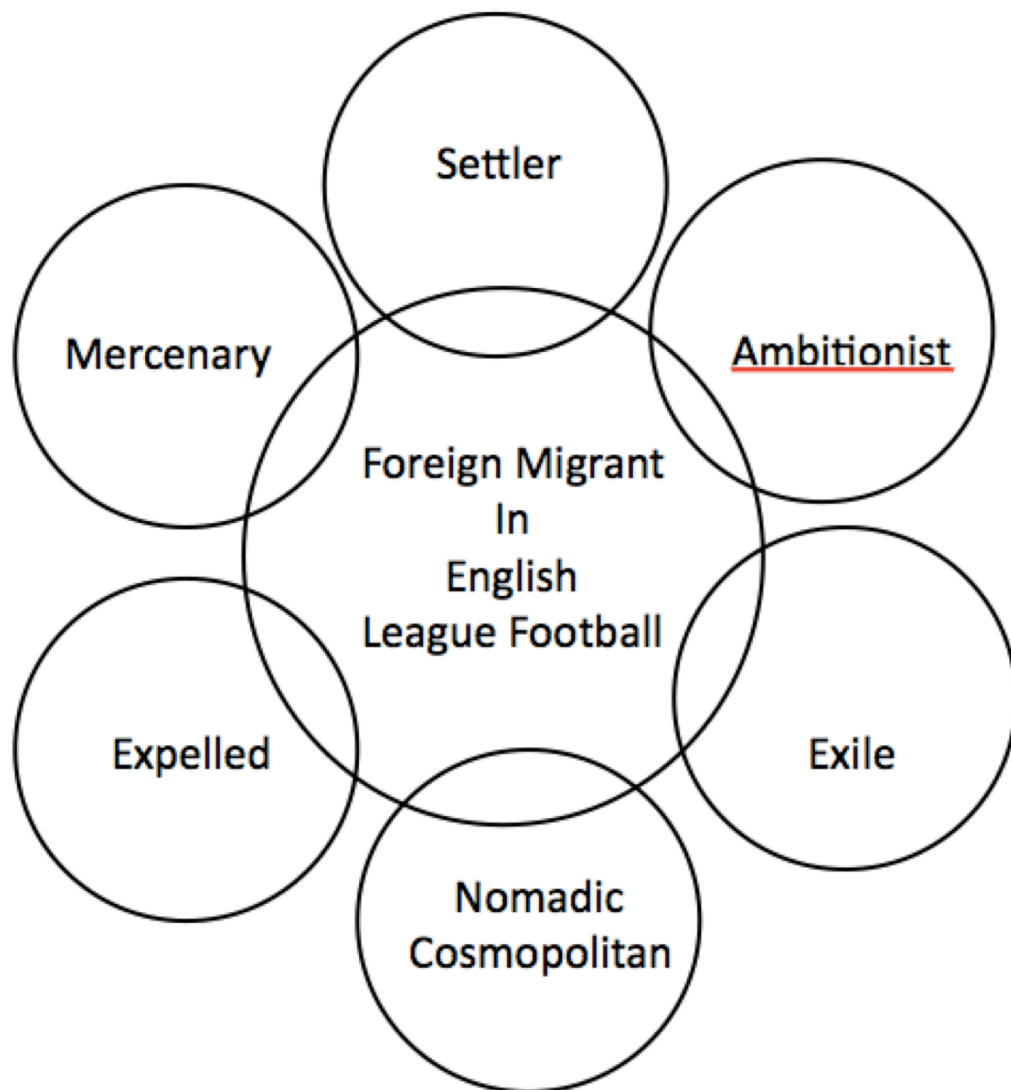


Figure 2. Magee and Sugden (2002) Typology of Football Migration

Appendix C

Semi-Structured One-On-One Interview Protocol

The following are examples of questions that might be asked during the interviews. Questions will be adapted to fit each individual participant and conversation.

1. Tell me how you got involved in the sport of basketball?
2. What do you love most about playing basketball?
3. Tell me about your experience playing basketball in the U.S.?
4. Tell me about your experience playing basketball in _____ (will insert individual countries played in)?
5. How is it similar to and/or different from playing in the U.S.?
6. How has your experience with fans been in both places?
7. When in _____ what language did your coach speak (will insert individual countries played in)? How did this impact you?
8. How has language played a role in your experiences _____ (will insert individual countries played in)? How did this impact you?
9. What type of activities did you do outside of basketball, just for fun, in _____ (will insert individual countries played in)? How is that similar to and/or different from when you are in the US?
10. Tell me about what motivated you to go overseas to play basketball?
11. Were there times when you were hyperaware of being an American? What happened?
12. Were there times when you were hyperaware of being African American? What happened?
13. Were there times when you experienced any racism in basketball? What happened?
14. Were there times when you were hyperaware of being “different” in (country)? What happened?
15. When speaking to other male basketball players overseas, how have your experiences been similar? Different?

16. What type of advice would you give to American women basketball players who are interested in pursuing a professional basketball career?
17. Is there anything that you would like to add that you feel we haven't covered?

Appendix D**Demographics Questionnaire**

1. Gender?

2. Age?

3. Languages spoken?

4. Do you hold citizenship in any countries outside of the U.S?

5. Race?

6. Do you have a partner that lives with you overseas?

7. Do you have any children?

8. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

9. How many years have you played professional basketball?

10. How many years have you played in the WNBA? _____

11. How much does your WNBA salary differ from your overseas salary?

12. How many countries have you played professional basketball in?

Participant Demographic Tables

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Languages Spoken Fluently</i>	<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Highest Level of Education</i>
Lashay	Female	English	U.S.	African American	Bachelor
Mya	Female	English	U.S.	African American	Bachelor
Leslee	Female	English	U.S.	African American	Bachelor
World Traveler	Female	English, Spanish, Italian, some French	U.S.	African American	Master
Coach K	Female	English, Spanish	U.S.	African American	Bachelor
Tonya	Female	English	U.S.	African American	Master
Kate	Female	English	U.S.	African American	Bachelor
Sabrina	Female	English	U.S.	African American	Working towards a Master degree
Aly	Female	English	U.S./ Israeli	Caucasian	Bachelor
Lisa	Female	English	U.S.	Caucasian	Bachelor

Table 2. Participants' Family Information

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Partner Overseas</i>	<i>Children Overseas</i>
Lashay	No	No
Mya	No	No
Leslee	No	No
World Traveler	No	No
Coach K	No	No
Tonya	No	No
Kate	No	No
Sabrina	No	No
Aly	No	No
Lisa	Yes	No

Table 3. Participants' Athletic Information

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Salary Overseas vs. WNBA</i>
Lashay	About the same
Mya	\$20,000 more overseas
Leslee	Same
World Traveler	Twice as much overseas
Coach K	Twice as much overseas
Tonya	Triple as much as overseas
Kate	Twice as much overseas
Sabrina	About same/little more
Aly	Twice as much overseas
Lisa	Twice-Three times as much overseas

Table 4. Number of foreigners on team rosters as reported by participants

<i>Country</i>	<i>Quota</i>
China	1
Czech Republic	2
France	2 or 3
Greece	1-2
Israel	As many as six
Italy	2 or 3
Japan	1
Latvia	2
Poland	2
Spain	2
South Korea	1
Sweden	2-3
Russia	2-3

Appendix F

Invitation to Potential Research Participants

Dear _____,

I hope you are well. I am contacting you because of your experience playing in the WNBA and professional women's basketball overseas. My name is Barbra Nalani Butler and I am a Ph.D. student at The University of Tennessee in Knoxville (USA) and I am currently doing a research study on international women's basketball sport labor migration. I am interested in interviewing you as a potential participant in my study.

This study examines the experiences of WNBA players who play or have played basketball on an overseas team. The purpose of this study is to understand:

- The experiences of American WNBA players who have played in the WNBA and overseas
- Why American WNBA players choose to play basketball outside of the U.S.

I plan on doing 10 to 15 one-on-one interviews with current and former women's basketball players and I will be conducting interviews starting February 2015. Please let me know if you are interested in participating in the research study by contacting me via email, phone, or Skype. The interview will take about 45-60 minutes. If you choose to participate in the research study, you will be provided an informed consent form and your identity will be kept confidential. You will find my contact information below.

I look forward to your response and hopefully working with you in the future.

Best Regards,

B. Nalani Butler
Email: Bbutler7@vols.utk.edu
Skype: BnButler7
Phone: 865.974.3295

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

Women on the Move: The Migration of WNBA Players to Overseas Basketball Teams

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study. This research study examines the experiences of WNBA players who have played professional basketball in the WNBA and overseas. The purpose of this research study is to understand:

- The experiences of American WNBA players who have played in the WNBA and overseas
- Why American WNBA players choose to play basketball outside of the U.S.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

You will participate in a one-on-one interview and talk about your past and/or present experiences playing in the WNBA and overseas as well as what motivated you to migrate to professional women's basketball teams outside of the U.S. The interview is expected to last about 45-60 minutes.

The interview will encourage open discussion. You will be encouraged to elaborate on your experiences playing in the WNBA and on professional teams overseas. A series of questions will be used to guide the semi-structured interview. Additional questions might arise as part of this more conversational interview style. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Once the interviews are transcribed, you will be given the opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy before it will be analyzed.

CHECKING FOR ACCURACY

You will be offered the opportunity to review and revise the transcript of your interview. Once transcriptions are completed, you will receive transcriptions via email and will have one week (seven days) to review transcriptions and respond. If you do not respond, then it will be assumed that all interview transcriptions are accurate.

RISKS

There are minimal risks in this research study. The process of reflecting on past experiences

may produce negative thoughts and emotions for you.

_____ Participant's Initials

BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits for the participants in this research study. The findings of this research study may help to increase knowledge of women's professional basketball overseas and in the WNBA. Findings may also help agents, coaches, managers, and families in understanding the dynamics of American women basketball sport labor migrants.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All conversation in the one-on-one interview will be kept confidential. In order to protect your identity, you will choose a code name that will be used to reference your comments. In addition, any defining characteristic (university affiliation, hometown, previous teams, etc.) that can be linked to you will not be identified in the study.

Signed consent forms will be kept separate from transcripts in a secure location. Only the researcher and her faculty advisor will have access to information from interviews after transcriptions are completed. The audio recordings will be destroyed once the transcriptions are completed.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

The University of Tennessee does not "automatically" reimburse research participants for medical claims or other compensation. If physical injury is suffered in the course of the research study, or for more information, you should notify Barbra Nalani Butler at 865-974-3295.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the research study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,) you may contact the researcher Barbra Nalani Butler or the researcher's advisor Dr. Lars Dzikus at the following:

Barbra Nalani Butler
 1914 Andy Holt Avenue 233 HPER Building Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-2700
Phone: 865.974.3295
Email: Bbutler7@vols.utk.edu
Skype: BnButler7

Lar Dzikus
 1914 Andy Holt Avenue 335 HPER Building Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-2700
Phone: 865.974.0451
Email: LDzikus@vols.utk.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-7697.

_____ Participant's Initials

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the research study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the research study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix H

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface. The top menu bar includes Home, Create, Data, Analyze, Query, Explore, Layout, and View. Below the menu are various toolbars for Item, Clipboard, Format, and Paragraph. The main workspace is divided into a left-hand navigation pane and a central list of nodes.

The left-hand navigation pane is organized into several categories:

- SOURCES:** Internals, Externals, Memos
- NODES:** Nodes (selected), Node Matrices
- CLASSIFICATIONS:** Source Classifications, Node Classifications
- COLLECTIONS:** Sets, Memo Links, Annotations
- QUERIES:** Queries, Results

The central list of nodes is a table with the following columns: Name, Sources, and Refs. The nodes listed are:

Name	Sources	Refs
Relationship w partner overseas	1	
Relationship with American teammates	4	
Relationship with food	1	
Relationship with men's team	1	
Relationships w other Americans	1	
Relationships with foreign teammates	5	
Relying on foreign teammates	3	
Retirement	2	
Safety overseas	2	
Spain	1	
Staying in shape	1	
Team relationships	7	
Technology-Entertainment	1	
Time off	2	
Time overseas	1	
Touring	1	
Translator	3	
two Americans on the team when I pla...	1	
Untitled	1	

Figure 3. Screenshot of NVivo Coding

Appendix I

Thematic Table for the Motivations and Experiences of American WNBA Sport Labor Migrants

Major Categories and Themes	Descriptions	Discussed by # of participants
<i>Category 1: Motivations to Migrate Overseas</i>		
a) Eagerness to experience a different culture outside of the U.S.	I wanted to do more and explore the world; I always wanted to see the world; get out and see things; I love doing things; being able to go to different countries; going to places you read about; travel the world; travel; branch out; opportunity to travel and see new things	10/10
b) Monetary Compensation	Money was a factor too, but it became a factor more down the line; format of the season; money first and foremost; make a living for myself; money not the main thing; money number two; it's a job; provide for our families; longer you play, more money becomes a factor; not an opportunity you can pass by from a money standpoint; money is so attractive overseas; not so much about the money;	10/10
c) Gaining experience for future careers outside of playing basketball	Overseas there are more opportunities; I wanted to be a professional; I knew I wanted to coach sophomore year of college; ultimately coaching is what I wanted to do; at the end of the day I want to coach basketball; gave me the platform to do what I am doing now; I always knew I wanted to coach; they gave me a generic coach answer	4/10
d) Staying in shape for WNBA basketball	I just went overseas to stay in shape; our WNBA season is just so short; our off-season is way more longer than our normal season; do something to stay in shape	4/10
e) Personal goals	Love and passion; I am in such good shape; my heart was still in it; I was in really good shape for playing; kind of kept me doing what I liked; I am in the best ability I can actually play; I wasn't aware of the different opportunities; I wanted to play at the highest level; dreams obtainable; finding somewhere comfortable I could play; play basketball; have a dream; I just wanted to keep playing	3/10

Category 2: Experiences Playing Professional Basketball		
a) Experiences in the WNBA	You're playing against great players every night; fast paced style; one-on-one; all of us have most of the same teachings; who can one-up each other; the WNBA they expect you to know everything; as far as talent wise I would say the best of the best are in the WNBA; the only reason I went to the WNBA was because I got drafted; I was invited to training camp and started a WNBA game; in the WNBA you are on your own; in the WNBA I had to work to get a double double; like their league is never in the top and the WNBA is; my dream was to always be able to play in the WNBA; being in the WNBA I think that's where the top players come from; the WNBA isn't able to put together some great marketing package	10/10
b) Fans Overseas	Lots of fans; more fan support overseas versus the WNBA; fans were crazy (in a good way), crowds were crazy (on a good way); built authentic relationships with fans; passionate; bigger clubs get more fans; cheer differently; fans live in the moment; fans in Asia are large in quantity; fanatics; fans traveled well with the team; very supportive; fans have been awesome; played for one of the top teams and had really good fans; great crowd; clubs in Turkey are spearheaded through soccer; you could bring bullhorns and drums; they were just obnoxious; people smoking in the arena at half-time	10/10
c) Europe: Experiences Playing	Participants who played in Europe experienced: Second home; culture in Israel is similar to back home because people speak English; enjoyed beach and exploring country in Israel; you get paid to do it (go overseas and play); pay you to go over there (overseas) and win games; more about winning (overseas); home away from home; when you're on the court you're always happy; Czech Republic was a melting pot; just got see the motherland (Israel); guaranteed money in France; after you play in all of these countries you play against certain people; to this day I missed the red square because I was so focused on playing basketball; loved playing in Sweden, women's basketball was very popular	9/10
f) Celebrity Status	They really took to me wanting to become a part of the culture, which made the transition a lot easier for both parties; I loved most of the people; smaller towns rallied around women's basketball; I was very well-known in the league; everyone was pretty receptive and kind; I was one of the players who was better; advantage came with your ability to play; overseas you are worshipped; it was almost like a paparazzi type thing; they take pictures of me and pictures with me; you're the superstar player; I was most recognized in Korea; I had a driver; I was able to play in bigger cities	6/10 Variant

e) Agents	Assisted me in getting citizenship; did research; agent is important; assisted with contractual agreements; important to build a meaningful relationship with agent; agent dealt with business transactions; played a role in where the I ended up playing; comfortable; safe; important to ask questions to agent; my agent called me and told me I had been released from the team; I learned a lot about reading contracts	5/10
g) Dual-Citizenship	Family member being Jewish; teammate was liaison between player and agent; law of return; Jewish heritage; citizenship; Bosman; helps my case; competing against Europeans; classes of citizenship; because we have so many people with dual-citizenship on the team everyone is similar; had different passports too; girls can go and some countries and buy them a passport; yeah everyone is becoming more aware of it, becoming a naturalized citizen; if you're able to apply for dual-citizenship and make it work to your ability, then do it	5/10
h) Safety Overseas	Bombs reaching Tel Aviv; bomb sirens; been a lot of bombings and killings going on here; makes me nervous; very real; you would have people try to rob you; cops would pull you over to rob you	2/10
Category 3: Leisure Overseas		
a) Leisure in Europe	Sightseeing; hang out with friends; saw the Holy land in Israel; foreign teammates showed Americans around; go to eat; go to club; road trips; go to bigger cities; walk the streets; see what city has to offer; they knew certain things that would make me happy off the court; the other 22-20 hours of the day when you're not on the court you have to live; Russia wasn't the best of times; you go out and have clubs; in Turkey the thing to do was to go eat and smoke hookah; I really loved all of the places I played; shopping a lot; take tours; you might just have a coffee and hang out for a while; I loved Israel; I explored the country; I went to the zoo; went to different cities; looked at historical things; before I had never used public transportation at all; there was not a country that I did not enjoy; I enjoyed each country for different reasons; experience the culture	9/10
b) Leisure in Asia	Always something to do; good food; I really loved all of the places I played; the technology, it was a great opportunity; go see a movie; go to a western restaurant; go shopping; not much downtime; try to visit the bigger cities; go where all the British and American tourists go; experience the culture; visit people	5/10
Category 4: Culture and Acculturation		
a) Holidays Observed and/or Celebrated	Jews have a million holidays; have to participate and observe holidays because stores are closed; celebrate American holidays; celebrated the Korean New Year; All other seasons I went over after Christmas; we celebrated Three Kings; we celebrated new years by popping grapes;	10/10

	we definitely do celebrate American holidays; Shabbat dinner is every Friday; Spain was Catholic, so you know religious background; I celebrated Swedish holidays because I roomed with a Swedish person; I missed all those holidays, I wasn't allowed to come home; a lot of times they would have holidays and shut everything down; I went back to Greece for a holiday	
b) Experiences with Local Cuisine Overseas	Finding new restaurants; going out to eat; foodie; cooking; wineries; groceries sell American stuff in Israel; Nutella; I'm one of those people that love going to the grocery store; I love the food in Spain; the food in Europe is actually a 100 times better than the food in America; there are no preservatives; my highlight of the day was going to McDonalds and getting something to eat; I wanted to eat the food that the locals ate; you had the neighborhood butcher and the neighborhood fruit and vegetable stand; cookouts; have dinners; I liked Swedish food and I like Polish food; every place had a McDonalds; I cooked a lot; if you want something American you can go to McDonalds; food is ridiculous in Asia; what can I eat?; always seemed to have some type of chicken; I would bring over a whole bag of food; McDonalds and Pizza Hut we loved	10/10
c) Issues Involving language	- Two participants were fluent in a language other than English and two participants had a working knowledge of a language outside of English Codes involving foreign language included: Most spoke English in Israel; learned basics of language; learned how to say certain foods; if you don't know how to say something, you can act it out; not being able to get what you want because you can't communicate; translators; coached in native language; translators weren't necessarily basketball translators; sign language is a beautiful thing; it's kind of like the game gestures; you learn how to communicate; I knew the basics before I got there; I learned language through a workbook; talked to teammates; went to restaurants; would try to read the menu; we had translators; they gave us translators; most of the time you get players that will translate; got to be familiar with the language; I wanted to learn the languages; listening to it day in and day out you start to learn words; sometimes you pick up what the coaches say; no one to talk to; difficult at times; language is more of a barrier when trying to build a meaningful relationship	6/10
Category 5: Relationships		
a) American Teammates	Played with each other a lot (WNBA and overseas); do stuff together; friends before coming over here; meet up	9/10

	with other Americans not on team; get together with other Americans; you're only allowed two Americans on your team so you actually kind of feel a more personal friendship with them; you have that friendship from overseas and you come back to the WNBA with it; from the off the court standpoint you get to develop more of a friendship; met up with Americans playing there; call the other Americans; one time I played with a girl from Russia, but everyone else has been American; the Americans on other teams, we all kind of knew each other; the Americans there, we have our own little community	
b) Foreign Teammates	Do stuff together outside of basketball collectively; relationships pretty good; team functions; team hangouts; everyone included; open invite; makes it easier to be over here; they were busy with the army; foreign teammates invite Americans to celebrate holidays; Shabbat dinners; celebrate Thanksgiving, girls were close; own little family away from family; meet so many other players from different cultures; I hung out with some; cool to hang out with some because you develop that trust; we were a really close knit team; I had a really close teammate and she was Lithuanian; I had great experiences with my teammates; the Israelis, sometimes they would come over and sometimes they wouldn't; they were excited that we were there; little house gatherings; sometimes we would just go shop for something in the house together	9/10
c) American Military Overseas	Amy base overseas; I also did a camp when we were at the Army base; we would always try to hook up with military people; we would go on base and hang out with friends; we could stay over; family was stationed in the military;	3/10
d) American Expatriates	I knew where the Americans hung out to watch basketball on Sundays; I was hanging out with the Americans over there that were in school; then there are the Americans that after college they want to tour Europe; extra people to hang out with; there were also a couple of students	2/10
e) Partner Overseas	My husband; where my husband came; missing my husband	1/10
Category 6: American Awareness and Views of Being Othered		
a) Quotas	Restriction on how many Americans you can have on a team; In Israel: Four players on a team and three can be on the court at the same time; Eurocup; Americans as foreigners; Bosman; Two of us in South Korea); changed the rule to one American per team; Poland there were three of us, but only two of us could play at a time; Turkey we had three of us; we could only have one in China; you're only allowed two Americans on your team; only American on team in Spain; in Poland I had two other Americans	10/10

b) Nationality	You don't know how they will take the Americans; Americans can be cocky; Americans can be arrogant; turmoil; I fit in; Israelis will stare at teammates; changed the rule to one American per team; A lot of us Americans; Always reminded of that; you get excited when you see another American; they would say I was a different American, that wanted to adapt to the culture; if your American can beat their American then you're good; At the end of the day its all about the Americans; I think we carry ourselves like we are Americans; when you're playing overseas as an American you're supposed to be the star; stereotypes; perception of Americans; Americans don't have the greatest reputation; egocentric; Americans have a natural bond	10/10
c) Awareness of Race	Because they are Black they will stare; ask if they are Ethiopian or African; inquiring; rude that they stare; they stare a lot; just everything about you is a little bit different than what they are used to; you try to fit in where you get in; it is always somebody that is ignorant that doesn't know any better; puts you back in reality; they have darker skin over there; stare and stop; stare at us as we walked down the street; trying to figure out why a Black person was there; I remember one time we were walking and this guy almost ran into the wall; in bigger cities a lot of Africans go there; being tall and White I stick out like a sore thumb; in Europe, you kind of see descendants from maybe my heritage	10/10
d) Perceived Discrimination and Racism	I'm sure I did; you kind of go into your own little world; you're not really tuned into all of that; I am sure I have experienced it and it getting to me... not so much; you're the American so you should be able to handle this; I could possibly get hurt because you're not calling fouls and you should be; from that standpoint it was disturbing; A lot of times you got fouls called on you because you were an American; officials would have some sort of pre-existing vendetta against any American players; I was getting killed on the court; then there is a kid that calls me a Black bitch; people would act like they didn't hear you; people would just kind of look; I told him I was the basketball player; had I been a regular person; no I didn't experience any racism; if I did, I wouldn't have known it; people couldn't speak English, so if they were racist I couldn't understand; I didn't experience much; you can't afford it	8/10
e) Physical Characteristics	I was a really tall girl; I was tall; I actually have a really tall team; I am rather tall; being tall; being tall and White I stick out like a sore thumb; they were tall; just because I was tall; there are many reasons why I would stand out	6/10

f) Gender	Same type of feeling about missing home; same type of feelings about missing friends and family; different living styles; aren't overseas as long as they are; they are here for at least 10-months; don't talk about basketball too much; women are more accommodating; Turkey was a male dominating culture; just because they were men they were treated a little better; similar because you end up meeting in the same place; end up going to the same club; big difference; our apartments were smaller	5/10

Appendix J

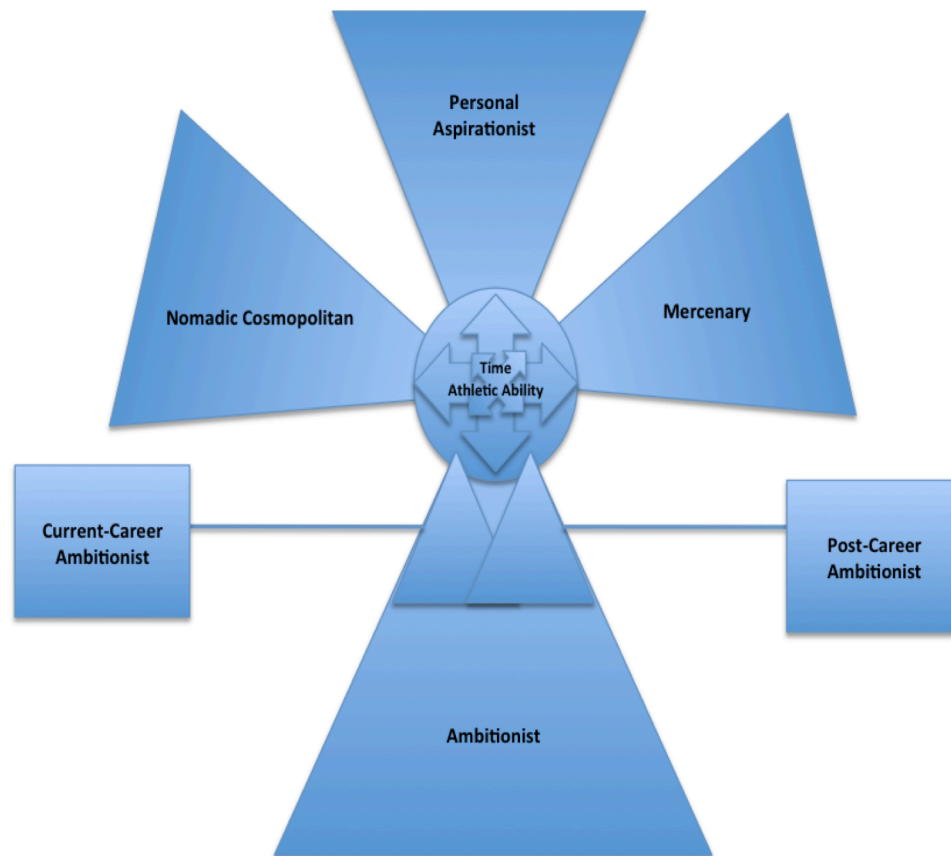


Figure 4. The Typology of American WNBA Transnational Sport Labor Migrants

Appendix K

Table 5. Themes that emerged in relation to previous literature

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Literature</i>
Eagerness to experience a different culture outside of the U.S	Nomadic Cosmopolitan: Motivated by eagerness to experience a different culture outside of the U.S.
Personal goals	Personal Aspirationist: Motivated to achieve personal goals for self-fulfillment
Monetary compensation	Mercenary: Motivated by monetary compensation
	Ambitionist:
Gaining experience for future careers outside of playing basketball	Post-Career Ambitionist: Motivated to gain experience for her future career outside of playing basketball
Staying in shape for WNBA basketball	Current-Career Ambitionist: Motivated to stay in shape for the WNBA

VITA

Barbra Nalani Butler studies globalization and sport, specifically sport labor migration from an in-depth academic perspective. Within sport and globalization, Butler's research has covered a wide variety of issues including: sport for development, women and sport, mega-events and sport, and sport labor migration. Her main area of focus is on sport labor migration and how sport choice, race, nationality, and gender affect sport migration for athletes and coaches who are interested in pursuing opportunities outside of their home country. She has also conducted studies on mega-sporting events and social justice, and the results of that work have been peer-reviewed and published in international sport journals.

Butler's active research agenda led to many honors and achievements: membership in Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, earning the Graduate Scholar Award at the Fourth International Conference on Sport and Society, recognition by the U.S. State Department for service, and the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) Dissertation Fellowship during her final year as a doctoral student. Butler also obtained graduate certificates in: grant writing and proposal development, qualitative research methods in education, cultural studies in education, and she is currently working towards her certificate in online teaching and learning.

As a doctoral student, Butler taught courses in sport studies at the University of Tennessee, including social issues and sport and social foundations and sport, in addition to guest lecturing in various sport management classes and research methods classes. As an instructor, Butler was responsible for creating and executing the courses from start to finish and taught over 300 students during her tenure as a doctoral student. Butler's passion for international sport and sport diplomacy led her to serve as a graduate student representative for the Center for Sport,

Peace, and Society and the Korean Foundation for Next Generation in Sports Talent Students (NEST).