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Sport, migration and national/ethnic identity of Japanese-Canadian/American players in the Japanese Ice Hockey League

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This study seeks to understand the migratory motives and national/ethnic identity of four Japanese-Canadian/American players who represented the Japanese ice hockey team in the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics. The results indicate that three players regard learning about Japanese heritage as the most important factor in their migration to Japan. The other player states that his main motivation for migration is to earn money to support his family. Furthermore, while they consider themselves to be dual citizens, that is, nationals of both Japan and Canada/USA, they have a stronger sense of belonging with respect to their place of birth in Canada or the USA.

Keywords: globalization; national/ethnic identity; migration; ice hockey; Japanese-Canadian/American

Introduction

There are numerous explanations for the rise of sport migration, but generally these can be linked to the overall increasing global flow of people, products and processes. Sport, both as an international form of entertainment but also in terms of its links with the production and consumption of sporting goods, has experienced exponential growth over the past few decades. However, we should not, despite the claims made by some scholars, ignore the enduring importance of the nation as a central cultural and political organizing concept. Indeed, sport provides a key example of the central place of nations and national identity in our globalizing world. One only needs to consider the rising number and significance of international sporting competitions and the increasing migration of athletic workers to confirm this point.

While the international migration of workers is not a new phenomenon, there has certainly been a shift in the way in which issues related to residency and citizenship are conceptualized in different countries. Increasing migration often results in increasing multiculturalism which, in turn, impacts on the ways in which nations see their collective identity. This is particularly true for countries that consider themselves to be more homogeneous and pure and which have less historical experience of immigration, particularly by visible racial/ethnic 'others' (Lee, Jackson, & Lee, 2007). Some countries, such as Canada, have long espoused multiculturalism, whereas others – such as Japan – are still negotiating the challenges of defining migrants as 'authentic nationals'.

How then do we understand the place and experience of athletes who migrate within the global sporting economy? What role does dual citizenship play with respect to opportunities to work and live in other countries, as well as to their experiences as people leaving one country and entering another, often within the context of 'national' sporting teams? To date, athletic migrants to Japan and similar countries have tended to be located

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on the periphery and considered as marginal or outsiders. However, with increased globalization and the enduring importance of sport in defining and expressing national identity, an examination of athletes of dual (multiple) citizenship can offer valuable insights into a range of important issues, including globalization, immigration, cultural diversity and identity politics. Focusing on the motivations and experiences of ice hockey migrants to Japan, this study examines the ways in which sporting migrants negotiate and assume multiple national/ethnic identities within the context of globalization.

Over the past decade a considerable number of studies have addressed the phenomenon of globalization in the sporting world (Chiba, Ebihara, & Morino, 2001; Donnelly, 1996; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007; Jackson & Andrews, 1999; Maguire, 1994; Rowe, Lawrence, Miller, & McKay, 1994). Included in these works are both theoretical and empirical studies that focus on a range of sports and countries. Some researchers have directed their attention to the national identities of sporting migrants (Chiba, 2013; Chiba & Jackson, 2006; Jackson, 1998a, 1998b; Maguire & Stead, 1996; Stead & Maguire, 2000). In part, this line of research has addressed the actual geographical migration patterns of the global athletic workforce (Genest, 1994). However, less attention has been paid to the question of why athletes migrate or to the nature of their experiences. It is against this background that this study examines sport migration and the experiences and identities of Canadian/American-born naturalized Japanese ice hockey players.

Studies relating to foreign-born players have been conducted in European countries since the 1990s (Bale & Maguire, 1994; Falcoux & Maguire, 2005; Lanfranchi & Taylor, 2001). For example, Maguire (1996) explored the role of Canadian players in British ice hockey between 1990 and 1995 and reported that some Canadian players took an active part in the European league and assumed British citizenship in order to play for the GB team. In his conclusion, Maguire (1996, p. 356) noted that 'there is no single motivation driving Canadians around Europe or beyond' and that:

It is also clear from the evidence that Canadians play for their adopted countries out of a wish to play at the highest level possible rather than from a desire to represent the nation. They appear, like elite cricket migrants, less interested in patriot games (Maguire, 1996, p. 356).

Maguire's suggestions are important with respect to this study's focus. In an even earlier study, Genest (1994) conducted a survey based on a geographical approach to the international migration of Canadian players in the world of ice hockey from the late 1970s to the late 1980s. He calculated the number of Canadian official transferees to go abroad (to European countries) according to the season and their hometown and found that, with one exception, Canadian ice hockey migrants tended to flow into West Germany and Britain. The one exception involved players from Québec, who were more likely to travel to France and Switzerland (Genest, 1994). While the reasons are not absolutely clear, the fact that French-speaking Québec players would be able to play and live in countries with French as a first or a major language is almost certain to have been a key explanatory factor. In short, and perhaps not surprisingly, these Canadian players tended to move to teams in European countries linked to their heritage and/or native language.

Elliott and Maguire (2008a) focus on the motivation of players and relationships between players, coaches, agents and owners in order to explain immigration of Canadian players to the English Ice Hockey League (EIHL). They offer a typology of European hockey league rankings, revealing that the EIHL is situated at the lowest level of the ice hockey leagues compared to others in Europe, and explain the migratory motivations of Canadian players based on a theoretical framework of process sociology. They note the value of 'informal communicative friends-of friends' networks and 'bridgehead contacts'

(Elliott & Maguire, 2008a, p. 158) to explain player recruitment. Furthermore, Elliott and Maguire (2008b) argue for the necessity of combining findings in the area of athletic labour migration with those in the area of highly skilled labour migration.

With respect to the case of migration from Japan, many anthropologists have studied people of Japanese descent in South and North America (Maeyama, 2001; Yamada, 2000). There were some 1,160,000 Japanese-Brazilians, 860,000 Japanese-Americans and 68,000 Japanese-Canadians in the respective countries (Maeyama, 2001; Yamada, 2000). Furthermore, Yamamoto (2007) and Yano (2007) have recently focused on the issue of 'returning migrants' (of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan). However, little attempt has been made to research foreign-born athletes of Japanese descent. To date, most studies have outlined the patterns of migration in terms of numbers and countries of origin; unlike the present study, few have investigated migration from the perspective of the athlete/new citizen.

Methods and data

The method adopted for this research was mainly qualitative, using interviews with three Japanese-Canadians and a Japanese-American who were members of the Japanese national hockey team at the Nagano Winter Olympics.¹ The interviews with each player were conducted in English (through an interpreter) in February 2001 in an office of the company by which they were employed, and each lasted approximately one hour.

All of the players had been born and grew up in North America. Thus, they usually spoke English rather than Japanese in everyday life and maintained North American customs. As a key indicator of their lack of Japanese language skills, I note that it was impossible to interview them in Japanese. In addition, they could not understand the meanings of newspaper articles written about them in Japanese.

This case study of four Canadian/American hockey players of Japanese descent cannot realistically be generalized to explain the motivations of other foreign hockey players migrating to Japan. However, the findings may still provide valuable insights to advance our understanding of Canadian/American hockey players' reasons for playing in foreign countries according to their background and athletic level.

This study sought to understand their particular experiences as foreign-born players through interviews. The interview questions were prepared in advance and were modified according to context. Questions were mainly concerned with the players' migratory motivation and national/ethnic identity, as well as the differences between the ice hockey cultures of Canada/ USA on the one hand and Japan on the other.

The four participants interviewed were aged between late twenties and mid-thirties at the time of the interviews, in 2001 (Table 1). The names used here (Suzuki, Tanaka, Takahashi and Yamada) are pseudonyms in order to protect the participants' privacy.

Table 1. Attributes of four ice hockey players.

Name	Age	Birthplace	Generation	Former league
Suzuki	28	CANADA	Third	The Western Hockey league
Tanaka	30	CANADA	Third	The International Hockey League
Takahashi	35	CANADA	Second	The Canada West Universities Athletic Association (CWUAA)
Yamada	29	USA	Third	Central Collegiate Hockey

All had played in the JIHL since the 1994–5 season; that is, they had played in Japan for at least seven years as of February 2001.

Typologies of sporting migrants in the sociology of sport

Maguire (1996) suggested a typology of sporting migrants on the basis of his examination of the case of Canadian players in British ice hockey. He categorized them as pioneers, settlers, mercenaries, returnees and nomadic cosmopolitans. This typology was intended to explain sport migration more generally. Magee and Sugden (2002, p. 429) subsequently criticized certain aspects of this typology and sought to improve it by focusing on the case of the English Football League. Their typology was constructed around data from interviews with 22 foreign football players in the Premier League and added the new categories of ambitionist, exile and expelled to Maguire's typology. The present study combines Maguire's typology with the modifications suggested by Magee and Sugden (2002) in order to explain sports migrants in Japanese ice hockey.

Foreign-born players in the Japanese Ice Hockey League

Before looking at the specific characteristics of foreign-born players, it is worth explaining the change in the quota system of the Japanese Ice Hockey League (JIHL). With the foundation of the JIHL in 1966, each team was allowed a maximum of two foreign players. The JIHL itself was composed of six corporate teams until the 2001–2 season. The Japanese Ice Hockey Federation closed its doors to foreign players for a 10-year period beginning in 1983. Thereafter, the JIHF decided to accept foreign-born players of Japanese descent from the 1994–5 season. Furthermore, foreigners with no Japanese descent were allowed to play in Japan from the 1995–6 season. Although the JIHF did not regulate the quota system formally, in May 1997 it stipulated that each team could possess two foreign-born players of Japanese descent and two foreigners.

The total number of foreign-born players reached 64 during this period, 27 of whom had Japanese descent.² This seems to indicate that many foreign players were recruited by corporate teams, as opposed to specific attempts to recruit foreign-born players of Japanese descent. Furthermore, half of the foreign-born players having Japanese descent assumed Japanese nationality, and they were superior to almost all Japanese-born players in terms of athletic level. As they were regarded as domestic players after their naturalization, they were likely to play in Japan for a longer period of time compared with other foreign players. In his interview, Yamada, who played for a Japanese corporate team for seven years, admitted this advantage as a foreign-born player of Japanese descent. Indeed, whereas most Japanese-born players have semi-professional contracts, those of Japanese descent usually obtain full-time professional positions.

Of the foreign-born players of Japanese descent ($n = 27$), there were 20 Canadians (74.1%), five Swedes (18.5%) and two Americans (7.4%) (Figure 1). This demonstrates that Canada is the most popular recruiting site and that there are many Japanese migrants in that country compared with European countries. On the other hand, of all foreign players ($n = 37$), there were 15 Canadians (40.5%), 10 Russians (27.0%), seven Czechs (19.0%), three Americans (8.1%), a Swede (2.7%) and one Unknown (2.7%) (Figure 2). This result corresponds to the ratio of the top 10 federations that 'exported' ice hockey players between 1990 and 1995 (see Maguire, 1996, p. 341).

The number of foreign-born players of Japanese descent ($n = 27$) according to playing position was as follows: forwards = 17 (63.0%), defenders = 8 (29.6%) and

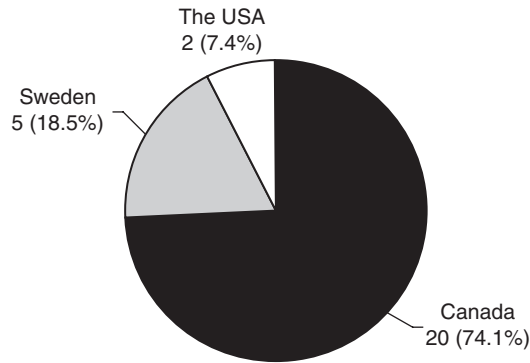


Figure 1. Birthplace of foreign-born players of Japanese descent ($n = 27$) in the JIHL (the ratio).

goalkeepers = 2 (7.4%). The ratio for foreign players ($n = 37$) was as follows: forwards = 18 (48.6%), defenders = 17 (46.0%) and goalkeepers = 2 (5.4%). Furthermore, the ratio of foreign-born players (including foreigners without Japanese descent) to the total number in this league increased from 13.0% (27/208) in the 1995–6 season to 17.2% (28/163) in the 2000–1 season.

This result indicates a decrease in the total number in the JIHL and the increasing naturalization of foreign players of Japanese descent. The total number of ice hockey players decreased from 208 in the 1995–6 season to 163 in the 2000–1 season. In short, while the number of foreign-born players remained the same, their proportion in the JIHL increased because of the decrease in the total number.

The average age of foreign-born players of Japanese descent ($n = 27$) in their first season of the JIHL was 22.89 ± 2.15 . On the other hand, the average age of foreign players ($n = 37$) was 28.97 ± 2.67 . This result seems to reflect differences in the career trajectory of players and in their athletic level.

For example, in the year before they came to Japan, foreign-born players of Japanese descent belonged to university ($n = 10$) or minor-league teams affiliated to the NHL ($n = 7$), European leagues ($n = 3$) or high school teams ($n = 1$).³ Conversely, in the year

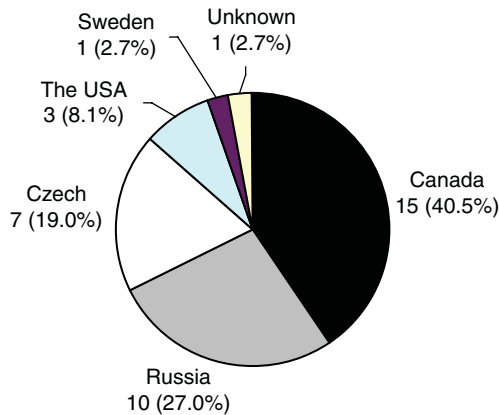


Figure 2. Birthplace of foreign players ($n = 37$) in the JIHL (the ratio).

before they came to Japan, foreign players worked in European leagues ($n = 17$), minor leagues affiliated to the National Hockey League ($n = 5$) and the NHL ($n = 4$).⁴ In addition, 16 foreign players had been registered by NHL teams during their career. In contrast, no players of Japanese descent in the JIHL had belonged to NHL teams during this period. Judging from the above, many foreign-born players of Japanese descent would have had a lower athletic level compared with foreign players and came to Japan after graduating from university, taking advantage of their Japanese-descent status.

Background of Canadian/American players who migrated to Japan

The Japanese men's ice hockey team included six Japanese-Canadians who were naturalized following their representation of Japan at the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics. To put the discussion in context, it is important to note that the Japanese men's team had failed to reach the Olympics after the 1980 Winter Games in Lake Placid, USA. It was suggested that one of the reasons the team fell from a ranking of 10th in 1980 to 18th in the 1995 World Championship Tournament was due to the isolation of the JIHL between 1983 and 1993.⁵ Furthermore, an executive of the Japanese Ice Hockey Federation (JIHF) indicated that another cause of Japan's relative weakness arose from the strengthening of European teams which were recruiting Canadians with dual nationality.⁶

Recognizing that Japan could not qualify for the Lillehammer Winter Olympics in 1994 with a purely domestically developed team, the JIHF embarked on a drastic change to its policy and opened the doors of the domestic league to foreign-born players of Japanese descent. In addition, the JIHF established a plan whereby seven Canadian/American players would take Japanese nationality in order to play for the national team. As a result, six of the 23 national team players at the Nagano Winter Olympics were Canadian-born but of Japanese descent. In addition, one Japanese-American was selected as a reserve player.

Furthermore, the JIHF appointed Dave King (who had been manager of the Canadian team from 1982 to 1992) as head coach of the Japanese team in 1995. Subsequently, he became general manager, and a Swede, Bjorn Kinding, took up the position of head coach of the Japanese team for the Nagano Games. After a 22-year absence from the Olympic Games, the Japanese team had two defeats and one draw in the qualifying round and won a play-off match between the 13th and 14th placed teams. It is within this context that the migration of the participants in this study needs to be understood.

At this point, it is worth noting that the JIHL folded in 2003–4, in large part due to harsh economic times for the companies that supported it. However, in its place, the Asia League Ice Hockey (ALIH) was founded in 2003–4. It consisted of five teams, four Japanese and one Korean. The ALIH expanded to eight with two Chinese teams and a Russian team joining in 2004–5. In the 2013–4 season the league is composed of eight teams (four Japanese teams, three Korean teams and a Chinese team). In time, this new transnational ice hockey league will almost certainly offer further insights into the issue of globalization, particularly in relation to East Asia.

Participants' life histories and the process of recruitment to Japan

Suzuki and Tanaka are third-generation Canadians of Japanese descent (Table 1). Suzuki played in the Canadian Western Hockey League, which was affiliated to the National Hockey League (NHL). Earlier in his career, Tanaka was selected for the Canadian under-18 national team and subsequently played in the International Hockey League, the

minor professional league of the NHL. He had actually been retired from ice hockey for eight months before his recruitment to Japan (*Asashi Shinbun*, evening edition, 10 February, 1998).

Takahashi is a second-generation Canadian of Japanese descent. He played in Germany for two years from the age of 19. After that, he went on to university in Canada and played hockey in the Canada West Universities Athletic Association (CWUAA). He was also selected for the Canadian team twice. Yamada, a Japanese-American, was playing in his third year at an American university affiliated to the Central Collegiate Hockey Association. He was recruited by Dave King, head coach of the Japanese team, in the following way:

Dave King called me when I was in college (...) and told me about a chance to come to Japan and play for the national team. And a coach of the corporate team [real name of corporation with held for reasons of confidentiality] at that time called me and told me about a chance to come and play in Japan.

Yamada took time off school and decided to play for both a corporate and the Japanese national team. Tanaka was also recruited by Dave King. On the other hand, Suzuki and Takahashi were recruited by Canadian coaches of a Japanese corporate team. They already knew the Canadian coaches before their recruitment, because they had previously attended the corporate team's training camp in Canada. Thus, as they were recruited by Canadian coaches, no agents were involved in their move to the corporate team.

The Nationality Law states that foreign people have to live in Japan for more than five years before obtaining Japanese nationality. Thus, the JIHF could not recruit other Canadian or American players for the Nagano Winter Olympics. However, foreign people of Japanese descent can obtain a Japanese passport after they have lived in Japan for at least three years – hence the recruitment by Canadian coaches such as Dave King.

Ultimately, these players became Japanese citizens in December 1997, after relinquishing their Canadian/American passports because the Nationality Law in Japan does not recognize dual citizenship. However, they did regain their former passports upon returning to North America. Thus, they had dual citizenship at the time of interviews in 2001.

The participants interviewed were treated almost like full-time professionals by the Japanese corporations. Thus, they could go back to Canada/America after finishing the ice hockey season in April and enjoy summer vacations with their family. Conversely, Japanese players in the JIHL concentrated on ice hockey during the season, attending diligently to their duties as employees and training during the off-season.

Overall, those interviewed indicated that they were warmly welcomed and supported by the Japanese and did not experience serious discrimination in Japan. Notably, however, they had experienced discrimination during their childhood in North America because of their Japanese heritage.

The migratory motivations of Japanese-Canadian/American players

This section focuses on the participants' motivations for migrating to Japan. When asked what factors attracted him to Japan, Suzuki answered:

I wanted to learn about my heritage. My heritage has Japanese roots from my father and grandfather. Japan is very safe. The company team is very honest. My choice was to play in either Germany or Japan. And sometimes ice hockey players in Europe have difficulties with the teams in terms of salary. Sometimes players are likely to be fired quickly in Europe.

Suzuki had two options: Japan or Germany. He chose to play ice hockey in Japan in order to learn about his Japanese heritage and to avoid the risk of unstable conditions as a professional player in Germany. When asked about finances, Suzuki commented as follows:

Money is important but when I first came over, I was looking forward to experiencing Japanese life and seeing a new culture. I want to learn a little bit about my heritage and my roots and play ice hockey for a living. But money is important too because I have to live and I want to be comfortable. And prices in Tokyo are very expensive.

Thus, Suzuki recognized that financial reasons were important as well as cultural ones. Yamada responded to the question about migration as follows:

The main thing was the chance to learn more about my heritage, Japanese heritage. Growing up in the States, there were not many Japanese people in Minnesota. I did not really know much about Japanese culture, just little things that my family does, so it is really interesting to learn more about heritage.

Yamada's reasons were very similar to those of Suzuki. Takahashi also regarded learning about Japanese heritage as an important factor in his migration to Japan. In addition, he considered his experience in the Olympic Games as important.

The Olympics was one of the highlights of my career and my life as well. I mean it was a great experience. It was an unbelievable feeling, because I always watched the Olympics on TV, it looked like a dream. It was an opportunity and role to play ice hockey for the Japanese team and we were able to represent Japan in the Olympic Games. It was great.

In short, his reasons for going to Japan were to learn about his Japanese heritage and to experience playing for the Japanese team in the Olympic Games. Participants also commented on the significance of playing as professionals. While financial aspects were very important for every player, it was very interesting that three players attached equal importance to learning about their heritage and roots. They felt an affinity with Japan and wanted to visit it in order to experience Japanese culture. Thus, the opportunity to play in Japan was timely and convenient. Because they were attracted to Japan largely on the basis of their descent or roots, they can be classified as a new type of sports migrants, 'heritage inquirer'. They seek the experience of a different culture based on their descent rather than a good salary. However, Tanaka cited finances and better working conditions as priorities for moving:

Money. Because I have a family and also the way the team supported. I was treated differently than in the minors back home. They treated me better than back home. That helped my decision.

In short, his main migratory motivation was to earn money in order to support his family, but within what was perceived as a more player-friendly working environment. Thus, he can be regarded as a 'mercenary'. It seems that the differences in motivation were linked to feelings about their descent. In addition, their company could guarantee a good lifestyle, a salary and the opportunity to play ice hockey as professionals. In addition, they could aim to compete at the Nagano Winter Olympics.

These results were rather different from those found in previous studies of athlete migration motivation. Foreign players from relatively high-level leagues (e.g. Major League Baseball in the USA and the Super 14 of rugby union) tend to aim for good contracts when they come to Japan (Chiba, 2004, 2013; Chiba & Jackson, 2006). For example, the most important reason cited by six rugby players coming to Japan was to get a good contract (Chiba & Jackson, 2006). In particular, Howitt and Haworth (2002, p. 8) indicated that while a while an elite rugby player in New Zealand (who is not an All

Black) can negotiate a salary of around 80,000 NZ\$, if signed by a UK club or Japanese company the same player can earn three times as much.

National identity of Japanese-Canadian/American hockey players

As they have represented a national team other than that of their mother country and experienced plural ice hockey cultures, the participants were interviewed about their national identities. Suzuki was asked, 'Since you are Canadian did you feel as if you were giving up or losing any of your "Canadianness" through your naturalization process?', and replied:

At the beginning I thought maybe I would be losing like all my Canadianness. But I have always said like when I was in Canada I am a Japanese-Canadian. I have always had two in my heart, two nationalities. I have a lot of pride in being Japanese-Canadian. I am truly a Japanese-Canadian. I will always be Japanese and I will always be Canadian until I die. That's the way I see it in my heart. I am a Japanese-Canadian.

Suzuki strongly regarded himself as Japanese-Canadian. He has plural national identities and is proud of his ethnic identity as a Japanese-Canadian. His self-identification is similar to that of Japanese-Canadians in a previous study (Yamada, 2000). In addition, he made interesting comments about how he locates himself with respect to national identity.

I have to say that is maybe more to the Canadian side, because I never grew up eating Japanese seafood and having a lot of Japanese culture. I just came to Japan and learned some Japanese culture. So maybe I am moving more to the center, if there is a center line between Japanese and Canadian. I am gradually coming back to the center.

Suzuki acknowledged his national identity as more Canadian than Japanese. However, over the course of his seven-year stay in Japan, he had felt his identity was slowly changing to reach a central point between Canadian and Japanese. Takahashi spoke of his feelings in the following way:

I mean, I am who I am. My identity is not through what citizenship I have. I am always going to be who I am. My family all are Canadian citizens. So I do not know if I am giving anything up. Because I am still the same person I was before I was naturalized, I did not change. Who I am? I have a Japanese passport but I am still not ['authentic' Japanese]. I am still Takahashi. I am the same person.

Here, we see that Takahashi does not regard citizenship as important for his identity. It is clear that the national identities of the participants did not change after they obtained Japanese nationality. Yamada made similar remarks in response to this question, saying: 'Getting a Japanese passport really did not change my life'. Tanaka responded as follows:

No. I felt I was gaining something. I was gaining something like becoming a Japanese citizen but I wasn't losing anything, because I was always going to be Canadian in my heart, with a part of Canada in my heart, where I became another citizen in the country. I live in Japan most of my life now. I feel more Japanese but that doesn't mean less Canadian.

It is clear from this comment that Tanaka never lost a sense of his 'Canadian-ness'. But to what extent did the participants regard themselves as Japanese, or Canadian/American, or both? Takahashi answered the question about his national identity as follows:

Both. Yes, I grew up in Canada. I realized I am a Canadian. So I did not understand a lot of things until going to Japan and I have been here for seven years now. I think I understand a little bit things. I mean, you can never be fully Japanese if you did not grow up here. . . . When I looked at myself, I am both, but I don't. It is not fully in my personality to be like most Japanese are.

Takahashi recognized himself as being of both Canadian and Japanese descent. However, he understood that he could not become 'authentically' Japanese. Yamada replied to the same question as follows:

Both. But when I live in Japan, I consider myself Japanese. At home in the States, I consider myself American. I think growing up so many years in America, I consider myself American.

While Yamada regards himself as both American and Japanese, he ultimately recognizes himself as American rather than Japanese. In addition, he recalled that he had supported the USA men's soccer team when it competed against the Japanese team. In short, while the players regarded themselves to be nationals of both Japan and Canada/the USA, they expressed a strong sense of belonging as Canadian/American. On the other hand, Takahashi expressed his feeling of pride in representing the Japanese team:

I enjoy it. I think it is great, I mean I represented a country internationally. It is good experience for me. I am always proud of it and I remember highlights of the Olympics and world championships. So I enjoy that a lot.

Here, we notice the patriotism that Takahashi feels towards Japan, taking great pride in playing for the Japanese team. Other players also acknowledged their patriotic feelings towards Japan. This differs from Maguire's (1996) findings, which indicated that Canadian hockey migrants do not take much interest in patriot games.

None of the players appeared to experience any mental conflict about the situation of playing for the Japanese team but having a Canadian or American national identity. However, Tanaka and Takahashi stated that they had mixed feelings when competing against the Canadian team. Given that both are Japanese-Canadians and had played for Canadian national teams, they indicated that they felt a bit lost in this situation. Nevertheless, they also stated that they enjoyed playing for Japan's national team against Canada in a friendly match. We can see from this that national team players do not necessarily play only for national pride.

Conclusion

The results indicate that three players regard learning about their Japanese heritage as the most important factor in their migration to Japan, while the other player stated that his main motivation for migration was to earn money to support his family. Furthermore, while they consider themselves to be dual citizens – that is, nationals of both Japan and Canada/USA – they have a stronger sense of belonging with respect to their place of birth in Canada or the USA.

The case of ice hockey migrants to Japan provides interesting insights into the issue of globalization with respect to both the sporting world and wider society. The JIHF followed the development strategy of European countries by using foreign-born players of Japanese heritage and opening the doors of the domestic league to foreign players. These decisions were affected by trends in the world of ice hockey, specifically the globalization of the sport. Increasing globalization means it is likely that there will be even more recruitment and migration of elite sports people and an increase in the number of athletes with multiple national identities. How they respond to the new circumstances in which they find themselves will vary from one sport to another, from one country to another and from one individual to another. The present study has revealed how one group of sport migrants have sought to come to terms with the questions raised by contested identity.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. Attempts were made to interview another three Japanese-Canadians, but this proved difficult because of their schedule.
2. I regarded players registered in the quota system and those who come from abroad and have a Japanese name as foreign-born players with Japanese descent.
3. In addition, there were six foreign-born players of Japanese descent whose previous teams could not be examined.
4. There were 11 foreign players whose previous teams could not be examined.
5. *Ice Hockey Magazine*, December 1994. This article does not indicate the name of the writer.
6. *Ice Hockey Magazine*, December 1994. This article does not indicate the name of the writer.

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