

Assessment of the monograph „*Czech Sport Migration. Push and Pull Variations Between Sport and Cultures* by William Crossan; Charles University, Karolinum Press, 2024.

The text of the monograph is, at least for sociologists of sport(s), indisputably attractive: mutual relations of sport and its cultural background, in context of sport mobility (and migration) is perhaps most interesting, most characteristic and very spectacular topic of contemporary (global) sport. Reader of this book is literally „absorbed“ of the text of this monograph, as early as, in its first sentence(s). Here, via author's specific motivation for migration in the field of sport, is general discussion on social and cultural life more persuasive and impressive. Since this undisputably cardinal (and seems to be typical American) moment to present time of publishing „*Czech Sport Migration*“ have been arching over tens of years of social, sportive and cultural adaptation. And, in the case of William Crossan above all, over systematic and responsible explorational approach to the complex field of sport mobility and sport migration.

Throughout this book, William Crossan examined these social processes over time. Using here figurational sociology with a historical overview of sport migration in each sport, followed by an introduction of multiple perspective through which reader could easily understand the increases in both quantity and variety of sporting migrants from selected period 2004 to 2022.

Author examined the social system of sport in the Czech Republic through three important criteria: exploring whether the nation in the given sport is primarily sending or receiving; determining level of the cultural position (primary, secondary, or developing) of discussed sport within the nation; and also investigated the placement of both the nation and the sport through general classification as core, semi-periphery, or periphery.

Sociological perspective enables to identify cultural reactions to globalized migration, patterns in sport migration, and developmental impacts on stakeholders. Such attitude is in Czech case focused on migration (mobility) in football with its increasingly stronger in the receiving processes thanks to import players from Africa and fewer from their traditional Slavic culture.

Crossan utilised theory of social capital and trust as an indispensable phenomenon facilitating phenomenon of sport migration. Intensity of both sending and receiving migration itself accumulate fundamental agents of social capital – trust, information, and support. It is reflected in both the sending and receiving of sporting migrants. High numbers of migrants moving between specific destinations is advantage in primary sports and disadvantages in secondary sports: Czech ice hockey has developed a high level of trust as a semi-peripheral destination for elite players who have not been able to obtain solid playing roles in the NHL; at the same time The Czech Republic is primarily a receiving nation in basketball. Basketball, as a secondary sport in the Czech culture, has less developed migration networks in comparison to the primary sports of football or ice hockey which subsequently influences youth sport participation.

In broader perspective of sociology of sport, William Crossan accents mutual relations of sport and culture; at the time of being cultural position of a sport is in growing measure affected and influenced by media, global success, and even sport migration. The likelihood of achieving success through migration and the optimal timing for migration to enhance visibility vary in Czech context between two primary sports; culturally, from the perspective of ice hockey and football as primary sports in the Czech nation; Czech ice hockey is much closer to the core of the sport than football. As a such is consequently more „amiable“ in the field of motivation for sport migration.

Author outlines most typical trajectories of sport migration into and out of Czech ice hockey, football, basketball, volleyball, and baseball. In the case of football Crossan in detail discussed relevant changes of politics and cultural similarities (presenting specific ways and personal motivation for Slovak ice hockey players). Anyway, migration served not only as way to accelerating sportive career, but also as a means of „only“ sustaining a playing career.

Author of reviewed monography in matter-of-fact attitude attempted various strategies to regulate the number of foreigners allowed at different times and in different sports, relating in global economics of sport position, as well as on nations and sport federations. Such regulations, in additions attempted various strategies to regulate the number of foreigners allowed at different times and in different sports, or subsequently enable national players to command higher salaries than they might receive in other markets.

Migration decisions are affected, socially and culturally, with accordance of given sport, athlete's age, level of personal aspiration, family background, level of personal and cultural adaptability, chance to extend skill set and visibility. Crossan reminds, that in ice hockey, young players witness during their development fees rising, coupled with the awareness that professional clubs can acquire equally skilled foreigners at a lower cost.

William Crossan contributes in impressive impact to describe and understand sport migration processes in five different sports within one nation. On the way of this research objective, applying „multiple lenses“, involving in dominant migration flows, considering primary the cultural position of the sport; research interes thus also focused on individual motivations (for author as a sporting migrant in specific way of „dual motivations“). In general: We agree with deeply and knowledgeable conclusion of this monograph, that „push and pull dynamics“ and as a such, in sport migration are important at both the sporting and national levels; but important role also play factors of significant and complex considerations for each player to navigate on a personal level.

Special valuation of discussing monograph deserves for very colourful and unquestionable laborious knowledgeable and informative research insight into specific cultural aspects of sport migration in football, ice hockey, basketball, volleyball and baseball in proper context of social as well individual motives, career tratories and specific aspects of lives of sport migrants.

References are, not only in the context of rather specific field of sport science, impressive, reflecting systematic, long time responsible approach of author's to the problem(s) of sport migration. List of tables, as well List of Figures olny enhance(s) this highly positive impression for readers. And above all, it is inevitable to accent very strong valuable contribution the monograph for future reseacher(s) of social and cultural aspects of (global) sport.

William Crossan proved and sufficiently presented in his monograph „Czech Sport Migration. Push and Pull Variations Between Sport and Cultures“ justification for conferment award of the academic degree associate professor (docent).

V Brně, dne 10. 1. 2025

Prof. PhDr. Aleš Sekot, CSc.