GREEK CYCLISTS ON THE MOVE: NARRATIG THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

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Διδακτορική Διατριβή που υποβάλλεται
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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Ελένη Διακάκη: Έλληνες ποδηλάτες εν κινήσει: Αφηγήσεις της μεταναστευτικής εμπειρίας

(Υπό την επίβλεψη του Καθηγητή κ. Μάριου Γούδα, Καθηγητή)

Μεταβάσεις που έχουν ιδιοσυγκρασιακό χαρακτήρα χρειάζονται την προσοχή μας, καθώς μπορεί να αποτελέσουν στρεσογόνες και τραυματικές εμπειρίες (Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004). Η αθλητική μετανάστευση είναι μια απ'αυτές καθώς έχει επιπτώσεις στην ταυτότητα και την κουλτούρα του ατόμου (Maguire & Stead, 1996). Ο σκοπός αυτής της έρευνας ήταν διπλός: α) να διερευνήσει την επίδραση της μεταναστευτικής εμπειρίας στην αναδόμηση της ταυτότητας των αθλητών και β) να διερευνήσει τα κίνητρα των αθλητών για την έναρξη, την παράταση ή τον τερματισμό της μεταναστευτικής εμπειρίας υπό το πρίσμα των διαδικασιών προσαρμογής. Οι πρώτοι πέντε Έλληνες αθλητές ποδηλασίας (τέσσερις άντρες και μια γυναίκα) που μετανάστευσαν για να επιδιώξουν μια επαγγελματική αθλητική καριέρα σε ημι-επαγγελματικές ομάδες της Ευρώπης συμμετείχαν στην έρευνα. Χρησιμοποιήθηκε η ποιοτική μεθοδολογία ώπου διεξήχθησαν εις βάθος αναδρομικές συνεντεύξεις. Διαλογική αφηγηματική ανάλυση και θεματική αφηγηματική ανάλυση πραγματοποιήθηκαν για κάθε ερευνητικό ερώτημα αντίστοιχα. Η θεωρητική προσέγγιση των εναλλακτικών αφηγήσεων ταυτότητας (Douglas & Carless, 2006) και το μοντέλο της Φίσκε (2004) για τα μονοπάτια προσαρμογής (βασικά κοινωνικά κίνητρα) καθοδήγησαν τις αναλύσεις. Από τα αποτελέσματα αναδείχτηκε ότι η μεταναστευτική εμπειρία είχε σημαντική επίδραση στις ταυτότητες των αθλητών. Αυτό ήταν αποτέλεσμα της φυσικής και ψυχικής μετακίνησης και των αλλαγών στις δεδομένες τους συνήθειες. Οι ταυτότητες βρίσκονται σε συνεχή διαμόρφωση και ποτέ δεν είναι σταθερές και πεπερασμένες. Η μετάβαση της μετανάστευσης ενέτεινε αυτές τις διαδικασίες και προκάλεσε σημαντικές διαμορφώσεις, διαπραγματεύσεις και αναδομήσεις. Οι ποδηλάτες μέσα από τις αφηγήσεις τους αναθεώρησαν τις προτεραιότητές τους και αναδόμησαν τις ταυτότητές τους προκειμένου να διατηρήσουν ή να αποκτήσουν την αίσθηση της ακεραιότητας και της συνοχής ανάμεσα στη βιωμένη εμπειρία και στην αφήγηση της.

Όσον αφορά στα κίνητρα των αθλητών αυτών, τα μονοπάτια προσαρμογής συνέβαλαν στην απόφαση να μεταναστεύσουν, να παρατείνουν ή να αποχωρήσουν από τις χώρες υποδοχής. Από τις αναλύσεις προέκυψαν διαδικασίες απόσχισης από την χώρα αποστολής, με πλήρωση, παράλειψη ή ισορροπία των βασικών κοινωνικών κινήτρων, τονίζοντας έτσι τον ρόλο των μονοπατιών προσαρμογής στην πορεία της αθλητικής καριέρας των αθλητών ποδηλασίας. Η έρευνα αυτή επεκτείνει την υπάρχουσα βιβλιογραφία στην αθλητική μετανάστευση και προσφέρει καινοτόμες οπτικές ταυτόχρονα προς την αφηγηματική προσέγγιση της μεταναστευτικής εμπειρίας, αλλά επίσης και προς την αξιοποίηση των δύο θεωρητικών μοντέλων προκειμένου να εξεταστούν διαφορετικές πτυχές (ταυτότητες και κίνητρα) που χαρακτηρίζουν το φαινόμενο της αθλητικής εργατικής μετανάστευσης.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: αθλητική μετανάστευση, κίνητρα, προσαρμογή, ταυτότητα

ABSTRACT

Eleni Diakaki

Greek cyclists on the move: Narrating the migration experience

(Under the supervision of Marios Goudas, Professor)

Transitions that are idiosyncratic in nature warrant our attention, as they may provoke stress and trauma (Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004), and sport migration is one of them as it impacts a person's identity and culture (Maguire & Stead, 1996). The purpose of this study was twofold a) to explore the impact of migration experience on the reconstruction of athlete identities and b) to address these athletes' motives to initiate, prolong or terminate the migration experience under the prism of adaptation processes. The first five Greek elite cyclists (four males, one female) that migrated to pursue a professional athletic career in semi-professional European teams participated in this inquiry. Qualitative approach was employed and in-depth retrospective interviews were conducted. Dialogical narrative analysis and thematic narrative analysis performed for each research question respectively. The theoretical conception of alternative identity narratives (Douglas & Carless, 2006) and Fiske's (2004) model of adaptation pathways (core social motives) guided the analyses. The findings revealed that the migration experience did have a significant impact on these athletes' identities. This was a result of their physical and mental relocation and the change on the taken for granted habitus. Since identities are in constant formation and never fixed or finite, the migration transition intensified these processes and caused major formations, negotiations and reconstructions. Cyclists through their narrations revisited their priorities and reconstructed their identities in order to maintain or attain integrity and a sense of coherence between the lived and the told. In terms of cyclists' motives, adaptation pathways contributed in their decision to migrate, prolong their stay or depart from the host countries. From the analysis processes of disintegration from the donor country, fulfillment, omission and balance of the core social motives were revealed, highlighting the role of the adaptation pathways in these cyclists' athletic career trajectories. This inquiry expands the existing scholarship on sport migration and offer novel insights both in terms of narrativelly approaching the migration experience, as well as the utilization of the two theoretical conceptions to examine

different aspects (i.e., identities, motives) that characterize the sport labour migration phenomenon.

Key-words: sport migration, motives, adaptation, identity

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

TABLE OF FIGURES

Introduction

Greek Cyclists on the Move: Narrating the Migration Experience

The sport labour migration phenomenon has been studied for almost two decades by sport science scholars, examining an array of sports across the globe. Nevertheless, the area of South-eastern Europe called the Balkans, and Greece in particular together with cycling as a sport have been left out. The purpose of this inquiry was to take a step towards filling this gap and -following Schinke, Hanrahan and Catina's (2009) suggestion for expanding research to include more on cultural diversity- to enrich our understanding of experiences that impacted the psyche, the identities and motives of migrating Greek elite cyclists. Furthermore, pursuant with an exhortation by Molnar and Maguire (2008), the researcher aimed to expand the scholarship in the field of sport migration "to fully comprehend migration processes and migratory experiences within Europe" (p. 74), by conducting an in-depth study that focused on immigrant athletes' experiences.

Research Questions

The first research question pertained to **"**How Greek elite cyclists' migration experience impacted their identities?" More specifically, the aim was to explore the narrative modes the participating cyclists employed to reconstruct and negotiate their identities. In order to uncover the narrative mechanisms through which these reconstructions were made vivid and tangible, the impact of the experience on the *being* and *doing* of the athletes was explored. To elucidate on the meaning of *being* and *doing*, these terms are further explained:

a) *Being*: refers to the sense of self and the multiple roles and identities (including negotiations, formations and reconstructions) (Bamberg, 2010a, 2010b).
b) *Doing*: refers to the experience and the very act of storytelling (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Riessman, 2008). The narrative mechanisms that the cyclists dialogically performed to negotiate the formations and reconstructions of their identities and reveal the paths that practically lead these cyclists to leave their

continental teams and return home or extend their stay.

Figure 1.1 Impact of the migration experience on identities (i.e., being and doing)

The second research question pertained to: a) cyclists' motives to migrate, and b) adaptation processes that contributed in these cyclists' motives and decisions to extend their stay in or depart from the host country. Fiske's (2004) model of adaptation pathways which comprised the core social motives of belonging, understanding, control, trust, and self-enhancement was employed, in order to address in depth the two sub-questions through a two-way approach.

The Sport of Cycling: Characteristics and Specificities

To better understand the contextual details in which the migration experience of elite Greek cyclists unfolded, it is necessary to take a look at the nature of the sport and some of its specificities. Cycling is an Olympic sport with various disciplines (e.g., road cycling, mountain bike, track cycling, bmx), being both a team and individual sport. Each discipline has its specificities in training and racing and varies in terms of the starting of a race (mass or individual start), duration, terrain, tactics (Mujika & Padilla, 2002). Cyclists at the professional level throughout a year may ride up to 40.000 kilometres, while training

under extreme conditions and altitude shifts; hence injuries and overtraining are issues that these athletes often have to face (Jeukendrup, 2002).

The weekly training of a professional cyclist means 25 to 30 hours of riding, covering approximately 700 to 1.200 kilometres (Taylor & Kress, 2006). These training loads and hours are added to the hours and kilometres travelled by the cyclists for training camps and races around the world (Taylor & Kress, 2006), if they aspire to claim a place in world class races. Taylor and Kress (2006, p. 326) argue that "races themselves are complex and sometimes chaotic events" extending the challenges a cyclist has to overcome. Elite and world class level athletes may count from 50 up to 110 days of racing during a year (Mujika & Padilla, 2002) with the competitive season lasting about nine months. The most demanding races are the grant Tours (e.g., Giro d'Italia, Vuelta a España), with Tour de France being the most popular cycling event. It lasts approximately three weeks and covers up to 3.360 racing kilometres with altitude shifts and elevation gains often exceeding 3.500m. Differences in the temperature are also vast varying from approximately 30 degrees Celsius to 10 or 5 degrees when climbing the Alpes (Bridge & Febbraio, 2002).

In addition to the aforementioned challenges, according to anecdotal reports the use of intercom during stage and important road races is a stressor. Intercom serves for delivering guidance from the coach or changing tactics during the course of a race and it heavily weights in the final outcome. Thus, any malfunction of the equipment or lack in understanding due to a variety of reasons (e.g., misunderstandings due to miscomprehension of the language by foreign athletes) may cost a team's success.

Overall, cyclists need to be prepared to cope not only with the extreme conditions, terrains and the physiological demands but also with the high risk nature of the sport, as well as the psychological demands to cope with pressure and unexpected circumstances (Taylor & Kress, 2006). Drafting skills, breakaways, crashes, tactics, lack in communication and equipment failures are some of the challenges that define who will cross the finish line and attain great achievements. In terms of the cycling subculture and tacit rules of attitude in a team or during a race there are no studies hitherto addressing such issues; so far, only anecdotal reports from cyclists make up the peculiarities and behavioural code of this sport.

Identifying the Gap within the Literature

Cycling as a sport has attracted the interest of sport science scholarship with a vast amount of studies concerning the physiological and anthropometric characteristics of elite cyclists (Lee, Martin, Anson, Grundy, & Hahn, 2002; Peinado et al., 2011) and nutrition (Bardis, Kavouras, Kosti, Markousi, & Sidossis, 2013; Jeukendrup, 2011); while comprehensive books on cycling cover issues about performance enhancement (Burke, 2003; Jeukendrup, 2002) including training, performance assessment techniques and tools, biomechanics and nutritional demands.

In the field of sport psychology Taylor and Kress (2006) addressed the psychological factors that impact performance in cycling and presented mental training techniques for cyclists. Earlier on Kabush and Orlick (2001) and Ungerleider (2005) also offered some specific psychological techniques for cyclists. To this day, the foci of sport psychology researchers has covered the psychological characteristics of elite and non-elite cyclists (Diakaki, 2005), the motives of competitive and non-competitive cyclists (LaChausse, 2006), and the psychological components of elite cyclists (Baghurst, 2012).

Books pertaining to the background of grant tours and doping scandals (Hamilton & Coyle, 2012; Møller, 2011; Voet, 2001), along with biographies of great cyclists (Armstrong & Jenkins, 2000; Cavendish & Friebe, 2013; Cooke, 2014; Fotheringham, 2013; Pendleton, 2012) encourage for a holistic understanding of the sport and its subculture. Armstrong's (Armstrong & Jenkins, 2000) autobiography actually attracted the interest of scholars providing alternative interpretations and reflections (Butryn & Masucci, 2003; Sparkes, 2004, 2009).

Sparkes (2004) provided insights relating to the way bodies, selves and narratives are articulated in Armstrong's (Armstrong & Jenkins, 2000) autobiography. He observed that the changes provoked in the sense of the body and selves (e.g., disciplined and dominating through the elite sport qualities) are accompanied by a tendency towards different narrative plotlines (i.e., cyborg, restitution, quest narratives). The narrative repository that a culture provides, the expectations, social and ethical conventions, constrain and define not only what is tellable (expressed) and in what ways (how), but also the experiences, understandings and interpretations of ourselves (Sparkes, 2004, 2009). It was these reflections that paved the way to approach and understand narratives from the elite sport culture through alternative perspectives that as such embrace heterogeneity and diversity.

Overall, the enquiries by Butrynand and Masucci (2003) and Sparkes (2004, 2009) dared to question the legitimacy and celebration of dominant narratives that circulate in Western cultures. They contributed in that they highlighted the value of accessing counter narratives that provide alternative plotlines and the space for different voices and identities to subsist.

In the field of sport psychology there is a dearth of studies on cyclists that appears to constrain the researchers from drawing their conclusions who still incorporate research from other sports (i.e., running, triathlon) (Taylor & Kress, 2006). In the same pattern, research on career and life transitions of athletes has addressed various sports in different countries (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Stambulova, Stephan, & Jäphag, 2007; Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004) with migration as a transition that has been rather overlooked and the sport of cycling also absent.

In the sport migration and acculturation literature, considering both scientific perspectives of sociology and psychology, a variety of sports has been studied like soccer, ice-hockey, basketball, hockey, cricket (Chroni, 1995; Maguire, 1996; Maguire & Stead, 1998; Meisterjahn, 2011; Schinke et al., 2010; Stead & Maguire, 2000) but not cycling. As far as adaptation is concerned, only Tenenbaum, Jones, Kitsantas, Sacks, & Berwick (2003), examined adaptation failure of cyclists under a variety of stressors where causes, symptoms, responses and perceptions were found to be individualized for each athlete. The utility of the stress response model introduced in their study was supported, evidencing that when both psychological and physiological factors interacting with other stressors unrelated to sport contribute to a failed adaptation.

Even though migrating athletes' identities were studied from a sociological perspective (Maguire & Stead, 1996; Molnar & Maguire, 2008) in relation to the sport migration phenomenon, sport psychology research has mainly focused on acculturation issues leaving immigrant athlete experience and identity issues untouched. With regard to the theoretical models chosen for this inquiry, to address the first research question about the impact of the migration experience on athlete identities (both on their being and doing), no studies to this day have employed the alternative identity narrative conceptualization, which was introduced in the sport psychology research by Douglas and Carless (2006), in order to explore changes in migrating athletes' identities. This framework was considered to be most appropriate post hoc, after the interviews and transcriptions were conducted. The alternative stories that dialogically emerged through the interviews brought to light a gap between the dominant script that permeated elite sport and the actual experience of the

immigrant athletes in this study. Given the fact that migration impacts athletes' identities (Maguire & Stead, 1996), this identity conceptualization (Douglas & Carless, 2006) aided in narrativelly exploring the immigrant athletes' experiences and the impact on their identities. It (this conceptualization) also instigated the unfolding and revealing of alternative perspectives for viewing elite immigrant athlete identities. Drawing on McLeod (1997), Douglas and Carless (2011) arue that when there is no space for alternative identity narratives to exist, a demarcation of people that don't abide to a dominant narrative plot is encouraged while their mental health and well-being is in danger. They further suggest that "in silencing alternative narratives, we restrict and limit the identity and life options that are open to people in sport" (p. 11). The reasoning of employing Douglas and Carless's (2006) conceptualization was based on these arguments.

To address the second research question and explore the athletes' motives to migrate, stay or depart from the host country, along with the adaptation process that may or may not emerge and its role to athletes' motives, Fiske's (2004) theoretical framework was employed. Previous sport psychology studies have utilized this framework (Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010; Schinke, Gauthier, Dubuc, & Crowder, 2007; Schinke, Yukelson, Bartolacci, Battochio, & Johnstone, 2011) to examine the challenges and stressors, the adaptation strategies athletes have used when in relocation, promotion or retention (Schinke et al., 2007), and the role of social support networks (e.g.., coaches, teammates) in immigrant athletes' adaptation, suggesting adaptation interventions. During the interviews it came up that not only the reasons that 'pushed' the athletes to wish to stay or depart, were rooted in adaptation issues, but also their motives to migrate. As in the first research question, the decision to apply Fiske's framework was taken post hoc (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). The innovative two-way approach employed in this study of examining migrating athletes' motives to depart from and return to their home country provided novel perspectives on athletes' motives and revealed the extended applicability of Fiske's (2004) model in addressing issues relating to sport migration apart from adaptation. Here, adaptation processes were used as a means to understand motives to return or extend the stay in the host country, and to a lesser extent to understand the adaptation processes per se. The data co-produced from the interviews revealed the significant role of the fulfilment, omission or balance of values that matched the core social motives from Fiske's (2004) framework.

In the recent years, researchers (Carless & Douglas, 2013b; Douglas & Carless, 2011; Gilbourne & Priestley, 2011; Smith & Sparkes, 2010) have often urged for a

utilization of research approaches that will enrich the understanding of athlete experience. In this inquiry, due to the limited number of elite cyclists from Greece migrating to pursue a professional career abroad and in order to reveal the richness of the data and explore in depth the specificities and uniqueness of each case the qualitative approach was deemed as more appropriate and effective. Qualitative methodology and narrative approach in specific led the interview procedures and analyses.

Rationalization and Significance

The first research question dealt with the impact of migration experience on the narrative reconstructions and negotiations of cyclists' identities. The transition of migrating to another country with the purpose to pursue a professional athletic career and its impact on the formation and reconstruction of the sense of self -apart from the local, national and cultural identities, issues examined by Falcous and Maguire (2005) and Maguire and Stead (1996) - has not been researched until today.

The answers to this question can provide us with alternative narrative maps that will enrich the available socially constructed repertoires of sport narratives (Smith & Sparkes, 2008a, 2008b), which usually are embellished to fit the Western norms by exalting the dominant hero narrative. The emerging narratives may act as 'listening devices' and 'raise awareness' (Carless & Douglas, 2013a; Douglas, 2009) in that alternative beings and doings exist, and as such promote the acceptance of healthy identities and well-beings for athletes.

In a recent study Schinke, McGannon, Battochio and Wells (2013) prompted for more in-depth and case studies that will holistically depict the acculturation processes. To enrich the acculturation literature and provide novel insights, the second research question addresses Greek cyclists' motives to depart from their home country, to extend their stay or to return home along with the acculturation processes accrued. To do this, Fiske's (2004) five adaptation pathways (belong, trust, self-enhance, understand, control) were employed, in a two way process: to explore if these pathways were fulfilled or stopped functioning in the donor country, weighting in the decision to migrate; and to explore if adaptation took place in the host country (i.e., pathways fulfilled, omitted or balanced), weighting in the decision to extend their stay or to depart. Schinke et al., (2013) argued for the importance of understanding the fluidities of acculturation processes and the uniqueness of each athlete's experiences and identity aspects (i.e., religion, gender).

Sport psychology practitioners need to engage in culturally sensitive practices and a reciprocal dialogue with the athletes to promote understanding and expand alternative interpretations and meanings. The role of professionals working with immigrant athletes is not limited to elaborating on the challenges these athletes face in order to act as a conduit between them and the new team and aid integration in the new contexts. The time has come for the sport psychology professionals to be co-participants "in the collaborative process of learning, reflection, critical awareness, and intervention" (Ryba, 2009, p. 44).

Purpose

The two research questions are interrelated in that both attempt to illuminate the psyche of the participating athletes in their *Odyssey* (i.e., migration experience), in their quest: for alignment of their stories told and experiences lived, to preserve multidimensional identities, and to fulfil belonging, understanding, self-enhancement, trusting, controlling (Fiske, 2004). This inquiry sought to explore how and if all these facets of the migration experience impacted the cyclists' beings and counted in their decision to depart, wish to stay, and finally to return.

Operational Definitions and Theoretical Background

In this section the researcher defines the key terms that will be operating throughout this study, which are considered fundamental in understanding the migrant athletes' experiences. To unravel the on-going negotiations and reconstructions of identities, the adjustments and formation of motives to depart, stay, and return, but most of all to fathom the psyche of these cyclists, theoretical constructs were utilized that were considered relevant and aided towards the depth of the inquiry. The selection of the theoretical devices occurred *ex post facto*. This was a decision based on my subjective judgment, experiences as a person and an athlete (culturally and politically situated) and research interests, which are deeply rooted in my inner quest to reveal a part of people's idiosyncratic personalities (to get to know us better) (Denzin, 2003; Sparkes, 1996).

Identity.

Given the range and extent of the research on identity, it is not surprising that there is less consonance on the conceptual and theoretical meaning of the term, as well as in its distinct usage (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The definitions proposed and adopted by various

scholars accentuate in the elements of interaction (both independence and interdependence), multiplicity and ceaseless re-formations.

According to Mead's (1934) early description, identity is shaped through an on-going process of social interaction, institutional and interpersonal, which shapes behaviour in a cyclical patent. Along the same lines, Oyserman, Elmore, and Smith (2012) posited that one's self is constituted by identities that are dynamically constructed through the interplay with the environments and the cultures in which people function (i.e., with one's own self, others and the world), while their content entails the meanings one gives to the multiple roles he/she may have. Using their words, identity refers to "the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is" (p. 69).

As I scrutinized scholarship relating to self and identities, the relational character of identity surfaced, which is constructed through different aspects of relationships, intersected or assorted between the self and the defined other (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Identity is partially constructed, consciously or unconsciously, stemming from interactions that may lead to negotiations, reformations and contestations, and being interdependent on others' reflections and projections or on the context people live in and function.

In the present study, identity was defined as the meanings ascribed in the numerous roles people have inside the macro and micro contexts they function (Oyserman et al., 2012); thus the parts of selves assigned in these meanings constitute one's identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Thus, since individuals possess various roles depending in the networks they function (i.e., family, sport team, university, peers), they possess various identities that are defined by their actions and discourses (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and are in constant flux. In a reciprocal manner, the salience of individuals' identities reveals their actions and correspondingly these actions reveal the salience and hierarchy of their respective identity; role evaluation and reinforcement that derive from their social environments plays a vital role (Adler & Adler, 1987).

Referring to migrant identity, Maguire and Stead (1996) argued that it is everyday life, discourse and action that impact identity re-constructions:

> The dominant view of identity tends to 'invent' a specific origin and tradition, recount 'common' experiences and emphasise a view of who 'belongs' and who does not 'belong'. These are crucial issues in migration and identity politics. Questions such as "who am I"?, "who is like me"?, and, "where do I belong"?, are central to notions of self and the politics of migrant identity. (p. 16)

Athletic identity.

A number of studies were conducted on athletic identity, recognizing the magnitude of identity as a parameter that influences athlete discourses and actions (see, Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993; Eriksson, 2010; Muscat, 2010). The common ground of definitions on this aspect of identity, as conceptualized by eminent scholars (Brewer et al.,1993; Cieslak, 2004; Horton & Mack, 2000), lies in that athletic identity refers to the degree of identification with the athlete role and its significance, exclusivity and value to a person's self-worth. The role of the interaction between the environment and people on the maintenance of this identification by the individual is an apropos aspect added to the definition by Cieslak (2004).

Webb, Nasco, Riley and Headrick (1998) suggested a two dimensional model of athletic identity comprised by one's private/self athletic identity which refers to own perception of who the individual is; and the public/social athletic identity, which refers to other people's perceptions of the individual (reputation and peoples' reflections and projections). Duda (1999) (as cited in Cieslak, 2004) argued that our self-concept is embracing our identities, and our self-description and self-evaluation delineate our self-esteem and self-worth. The maintenance or alteration of our identities (e.g., as a daughter, a friend, a believer, etc) depends on the positive feelings deriving from our self-esteem and perceived social support (Cieslak, 2004). However, when an individual identifies with the athletic role from early childhood, this aspect of identity constitutes a significant feature of her/his life (Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998).

A strong identification with the athlete role may prove to have both positive and negative consequences to the individual (Brewer et al., 1993). Positive effects considered to be increased athletic performance and advancement in athletic skills (Danish, 1983), which in turn will lead to a heightened self-esteem and self-confidence. Horton and Mack (2000) supported the beneficial consequences of a strong identification with the athlete role, as runners with high private/self athletic identity in their study, experienced positive psychological and physical outcomes from training (e.g., body image, increased self-confidence, decreased anxiety) and enhanced enjoyment from and commitment on running. Among the negative impacts of over-identification with the athletic identity are transitions out of sport [either normative (e.g., retirement) or non-normative ones (e.g., injuries, de-selection)] that, together with the lack in career decision making skills (Adler & Adler, 1987; Murphy, Petitpas & Brewer, 1996), agitate the psychological state of the

athlete (Grove, Lavallee & Gordon, 1997; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Webb et al., 1998; Werthner & Orlick, 1986) and incite impediments in career development.

Identity foreclosure.

The exclusivity of an athletic identity and the strong identification with the athlete role may lead to foreclosure and constriction in undertaking roles in other spheres of social life. This identity foreclosure was theorized by Marcia (1966) as the situation where the individual compromises with the demands and social roles being ascribed to her/him; characterized by obedience, respect to authority, strong leadership and a self-esteem susceptible to negative information. Murphy, Petitpas, and Brewer (1996) utilized this definition to their study with intercollegiate student-athletes, while Miller and Kerr (2003) took this theorization further to add the insightful remark that "the individual with a foreclosed identity fails to evaluate internal needs and values and instead internalizes a socially acceptable role identity" (p. 189).

Good, Brewer, Petitpas, Van Raalte, and Mahar (1993) in their study with college students found that as the level of sport involvement increased (from non athletes to intercollegiate athletes) so did the susceptibility of identity foreclosure. They commented that this may be due to the demands placed on the athlete and the restrictive context of competitive sport.

Transitions.

Schlossberg (1981) defined transition as an event or non-event (i.e., unanticipated events or anticipated events that do not happen) that result in altering the views of an individual, the circumstances, and the world, thus provoking changes in one's behaviours and social relationships. Adding to this view, Stambulova (2003) discussed transitions as processes that require a careful balance between coping resources and barriers in order to avoid a crisis and to attain a successful transition. In the same ground with Schlossberg (1981), Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) categorized transitions in normative (planned events) and non-normative events (unplanned significant events) or non-events.

Normative transitions, according to Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) relate to (a) sport career transitions, (b) psychological development transitions, (c) social transitions, and (d) educational/vocational development transitions. On the other hand, non-normative transitions relate to unpredictable events such as injury and overtraining. According to this

categorization, sport labour migration falls under the normative category, and is considered as a continuous process instead of an event (Stambulova, 2003).

To this day, the most researched sport career transitions are retirement and sport injuries. As sport scientists are greatly concerned with performance advancement, these normative and non-normative transitions, respectively, have been explored extensively aiming to prevent and remedy the aftermath of the lived experience, which can have a negative impact both on the individual and his/her performance (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Loberg, 2009; Stambulova et al., 2007). With regard to the impact the transitional experience of sport retirement has for the athlete, athletic identity has been thoroughly explored as a parameter (e.g., Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Judge et al., 2010; Stephan & Brewer, 2007). Athletic identity fluctuations appear to be a significant issue and have also been studied in career ending injuries (e.g., Loberg, 2009; Muscat, 2010).

Athletic identity has been explored in relation to these transitions, espousing that the salience of this identity is influenced by the social environment and in turn influences the smoothness of one's transition experiences of injury and retirement. A factsheet providing guidelines by the International Olympic Committee (IOC, n.d) highlights the impact of athletic identity on the quality of athlete retirement. By concisely explaining the definitions of athletic identity and identity foreclosure, the IOC points out that when transitioning out of sport identity changes occur, sometimes leading to identity crises –especially in cases of identity foreclosure-, and provide guidelines to manage positively these identity fluctuations. A noteworthy body of research (see for example Muscat, 2010; Stoltenburg, Kamphoff, & Bremer, 2011; Wylleman et al., 2004) has examined the major transitions of career termination and career ending injuries, the crucial role athletic identity plays in them and has suggested interventions and career planning programs aiming to smoothen the transition process –out of sport-, diminish the negative consequences and ensure quality of life.

However, the transition process of migration and the impact of this experience on athletes' identity reconstructions have yet to be explored. To my knowledge only Richardson, Littlewood, Nesti, and Benstead (2012) and Agergaard and Ryba (2014) approached migration as a transition process. Richardson et al. (2012) urge us to acknowledge that "each transition may be personal, and subsequently, distinct to each individual" (p. 1607). Adding to this view, Agergaard and Ryba (2014) argued for an

approach where the reciprocal relationship between the psyche of transnational athletes and their culturally constituted careers would have a prominent position.

Narrative identity (the construction of).

Narrative inquiry implements the concepts of self and identity as multidimensional in nature, being constructed through narratives, located in space, time and contexts (Smith & Sparkes, 2008b). The significance of narrative construction of identity--meaning the narrative identity--lies upon the argument that:

> ...narrativity and relationality are conditions of social being, social consciousness, social action, institutions, even society itself; the self and the purposes of self are constructed and reconstructed in the context of internal and external relations of time and place and power that are in constant flux. (Somers, 1994, p. 621)

Paraphrasing Duranti (2004), storytelling (or narrativity) may be an intentional or habitual act that reveals agency, thus narrative identities make up social acts accomplished by agentic individuals. The temporality of relationships and narrations over time and space is characteristic of the narrative identity approach conceptualized by Somers (1994). By incorporating the relational setting in the narrative identity approach (Somers, 1994) - meaning the relationships between institutions, narratives, people and social practice- I locate the scene, the space, and time where identity construction procedures are taking place.

Identity narratives in sport.

Recently, researchers inquired about different aspects of the elite-athlete identity, beyond the athletic aspect of it. Upon uncovering illness narratives in sport (Smith & Sparkes, 2002, 2008a; Sparkes, 1996, 2004; Sparkes, Pérez-Samaniego, & Smith, 2011), female golfers' narratives on career termination (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009a), and elite athletes' identity development narratives within the sport culture (Carless & Douglas, 2013a, 2013b; Douglas, 2009), researchers claimed that different kinds of identities and narrations can co-exist, clash or cooperate and counter narratives are there for those willing to hear them. Considering different aspects of identity is essential for making sense and drawing meaning of one's self. Furthermore, narrating these identities is vital when a person is experiencing a major transitional process where taken for granted notions are removed.

The point of departure for the present quest was Douglas and Carless (2006) conception of alternative narratives in elite sport culture, in which they located three –not exclusive and unfixed- narrative types namely performance, discovery and relational narrative. The performance narrative is a master or 'hero' narrative, commonly articulated by elite athletes (Sparkes, 2004), and conveys the tenor that despite the hardships, all obstacles are surmounted and the athlete rises victorious. The relational and discovery narrations highlight "the existence of different routes to success in professional sport and provide insights into athletes' diverse biographies, motives, beliefs, and expectations" (Douglas & Carless, 2011, p.3).

The theoretical framework of identity narratives.

Narrative inquiry emphasizes the role of interactions in shaping peoples' constructions and reconstructions of identity as they are culturally and socially situated (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, 2009b). According to the dialogical nature of narratives, individuals resist, negotiate or align to the available narrative maps and the prevailing social norms (Smith & Sparkes, 2008b, 2010). For the individuals, it is within their social and cultural space that they actively and dialogically bestow or dismount meaning to and from their surroundings (Bamberg, 2012).

The cultures in the micro and macro environments people live in not only define one's *who I am,* but also place standards regarding *who I should be*. They subcutaneously define what kind of narrative is tellable and what kind should be silenced. In an attempt to dispute this tradition, Douglas and Carless (2006), argued that depending on the priorities placed by the athlete and the ascendant identity that accrued, different types of identity narratives exist.

In the performance narrative, the prevalence of athletic identity is apparent. These narratives considered to be monological in that they focus on sport-related issues, overlooking other aspects of life. This kind of narration "provides a script in which the athlete wants so much to win that he accepts discipline, sacrifice, and pain in the pursuit of glory" (Douglas & Carless, 2011, p. 10); while at the same time in failure situations feelings such as shame, embarrassment and loss of competitiveness are considered to be normal. Discovery narratives on the contrary, prioritized the exploration of the world, new places, people, and different experiences and the sport has the role of conveyer and the 'ticket' to such experiences. Even though sport success in this kind of narrations does have a place, it is not the main priority. This type of narration is characterised as dialogical in

that it reinforces the construction and preservation of multiple roles, selves and identities. On this account, the relational narratives prioritized social relationships, retained the dialogical characteristic, with the narrator valuing relatedness and sharing both success and failure with significant others. Whatever the outcome it would be meaningless without the sharing (Douglas & Carless, 2006; Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2011).

Fiske's (2004) theoretical model.

The theoretical background for the second research question lies in Fiske's (2004) five core social motives. According to this theorisation the main motive, which is the *sense of belonging* (i.e., being accepted), recognizes that people strive for social belonging and for being part of a social network. This implies that they want to be accepted and evade rejection. The rest of the core social motives stem from this drive and seem to be a prerequisite of belonging. In particular, individuals in order to belong it is important to attain shared *understanding* with their group, a *sense of control* (i.e., to know the outcomes produced by their actions) and *trust* in group members (i.e., to feel secure in the group), and lastly, *self-enhancement* (i.e., trust in one's self that encourages self improvement and coherence) that reinforces agency.

Belonging may be considered as the development of stable relationships and shared cultural understanding, shared values and goals. It may be wide or secure, depending in the cultural context (individualistic or collectivistic) as in individualistic societies people tend to have more relationships, whereas in collectivistic societies they tend to have lesser but more intimate and sensitive relationships (A. P. Fiske & Fiske, 2007).

Understanding refers to the common language or communication mode that people use to comprehend not only each other but also the contexts they live in (Fiske, 2004). As A. P. Fiske and Fiske (2007) suggest "it informs their assessment of their own rejection and acceptance" (p. 285). It may refer to understanding the person or the relationships and networks, and differs across cultures, along with the strategies employed by individuals to achieve understanding. The facets of understanding that foster belonging, the authors believe, are pancultural (i.e, corresponds to all cultures). In sport settings understanding enables the relocated athlete to make sense of a stressor and find effective coping strategies.

Feelings of control generate feelings of efficacy and promote personal well-being and a healthy social life. Thus, it is important for people to have feelings of control to the

outcomes of their actions. A reinforcing and supportive team climate encourages feelings of control.

Self-enhancement seems to escort self-improvement, self-maintenance and self-protection. The self-improvement facet aids in easing stress. Depending on culture enhancement may relate to interpersonal relationships (i.e., enhance the self as a member of a group) or the self (i.e., enhancing the self compared to others or the view other people have about them).

Trusting pertains to the feelings of assurance, for example a team member will assist a newcomer to overcome the challenges of the new environment and conditions. It may be characterized by its wide application or its selectivity. Within individualistic societies people seem to show trust in a wider manner, prioritize individual oriented motives, autonomy and view relationships in the light of individual choice and control. Collectivistic societies, on the other hand, tend to show trust in a more selective and narrow manner, prioritizing social harmony, interdependence and poses relation oriented motives.

A. P. Fiske and Fiske (2007) proposed that cultures provide ways of performing and interpreting the abovementioned motives. However, irrespective of the cultures the core social motives are aligned to each person's idiosyncratic personality and impact his/her psychosocial health. The researchers argued that since humans are "relational animals", the need of human being for relationality and intimacy is fulfilled through social relationships. Culture in which the social relationships are experienced shapes and co-constructs the way, intensity and direction of these needs, thus people enact their (common core social) values in a unique but culturally induced way. Differences and similarities among cultures exist with regard to the core social motives enactment, expression and fulfilments preserving a common ground on the value of belonging, being accepted and evade rejection.

Fiske and Yamamoto (2005) pointed out the similarities of cultures (collectivistic or individualistic) in the enactment of the core motive of belonging. By empirically testing this notion they found that negative feelings where apparent after rejection in both Western and Eastern participants, whereas the opposite was true when positive feelings experienced after approval/acceptance among participants of both cultures. Additionally, there was reciprocity, meaning when participants got a negative evaluation they also rejected their partners, which was not the case for the positive feedback participants. However, there are some cultural variances in modes of understanding. In their concluding remarks, Fiske and

Yamamoto (2005) argued that the main motive of belonging is universal and relatively stable across cultures. The other four motives, even though present, varied in their enactment across cultures and individuals.

Utilizing this approach one may agree that individual actions and discourses intent to fulfil the core social motives. A. P. Fiske and Fiske (2007) placed great importance in the reciprocal relationships between cultures and social relationships, as they argued that culture pervades social relationships and is conveyed through them. Using their words "…culture includes those aspects of organisms' capacities, motives, ideas, biology, practices, institutions, artifacts, and landscapes that result from engaging in social relationships." (p.283). The theoretical approach for this study will be culturally sensitive in that it addresses the role of culture in shaping and changing individuals' actions (e.g., doings) and identities (e.g., beings). However it is not going to adopt a dichotomic view (demarcation) based on individualistic or collectivistic cultures. The reasons are rationalized further in the following section.

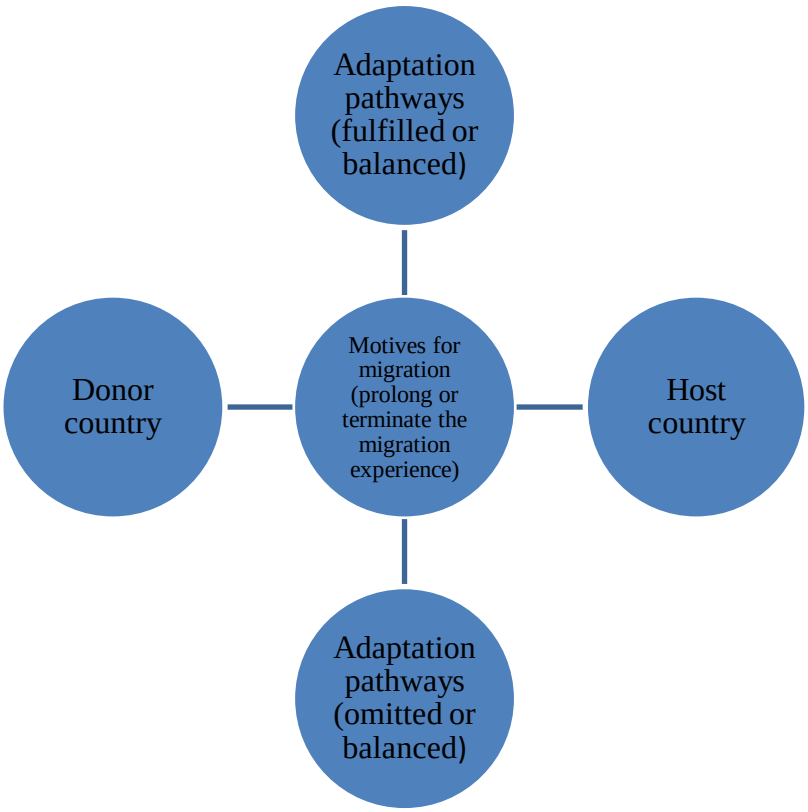

Figure 1.2 Fiske's (2004) theoretical model employed in a two-way approach [in order to explore motives to migrate, prolong or terminate the migration experience]

Problematizing over Collectivistic and Individualistic Constructs

A. P. Fiske and Fiske (2007) provided a detailed view of the differences in which people and cultures (i.e., collectivistic or individualistic) appear to have variations in the way they emphasize or handle the core social motives. In the same ground with Fiske and Yamamoto (2005), the authors converged that the main motive of belonging is universal in its value; however A. P. Fiske and Fiske (2007) differentiated in their finding that the extent to which it is perceived (i.e., belonging) and enacted is different among cultures. Thus, even though there seem to be some variations in the enactment and expression of the core social motives, there are also some common ground in the significance of the core values and motives among cultures and people.

Following this line of thinking, I assumed that the challenges the athletes faced post-relocation stem from the differences between the cultures of the donor and host countries. Most likely, they perceived an immense difference between the two cultures and that produced stress varying in its intensity (e.g., acute, enduring, moderate), which they struggled to overcome. The initial assumption for the cases of the elite cyclists of this study was that the countries and cultures that hosted these athletes were individualistic (i.e., Austria, North Italy, Czech) unlike Greece which still holds more collectivistic elements (Pouliasi &Verkuyten, 2011), and still transits from a collectivist mentality and function to an individualist one (Hofstede, 1980). As Chroni, Diakaki, and Papaioannou (2013) addressed:

> Family and religion are two of the strongest institutions from which values and beliefs are generated, influencing various aspects and spheres of life. Modernization does not affect all people equally and finding balance between old and new values and beliefs is a long-term process. In view of this, Greek athletes often struggle when the athletic career journey to the top asks them to find a balance between traditional values and the self-focused demands placed on them by the elite sport environment. (p. 116)

Based on these observations, the assumption was that in the sport context of Western more developed countries–such as North Italy that is considered to be the ‘finishing school’ in cycling- the competitive environment would intensify divergence; being characterised by more individualistic values and mindset and would be unfamiliar to the Greek cyclists of this study.

However, according to A. P. Fiske and Fiske (2007) these challenges may accrue not because of encountering a division of cultures which made the understanding more complicated and urgent. The variation of the challenges that were present was because of personal idiosyncrasies, sociocultural conditions and the interdependence and interaction of people and contexts. By characterizing a society as individualistic or collectivistic researchers construct boundaries and realities. This happened in the way that the term 'individualistic' is a mixture and a sequence of features that "in our own ideology and folk sociology, Americans perceived as defining our culture" (Fiske, 2002, p. 84). Thus the term 'collectivistic' refers to an opposite polar and defines what we are not.

Fiske (2002) when in his article critiques the validity and measurement of individualism and collectivism and comments upon Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier's (2002) meta-analysis on the same topic, locates the limitations of measuring these constructs. He observed that there was no (statistical) support that individualistic and collectivistic are opposite types when comparing cultures, due to the conflicting results of studies. Thus, either the measurement tools (and scales) are flawed or the constructs are of no use (not meaningful). He concluded that the two constructs as they are perceived are invalid.

Indeed, Oyserman and colleagues (2002) argued that the majority of the researches produced divergent results (e.g., small effect sizes, towards the wrong direction or non-replicable) in that East Asian countries tend to be opposite in their psychological positioning (thus being collectivistic) compared to the psychology of North Americans (being individualistic). Fiske (2002) did agree that even though "many important psychological processes are contingent on culture" (p. 83), these constructs cannot capture the complexity of the cultural variances across nations. This is because nations constitute political units that encompass many cultures –in our days even more- that are diverse. What these constructs accomplish is to mix all the elements comprising the different cultures and create homogenized categories. Another pitfall that these constructs entailed was that they overlook context specificity and assumed that behaviours are consistent across cultural environments. Thus, a Western European individual may be individualistic in certain domains of her/his vocational life, but may be highly collectivistic in other domains of social life.

Fiske (2002) when referring to the research methodology employed by psychologists posits that they "are trained to think in terms of quantitative dimensions or polar oppositions, but these styles of theorizing may not work for studying cultures or their

psychological consequences and substrates" (p. 84), since cultures pertain to qualitative operational variation. They are social systems transmitted and constituted by meanings, schemata, practices, competencies, ideas, values, norms, institutions, rules, artifacts. Reflecting on this comment, Fiske (2002) conceived it perfectly and represented closely the majority of the Greek academia.

Acculturation.

The existing literature in migrating athletes' acculturation is still in its infancy, since this issue has attracted the interest of researchers only the last years (Kontos, 2009). In the sport psychology scholarship there seem to be a need for a clarification of the terms 'adaptation' and 'acculturation' which are used interchangeably. Moreover, in order to fill the void and become synchronized with the evolution on sport migration, more in-depth understanding of the processes of adaptation and acculturation of migrating athletes is necessary, along with implication for applied practice based on scientific evidence regarding migration.

This under-researched topic should problematize scholars when one considers the growing flow of sport immigrants (Schinke & McGannon, 2014). Schinke and McGannon (2014) further argued that the process of acculturation is a transition in its own right and requires effective coping mechanisms both in terms of individual and team level, highlighting in this argument the role of social support and micro environment. The processes of acculturation may be facilitated from a supportive team environment or may be hindered from neglecting attitudes and indifference from the part of the sporting context.

Acculturation is the process where the immigrant or minority individual becomes acquainted with the host culture practices and skills (Berry, 1997; Berry, Poortinga, Segal, & Dasen, 2002). In the sport context, acculturation refers to the relocated athlete transitions towards the practices of the host culture (Kontos, 2009). A recent and enlightening study by Schinke and McGannon (2014) suggests that acculturation challenges may pertain to different training regimes (e.g., more or less scheduled) or unfamiliar dynamics between the coach-athlete relationship (e.g., in terms of hierarchy and power). Redfield, Lindon, and Herskovits (1936, p. 149, as cited in Weedon, 2012, p.202) provided us with an intuitive definition of acculturation as a concept that "comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns

in either or both groups". This implies that in the process are involved not solely the immigrant athletes but also their immediate sporting encvironmetn.

Embedding Chirkov's (2009) conceptualization of acculturation as a social process, Schinke and McGannon (2014) proposed that acculturation should be viewed as a shared process, where relocated athletes and their sporting context jointly aim in uncovering solutions and navigating through familiar and unfamiliar practices of different cultures. Summing up the postulates of acculturation the authors remarked that (a) it is a social process irrespectively of whether other people will engage to share it with the athlete; (b) is manifesting in the contexts with immigrant and minority athletes irrespectively if others (teammates or coaching staff) acknowledge the cultural adjustment processes; (c) is a navigation between host and donor cultures [and as Agergaard and Ryba (2014) argued, between transnational relationships and networks], thus it is an on-going and fluid process; and (d) may refer to changes required from the relocated athlete or from the sporting context of the host culture.

Adding to the abovementioned (Schinke & McGannon, 2014) view, to explore acculturation processes I employed a perspective presupposing that processes of adaptation and acculturation take place during a significant transition, which is the migration of athletes in a foreign country. Hence, adaptation is a by-product of the migration experience and s implicitly or explicitly interdependent from the micro and macro environments. Definitely adaptation is a sum of challenges and stressors (Battochio et al., 2013; Ryba, Haapanen, Mosek, & Ng., 2012; Schinke et al., 2007; Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke et al., 2011; Tenenbaum et al., 2003) that not only the migrating athlete has to face but also the team staff (including coaches, scientific staff, and teammates) (Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke, McGannon, Battochio, & Wells, 2013; Schinke et al., 2011).

Schinke and McGannon (2014) suggested three ways of acculturation depending in the responsibility placed upon (a) solely in the athlete, (b) in both the athlete and her/his environment with limited reciprocity, and (c) both the athlete and her/his environment with immersed reciprocity. The authors located the limitations of the current sport psychology scholarship about athlete acculturation and pointed out that the processes taking place often have been simplified under the term 'acculturation outcomes' (e.g., eating preferences, communication). The fluidity and navigation between host and donor cultural practices, acculturation and enculturation (i.e., the process of espouse and apply one's own cultural practices) or even self-alienation (i.e., the process of being isolated) have been overlooked (Schinke et al., 2006). Lastly, the social character of the acculturation process

with the collective participation of the sporting context should be scrutinized, a need also highlighted by Battochio and colleagues (2013) as well as Schinke and colleagues (2013, 2011). A more culturally sensitive approach should be adopted according to Ryba (2005) and Schinke et al. (2010) if researchers aspire to capture the dynamics of acculturation as a social and reciprocal process (Schinke &McGannon, 2014; Schinke et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2011).

Adaptation.

Adaptation is the ability of elite athletes to cope efficiently with challenges and stressors experienced inside and outside of their sporting context (Orlick, 1986). Schinke, Tenenbaum, Lidor, and Battochio (2010) defined adaptation as the end point of a process where athletes positively respond to challenges (e.g., major sporting events). This definition attaches in the term ‘adaptation’ a more stable hue and dissociates it from the term ‘acculturation’, clarifying both terms which are often used in the sport migration literature interchangeably.

Researchers in sport psychology studying adaptation of migrant athletes appear to have chosen Fiske’s (2004) adaptation model over that of Berry’s (1997) acculturation. As Schinke and colleagues (2011) explicate, Berry’s framework provides understanding of what leads some people to integrate into the new environment, as opposed to others that prefer to marginalize themselves. Fiske’s model, on the other hand, pertains to a more detailed process comprised by pathways that lead to adaptation with an emphasis on social motives. These pathways can be applied in Berry’s framework and processes of marginalization, separation, assimilation, integration (as described below), to understand what drives an individual to choose a certain process. The answer to this question elucidates the second research question of this study.

More specifically, Berry (1997) coming from a cross-cultural psychology perspective, theorized that acculturation strategies may be employed by migrant or minority people depending on the degree they want to embrace the culture of the host country and/or preserve their own cultural practices. Marginalization is a self-alienating process where the individual shows no interest on neither preserving the donor nor the host culture practices. Separation is the process in which the individual’s native cultural norms are preserved and no interaction with the host culture takes place. Assimilation is the/process where the migrant shows little or no interest on maintaining the elements of the native country and actively adopts the way of life of host culture, and lastly, integration is

the process when there is a simultaneous desire to maintain native cultural practices and adopt the cultural practices of the host country. Via his framework Berry (1997) suggested that individuals followed either of these processes in the same manner in order to acculturate. Additionally, Berry (1997) presents an acculturation framework that comprised by situational and personal (e.g., psychological level phenomena) variables. These variables along with features that precede or accrue during acculturation, group (e.g., factors relating to the society of origin and settlement) and individual level variables (e.g., moderating factors prior and during acculturation) make up the prerequisites to study acculturation or adaptation. What was utilized, in this study, from Berry's framework was some of these key features such as moderating factors prior or during acculturation (e.g., motivation, expectations, cultural distance, length of stay, attitudes and behaviours, social support, characteristics of host and donor country). These features, in my opinion, aided towards a more holistic understanding of the adaptation process.

Fiske on the other hand, with her theorization explored what elements promote adaptation and argued that, despite the adaptation state of an individual, the fulfilment of the five pathways (i.e., belonging, understanding, self-enhancement, controlling, trusting) take place not in a predefined sequence, contributing thus to a smooth adaptation. The challenges an individual faces define the pathway he/she is at. Even though the fulfilment of all pathways facilitates adaptation, the fulfilment of all the pathways is not mandatory. Meaning that the omission of one pathway may hinder adaptation processes, but it can be counterbalanced by the degree of fulfilment of other pathways and their importance for the individual. There is no linearity in Fiske's model in that the processes to fulfil each pathway are different to each individual and context specific. .

The common ground between adaptation and acculturation is the vital role of social support (e.g., Battochio et al., 2013; Campbell & ,Sonn,2009; Schinke, et al., 2006). In this study the term adaptation is employed as the physiological and psychological responses of an individual to stressors in an effort to maintain equilibrium in his/her life (Fiske, 2004). Usually, adaptation takes place in significant events where the demands placed on the individual surpass him/her provoking stress (e.g., relocation, excessive work load, new roles, or combination of challenging tasks) (see for example Tenenbaum, et al., 2003) such as in migration (e.g., .where the individual is out of the comfort zone.

Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review the existing literature relevantto sport labour migration. In order to outline central and current trends on the sport migration scholarship and map the psychosocial facets of this phenomenon, sport sociology and psychology inquiries were selectively reassessed. Further on there was a move from the general descriptions of the terms and the extent of the phenomenon, to the more specific happenings in the Greek reality and the sport of cycling, to sum up with the current knowledge and understandings of the sport migration.

According to the International Law Glossary on migration (2004), migration is defined as the movement of people internationally by crossing the borders of a state or internally within a state, "encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes" (p. 41). The contemporary theoretical models concerning labour migration such as the neoliberal model, the structuralist and the structuration models verged on this phenomenon from different perspectives, each emphasizing different aspects (Chatzaroula, 2007). The existing theories on international migration lack in coherence so as to facilitate our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of this phenomenon (Massey et al., 1993). Massey and colleagues (1993) proposed that an in-depth understanding of the causal and fundamental processes of migration cannot be attained if we adopt the lens of a single discipline or analysis tool; they suggest that "their complex, multifaceted nature requires a sophisticated theory that incorporates a variety of perspectives, levels, and assumptions" (p. 432).

In her literature review on migration, labour, and gender Chatzaroula (2007) describes the existent models and traces some limitations. Specifically, the neoliberal model that focuses on the benefits of this phenomenon to the individual, accounts that migration is a personal choice of under-employed individuals to move from a non capitalist body of economy to a capitalistic one and derives from a disparity between the productivity of labour and wages. The structural model adopts a view towards the dependence of regional economies on a central globalized economy and posits that

migration is a forced consequence based in a system of mandatory labour and implies structural restrictions that are attributed to capitalism (Chatzaroula, 2007).

Chatzaroula (2007) recognized two major limitations of the abovementioned models. First, that the emergence of labour migration cannot be interpreted in its wholeness based solely on its use to the capitalistic system of economy (i.e., cheap labour force). Second, both models take for granted that the subject of migration was male. Chatzaroula (2007) in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of the labour migration phenomenon made reference to Giddens (1998) and the introduction of the 'third road' (structuraction) model as it provides a theoretically sound soil for gender to be integrated in the study of migration and acknowledge that pre-existing political, economic structures and gender norms impact the migration of labour. Additionally, this model proposes that there are more paths apart from the dichotomy between actor and factor, namely (such as) the third road that unveils the personal intentional action and initiative.

It is important to incorporate gender in the exploration of the migration phenomenon, because together with race, class and other sociocultural characteristics form a part of the power relations that impact the movement of people. On account of this and in an attempt to enrich the research on sport labour migration by adding the gender component, Agergaard (2008) studied elite migrant women handball players and together with Tiesler (2014) they have inquired about women's soccer migration. In this regard, HaugaaEngh (2014) -navigating through the gender geographies of power- and Botehlo and Agergaard (2011) verified the significant variations in men and women's migratory experiences, patterns, motives and trajectories in general.

Sport labour migration entails athletes' move or relocation within and between geographical boarders (including countries either inter or intra-continental) to pursue an athletic career (Maguire & Pearton, 2000a). Hitherto, theories specifically concerning to sport labour migration haven't been developed. Scholars from sport sociology and sport psychology have utilized various models and theories to better understand the labour migration of athletes, such as globalization approach, world systems theory (network-based), glocalization projection (Giulianotti& Robertson, 2007), figurational approach (as in the study by Evans & Stead, 2012), theory of established-outsider relations, transational perspectives were also employed (Carter, 2011) and recently proposed multidisciplinary approaches (Agergaard & Ryba, 2014). Thus, in order to illuminate in depth this phenomenon it is important at first to centre the attention to its sociological characteristics, since the migration of athletes take place in and is affected by sociocultural space (Carter,

2011); challenges and stressors that migrating athletes often face are also rooted in changing sociocultural conditions.

Agergaard and Ryba (2014) argued that sociological and psychological inquiries, on sport labour migration and athletes' transitions respectively, reached to a common conclusion that "social and individual factors play an important role in shaping athletes' experiences" (p. 230). Hence, as a starting point, there is a need to locate this phenomenon in the wider society, trace its sociocultural characteristics and its interdependencies with macro (i.e., geographical, political, economic, historical) and micro (i.e., social networks, family, place, career) scale aspects. After doing so, I then can move on to specificities of the mobility of sport labour and the psychological facets, that altogether with the rest of the micro and macro elements, configure the phenomenon.

Greece, Sport Migration and Cycling

The phenomenon of immigration started gradually to increase in Greece since the end of 1980 due to the rapid political, economic, and social evolution (development) (Hatziprokopiou, 2005; Papantoniou-Fragouli & Leventi, 2000). Specifically, changes in the political situation in Eastern Europe which resulted in the opening of the borders caused an influx rise of (economic) immigrants –not only- in Greece (Papantoniou-Fragouli & Leventi, 2000). Consequently, there was a rise and intensification of the sport labour migration phenomenon as a part of the global, local and athletic scene (Maguire, 1996), the commodification of sport (Maguire, Barnard, Butler & Golding, 2008), the global capitalistic structure of economy and the sociocultural conditions.

Even though Greece was traditionally an emigration country, the immigration of Greek elite athletes to pursue an athletic career is still limited, with Greece transitioning in an immigration and host country due to the socio-political fluctuations in the near countries and its geographical position (Triantafilidou & Maroukis, 2010). This was more pronounced in football, after Bosman's case near the end of 1995 where the right for freedom of movement was earned for all the EU athletes. Basketball players had also moved abroad, however few of them signed illustrious contracts. So far, only exceptions of Greek athletes in few sports migrated to teams abroad. Hence, the knowledge about experiences of Greek immigrant athletes is limited if not absent.

Because cycling as a sport is undervalued in Greece, very few cyclists decide to pursue a professional team abroad. Due to the nature of the sport of cycling, the race schedule throughout the year is quite tight and cyclists with their teams have to move in

different regions of their country or another country for single day events/races, small (3-5 stages) or grand tours (up to 21 stages). Cyclists of semi-professional (i.e., continental) teams (or national team riders) may competed in 40 to 50 races a year [50-110 days of racing (Mujika & Padilla, 2002)], which meant practically almost every weekend. In grand tours each stage (race day) passes through different locations. This fact placed them in the same 'category' of nomads, such as golf and tennis players, in the pursuit for world ranking points and qualifications for world championships and Olympic Games. Cricket and rugby players, on the other hand, were considered to be seasonal immigrants since they move between the north and south hemispheres in order to benefit from a double playing season.

Maguire and Pearton (2000b) and Maguire (2008) have acknowledged that the migration experience is more transient depending in the nature of some sports (e.g., ski, golf, motor racing, track and field) compared to others. In Maguire's (2008) words "their 'workplace' is constantly shifting" (p. 446) and this is also the case for cyclists.

Although the rate of recurrence and extend of the global sport labour migration had become more complex and tense during the last years (Maguire, 2008), the research in this field is still limited (Elliot & Maguire, 2008; Maguire, 2004), and more pronounced in the science of sport sociology than sport psychology (Schinke et al., 2013). How migration and sport interact was a topic of interest for historians of sport (Cronin, Doyle & O'Callaghan, 2008; Favero, 2008) as well as anthropologists (Grey, 1999; Klein, 1988, 1991). The role of sport on the integration of immigrants has also caught the attention of psychology and sociology of sport research (for a systematic review see Hatzigeorgiadis, Morela, Elbe, Kouli, & Sanchez, 2013; Walseth & Fasting, 2004).

Attributes of Migration

Considering Maguire's (2008) observation about the characteristics of a globalized society, "globalization has undoubtedly changed the relationship between time and space, and the globe is now more compressed" (p. 443). It appears that global sport as a part of cultural globalization is promoting universal values such as unity, democracy and peace.

On the other hand it is considered to be more part of cultures' commodification and "symptomatic of a new and consumer dominated phase of western capitalism" (Maguire, 2008, p. 443). Thus, provoking fragments and deconstructions --of localities, meaning local cultures-- while at the same time annihilates the differences between local cultures. In terms of the power structure this western omnipotence in economy, politics,

technology and knowledge construction and distribution "is dominated by, and differentially favours, developed countries in general and the civilization of the west in particular" (Maguire, 2008, p. 444).

'Globe-oriented perspective' seems like the middle ground in which people acknowledge their common values and at the same time they respect and create space for their differences. According to Maguire (2008) the question is whether globalization encourages a cosmopolitan view, embracing this globe-oriented perspective, or it cultivates nationalism, hostility and feelings of ethnic purity; whether it bears immigration restrictions and inhibitions or free movement of labour.

In order to make sense of sport migration as a global phenomenon there is a need to consider economical, political, historical, geographical, and sociocultural factors (Maguire, 2008; McGovern, 2002) that are interdependent yet altogether illuminate the complexities abound in this major transition that is called labour migration of athletes.
Maguire (2008) proposes that sport labour migration can be identified in three levels: among different regions of the same country, among countries of the same continent and among different continents. In this study the focus is among countries of the same continent.

After this overview of the general trends of migration and its juxtaposition with Greek reality and the sport of cycling I will scrutinize the current sport sociology and sport psychology scholarship on the phenomenon under study.

Sport Labour Migration under the Scope of Sport Sociology

A number of studies have explored sport labour migration in a variety of sports (e.g., football, ice-hockey, cricket, basketball, boxing, baseball, handball, rugby). Primarily in response to sport sociology interests, researchers explored: the development of typologies for sport migrants (Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996, 2004), motives for migration (Maguire, 1996; Maguire &Pearton, 2000; Stead & Maguire, 2000), labour rights (Maguire, 1996; Maguire & Pearton, 2000B; Maguire & Stead, 1996), impact of the migration phenomenon on host countries (Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Maguire, 1996; Stead & Maguire, 1998) as well as on donor countries (Stead & Maguire, 1998), formation of sport migrants' national identities (Bradley, 2006; Bruce & Wheaton, 2009; Maguire & Stead, 1996; Stead & Maguire, 1998), globalization and sport migration (Eliasson, 2009; Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Magee & Sugden, 2002; McGovern, 2002; Mckay et al., 1993),

procedures of integration (Agergaard, 2008) and glocalization (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007).

A review of the sport sociology studies will follow, focusing on key findings that escorted this inquiry. Main sociological issues and trends will be outlined and connected with our research questions.

The development of typologies.

In order to trace athletes' motives and create a pattern of global flows typologies were developed.

Based on athletes' reasons and motives to migrate typologies were conceived to ease the portrayal of the movement of sport labour. At first Maguire (1996) and later Magee and Sugden (2002), in their attempt to explain and interpret in its entirety the phenomenon of sport labour migration developed typologies. Specifically, in order to further understand the characteristics of the sociological model in which the Canadian ice hockey players fit, Maguire (1996) introduced a preliminary typology. According to which the 'pioneers' are the sport immigrants that extol the benefits of their sport, while they speak and act in ways to 'proselytise' the indigenous people to their own sport culture. 'Settlers' considered being those who, not only establish their sport to the host country, but they end up to stay there permanently. On the contrary, the sport immigrants characterized as 'mercenaries', are motivated from short-term gains, they don't relate to the local society and are the 'hired guns' that are going to 'finish the job with efficiency' and then leave. Another categorization is the 'nomads' that use their sport career to travel usually in cosmopolitan destinations (i.e., football players), without precluding travelling away from big cities (i.e., extreme sport athletes). Irrespectively of which categories an immigrant athlete may fit, there is always the possibility of returning back in their home countries, and that makes them 'returnees'.

Referring to the typology developed by Maguire (1996), Magee and Sugden (2002) locate some inconsistencies and vague points and use it to create a new typology. They remove the category of 'pioneer', keep the categories of 'mercenary' and 'settler' and rename the category of 'nomads' to 'cosmopolitan nomads'. The new categories are the 'ambitionist', which is the football player that just wants to pursue a professional career; the 'exile' is the one that migrates due to personal or political reasons (voluntarily or because of threats to his career, freedom or life); 'expelled' is the player that is forced to migrate due to a combination of problems such as behaviour issues or too much explosion

to the media. An introductory category is ‘celebrity superstar’ and characterizes the player who demands and aims media promotion. Finally, Magee and Sugden (2002) suggest that these categories are not fixed, but they interrelate and change according to the career level of the player.

Lafranchi and Taylor (2001) when studying the migration of soccer players revealed that their participants fell under three categories in terms of their motivation to relocate namely: itinerants, mercenaries and settlers. The first category was characterized by ephemeral relationships with the host culture, a constant shifting of places where the player signs contracts for short term. The mercenary was the athlete motivated mainly by economic rewards and leaves a host country for another if the contracting offers are more lucrative. The last category is the player that aims to stay in the host country, creating such conditions (e.g., getting married). These categories overlaped with some mentioned above in both Maguire’s (1996) and Magee and Sugden’s (2002) models, however the less the categories the more restricted is their explanatory function.

In the theoretical application, discrepancies and incompatibilities seemed to arise, regarding the classification of immigrant athletes according to the typologies and their motives to migrate. In particular, Agergaard (2008) in her attempt to label women handball players migrating to teams in Denmark, according to the pre-existing typologies (Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996) she traced that their main motive is sport ambition to achieve a professional career. Moreover, Agergaard (2008) complemented certain dimensions that were not mentioned in the existing typologies, such as the importance of the family, the social contact with the team, personal acquaintances (friendships or socializing) and the feeling of personal satisfaction. She concluded that besides the category of the ‘ambitionist’ athlete there seems to be a lack of fit or an under-representation between the athletes and the categories, underlying the need for further refinement of the typologies.

In their study Molnar and Maguire (2008) applied a figurational model and examined Hungarian footballers. They concluded that these athletes can be seen as ‘nomadic-returnees’ and not as ‘mercenaries’, since their transfers where dependent on agents and they had no choice over their destination or host country. These football players in their majority wanted to return to their home country and this was the first phase of sport labour migration of the post-communist era. It can be argued here that their classification according to the typologies may accrue without complexities.

Later on, Botelho and Agergaard (2011) studied women football players migrating in Scandinavia, traced that one of their motive was ambition to be professional players and compete at the higher level. However, the common motive for moving transnationally was not the financial incentive –since their salaries where often low- but 'the love of the game'. On the grounds of this study, Agergaard, Botehlo and Tiesler (2014) revise the typologies introducing their categorization based in the transnational approach. Thus, the common characteristic is that of "multiple embededness" (sense of belonging and relating to an array of physical, social and cultural environments), practicing transnational actions. Their differences lay on their experiences, mobility plans and core characteristics of their migration. The first category was the transnational settlers are the athletes that migrate from their country to another with the intention to settle there, whatever the origin of this intention may be (e.g., economic reasons, better quality of life). The second is the transnational sojourners are those who leave short-term the donor country aiming to return again, indicating the ephemeral nature of their move. Lastly, the transnational mobiles are those moving across different countries often and compared to the transnational sojourners that have a permanent base (country), they move back and forth across two or more different countries; and form transnational networks and sense of transnational belonging.

With the same viewpoint in mind, the debate about the typologies continued with Maguire (2004) argued from early on that the development of typologies was a result of empirical research and preliminary data analysis. He suggested that the introduction of typologies is an ideal way to portray the real world, thus it is reasonable not to be exclusive and sometimes to overlap. It was apparent that restrictions and ambiguities may occur about their use; however this produces creative scholarly debates in a new subject and encourages further research.

Patterns of sport labour migration.

Due to the fact that the research on migration of sport labour is in its first steps the designation of the migration motif is of major importance. The global migration pattern of athletes appeared to entail moving from east countries to the west, without excluding cases of migrating to the opposite direction. In addition, there seem to be an influx of athletes mainly in countries with tradition to the sport of interest (Maguire, 1996) and in wealthy countries (Njororai, 2011).

Studies in sport labour migration converge in the same conclusions as far as the magnitude and dimensions of the phenomenon, the motif (meaning its pattern), its impact and confrontation from the wider society, athletes' motives to migrate and issues concerning their adjustments for a smooth integration in the host society. Maguire and Stead (1998) in their study located the wider migrating patterns of elite footballers from and to countries and teams of the EU and the European Federations of Football (UEFA). They noted that there was a rise in imported and exported players, as well as in migrating athletes inside Europe, mainly from the east to the west [findings reaffirmed in subsequent studies, see Njororai, 2011]. Maguire and Pearton (2000a, 2000b), studied the migrating patterns of footballers in the World Cup finals of 1998 in France, reached the same conclusions that the motif followed an upward trend and direction from the less developed eastern countries to the more developed and wealthy west countries. The same pattern seemed to apply to cricket players migrating in England, during the 80s' and 90s' (Maguire & Stead, 1996; Stead & Maguire, 1998).

Maguire (1996) in his study examined the labour migration of male Canadian ice hockey players and their experiences in England. He located similar migration patterns as in football and cricket. Specifically, the main 'exporters' of ice hockey players appeared to be Canada and the former Soviet Union, while during the 1994-1995 period, Germany and England were the main 'importers' of Canadian players. Some years later Magee and Sugden (2002) explored the experiences of immigrant football players in English teams. In the model presented in their study, Europe was the core, semi-circumference was South and central America, the periphery was Africa and the outer region is Asia and North America. The global spread of football started from the core and expanded outward, while the flow of migration started from the outer arena heading to the core, but not all roads led there. An introverted motif was followed to the more wealthy and strong teams. Magee and Sugden (2002) and Maguire (1996) converged in the conclusion that the countries which comprise the core dominate and control the utilization of the sources and production of sport labour resource and by setting their terms and conditions they destroyed the countries of the semi-circumference and periphery.

McGovern (2002) in his quest to discern if the migration of professional football players is part of internationalization or globalization procedures, used data from all the players that were part of the English league from 1946 to 1996, for at least one season. He reported that the migration pattern is becoming more international as the years go by, but the procedures that take place are not a result of internationalization or globalization of

English football, since they appeared to be directed towards periphery affected by the economic, political, historical and social development. However, with an insightful comment, McGovern (2002) advocated that the talent to play football -and consequentlythe broader athletic proficiency- is not a compatible product, instead is mutable, it forms a quality and is inseparable from the social characteristics of its owner; hence it cannot fall under the standardized processes of the globalization.

According to Maguire and Pearton (2000b) the pattern of migration of the less skilled footballers was different from that of elite players. The authors observed that the import of elite players can be afforded mainly by wealthy European teams. Bosman's case had some involuntary effects by inflating the value of talented foreign players in which teams were offering attractive long-term contracts. Conversely, it increased the import of players from smaller countries outside EU over small economic remunerations, bringing in the surface issues of labour exploitation. In this same study Maguire and Pearton (2000b) conclude that the evolution of technology with live streaming of games through internet changed the situation by making television broadcasting 'redundant' and magnifying the gap between small and big teams.

Later on, Falcous and Maguire (2006) examined the production and presentation of NBA (coming from North America) from the television network of Great Britain, revealing the role of media in the expansion and global promotion of specific sports, hence guiding -with specific directions-the migration of athletes. Television broadcasting through visual, verbal and narrative tactics is the main way to promote basket as a spectacle and 'product', and a means for the backing of the intercontinental market. In their closing remarks Falcous and Maguire (2006) suggested that the endeavour of NBA to ensure a global social space in Great Britain was determined by the political economy of the media production and the dynamics of the global ideological exchange. The evidence presented are not univariate but they interact with other factors and confirm that no matter how strong a global trend is, it is obliged to negotiate with local orders, especially when is about a former great power such as Great Britain with powerful media industry.

The migrating patterns of Japanese professional baseball players the last twenty years were studied by Takahasi and Horne (2006). An amplified migration to America, but also to China, Taiwan, and Korea, led the Japanese companies to sponsor games and promote the Japanese sport tourists to America. The authors suggested that new chances were created in the East Asia and North America for the economic investments and labour

coming from Japan. Thus, economic development was one of the factors that determined the move of labour, including the international sport migration.

In order to portray the motivation and experiences of the immigrant athletes, and consequently the highly skilled workers, the fact that the migration phenomenon is multifaceted and interdependent by a lot of factors (Elliot & Maguire, 2008) had to be acknowledged. Migration patterns tended to become more short term or transient due to the evolution of global economies, the expansion of markets (Elliot & Maguire, 2008), technology (transportation, communication) and multicultural trends. As Molnar and Maguire (2008) argue migration patterns are in a state of constant change and reformation.

Reasons and motives to migrate.

In trying to explain the recruitment processes and the destination choices migrant athletes make, Maguire took into account the typologies of sport migrants and notes that "the motivation of migrants, then, is complex and multifaceted" (2008, p. 448).Overall, reasons to migrate seemed to be the geographical proximity, historical bonds, colonial past (Darby, 2007), cultural and linguistic similarities, ambitions of some countries to be established as sporting superpowers, the 'production' of 'cheap sport labour' from countries of Eastern Europe, the few opportunities in their home country, the freedom of movement inside EU (after the Bosman's case), the tradition of some countries in specific sports and their the identification as 'talent pipelines', economic incentives (Takahasi & Horne, 2006), investment of global media companies in sport as a spectacle and its promotion as a 'shopping window' (Maguire & Stead, 1996, 1998; Stead & Maguire, 1998, 2000; Takahasi & Horne, 2006). In these reasons to migrate, the existence of second generation immigrants in the host countries and the style of playing were added (i.e., Latin football players from South America matched more to Italian and Spanish teams, whereas players from Northern Europe as well as Scandinavian players fitted more in countries such as England) (Maguire & Pearton, 2000b; Stead & Maguire, 2000).

Darby (2007) examined the migration of African footballers in Portugal and argued that it was attractive for these players to prefer a country with which they may have less cultural and linguistic obstacles, and more chances of social interactions with compatriots. These factors in combination with the limited opportunities in their home countries, due to various socio-economic and political problems, led them to make the decision and migrate.

In his study Maguire (1996) pinpoints that it was crucial to concede that the migration of Canadian ice hockey players around Europe is a multifaceted procedure that

summoned up all the features of the sociological model, such as the spirit of the 'pioneer', the role of 'settler', the 'mercenary' style and the desire of the 'cosmopolitan'.

In studying Kenyan immigrants, Njororai (2010) resonated that these athletes moved "to the oil-rich, but talent-starved" (p. 448) countries, with their main destination being the Middle East. Due to the imbalance of global wealth and since sport became a commodity, more than ever, countries that can afford resources, facilities, science, technology, marketing and athletes, attract immigrant athletes–an observation also highlighted earlier by Maguire and Pearton (2000b). The destinations of Kenyan athletes were countries such as Quatar, Bahrain, France, Holland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Finland with which they had no cultural or colonial ties. Thus, the reasons to migrate were higher wages, marriage, citizenship, competing in the highest level (i.e., Olympics), easiest access to competitions around Europe and (opportunities for) travelling due to globalization.

The personal motives of migrating athletes appeared to be mostly their personal development and athletic skills (competencies), the chance for a professional sporting career, as well as, economic factors (Maguire & Stead, 1998; Molnar & Maguire, 2008; Stead & Maguire, 1998, 2000). Stead and Maguire (2000) examined the personal and professional characteristics, the objectives, the preparation to migrate and the choice of England as a destination for Scandinavian football players from 1946 to 1997. In view of their psychological preparation and their characteristics a lot of players mentioned their self-confidence, their maturity and self-awareness as persons and athletes, and the role of family and partners as important elements that aided the decision to migrate.

Data deriving from baseball Japanese players migrating to teams abroad from 1982 to 2005, revealed that the primary reasons to migrate were the economic recession in the beginning of the 21st century and the instability it caused in the Japanese sporting institutions (Takahasi & Horne, 2006). Other factors were the changes in the labour relationships (e.g., changes in the rules and the hiring tactics, emergence of sport agents) and the inclusion of the sport in the Olympic Games in 1992, which accelerated the internalization of the sport and the migration of Japanese players to other countries (i.e., East Asia) and mainly to North America.

Impact of the sport labour migration phenomenon on host and donor countries and acceptance of sport immigrants.

Migrating athletes had to come across labour rights issues (i.e., exploitation) (Maguire & Stead, 1996; Molnar & Maguire, 2008) like any other worker, and the consequences of the decisions and actions of sport federations and the European court regarding sport provisions and restrictions (i.e., quotas) had a direct impact in their move (Maguire, 1996). Maguire and Pearton (2000b) added more details by explaining that "the employment rights achieved by players in team sports such as European soccer are limited compared with the freedoms gained by sports people in individual sports, particularly in tennis and golf" (p. 761). They further observed that given the high incomes of elite immigrant soccer players it is at odds to suggest that they are being exploited; though, this is the case for young inspiring athletes 'imported' from South America and Africa (Maguire & Pearton, 2000b), creating an exploitative wave of the developed countries upon the developing countries (i.e., African football players imported in the European Leagues) (Darby, 2007). However they faced issues claiming more (greater) employment rights (Maguire & Pearton, 2000b). In Maguire's (1996) study with Canadian immigrant players, even though the relocated athletes were part of the global labour migration and shared similar problems with immigrant athletes from different sports, they differed in that they were also recipients of violent behaviours, since the subculture of the specific sport encouraged acts of violence.

The migrating of sport labour provoked both positive and negative reactions in the host and donor countries (Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Maguire & Pearton, 2000a, 2000b; Maguire & Stead, 1996; Stead & Maguire, 1998).). Considering the donor countries, while in the beginning there was a positive climate, later on some reservations appeared with regard to the decline of endogenous talents and the de-skilling of these countries, causing under-development (Darby, 2007; Maguire & Pearton, 2000a, 2000b; Molnar & Maguire, 2008; Stead & Maguire, 1998). The revitalization of the game, the attraction of media and sponsors, the availability of athletic talents and the role of these players as role models for young players were some of the positive elements that the host country would enjoy.

On the other hand, those opposing to athlete migration argued that it diminished the opportunities for the development of indigenous players by creating a phase of dependent-development, in terms of personal and professional growth, for both the indigenous players and the nation. Additionally, the disputants of sport labour migration advocated that it eroded the spirit and the ethos of the national game and expressed their disbelief about the effectiveness of the 'imported' players (Maguire, 1996; Maguire & Pearton, 2000b;

Maguire & Stead, 1996; Stead & Maguire, 1998This climate spurred by patriotic feelings and triggered the issue of the representation of England by foreign players, since sometimes the motives adopted by immigrant athletes were more to 'execute' their job efficiently and compete for the 'flag of convenience' (Maguire & Stead, 1996; Poulton & Maguire, 2012) or compete in a higher level for any country that provided this opportunity (Maguire & Stead, 1996; Stead & Maguire, 1998). What is articulated elsewhere (Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Maguire & Pearton, 2000b; Stead & Maguire, 2000) is the notion that migrating athletes may not feel bonding and attachment to their host country, due to the fact that "highly rational and technical criteria determine their status and market value and thus sport migrants embrace the ethos of hard work, differential rewards and a win at all costs approach" (Maguire, 2008, pp. 451-452).

In the same lines, Falcous and Maguire (2006) studied the impact and acceptance of immigrant athletes by the local community, in the English basketball team of Leicester Riders (East Midlands), they stressed that it is not simple to categorize basketball fans' positioning by placing them in a 'mould'. The authors suggested that by doing this we undervalue the importance of the interplay between the development of a local identity and the consumption of the athletic 'product'. The opinions of the fans, of whether the immigrant athletes were good or bad for the team and the country, varied and depended on the fans' desire and expectation for entertainment and spectacle, the development of feelings of national pride and the impact of basketball on these feelings, the local and national stereotypes as well as the development of folk identity. All these factors were related with the political, cultural and economic apparatus in the global space of basketball, operated in conjunction and revealed the strategic role of media not only in the glocal political economies, but also in shaping representations of cultures, identifications, patterns and hierarchies (Falcous & Maguire, 2006; Poulton& Maguire, 2012).

In a different view, Elliot and Weedon (2010) suggested that the migration of youth footballers in English football is beneficial for both the donor and host countries. They argued that there is a circulation of knowledge and skills between the indigenous and immigrant players, and the integration of foreign footballers with the indigenous could only aid all of these athletes to develop their talents and potentials.

The impact of sport migration in the donor (domestic) countries' talent development was explored by comparing immigration in Danish and Norwegian women's handball. With a sound methodological design applying both quantitative and qualitative methods, Agergaard and Ronglan (2015) located the players' trajectories moving to

Danish women's handball –in terms of numbers and performance level. The findings suggested equivocal consequences of this immigration phenomenon that can be traced in the support of domestic talent (e.g., learning from skilled immigrant athletes) or in the discount of local athletes by demoting their participation (playing value/time) in matches. The structure and tactics of training and matches –rooted in overmanning- appeared to have a merit for the devaluing of domestic talents.

Adjustments and adaptation of sport immigrants.

Agergaard (2008) inquired about the migration of women handball players in Denmark during the period 1999-2007, drawing attention to the issue of women labour migration in a less popular sport. Among other issues, she also inquired about the tactics that Danish teams utilize in order to integrate the newcomers. Teams' strategies for smooth integration appeared to be an important factor that contributed to the immigrant athletes' residence in their host teams and country. One team that recruited players mainly from Nordic countries –or familiar with the Danish culture and language- applied the tactic of assimilation, and while saving time and money, they mobilized the entire team to create a positive climate under the assumption that the immigrant athletes have to adjust to the culture, team climate and social responsibility. The other team that recruited more Eastern European players implemented the segregation strategy, by hiring one of the foreign athletes with language skills and sport experience -and without the involvement of the rest of the team- to help the newcomer immigrant players to integrate smoothly, without being necessary to assimilate, as the presence of a foreign language and culture was part of their everyday practices. Thus, the integration strategies adopted by clubs and their effectiveness depended on their resources, the new recruitments and their origin, personal competencies (e.g., good language skills may encourage the newcomers to prefer an assimilation strategy), personal acquaintances and the presence of other foreigners in the new team, being from the same or different donor country.

Maguire and Stead (1996) emphasized the personal and professional adjustments and a series of problems and interrelated insecurities that the cricket players migrating to England had to face. In particular, such issues were the signing of contracts, its' questionable duration, the wages, the exploitation and under conditions acceptance by the subculture of the English cricket and the dominant host culture. In addition, the feelings of loneliness inside and outside the court (Weedon, 2011), as well as feelings of national and

cultural identities which were at stake were all challenges faced by the migrating cricketers.

Migration is an experience that causes major and acute effects on identities and cultures (Maguire & Stead, 1996). In the same view, sport is a context where notions of multiple identities are formed, reshaped and embodied and the sense of belonging is developed (Njororai, 2010). Maguire and Stead (1996) posited that "a key feature of the sport process is that it is used by different groups, those more established, emergent or outsider migrant groups, to represent, maintain and/or challenge identities" (p. 16). In terms of the formation and development of national and cultural identities the researchers observed that migrant cricketers in England sometimes adopted a defensive attitude towards the dominant culture, while the more experienced and long-standing players often developed a hybrid identity. These athletes may have redefined their own sense of identity and culture, and strengthen their national identity. Alternatively, they may have cultivated a local identity or created space for a pluralisation of national and cultural identities.

Globalisation and sport migration.

Sports labour migration has been viewed as an aspect of globalisation. Via this approach, migration patterns of athletes were found to be influenced by political, economic, and historical processes (e.g., Eliasson, 2009; Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1994; McGovern, 2002; Mckay et al., 1993). However, the explanatory power of the term was questioned (e.g., Carter, 2011; Evans & Stead, 2012; Weedon, 2012) on the grounds of the homogeneity promoted by the globalization perspective and the overemphasis on the macro scale facets of the migration of sport labour.

In this context Carter (2011) proposed that it is fundamental to incorporate the spatial element in current migration theories, outlining the interdependence of people (migrants), places and institutions and bringing to the fore "the experiences of people and the spaces through which they move" (p. 2). So far, the globalization approach highlighted the interrelations and role of the macro scale aspects that determined migration. In order to deepen the understanding of this phenomenon, Carter (2011) advocated that the priorities given on the consideration of the macro (e.g., political economy elements) and micro (e.g., family, place, career) scale aspects of this phenomenon need to be revised by shifting the emphasis from institutional practices and structures –that control migration- to placing

more emphasis on the role of migrant agency, "individual experiences and the politics of their mobility" (p. 10).

Discrepancies still exist regarding the globalization in terms of definition, its directions and effects (Klein, 2008). In his study on the migration to Major League Baseball, Klein (2008) suggested that globalization is a process, dependent on a variety of factors such as the technological revolution (e.g., communication, transportation), economic, political, sociocultural and historical developments, with respective implications. Globalization was theorized by Klein (2008) as a continuum. One end it was the flattening of pluralities and localities and the promotion of homogenization of cultures, namely Testicular Globalization (TG), exacerbating the gap between first and third world countries. On the other end of the continuum the so called Tough Love Globalization (TLG) was located, where there is mutual respect, acceptance and coexistence with and between local and other cultures (glocalization), eradicating differences between first and third world countries. Baseball would stand at the Testicular polar and Klein (2008) encouraged to adopt a globalized view of baseball and expand it (de-centralize it) across Europe, Asia and Africa in order for the sport to develop and gain status.

Commenting on issues of globalization Maguire (2008) questioned whether these global processes guide people towards a cosmopolitan identification by diminishing differences or by creating an atmosphere of nationalism and denunciation of different cultures. What Maguire (2008) eloquently said was that the concerns about "hostility or friendship, of immigration control and free movement of labour, of a real politic or ethically-based approach, should also help frame how we make sense of a nation-state's foreign policy stance to sport and migration more generally." (p. 456)

Since the glocalization approach came into play, it was used to further analyze sport and diasporic-spectator identity (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007). This glocalization approach suggested that cultural differentiation and the creation of localities is a fundamental part of globalization. Glocalization as a term brings together the elements that co-exist and coalesce, meaning the global and local, the universal and particular, the homogeneity and heterogeneity, the common values and the differences. Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) added that a duality of glocality characterizes the term glocalization with the mutual dependence of homogeneity and heterogeneity. These researchers utilized the transnationalism as the term "referring to processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders" (p. 170).

Weedon (2012) explored youth migrant footballers playing at Premier League Academies. Some problems these adolescents faced were feelings of loneliness, homesickness, unfamiliar cultural environments, language difficulties and similar issues and challenges in order to adjust and acculturate, as their senior counterparts. Incorporating in his work the glocalization thesis he concluded that the "players' experiences of acculturation can be seen as occurring within a glocal context in which global flows and local customs are in constant flux, requiring active negotiation from locally situated social actors."(p.214)

Overall, sociological inquiries approached the sport labour migration phenomenon utilizing different perspectives and explored patterns of migration, personal and professional adjustments of migrating athletes, impact of the phenomenon on the host and donor countries, globalization and sport migration, typologies based on migrants' motives to migrate (e.g., Maguire, 1999; Magee & Sugden, 2002; Stead & Maguire, 2000). Commenting on these two studies, and contesting the "globalisation" approach, Carter (2011) observed that they treated migrating athletes as unified (self-same) masses "that devalue and ignore the inherent tensions of migratory experiences" (p. 6). Without overlooking the structural and institutional dynamics, the political economy and socio-cultural elements that influenced and defined this phenomenon were also examined (e.g., Maguire & Pearton, 2000b). In general, the sociological scholarship is flourishing and provides a multilevel perspective of the migration of sport labour.

Sport Labour Migration under the Scope of Sport Psychology

From the sport psychology perspective, the substance of the migrating experience for the athlete has attracted relatively little research attention. Contemporary sport psychology studies explored the challenges and stressors that athletes who relocate face, as along with acculturation processes (Battochio et al., 2013; Kontos, 2009; Ryba et al., 2012; Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke, et al., 2011).

Recent research findings on immigrant athletes (R.C. Battochio, Schinke, D.L. Battochio, Halliwell, & Tenenbaum, 2010; Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010; Schinke et al., 2011) using Fiske's (2004) model, reveal that the challenges migrating athletes have to handle are vast and can be located in the new sociocultural conditions inside the athletic environment. The researchers acknowledged the significant role of the sport context in the achievement of a smooth adaptation and acculturation. The encouragement and the supportive team climate may bring on a smooth adaptation. On the

other side the negative atmosphere in the team and in the sport context may hinder the adaptation process (Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke et al., 2011). These studies argued for the active role athletes, coaches, teammates and sport psychology professionals can have in the adaptation process and offer practical advice.

These inquiries revealed that the challenges migrating athletes have to handle are vast and can be traced in the new sociocultural conditions. In terms of adaptation and acculturation of migrating athletes (Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke et al., 2011; Schinke et al., 2013) the findings converged in outlining the on-going character of the process, its fluidity (e.g., adaptive or maladaptive) and variability (e.g., whether the relocated athlete approaches or avoids the host cultural norms), as well as the mutual commitment, reciprocity and responsibility both on behalf of the host team and the newcomers.

Chroni (1995) inquired about how basketball players experienced their move into a new country. She explored what was important for five (5) male and one (1) female American basketball players when they moved to play for professional teams in four (4) different European countries. Chroni (1995) found that the way players perceived their move to play overseas in advance and during the experience was instrumental. Viewing the move as a chance for growth, as an exciting and challenging event helped them adjust and cope with personal/family- and basketball-related issues.

In the same context, Meisterjahn (2011) explored the experiences of 10US professional basketball players who played overseas. He focused on the difficulties and the opportunities the players faced both personally and professionally (i.e., basketball-related). The themes that surfaced relating with athletes' personal lives were: *learning local mentality*, *exploring physical environment*, *experiencing isolation* and *connecting with others*. These issues pertained to the different sociocultural conditions in the host country and homesickness stemming from missing their own people (family and friends) that was intensified due to communication issues (i.e., language barriers). All these challenges were accompanied by efforts of adjustments in social life and attempts of connection both with their own network in US and with locals from the host country. The sport related themes that emerged were dealing with "the business", *adjusting to team resources*, *managing team dynamics* and *playing "the game"*. The professional adjustments in terms of their role in the team, the different competition level, adapting in new playing styles and learning new rules for the game, the frustration of contractual consistency, pressure (for attainment of the expected level of performance) in terms of performance expectations, the

often limited resources of the host teams, and the fragile dynamics of relating with coaches and teammates. Meisterjanh (2011) concluded that both the positive and negative aspects of the abroad experiences contributed to athlete self-actualization and led to development and growth, as well as to a reconsideration of sense of self.

Schinke, Yukelson, Bartolacci, Battochio, and Johnstone (2011) and Ryba et al., (2012) explored cultural adaptation and challenges faced by migrant athletes. They found that these athletes face challenges in everyday practices, such as loneliness (i.e., lack of relatedness with the new teammates), communication issues, and adaptation issues to the social norms defined by the host and donor cultures, all of which challenges are informed by cultural resources. These resources act either as an aid or a barrier in order for the processes of cultural adaptation, integration, and/or adjustment to take place.

Some of the abovementioned research employed Fiske's (2004) model to propose interventions for migrating athletes' smooth adaptation (Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010; Schinke et al., 2011). Fiske revised Taylor's (1983) cognitive adaptation theory that initially comprised by three themes pertaining to derive meaning from the experience, restore mastery over the experienced situation and the life of the individual, and restore self-esteem through self-enhancement. Based on this theory, she added more components to create a model comprised of five adaptation pathways namely: belonging, trusting, understanding, controlling, self-enhancement that are already elucidated.

Schinke and colleagues (2011) located the challenges post-relocation athletes faced both in the sport context and outside of it (i.e., community and culture), and how and if they surmounted them. They employed Fiske's (2004) five adaptation pathways and provided guidelines for practically aiding procedures of the ongoing adaptation of these athletes.

In studies examining challenges that Aboriginal elite athletes encountered (Campbell & Sonn, 2009; Schinke et al., 2006; Schinke et al. 2010), the load of acculturation in most cases appeared to be placed upon the migrant athletes, without any help from their sporting environments. This one-way process usually results in resolving the issue of acculturation by assimilation, enculturation or by an adhesion in their home culture. In this context, Campbell and Sonn (2009) traced factors that hindered or facilitated the adaptation of relocated indigenous athletes. Specifically, barriers were not only related to sport but had their origin in sociocultural conditions, such as the culture shock experienced by these athletes, stemming from the new professional training practices, loneliness, lack of indigenous visibility and homesickness –that sometimes was a

constant emotion. An added barrier was racism, which emanated from stereotyping and homogenizing tensions (predefined expectations for the newcomers) that eroded the individual intentionality and agency. Furthermore, on behalf of facilitating factors the authors concluded that the presence and support of family members or friends, the supportive role of established or older Aboriginal players (e.g., through mentoring), and the cultural embededness (i.e., kindredness) encouraged acceptance and belonging, and acted as an aid to the processes of adaptation.

In a more recent study Schinke et al. (2013) thematically analysed acculturation of immigrant athletes and their coaches' view of this process. Two main themes came up, similar to the findings of previous studies by Schinke and colleagues (2006) and Campbell and Sonn (2009). The first one was acculturation as a fluid process with the immigrants moving from the cultural norms of their home country to those of the host country, namely navigating two world views. According to this theme, the athletes talked about two world views without excluding any of them; rather they utilized both these world views to negotiate their experiences in the host country and sporting environment. The second theme considered acculturation as a process that can be either a two way process, being shared and involving the host sport context or a one way process, meaning that in the later the load is solely placed to the immigrant (or with help from others but without mutual sharing and learning), while in the former the host context share the acculturation with the immigrant athlete. This study brought to the fore the role of coach in the process of acculturation and the "bridging of world views, via a positive view by the host context balanced with what can be learned from their immigrant athletes' home countries" (p. 1685).

Battochio et al., (2013) considered the role of coaches and teammates in post-relocation adaptation of immigrant professional athletes in North America. Fiske's (2004) four out of five adaptation pathways were traced, and the role of the sporting context for post-relocation adaptation was highlighted. The authors located the sub-strategies for each pathway, as these were applied by the coaching staff and teammates to foster relocated athletes' adaptation. In particular, language advice, language models (i.e., established immigrant teammates serving as role models in this regard), reinforcement, integration advise, shared cultural background with other immigrant teammates and cultural appreciation on behalf of the team. Another interesting finding is that inclusive reputation of the team and through teammates, meaning that the hosting team was famous for its

integrative atmosphere and immigrant veterans actively contributed in easing newcomers and growing team's reputation.

Recently, Schinke and McGannon (2014) sought to enrich the knowledge of practitioners and coaching stuff (including teammates and people that relate to the immigrant athletes) and to assist the immigrant athlete and her/his sport context to handle the process of acculturation and convert it to a positive experience. One of the limitations they spotted was that acculturation tends to be oversimplified as a procedure under the label of acculturation outcomes. Challenges such as communication (i.e., language, gestures), food, or clothing do exist, along with various attitudes that athletes adopt, like a 'resistance' to adapt which leads to behaviours of self-alienation or de-selection. However, athletes often navigate between the cultural worlds of their host and home countries, thus implementing acculturation or enculturation (Schinke et al., 2006). Thus, acculturation has to be approached cautiously and not as a static process or outcome. The authors –abiding in previous work (Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009; Schinke et al., 2013) -draw the attention to verge on this process of acculturation as being in a constant flow and being experienced and sometimes shared within a social context.

Agergaard and Ryba (2014) attempted a multidisciplinary approach, combining their sociological and psychological perspective (expertise). They examined transnational athletes' migration experiences and career transitions pertaining to transnational recruitment, establishment and termination of their sporting career. All the participants reported adaptation into new playing styles, language, weather, cultural differences and adhering both in host and donor countries' practices, developing a sense of transnational belonging. In terms of recruitment, channels, agents (or mediators), social networks but also individual agency in forming and producing mobility were apparent with power asymmetries affecting some athletes (i.e, African and not North American). Again, power relations impacted in the same way (as described above) on career termination, a stage that was crucial for all the athletes. Through their inquiry Agergaad and Ryba (2014) introduced a preliminary analytical framework that promotes understanding of the trajectory (development) of transnational athletes' sport career, incorporating both macro (i.e., social configurations and power networks) and micro (i.e., individual agency) facets that enable or constrain mobility and belongingness.

However, Schinke and McGannon (2014) suggested that it is the immigrant athlete that must adjust to the new customs and habitus of the host country thus experiencing cultural adjustment, where her/his sport context may provide resolutions, suggestions or

co-participate in the processes of acculturation. These processes depend on the responsibility placed upon (a) solely in the athlete, (b) in both the athlete and her/his environment with limited reciprocity, and (c) both the athlete and her/his environment with immersed reciprocity. The authors argued that the process of acculturation is a transition in its own right and requires effective coping mechanisms both in terms of individual and team/social level.

The encouragement and the supportive team climate may bring on a smooth adaptation. On the other side the team and sport context may be negative, hindering the adaptation process (Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke et al., 2011). When teams arrange a player transfer they do hold expectations for the transferring athletes (i.e., that the athlete is going to integrate and cope with the different habitus). However, the athlete also holds expectations in the same ground (i.e., that the new team will foster his adaptation with a positive climate). Thus, adaptation should be a collective process involving both athletes and their sporting environment in a mutual way (Schinke & McGannon, 2014).

From a sociological perspective Evans and Stead (2012) upon examining sport labour migration as an embodied experience added the issue of relationships to be considered in the acculturation process. The migrating Australasian athletes moved in order to play at a higher level, to grasp sporting opportunities, and represent their nation, gaining social recognition. The study comes to elucidate how intimate relationships can act as to facilitate or hinder the migration experience, where peers and close dependents seem to be important networks that ease migration. The athletes of this study adopted different acculturation strategies, but all of them agreed that relationships were vital in their migration experience. According to Evans and Stead (2012), athletes who move with a partner or a family member find the settlement to be a more smooth process, in comparison to those who migrate alone. Friendships with teammates do not substitute relationships with family and friends from home (Evans & Stead, 2012). Similarly, Richardson et al., (2012) also pointed out that immigrant players in their study preferred to turn to family for social support instead of the team staff. Accordingly, we cogitate that regardless of the country and culture of origin, characterized by more or less collectivistic or individualistic practices, migrating athletes seem to prefer to resort to their own social network from back home to cope with the challenges faced in the host country. This observation may have its origins in the lack of culturally educated and qualified personnel (i.e., psychologists, team staff) that will buffer and provide valuable support in these

transitioning athletes. Most importantly a bi-directional approach will be adopted where both athletes and teams' staff will share the acculturation process with immersed reciprocity (Campbell & Sonn, 2009; Schinke et al., 2013; Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke et al., 2006) applying intervention practices proposed by experts in this field (Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010; Schinke et al., 2011).

The only exploration into cyclists' adaptation was undertaken by Tenenbaum et al. (2003). The authors categorized the responses of cyclists into successful adaptation or failed adaptation. The researchers highlighted two participants among their sample who felt overwhelmed by the number, quality and intensity of stressors in their sporting and personal lives and their responses showed a severe failed adaptation and deterioration in their physical, emotional and mental states. The first cyclist struggled to effectively commit to being an elite athlete and to maintaining full-time employment. The second cyclist struggled with the demands related to training, competing, and immigrating, as well as with raising a family. Failed adaptation for both cyclists was manifested through the following symptoms: (a) high tension, (b) low vigour, (c) fatigue, (d) helplessness, (e) rigidity, and (f) avoidance behaviour. The remaining twelve participants employed more constructive responses, contributing to either a failure adaptation, but with less intense signs, or a successful adaptation. Successful adaptation was characterized by (a) low state anxiety, (b) vigor, (c) clarity of thought, (d) hope, (e) flexible approach toward context, and (f) presence of social support. A consistent finding for all the cyclists was that those "who did not receive constructive forms of social support experienced significant states of failure adaptation" (p. 40). The researchers concluded that failed adaptation is an individualised phenomenon characterised by complexity. Lack in coping strategies and support mechanisms and non-training stressors emanating from psychological pressure add up to physiological responses often leading in adaptation failure.

In sum, sport psychology scholarship that explored the sport labour migration phenomenon was mostly –if not solely- interested in locating the challenges the relocated athletes had to face and issues pertaining to adaptation or acculturation processes. Fiske's (2004) model was used in some of the inquiries (Battochio et al. 2010; Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010; Schinke et al., 2011) to trace the route of adaptation pathways and provide suggestions for practical application and interventions. The scarcity of research in the field (Schinke & McGannon, 2014) should problematize researchers, given the increasing global flows of human capital.

Methodology and Design

In this section the methodological approach and the design of the study are presented in full detail. The issues brought up are the philosophical grounding of this inquiry, the qualitative genre employed, the methodological rationale, the step-by-step design and implementation of it, and finally reflections on issues of trustworthiness and the researcher's positioning.

Philosophical Foundations

At this point it is crucial to delineate the assumptions, worldviews and beliefs about knowledge and knowing, as these very notions not only have implications but most importantly designate the entire inquisition; the perspective from which I verge on the study matter, meaning the research questions, methodology, design and conclusions, and the rationale emanate from these principles.

Ontology/ Epistemology.

By referring to ontology and epistemology I posit myself and my inquiry in terms of the nature and mode of the reality and knowledge. Since ontology refers to the nature of reality, being and knowledge and epistemology refers to the mode and origin of knowledge and the relationship of the (potential) knower and knowledge, there is an interrelation of the two constructs (Thayer-Bacon, 1997) that impacts on the research procedure. This view, guided by a critical theory approach, displays a convergence between ontology and epistemology, as knowledge is contingent on interactions (e.g., participant-researcher-context) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, I elaborated both ontology and epistemology in conjunction.

The central belief that guided this study derives from a tentative critical theory that merges the relational epistemology and social constructionism. Critical theory perspective, as an umbrella term, supports that there is a reciprocal relationship between and among the researcher and participant–a view that Gergen (2009) supports- and the research process is impacted by the values the researcher holds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).At this point I add that participants' values share the same significant impact upon shaping this process. Additionally, context plays an equally important role in the conception and construction of

'realities' and knowledge; it is spatially and chronically specific and dependent on historical, political, economic, social, cultural, ethnic, gender factors. All of these elements guide the enquiry towards a cultural sport psychology prospect, which I will scrutinize later on in this chapter.

Seeing knowledge as a social construction implies that it is subject of imprecision and falsification, and proponents of different constructions (e.g., positivism, post-positivism, but most of all constructionism since this perspective does not account on "objective" procedures or definite results) should endow "on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). I espouse the galvanization by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and recommend the readers to put aside their disbeliefs and reservations until my positioning is fully developed.

Relational epistemology.

Thayer-Bacon (1997) in introducing her perception on relational epistemology supports that:

> We need each other to nurture the constructing/deconstructing of knowledge and help us in our searches for knowledge that is sound, comprehensive, coherent, and cohesive, as well as beneficial and beautiful. We also need each other to help us in our efforts to problematize and unsettle such knowledge, therefore allowing for multiplicity, dissonance, and discord. (p. 240)

I embrace this epistemology as it looks at all human beings through the lens of their social and relational nature and assumes that social relationships and interactions impact in the construction, development or de-construction of ideas; touching sensible cases where ideas may not found fertile ground to be communicated. Thus the quality of our relationships affects our perception of ourselves, of how we define ourselves compared to others and the contexts we live in. Thayer-Bacon (1997) further adds contexts, time, place and culture, as well as embodiment, all of which affect our experience and interpretation of the world and ourselves. Another feature of the relational epistemology is that all people can be influenced by their past and by other peoples' perceptions and social practices.

Thayer-Bacon (1997) further advocates that knowledge is constructed from humans' sharing experiences and efforts to make meaning out of these. Knowledge, which is constructed by people, and the social practices which are different depending in the context (temporal, spatial, and cultural), define what is believable, tellable and acceptable (Ryba & Wright, 2009). In the sport context, Douglas and Carless (2011) articulated this

notion by saying that "stories told in sport teach us what is expected of each of us in our particular role, what types of stories are acceptable, and what a happy ending looks and feels like" (p. 7).

Drawing on Dewey, Thayer-Bacon (1997) supports the notion that inquiry is a dialectical process and constitutes an interdependent, dynamic relationship between the researcher and the participants. The interesting part of this epistemological supposition is that it highlights the pivotal role of experiencing quality and caring relationships in that they foster the ability to enhance our awareness as "knowers" of the world and ourselves. The results from the first and second research questions lead us to the understanding that people when missing intimate relationships also become aware of *who they want to be* and *with whom*; the state of the social foreclosure, as a consequence of the migration experience, elicits identity reconstructions and deepens self-awareness.

Another reason that captured the researcher's interest is that it shares common ground with cultural sport psychology in the part that it places attention in the context, understanding and tolerance of obscurities, egalitarian inclusion, connection between theory and practice. This epistemology, labelled as a pragmatic social feminist perspective, "views knowledge as something that is socially constructed by embedded, embodied people who are in relation with each other" (Thayer-Bacon, 1997, p. 245). By embracing these core aspects I depart this epistemological underpinning and move to social constructionism.

Social constructionism.

The social constructionist perspective, which was integrated with the relational epistemology in a similar way, argues for the centrality of interactions and co-construction between and among people in the understanding of the 'reality' and the world around us. It is through relationships with others, ourselves and contexts that we make meaning of our experiences and our identities (Gergen, 2009). The self is positioned, defines and is being defined by the contexts a person functions and performs. The contexts (i.e., social, historical, political, cultural, etc.) where these interactions take place are of great importance, as well as the role of language as a mediator in our understanding (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 2009). Discourse and language and other social practices are performed dialogically to co-construct and reconstruct experience, meaning, knowledge and claim agency; this being done by negotiating, rejecting or accepting the kind of stories a person narrates thus reconstructing identities being reformed through experiences and narrations.

Subjectivity, relationality and multidimensionality are the characteristics of the construction of knowledge from people situated in time, space and interdependent contexts (Gergen, 2009). Knowledge is not simply possessed but is performed dialogically through meaning making actions such (through language and discourse) as narrations (Burr, 2003). Power relations, prevailing social norms and agency all are negotiating their role in the construction of knowledge and the world we live by. This standpoint critically views the taken for granted knowledge and norms and dispute the notion of an objective reality and unbiased knowledge by asserting that interpretation is a presupposition and integral to the construction of meaning and knowledge (Gergen, 2009).

The constructionist inquiry leads to the notion of humans as having personal agency "that live and lead storied *and silenced* lives [emphasis added]" (Sparkes & Smith, 2008, p. 296), being shaped by the sociocultural contexts they live in. According to constructionists, the role of social relations and interactions is central in shaping peoples' construction and re-constructions of identity–as they are culturally and socially situated. This approach theorizes narratives as social action through which our lives and selves are performed and co-constructed (Sparkes & Smith, 2008).

Since I deal with narratively constructed identities, I endorse this approach as it posits the individual in interactive relationships and narrations that have temporal and spatial ever-changing character (Sommers, 1994). Sommers (1994) argue that narrative identity is multidimensional and interdependent with processes and relationships and thus compatible with relational epistemologies.

It is my intention that this inquiry will have 'pragmatic' theoretical, empirical, and applicable implications and hope my view to contribute in this direction. This is the reason why I attempted tentative, flexible and multilayered definitions of terms and why I positioned myself in between these two epistemological perspectives. Relating to my research questions both the relational epistemology and social constructionism under a critical theory perceptive focus on the relational nature and co-construction of experiences, being and meaning making. Thus, they bring together core elements that compose the foci of this inquiry which are (a) the impact of migration experience in triggering processes of identity reconstructions and how these are detected in narratives dialogically performed; and (b) the core social motives by Fiske (2004) that act as a narrative meaning making devices in order to understand the cyclists' motives to leave the donor country and return back again.

Qualitative Methodology

Cultural sport psychology.

Cultural psychology as defined by Bruner (1990) does not deal exclusively with behaviour but with the intentionally based action. More specifically it scrutinizes the situated in cultural contexts action and the mutual interaction between the intentionality of the people who participate.

The critique of dominant Western ways of knowing and interpretation and the consequence of addressing individual identities and experiences as independent of social phenomena and contexts lead to a cultural turn first in sociology and psychology, to finally paved the way for sport psychology to embrace the cultural paradigm (Ryba, Schinke, & Tenenbaum, 2010). This paradigm supports the view of the centrality of language, non-verbal gestures and cultural practices in the embodied experience and pinpoints the impact of culture in peoples' lives and interactions (e.g., researchers, participants). Specifically, cultural sport psychology aims to understand the interactions between psyche and culture embedded in socio-historical contexts; and highlights the impact of "language, communication, relational perspectives, cultural practices, and meanings, beliefs and values in human development, learning and behaviour" (Ryba & Stambulova, 2013, p. 5).

Ryba and Wright (2010) argue that sport psychology embracing a cultural paradigm presupposes an undogmatically driven approach and a discourse that brings to the fore identity, representation and diversity issues and the blend and co-existence of all these elements in order to understand the human experience and being. To paraphrase Ryba and Stambulova (2013), universalizing hypotheses of applicability of interventions and sport psychology practices are discarded and culture sensitive research has replaced this tension for uniformity and conformity. Nevertheless, we witness that prevailing norms and discourses dictate conformity to specific practices, interpretations and ways of being, consequently guiding sport psychology research towards a narrowing and annihilation of subjectivity and everything considered as diverse (Ryba & Wright, 2010).

This discourse aims to bridge theory driven research and practice in order to have pragmatic implications and applications and create social change. Another characteristic is that it is multidisciplinary and amalgamates different scientific disciplines to accomplish a holistic approach. In addition it challenges the taken for granted notions of knowledge, objective reality and truth embedded in Western traditional epistemologies. Ryba and

Stambulova (2013) when referring to discursive culture imply that "language, non-verbal sings and cultural practices impose certain frameworks which structure how people live and derive meaning from their experiences within a particular context" (p. 1).

Everyday life of Greek cyclists who migrated signing professional contracts with European teams and how this experience provided them with different ways for viewing the world and themselves (Edensor, 2002), as well as why this experience commenced and ended was the focus of this inquiry. To reveal how the identities of sport participants and their reasoning of starting or putting an end to migration experience are more complex than has often been considered, especially when the cultural studies lens is used, I recognised culture and narrative as significant functions in understanding how one structures identity concept and role. As Bruner (1994) argues:

> Cultures are powerful systems for specifying possible ways of knowing, striving, feeling, and acting with respect to ourselves and others. Culture, through its store of narratives and its formulas for devising them, defines ... different ways not only of conceiving of our present states of being, but also our past and our future states. (pp. 52-53)

In the micro and macro environments cultures not only define "*who am I*", but also place standards of "*who I should be*". They subcutaneously define what kind of narratives is tellable and what kinds should be silenced (Douglas and Carless, 2011).

On the other hand, narrated stories are situated in a specific context that mirrors the prejudices, taboos, and norms of the society as well as one's struggle to negotiate approval, rejection or the 'bargain' for discovering his/her own terms, for creating some alignment between the experience and the narrated story (Smith & Sparkes, 2010). As such, I approached this study anticipating that the culture(s) of each cyclist would provide the context for the story he narrated, while his 'dominant', 'residual' and 'emergent' cultures would coexist and challenge each other, allowing negotiation and change to occur in his identity (Williams, 1981, as cited in Edensor, 2002).

With this enquiry I originally set out to enrich the depth of knowledge on the psychological facets of sport migration considering alongside the cultural background (Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009) of the participating migrating athletes. Following Ryba and Stambulova (2013) I integrated culture in sport psychology scholarship in an attempt to provide empirically grounded rationalization to enrich and refine theory and practice.

Narrative approach.

During the last two decades 'narrative turn' begins to blossom in humanities and social sciences (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). However, in sport psychology scholarship not many studies so far have used narrative approach (Douglas & Carless, 2011; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a).

According to Bruner (1990) narrative approach is one fundamental device that organizes and gives meaning to experiences. Meaning is co-constructed with-in the contexts and relationships through language, non-verbal aspects of communication, discourse, artefacts and other culture bearers. Through narratives we construct our identities, organize our experiences and make sense of ourselves and the world around us (Polkinghore, 1988). In this direction, narrative approach not only shed light in how stories are created, structured and function, and how meaning is attached, but also in the ways in which narratives are performed, by and with whom; as well as how they are accumulated, silenced, negotiated or accepted (Squire et al., 2008).

The performance of narratives, in the approach utilized here, presuppose multiple, often disconnected subjectivities, "socially constructed and constructing, reinterpreted and reinterpretable" (Squire et al., 2008, p. 4) all this being done dialogically. This narrative organization of experiences heavily affects the way people perceive themselves and their identities and constitute essential practices for the maintenance of our psychological wellbeing (Bruner, 1990). I claim that these self-referred constructions not only position our present and re-create our past, but also design and create our future (Bruner, 1990).

Smith and Sparkes (2008b) argue for the possibilities narratives offer and their dynamic nature. There seem to be consensus in that there is no single definition of the term as it serves a variety of functions and encompasses multiple understandings (Riessman, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2008b) depending on its applications and the scientific discipline that employ it. Narratives however, are characterised as having structure (sequence), plot, characters, being spatially and temporally situated and conveying a meaning, interpretation and the causality of actions (consequential function) (Riessman, 2008). Narrative inquiry is a process which lies in the philosophical positioning of interpretivism and argues that there is no social reality one can know about in an objective manner, independent of oneself (beliefs and biases); and that there is no universal truth, hence realities and knowledge are social constructions and thus subjective (Smith & Sparkes, 2008b). Supporting this argument Smith and Sparkes (2008b) describe that narratives are a resource based in

sharing and "serve as an essential source of psycho-socio-cultural learning and shape who we are and might become" (p. 3) and consider them to compose and construct realities.

In terms of agency, I encompass the notion that is claimed through the performance and co-construction of narratives, taking into account the impact of contexts as well as individual intentionality, in an effort to make meaning of experiences and identities and reclaim, re-construct and control them. I consort with Bruner (1990) in his point that in order to understand human, we have first to understand experiences and actions guided by intentionality and how this intentionality becomes apparent through the participation in common shared systems of culture.

Social context, action and interaction have shaped the individual experiences that cannot be ignored and even though narratives can be viewed as a personal account of experiences they are deeply impacted by and situated in contexts (Smith & Sparkes, 2008b). Social and cultural conventions shape the stories–who comes to tell stories, listen to, whom stories are of greater significance and so on (Smith & Sparkes, 2008b; Sparkes & Partington, 2003).

Hence, writing is viewed by narrative researchers as a co-construction, a subjective constitution that is being given form and shape by people (i.e., researcher, participants, audience) and contexts (i.e., historical, social, cultural) these people reside in (Smith & Sparkes, 2010). On this account, Ryba and Wright (2010) accumulate that in narratives we are not interested in whether there is accuracy in the recalling and narrating activity but rather they should be conceived as fluid, provisional and open to interpretations, such as socio-historical discourses.

While the social constructionist viewpoint creates space to contest the prevailing social norms as ways of understanding the world and ourselves, it prioritizes the role of social relations and interactions in shaping peoples' constructions and reconstructions of identity as they are culturally and socially situated (Sparkes& Smith, 2008). This approach emphasizes the relational nature of narratives, where individuals resist, negotiate or align to the narrative maps available and in consistence with their prevailing social norms (Smith & Sparkes, 2010; Sparkes & Smith, 2008b). Narratives are the 'vehicle' through which, by interacting with others, people co-create meaning of their experiences and themselves (Riessman, 2008).

The common ground between narrative and self lies on the fact that narrative emerges through experience, while at the same time attach form to experience (Ochs & Capps, 1996). It is through the experiences and the narratives we construct and perform us

make sense of who we are. Hence, selves and identities are relational and connected and performed with people and contexts (Smith & Sparkes, 2008a, 2008b). This inquiry endorsed the narrative approach that is thoroughly cultural and Sparkes' (1996) query on how we can communicate in written form the subjectivity of one's lived experience. In order to illuminate the complexity and messiness of life in elite sport culture (Douglas & Carless, 2009), as well as the constant and complex process of reconfiguration of our identities and experiences the narrative approach deemed more appropriate.

Deriving from the abovementioned contemplation I attempted to explore the narrative identity from a storied resource perspective (Smith & Sparkes, 2008) but with elements of the inter-subjective perspective that balances the individual and sociocultural aspects highlighting the role of narratives. According to Riessman (2002) personal narratives are a significant source of how people through their stories interpret and make meaning of past experiences. It is not just a procedure of recalling accurately, as Ryba and Wright (2010) suggest, but of remembering and re-constructing as the cyclists' try to categorize and make sense of their lives.

By applying narrative as a method, with the subjective and interpretive nature it entails, I endorse that individuals in their social and cultural space actively bestow or dismount meaning to and from their surroundings (Bamberg, 2012). The evident implications of migration as a transition event are changes in the sociocultural contexts people live, operate, perform and interact. These changes are extended to the relationships and interactions that take place in these contexts and inevitably are extended on changes in the sense of self.

Participants

The sole participation criterion was to be a highly qualified seasonal migrant worker (European Committee on Migration, 1996), meaning that the participating athletes should have held a salaried contract for a period of time abroad. Five Greek cyclists (four males and one female) fitted this criterion at the time of conducting the interviews and were invited to share their stories.

The ages of the cyclists when the migration experience commenced ranged from18 to 28 years of age (the other two of them where 22 and one was 25years old). The longer stay was for six years, one stayed for four years, another for two months, whereas the other two stayed for two years. The cyclists at the time of the interviews were cycling on average for 9.2 years (with the minimum being five years and the maximum 15 years) and

during their careers all had been members of the Greek national team. Their competition experience included National Championships, European Championships, World Cups and Championships, and pre-Olympic teams.

To answer the first research question the tales of the two male cyclists were presented as these comprised two dialogical narratives that revealed two very different experiences: a 4-year living and training abroad and a 2-month abroad experience. One was a track cyclist, who joined a continental road cycling team and one was a mountain biker, who joined a continental mountain bike team. The decision to invite a cyclist with only two months of experience abroad was based on the premise that not all athletes who pursue a professional sport career abroad stay in the host country for the full contract period. Hence his experience enriches the repertoire of athlete migration tales. As discussed later, this short period of time spent in the host country was long enough to incite culture shock (Bochner, 2003) and provoke negotiations and reconstructions of his identity. The rest three tales revolve around a performance oriented scenario commonly found in the elite sport narratives, thus the need to expand on alternative narratives could be met with elaborating on the two tales with alternative scripts.

For the purposes of the second research question all five cyclists were included in the analyses, as I seek to understand the reasons that lead these athletes to leave their home country and the reasons and motives –related to adaptation processes- that lead them to subsequently leave the host country and return home.

The unique feature of the narrators in this study is that they are the first Greek cyclists who signed professional contracts with teams abroad. This feature signifies that they were pioneers and as such easily identifiable. Following Punch's (1998) proposal, I informed the cyclists on this potential exposure, both orally and in written (consent form). The cyclists agreed wholeheartedly to participate. To enhance anonymity on the shared stories I used pseudonyms and omitted the names of their home- and host towns.

Data Collection

The study was reviewed and approved by the researcher's departmental Ethics Committee. Five pilot interviews were made for the interviewer to become familiar and acquainted with the process. An interview guide was formed from previous studies on immigrant athletes and was revisited throughout the interviews. This interview guide was partially used in a form of open ended questions due to the decision to adopt a conversational style and a narrative approach.

Single face-to-face interviews were conducted by the first author, who has been a competitive mountain biker for the past 11 years. Contacting (by telephone) and inviting the cyclists to participate in this study s was uncomplicated as the interviewer had been a teammate on the national team participating in European Championships, Balkan Championships and other international races. This also signifies that an unforced conversational style characterized the interviews, while she held an empathetic stance throughout the interviews, following Sparkes' (1996) observation of the researcher as an "emotional insider" and not as a "detached outsider". The interviews took place in their homes (except three that were conducted in a coffee bar, in the interviewer's house and in another teammate's house) preserving a familiar atmosphere and personal space for the interviewees, so to make them feel comfortable.

The purpose was to invite the participants to share and jointly construct stories about the research topic (their experiences as sport immigrants) (Chase, 2005). For this reason semi-structured in-depth interviews were applied consisting of open-ended questions. Because of the retrospective nature of the interviews I assumed that the low structure format would aid the procedure to recall not necessarily accurately but in a detailed manner by remembering and re-constructing as they try to make sense of their lives and selves.

To accommodate the conversational style, the predetermined open-ended questions or emerging ones would be brought up and discussed at times and in a way that fitted the conversation and did not interrupt its flow (Kvale, 1996). These questions focused in the migration experience, its importance and impact on the athletes' identities and raised during the interviews were deemed relevant or derived from the interviewee's narrations. They were applied to encourage for rich descriptions, and they were clarifying and prompting in their nature (Riessman, 2002). An additional function was to attach a chronological or sequential perspective (i.e., and then what happened, what happened before/ temporal or episodic ordering) to the stories. The end in all the interviews came naturally as the interviewee and the interviewer agreed that everything concerning the migration experience and other side events linked with it (i.e., background information about their lives inside and outside sport, the initiatives of the decision to depart, important events that stigmatized their lives as athletes) had been covered. As the researcher, I was co-participant in negotiating and dialogically creating the meaning conveyed and performed through the stories, together with the interviewees (Riessman, 2008).

The interviews were conducted in Greek language, lasted between 88 and 129 minutes, and were audio-recorded. They were transcribed verbatim yielding a total of 353 single spaced pages of text. After that text was analyzed and subsequently translated to English by the researcher for the purposes of this publication (Twinn, 1997). An experienced sport psychology practitioner, who had previously worked with national team road cyclists, reviewed the translations to ensure that the meaning was maintained as in the original language.

Data Analysis

To address the first question the researcher used dialogic/performance analysis, whereas for the second question thematic narrative analysis was employed. The rationale for the decision to apply each analysis for the respective research questions is elaborated here.

Dialogic/ performance narrative analysis.

My perspective posits that a person (one's sense of self and identity) is defined by the sociocultural context with the narrative repository it provides, and the relational context through the interaction with other people and environments. Nevertheless, an individual retains an active role (i.e., claiming agency) while situating him/herself by performing storytelling as a meaning making device, thus defining the surroundings (the context, the world) and the self. This viewpoint guided me to employ a dialogic approach in the analysis and interpretation, which underlines that a storyteller accepts, rejects or negotiates meaning with and to people and contexts.

The narrative analysis was employed aiming to locate the narrative modes the cyclists used to negotiate their multiple identities and reveal how the migration experience impacted their sense of self (Bamberg, 2012). More specifically, I used Riessman's (2008) dialogic/performance analysis, which is a hybrid interpretive tool that borrows elements from thematic and structural analyses while engaging in understanding to 'whom' a storied account refers to, 'when' as well as 'why' someone tells a story. This analysis places its focus on what the story seeks to accomplish (Bamberg, 2012).

The analysis began during the transcription of the interviews when 'with a first glance' the storied excerpts that seemed to illuminate the research aim were marked. Frank (2012) describes this phase as a process of continuous revisions on research report drafts, where the researcher discovers what part of the narration will be left out and what

comprises a story or small stories that respond to the phenomena under study. Following, the analysis focused on answering central questions on identities according to Frank (2012), such as "how does the story teach people who they are, and how do people tell stories to explore whom they might become" (p. 45) and my discussion touches on issues of agency such as "how are narrative resources distributed between different groups; who has access to which resources, and who is under what form of constraint in the resources they utilize?" (p. 44).

In line with cultural psychology mindset, this approach pays careful attention in the contexts these actions and performances of speech take place. It highlights the role of the researcher, locale, and sociocultural conditions (micro and macro environments of the sport and country) in the meaning making process and co-creation of narratives.

According to Riessman (2002) personal narratives are a significant source of how people interpret and make meaning of past experiences through their stories. Likewise, Bamberg (2012) contended that narratives act as central mechanisms in the construction of self and identity. They posit that the quest for a definition of the self, articulated in the *who am I* question, have their origins in the history of narrative, and the analysis of the stories themselves.

At the same time this analysis highlights the polyphonic nature of narratives, where the micro and macro contexts (e.g., social, historical, local, cultural, relational) impose, provoke, foster or silence specific kinds of narratives (Riessman, 2008). However, with the dialogic analysis meaning is not restricted in the narrative itself but is being ascribed in the dialogical interaction between the storyteller and the audience, the researcher and the transcript, and the written text and the prospective readers (Riessman, 2008).

During the narrative analysis procedure the researcher conveyed in a story format the temporal sequences of the lived experience or fractured intermediate events that were storied in the interviews. The holistic based analysis conserves the story format as a whole while proceeds to analysis and interpretation. The narrations are stories in interaction with the interviewee, and a hypothetical audience (i.e., the readers of the narration) and consist of experiences and events lived in interaction with other people and contexts. A narrator's story is shaped and co-created with the researcher (Smith & Sparkes, 2010) and since quite often there are no clear boundaries on locating stories in a text (Riessman, 2008), I visited and revisited my own views, stories and connections with competitive cycling as an athlete and sport psychology practitioner.

Even though the act of the researcher retelling and rewriting the stories told by the interviewees is by itself a procedure of co-constructing, I assumed that the representation of the data in a storied form would restore the active role to the readers (Riessman, 2008) to make their ~~own~~ assumptions, interpretations and meanings. As a starting point I converged in Smith and Sparkes (2010) positioning, that for narrative researchers writing is "... a subjective process and product that communicates stories researchers have co-constructed...They are shaped by both the writers' and readers' history and the cultures they inhabit" (p. 87).

On this account I re-storied (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002) these cyclists' stories beginning with a small prelude (or background information about themselves) that sets the scene. I continued onwards by the struggling and negotiations that took place, to end with their decision to depart, which was part of claiming their own defined sense of identity (priorities and values that provoked agentic actions). The analysis of the interviews was driven from a chronological sequence of events that lead to prioritizations and negotiations, and finally to the formation of the plot and the story. That is why I presented the stories first and my interpreting conclusion afterwards. After reading my reflections on the stories can the readers reflect further and problematize on notions, constructions and theories.

The objective was that the present study illustrates the depth and the magnitude of how this migration experience impacted these athletes' identities and the way they reconstructed them through narrative.

Thematic narrative analysis.

The researcher approached the second research question "Why these cyclists departed from their home country and for what reasons they returned back" by employing thematic narrative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008). This methodological approach to analysis is akin to understanding human experience and I considered it suitable for uncovering the athletes' motives of initiation and termination of the migration experience.

Fikes's (2004) theoretical model guided the analysis and interpretation of the narrations in order to trace processes of adaptation these cyclists experienced or skipped, and the role these had in the athlete decision and motive to terminate the migration experience. The focus was on the content (i.e., what was said) of the narrations being performed and their thematic meaning. Underlying themes, ideologies and meanings that

constituted each semantic unit were located (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes were analysed for each narrative case as well as across the cases. These key themes were storied accounts and as part of the athletes' narrations construct and constitute attempts for social space and identities.

Narrative accounts that captured and responded to the research question where considered as themes, taking into account that "the keyness of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Therefore, overall themes were the five pathways introduced in the theoretical model employed and sub-themes within those were related with each pathway and labelled under brief characterizations. The writing up was considered to be an essential part of the analysis with a constant moving back and forth through the narratives and researcher's interpretations and re-representations, where new themes may be captured throughout this process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Unlike dialogic/performance narrative analysis this kind of thematic narrative analysis rarely places attention to structure of speech or characteristics of the act of narration (Riessman, 2008). Under the same belief that narratives are co-constructed and dialogically performed, I considered the role of the micro and macro environments. Since the migration experience was a significant process and transition process for the cyclists, through their narrations they re-interpret and make sense of 'after all what happened', which is a subjective perception, articulating and co-generating of the whole narration.

Thematic narrative analysis allows for extended narrative accounts to be analyzed and interpreted as a whole and does not fragment them into shortcut categories and coding (Riessman, 2008). It allows for chronological ordering of episodes and comparisons between cases, however in my analysis here after this ordering I focused on the core assumptions and code them according Fiske's model. Issues of distribution are frivolous as I aimed to map the contours of the narrative co-construction of migration experience and its starting and finishing points.

Even though, most narrative thematic analyses does not account much the interaction in the research relationship, researcher's positioning and role in co-construction, and are solely interested in "what is told" (Riessman, 2008) I intentionally attempted not to ignore these vital elements. Thus, I amalgamate this approach to content by acknowledging and integrating the aforementioned focus points addressing to which a story refers to as well as to the conditions and contexts these narrations performed.

The co-construction of the narratives in this query is deductively guided by Fiske's (2004) theoretical model. Yet, the process of re-reading the narrative data leads the analyses to the theory they resemble, thus derive inductively. The case in this project is that inductive and deductive reasoning complement each other throughout the research process. My active role in co-constructing and co-participating in the narratives is evident, even though the identification of the themes was guided by theory. The selection of the themes to be included in the analysis and re-presented to the audience is a highly subjective process. Themes did not just emerge inside narratives but they were dialogically co-constructed and as Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997) (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006) pointed out they acquired relevance and correspondence with a theory through my understandings.

The five narrations presented for the purposes of the second research question were not intended to be representative or generalizable but rather to build upon a theoretical framework that thickened my understandings for the complexities and significance of the impact of the migration experience on athletes' lives.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In employing the narrative approach issues of trustworthiness seem to be out of fit since the interview is being viewed as a dynamic and relational meaning making process (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). Riessman (2008) advocated that "investigators don't have access to the 'real thing', only the speaker's (or writer's or artist's) imitation (mimesis)" (p. 22). Citing Mattingly (1998), Riessman (2008) shared the view that narratives are not only about recalling past experiences and remembering, but also about creating new experiences for the listeners. Thus, the researcher or listener plays a fundamental part in the subjective act of interpreting and analyzing the narratives (Riessman, 2008) which are co-constructed under specific circumstances.

The very act of narrating and writing is by itself "situated and strategic", subjective and positioned in specific contexts and institutions, referring to an audience (Riessman, 2008, p. 183) while bringing to the surface counteraction or reproduction of dominant discourses. Co-creating and re-interpreting experiences and events is the scope of narrative inquiry thus attempting for verification of facts and accuracy in the 'reporting of truth' do not fit with the philosophical underpinnings of social constructionism.

One of the basic assumptions that characterize narrative inquiry, according to Smith and Sparkes (2008b), is that meaning is not considered to be an objective

representation of the world, or a stable objectification that originates from within us. In agreement with Smith and Sparkes' (2008b) argument, it is through narratives people create and negotiate meaning that it is performed and co-constructed (dialogically), and is context (i.e., spatially, temporally) and audience dependent; a relational act between the narrator and the researcher that involves negotiations and re-constructions of meanings, that are intentional and interpretive in nature. In this inquiry, narratives are encountered as such, thus, there is no claim that the story co-created in a situated time and place is less authentic and that there is a need for verification or accuracy of events and experiences. Nor there is the expectation that the narrations are "reality reports delivered from a fixed repository" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 127) and depict factual truth proved by evidence (either archival data or historical accounts) (Riessman, 2008).

On the contrary, interpretative practices and the co-construction of the meaning, the contexts and conditions in which meaning is conveyed are under scrutiny (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, 2011). Any attempt to verify findings, ensure transferability (similar to positivist internal validity) or correspondence in the same way as in quantitative paradigm is incompatible with the fundamentals of narrative inquiry (Riessman, 2008). In this regard, Riessman (2008) highlighted that fixed criteria evaluating experimental research such as validity, reliability, and ethics, do not apply, correspond or evaluate the quality of narrative research; neither do criteria such as correspondence (validity in terms of historical truth) or internal consistency (e.g., coherence and factuality in narrations) that attend to research rooted within realist epistemologies have any application to narrative inquiry. There are no claims for generalizability or representativeness (external validity). All narratives are of value since they provide a view of potential and conceivable (intelligible) 'scenarios' under specific circumstances (spatial, temporal and contextual) (Chase, 2005).

Issues of reliability or validity do not apply –in the narrow use and meaning of these terms-, as the focus of narrative inquiry is on the 'how', 'why', 'when' and with 'whom' a narrative is performed and co-created [how narratives are conveyed, under what circumstances –context, what meanings where communicated –content, and the positioned audience-listener] (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). Holstein and Gubrium (2011) referring to the reliability criterion, explain that the recurrence of answers on a specific circumstance cannot be replicated because of the change in the circumstances under which it derived. Further, they elucidate that "validity of answers derives not from their one-to-one

correspondence to meanings held within the respondent, but from the respondent's ability to convey communicated experiences in terms that are locally comprehensible" (p. 154).

A sound narrative analysis linking data and theoretical constructs in a coherent way may strengthen validity (Riessman, 2008). Furthermore, the coexistence of 'realities', meanings that often are contradictory and the analytical thoughts of meaning making (constructing) facilitate the trustworthiness (Riessman, 2008). Persuasiveness and not a forced coherence in narratives -a need stemming from the dominant hearable stories with continuity and consequential sequence- is an important element of a rigorous narrative project. But persuasiveness alone cannot resolve issues of methodological and analytical rationale. These have to be explicitly discussed, as well as the design and processes leading to the employment of specific methods and findings (Riessman, 2008).

Riessman (2008) citing McCormack (2004), comments on issues of trustworthiness in narrative inquiry and suggests that in order to rationalize about theoretical claims in a research project a variety of issues need to be clarified. Specifically, the methods employed need to justified in terms of how they were used and why, the researcher has to position her/himself in terms of the epistemological stance and situated standpoint (by engaging in reflexivity), explicitly document their referenced sources, invite the reader to uncover their understandings and critically view the abovementioned components separately and in relation to each other.

The researcher's positioning and reflexivity.

By situating myself as an 'active participant' (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997) and highlighting the relational nature of this inquiry (Smith & Sparkes, 2008b) I reflect on how my involvement in the storytelling process may have affected it. This process amplifies trustworthiness, as biases and factors that may have affected the research procedure are being known to the potential readers (Knowles, Gilbourne, & Niven, 2011; Riessman, 2008). My epistemological and ontological presuppositions –that are interwoven with issues of validity and reliability- were made clear in earlier parts of this inquiry.

Emotions that surpass pure scientific interest and empathy emerged, and were accompanied by the quest for my own identity. My experiences in cycling and major transitions of my life impacted the research process and trajectory and where impacted by it; another important factor impacting the interview process, analysis and discussion was not just the common background of cycling with the co-participants but the fact that I was familiar with all of them being ex-teammates.

This familiarity with the co-narrators in this study may have a double angle, that of intimacy and the role of an 'emotional insider' (Sparkes, 1996), or a biased view of my personal perception for each individual. Together with the co-participants we have shared common racing in and out of the country, training camps with the national team and moments of relaxing between the races. Hence, my subjective and situated opinion derives from previous shared experiences and surrounding discourses that took place in specific contexts and under specific circumstances. To meet them again after some years and discuss with them was transformed in a "documentary" of the pioneer Greek cyclists that dared a move abroad. Throughout the interviews, throughout the interviews I felt so grateful to have the opportunity to witness and be part of such an experience.

After conducting the interviews and until know I live with them, they are part of me. There are quotes that I often use and I respectfully consider them as 'way of life' such as the metaphor of Odyssey in Manolis' tale and his words about inner dilemmas of suppressing himself in order to stay in the team –with a possible consequence to compete in the Olympics- or leave for a better quality of everyday life: "*in the meantime* [until the Olympics] *it is 3 years of my life, and I want to be richer through experiences and not live like a robot and be wasted away".*

During the interview process, embedded in the relationship between the researcher and the narrator, of co-construction and interpretation (which lasted throughout the transcription and analyses) I tried not to adopt an authoritative stance but to engage in self-reflection (Chase, 2005). To have an interactive voice and empathetically connect with the participants meant that I should account for my own biases and positioning (sociocultural context). The reason for employing an interactive narrative strategy lies in that "researchers have to understand themselves if they are to understand how they interpret narrators' stories and that readers need to understand researchers' stories (about their intellectual and personal relationships with narrators as well as with the cultural phenomena at hand) if readers are to understand narrators' stories" (Chase, 2005, p. 666).

As far as re-representation (Fisher & Anders, 2010) is concerned, long personal accounts, retrospectively writing about findings in the method section and using the 'I' pronoun are not appropriate or common for scientific writing in the field of sport science and in doctoral dissertation guides, in Greece (and elsewhere). Thus, there seem to be a promotion of a positivistic view of the researcher as an objective observer and listener and the detachment of the researcher's role and impact in the co-construction process. To this direction Knowles, Gilbourne, and Niven (2011) stress out that the field of qualitative

research in sport and exercise psychology is still characterized and dominated by a post-positivist standpoint. This promotes the view of a de-personalized researcher, being totally absent of her/his positioning and input -in terms of co-construction of the findings- and no self-referenced writing or first person pronouns; transforming the researcher in an indiscernible, objective observer/reporter of events, physically, mentally and linguistically invisible.

The presentation of the narratives in this inquiry include small segments of the interviews brought up together to form a longer excerpt or story, that are intertwined or followed by the author's interpretations (Chase, 2005). Pursuant to Chase (2005) this has a twofold but contradictory intention (for my purposes), both to connect and separate the researcher's voices from the narrator's. Thus, it reveals the role of researcher as a co-creator of the narrative by merging her/his voice with that of the narrator; but at the same time, the interpretative role of the researcher is highlighted and separates her/him from the process of a joint construction.

However, entering an interview process assumes that roles are distributed, that of the interviewer/researcher and that of interviewee/participant. Yet, often there are differences in the understanding and impact of these roles among the participants and the researchers (Rogers, 2012).

For the first research question, the analysis and co-construction of the stories yielded alternative narratives that challenge grand narratives and dominant discourses in elite sport culture. In an effort not to reproduce power hierarchies by privileging one storyline over the other, narratives were not treated as an 'exception' but as alternatives to the existing plotlines and accepted norms (Fisher & Anders, 2010). Thus, the researcher addressed both research questions (see introduction) by honouring for the first research question the particulars of the narrations (by conducting dialogical analysis), attending to narrative modes (to whom, when and why); and for the second research question the particulars of the experiences (by conducting narrative thematic analysis) paying attention to the thematic meaning of the narratives (what). Thus, the heterogeneity of people, experiences and detailed narrations is outlined, without overlooking common elements, evident in the discussion section where findings are discussed on the basis of current scholarship.

In terms of the sociocultural context, as a researcher coming from the same country of origin as the co-participants in this study, the researcher was familiar –meaning understand and relate- to the specific sociocultural conditions of the country and the sub-

culture of the sport of cycling. Thus far, in sport psychology there are scholars conducting research in the field of sport labour migration, coming from countries that hosted the migrating athletes (e.g., Scandinavian countries, Great Britain). In cases like this, an insightful view was operating and made available to the readers, that of being aware of the host culture and attempting to understand challenges, adjustments and adaptation issues, experiences in short, that often emerged as a result of the relocated athletes being exposed to unfamiliar contexts. In this inquiry and with the same scope there is a different point of departure in the perspective represented. This stems from the awareness of the donor setting that add and fosters an empathetic climate in the interview process, trust on behalf of the interviewees. Stambulova (2010) observed that the cultural background when it is common facilitates mutual understanding between a consultant and an athlete, and it is argued in this inquiry that the same applies to research-participant relationship.

Analyses and Narratives

This chapter consists of the narratives that derived from analyzing the interviews. The first research question was addressed and analysed, followed by the second research question. No previous suppositions and assumptions guided the inquiry for both research questions. Initially, the interviews took place to shed light in the understanding of the migrating experiences of elite cyclists. The theoretical implementation came up during the process of transcription and further reading of the literature regarding sport narratives and athlete migration (sport labour migration) drawing on sport sociology and psychology. Thus, both the very act of the interview and the writing of the narratives consist form of analyses and interpretative actions the outcome of which is presented below.

Exploring and Re-representing Narratives: The Migration Tales and the Identity Reconstructions

To address the first research question and explore the impact of the migration experience on identity reconstructions, there was a focus on narrative modes that the cyclists performed. The possibility for different narrative scripts articulated by Douglas and Carless (2006) was the vehicle for the storytellers -in the first research question- to claim some alignment between their lived migration experiences, the stories told and their reconstructed identities. In the pursue of the first enquiry the two cyclists' narrative re-construction of identities (Smith &Sparkes, 2008) was approached from a storied resource perspective trying to balance the individual and the socio-cultural aspects, as well as to highlight the role of narratives in identity formation. Considering the interplay between one's identity and the host-donor differences that may impact adaptation and integration, along with the role different aspects of identity can play in one's sense of self; the scope of the first research question was to illuminate the two cyclists' ways (narrative mechanisms) of re-constructing their sense of self.

As it is posited in previous chapters the dialogical process of the co-creation of stories, the relationship of the researcher and participant, their own positioning, identities, contexts and their in-between interactions have their merit in creating these narratives.

Bearing in mind that meaning making is a co-construction process, in the next section each cyclist's narrative is shared in a storied form, with intermediate small 'interruptions' of my analyses and understandings, to allow space for the readers to contribute in this process. In the same way, the act of rewriting the stories told by the interviewees is a procedure of co-construction that reveals the active presence of the researcher in the inquiry process and the emerging relationship with the participants while negotiating meaning (Riessman, 2008).

Following each story the analysis served to locate and address the foci of the research question and enlighten our understandings. More specifically, the researcher outlined and interpreted the cyclists' narrative mechanisms of negotiating alignment and a coherent sense of self. The presentation follows a sequence of events that reveal the impact of migration experience on athletes' identities. All text in italics derived verbatim from the interviews.

A relational tale: The other side of the peloton.

Prelude. When in August 2011 the interview with Nick took place, he was 31 years old and cycling as a member of the Greek national team on his way to the 2012 Olympics. He was born and lived in Greece before he had move to Northern Italy at the age of 18 to join a continental team. Today, he is still cycling competitively and is considered to be one of the most successful road cyclists in Greece.

When I arrived at his house, the Tour of Spain was on the TV, showing close-up scenes of the peloton. He pointed to the TV and said:

> *Do you know what you see here now? Here they are not going to show you the last cyclist that is struggling at the end of the peloton. These are the first 50 riders. There are another 150 that the camera is not showing. Let them show the other 150 on the back who are riding over their limits, struggling. Yeah, right! When I am winning the national championships, I am winning with a smile. And I look cool. Go ask the other riders who are ranked 20th and when finishing the race they cannot stand on their feet.*

From the commencement of the interview the reactions to the social conventions and the dispute on images launched by media were apparent. Nick pointed out the often unspoken fact that in the elite sport culture what is highly valued is the end result, the victory, and the final 'battle' of the best riders; the endeavour to finish the race is not enough. These are the ideals of the contemporary Western world and culture (Edensor,

2002) and Nick seemed not to fully embrace (identify with) them. The most coveted scenario in elite sports is to outface all the obstacles and achieve the optimal performance, leading to victory, and indeed this option seemed to canalize the media's attention. Carless and Douglas (2009) outlined the same issue with media involvement and the need to produce 'good news' or a 'feel good' story. Nick acknowledged this fact -since he himself has lived similar experiences as a successful rider- but didn't overlook all the other cases of struggle that don't (come off with flying colours) end up with achievements and trophies.

As Douglas and Carless (2011) remarked on their study with women golfers "the participants did not portray life in elite sport as the media portray it, nor did they portray life as it is represented in sport psychology and sociology textbooks and journal articles" (p. 4). Nick touched on issues considering the backstage of what it takes to be a winner, in the name of whom, and with what cost. Are there any chances or any space to achieve a victory but to renounce it, because you value something else more than your achievement and the glory it implies?

> *Once being there, my feelings were mixed: I was feeding my happiness with images. I understood that I was at an environment that I was dreaming of for a long time and I wanted to be in; but on the other hand I didn't have my people to share it with. And honestly, many nights I was reaching a point of feeling such sorrow that I wanted to cry. And in the mornings, I was waking up anticipating the moment we would go out for training and enjoy myself. So, at night when training was over I was depressed while the next day when we were about to go out for training I was super happy since I was going to be around the pros. So when the night comes, you are alone again, you realize it and freak out. The first two weeks it was very difficult in terms of my psychological state. In the trainings I had no problems. Training was my favourite part. [When] we were going out for training, I was forgetting myself and I was riding at unreal pace. The team was excited with my performance.*

Throughout the story Nick revealed the inner conflict he was facing. He seemed to experience a kind of 'division' where feelings of fulfillment for making his dream true and sadness that stem from the physical severance with his homeland, co-existed. Launching his career as a semi-professional cyclist, he was living his dream and riding with his 'heroes' [that all these years before he was watching on TV racing in Grand tours]. In the same time the absence of his family and friends appeared to overshadow his happiness. On

the bike his dream was alive, but off the bike he was feeling that he was alone and detached. The geographical and physical detachment that the experience of migration implies made him question if there is something more or something else beyond the most wanted dream. Consistent with Evans and Stead's (2012) findings on Australasia professional rugby players migrating to United Kingdom, feelings of loneliness arise when there was an absence of intimate relationships with one's own people, issues that were also highlighted by Schinke and colleagues (2011). In Nick's case, the frustration he experienced from the loss of his personal relationships and the way he negotiated with it resonates in his narration.

> *It's not that easy to become fed up. It doesn't take just one reason; there are more, more factors in order to make a decision, when you have put so much into it. I went to Italy with the goal to be a professional.*
>
> *In Italy I was always training, it was like a continuous training camp. You train, eat and rest; nothing else. You are focused toward a goal and life was like a continuous training camp. I got tired from this. Compared to Greece, my social life had shrunk. Everything was revolving around the bike and I was tired from it. In Italy there was no case I would have a day off from training. Never! What would I do if I stayed at home? I had nothing to do.*
>
> *Cycling is good, we like it, we love it, but after a certain age and some years on the bike, and so much specialization you have to get away a bit. If you observe all the professionals you can go out with them and never talk about cycling, as all their day they cycle. You cannot continue doing this the rest of your day.*

By using rhetorical questions he attempted to emotionally engage and awaken the audience in order to co-produce the obvious meaning he implies (Riessman, 2008). His words revealed how his athletic identity was ascendant and how he could find meaning and joy mostly (if not solely) when training with his team. Similarly, Weedon (2012) in his study of youth migrant footballers' acculturation revealed that issues of loneliness arise especially in non-training periods. In this tale the clash between living his dream and acquiring a performative and achieving self, while sacrificing or struggling with the relegation of his relational self surfaced.

> *I felt the exact following thing that basically I moved in a different and completely unknown environment; it wasn't easy to be 18 years old and to leave your family, your homemade meals, your home, your friends, your parents. I moved away from all these and went to stay with 5 people that I didn't know, while I was trying to be*

> *friendly. All these are hard. Imagine that I couldn't speak Italian and only a little English--almost nothing! And they also didn't speak English, communication zero, nothing, but very few things. And I was only 18!*

The processes through which the migration experience impacted his sense of self were multifaceted and included the unfamiliarity with the place and people, communication difficulties, and the simultaneous loss of the taken-for-granted everyday practices. All these factors added to his young age, his inexperience with similar situations, and his quest for belonging and re-defining his identity made up the essence of the migration experience and mirror its impact in the cyclist's being and doing. As far as the challenges of communication, they have also been acknowledged in studies about athlete adaptation (Battochio et al., 2013; Ryba et al., 2012; Schinke et al., 2011).

As the narrative unfolds, a repetition in describing feelings of loneliness and nostalgia was apparent while he also elaborated on how these feelings impacted his mood, performance, and subsequently his decision to return home. There was a motif of repetitive themes and words such as 'alone' accompanied by feelings of confusion (that provoked stress). As Riessman (2008) remarked, the repetition when used places emphasis in critical moments that have a significant impact on the progression of the story.

> *During my second year, as well as in the first year I had a knee injury; a very serious injury. I lost 2 months of trainings. There was a month in Italy that I couldn't race; I was under ongoing physical therapies and constantly crying. Nothing else! Do you know what is like to stay all day in the [team's] house, without your own people and wait for a physical therapy session to change your day a little? It wasn't that easy. I told you: You don't get fed up that easily, just like that; there were a lot of factors that contributed and weighed me down. The last year in Italy I had again some health problems and if you don't have someone to help you, someone really close, then you develop psychological problems. Whereas, if I was here in Greece and encountered a problem I could say: 'OK, I must get some rest, it's just a temporary problem and will be fixed. What can we do?' Then I would go out, meet a friend and forget about it. While there [in Italy], the whole day I was consumed with the problem.*

Unexpected or non-normative transitions such as an injury negatively charge the situation while augment feelings of loneliness. In Nick's case, this fact together with the prevalence of a performance identity and its exclusiveness, worsened the conditions and

highlighted what he missed the most; his family and close friends. He battled to bring to the surface his relational identity being repressed all this time.

> *I was fed up. I was really fed up. I was so disappointed. I didn't want anything, I was in denial; denial for everything. I was travelling back to Greece and I was performing twice as good in trainings. I could see it. From the moment I was leaving Italy to travel to Greece, at trainings my feet felt as if they were loosened. This began to happen mostly in my second year.*
>
> *For the most part, the problem started to grow bigger, the fact that I wanted to be in my own space, my own environment here in Greece. It began to grow big. I would see negative things [in Italy] which somehow I blended in and converted to sadness. The most important thing is that I didn't have my own people there. I believe that if I had, let's say one person only, even my brother or let's say if I was older and had my wife things would be completely different for me. I could stay and integrate. I could get over this big obstacle that is called loneliness abroad, feeling lonely while being surrounded by people. At that time, I had nobody. Not a soul to feel close to. A Greek person! Can you understand? Overall, this thing bothered me. I went racing, I was winning and I had no one, no one close to me to celebrate, to share with. Whether I was sad or happy I had no one to share. With whom to share? With the strangers? And with my teammates it's not the same. I felt close to them but not so close as my own people. At least the way I see it. We had an incredible time together, we laughed together; we went out, went to the sea. [However] I wanted my own people around. I was used to live like this. I was feeling so bonded with my people.*

By using rhetorical questions, Nick emphasized the difference between the relationships he had with his teammates and his family and friends from home, while he repeatedly talked about missing his own people. According to Evans and Stead (2012), athletes who move with a partner or a family member find the settlement to be a more smooth process, in comparison to those who migrate alone. Even though they suggested that intimate relationships may act both as a facilitator and a barrier, they also posited that friendships with teammates do not substitute relationships with family and friends from home. As Richardson and colleagues (2012) also pointed out, the immigrant players in their study preferred to turn to family for social support instead of the team staff. Accordingly, the researcher cogitated that regardless of the country and culture of origin, characterized by more or less collectivistic or individualistic practices, migrating athletes

seemed to prefer to resort to their own social network from back home to cope with the challenges faced in the host country.

> *They didn't kick me out of the team nor did I leave because of a conflict. I left the team in a very good atmosphere. I explained what exactly is happening and the reason why I wanted to leave. I told him [coach] that I cannot stand this anymore and I cannot perform in this environment here.*
>
> *Everything was OK, but there was always something bugging me, that I didn't have a person I felt close to. That was what bugged me. It's not the same. Especially during the fourth year, I don't know what got into me. I didn't want to integrate, I was distancing myself mentally and they [the team] understood it, I was reacting to any change, I didn't like anything. It's not that I didn't want to race. It's that I didn't feel like training, and all this came from the bad psychological state I was in, because the environment in Italy became tiring for me. I was tired of being abroad, of being an immigrant. I was tired of this thing.*
>
> *Even though I liked all this stuff, I liked the races, I started feeling stuffed and I wanted my own people around. I am talking about people with whom you have a very close bond.*

Similar to existing studies (e.g., Evans & Stead, 2012; Weedon, 2012), the absence of social network, sense of belonging and sharing similar cultural values may lead to disintegration strategies. At some point Nick was tired of making any effort to integrate, adapt or re-form his sense of self and the storyline of his narrative; inertia was his reaction to the clash of his being and doing, his identities and experience. Here, an atmosphere of despair prevails and not just a distant report of the facts; a situation that is dramatized to highlight the psychological consequences of his feelings of loneliness. His aversion on his athletic identity and the fact that he didn't want to train stemmed from the annihilation of his relational identity. Riessman (2008, p.112) argued that this is a sign for "narrator's plea for commonality [that] cannot be easily ignored".

> *So, here is what happened, what I told the Italians when I was leaving, when I was about to leave after 4 years; I told him [the coach]: 'Look it's hard for me. Let me tell you something: I am neither from Ukraine, nor from Russia. I've been to Ukraine, Russia, Romania, and I know where they live. If you come see where I live, you will ask me why I cycle.' I am 100% sure. Everyone from the team who visited me in Greece had asked me the same question. My German teammate had told me: "I am wondering why you Greeks cycle" and it makes sense. I was feeling*

> *ashamed to show him pictures from my holidays. Why? Because when he saw them he almost committed suicide. He said: "What is this? Where do I live? What am I doing?"*

The direct speech used according to Riessman (2008, p. 112) "builds credibility and pulls the listener into the narrated moment" and at the same time conveys a significant moment in the narration. It was important for Nick to share the 'exact' words he used to inform the coach on his departure because it pointed out more vividly his agency and his active role in the final decision. What he shared was an informed decision after he revisited his past experience and present priorities. He clearly valued his way of life in Greece, pointing out not only the internal environment (i.e., the role social relations have in the Greek culture) but also the external environment (i.e., landscape). Finally, he made the decision to leave the team as he could not find alignment between his own construction of identity and the one that his role as a professional athlete dictated.

A discovery tale: The Odyssey or the way to Ithaca.

Prelude. At the time of the interview (April, 2011), Manolis was 39 years old. He was an experienced mover as he was born in the USA, moved to Greece as a youngster and then in his late teens moved back to the USA for cycling. Later on, at the age of 28, he moved to Austria to join a continental cycling team. He stopped cycling at the age of 32, when he did not qualify for the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

> *I believe the difference between me and your other interviews is for sure that I come from a migrating family. What I am trying to say is that I had already learned to erase, to humble myself and move to a new place and absorb. This is one of the most profitable things for an athlete, if he uses his mind. If an athlete has an attentive mind along with the travelling he will do [for races], he will become a greater man first and then a better athlete. When I went there and didn't like the way of life, I chose quality life and I left. I said: 'Thanks, but I can't. I am not going to live in this village.' I didn't like this sober way of life. There is no case I could live in Austria. So I left and said that I will do whatever I can from Greece as my base. Quality of life for me is even how often you are going to meet a person, have a discussion, how will you use your free time.*

Since the beginning of the interview, Manolis emphasized his way of thinking and his status as an experienced mover. His narration was based on the discovery of places and people. He seized every opportunity, even in his way of training, to socialize and explore.

Cycling for him was a vehicle to expand and re-define his sense of self (Douglas & Carless, 2006).

> *I have no problem to leave everything back and take off. However, the difference [between moving to Austria and California] was that when I went for the first time in California, where I spend 5 years, I was speechless. It was a beautiful place. The climate was Mediterranean; they had a temperament similar to the Greek, without the traffic and all the negatives. It was a university town close to the sea. There were some good athletes; people to hang around and the first day I got there I said 'It's nice to live here.' This was a really important thing [for me], because I wanted to become a better athlete yet I didn't want to erase too many things from myself in order to succeed. OK, maybe, this was the reason why they chose someone else for the Olympics and they didn't choose me. Because for me, at the end all that matters is this entire Odyssey that has to do with the experiences and the things you are going to go through. I think that back then I had made the right choices.*

Manolis' previous migration experiences and the standards they placed in terms of quality of life led him to the decision to depart from Austria. Thus, the reason wasn't that he could not meet the team demands but the place, the situation and the quality of life, did not meet his personal mentality and standards. As far as the way the culture of elite sports is promoted (i.e., the need to sacrifice and devote oneself in a specific lifestyle) Manolis narrated that his case is different compared to others due to his migrating past and the team's range that marked out the practices of hosting the newcomer athletes, a factor that weighted in the decision to depart from the team.

> *Austria and California were day and night when comparing the way of life. Europe was for sure superior with regard to the level of cycling. When I went to this village in Austria, I said: 'What am I doing here? How do they live here?' It was beautiful, mountains around, beautiful landscapes; but when it got eight at night, everybody went home to sleep. This didn't fit me. I started to feel sorrow.*
>
> *..The only thing that didn't happen for me was to be in a developing team with all the pro athletes train together morning to night and eating together. But anyway, this wasn't my case. My professional team didn't have a house for all the athletes to live together. We had athletes from Italy, Germany, Austria and we were getting together only for the races.*

If the whole team was there definitely it would be a bit different. It's not about friendships as I can make friends relatively easy.

The landscape was beautiful in the Austrian village but what made it difficult was the lack of social life and the lack of a team, the coldness of the people, the coldness of my own boss, my own manager. I said: 'OK, probably we are not going to stay here for long.' I had no problem with my teammates; they were trying to help me and be like friends. But upon returning from the races, everyone went home, away from each other; so the atmosphere created in the races didn't carry over in training days which is so needed. I believe this could have kept me stay longer. After the races I was always going back to the small village I was living, which was surrounded by mountains while there were no other athletes around. The communication with the coach was only by phone and internet and I was there completely alone, isolated.

Let me put it another way: In order to give your maximum self everyday in training it requires the right psychological state and there I didn't have it anymore. I was alone. I had no team. It was a way of life that I didn't like. I had a choice to live in better places that's why I left. I said: 'I am not going to take my life to a lower level. I want to make it better.'

By switching between first and second person singular he aimed to engage the audience in a more immediate way. In the same way by switching verb tenses (from present to past), according to Riessman (2008) he added vividness and immediacy and lessened the distance of the narrated event and the listener. These alternations underlined his agency and this was verified by the progression of the narrated event.

I had no hesitation when I was deciding to move there [Austria], I didn't mind at all. I could go to any place and grasp life from the neck. Usually I was one of the problems when we were travelling with the national team as I was super social. My coaches were yelling at me: 'Don't be so social. Get yourself together. Come along with the team. You are not allowed to go out for a walk.' After all, the times I didn't listen to the coaches I met the greatest opportunities of my life. [For example, when they had me locked up and I found a way to sneak out, it is when I met my wife]. [Because of this behaviour] some of them [coaches] thought that I am not training enough.

Direct speech, as in Nick's relational tale, is deployed to bring the interviewer to the narrated moment (Riessman, 2008), add immediacy and enact important scenes "in the

way they took place"; it is an attempt to add validity and arouse the interviewer. From the narration observable are hints of the rationale behind the Greek subculture of elite cycling –that is influenced by the Western value systems of 'how an elite athlete should behave'. Thus, if an athlete is restive and attempts other activities outside the programmed ones is considered to be lazy or idle refraining from the profile of a good disciplined athlete.

> *From the beginning, cycling for me was about the 5 Rings of the Olympic Games. Nothing else! Yet, in the meantime, I could make some money and maintain a professional level. I chose to continue my way toward the Olympics but with a better quality of life; this may have cost a bit of my level as an athlete or maybe not.[When I was in my hometown] I could wake up in the morning and go and climb an uphill in a repetition of ten times. While in Austria, I was going for training and from the fifth repetition and on I was bored. I am not that [much like] a robot, I can't. I mean I wanted to go training and before I reached the hill I wanted to pass by a beach, to say hello to a couple of people. Maybe this is a mistake for someone who wants to have great achievements. But again, a lot of athletes stay in beautiful places and have their lives. As my level was increasing I met more and more people, some of the best in the world, who had chose beautiful places to live in. And you know what? They were going out at night to have their drink. In Greece back then the coach was telling me: "With all that you do you are never going to reach the top." Finally, when I was close to the top, I could see that these people had a life and said [to myself]: 'It is worst to deprive yourself of everything. You have to have a balance.' You are supposed to seize all your experiences and have them for the rest of your life. The road to Odyssey is about 'What you learn until you get there.'*

As he narrated his non-selection for the Olympics he negotiated how his life and self-worth were not depended on sport achievements (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Douglas, 2009). Self-fulfilment for him derived from experiences and emotions lived through cycling. Pursuant to Douglas and Carless (2006), self-worth and self-esteem do not always relate to great performances and fulfilment of high performance goals. The issue for Manolis was that he had lived in different places which provided him with standards and priorities about quality of life, and he looked for these standards and priorities in this move.

The achievement is not what matters most; it is the way to achieve that has more meaning. To compromise was not an option as he believed that alternative routes to

success were attainable and possible (Carless & Douglas, 2013). He didn't want to 'lose' and 'erase' himself and this part of his identity that relied on discovering new places, people and experiences. He certainly stands apart from a performance narrative (Sparkes, 2004) and his narration followed a script that merits the maintenance of a multifaceted self. Social relationships mattered to him not only in the narrow borders of his loved ones, but through meeting new people while discovering new places and living new experiences (Douglas & Carless, 2011).

> *My one and vast mistake was that I did not depart that place [USA] with a degree in my hands. I ceased my studies to be an athlete who would go to the Olympics. It doesn't have to be so depriving, this Greek mentality has to die or just fade away eventually. We have to understand that your college years, your university years can be your best years athletically, the way it happens there [in USA]. This can be a beautiful example, not our case where athletes stop their sports because they have to study for the entry exams to the university.*

This narration was like an inner dialogue where he was trying to find alignment with himself and to ensure he made the right choices. Manolis revealed a divergence in that big sport achievements need 'blind' dedication, while he argued that there is something more than this. The regrets of neglecting his educational potentials touch upon an important issue that of a dual career that is promoted in United States, where the universities offer scholarships for good athletes to study. Greek mentality and policies, so far, is restrictive of such ventures and narrows even more the orientation of elite athletes and ambitious students.

> *I wasn't psychologically strong to make it, do it all alone, to be alone and fight for the Olympics. It was 3 years away [the Olympics] and there was no case I could live my life that way; lose years from my life for a goal. Which of course is great, it would be the most beautiful thing for me to finish my career like that, but at the end it's like the Odyssey: the road is more important than anything else.*
>
> *Of course, in order to succeed you have to deprive yourself but sometimes you have to weight things up and I didn't wanted to live 3 years until the Olympics in a village in Austria. I said: 'I am not going to do this for no one because in the meantime it is 3 years of my life, and I want to be richer through experiences and not live like a robot and be wasted away.*
>
> *Elite sport is very good and needs dedication. You have to erase a lot of things and maybe this robotic [routine] is what is needed sometimes. It didn't fit with my*

> *mentality. I wanted for my free time a different way of life; I couldn't stand this robotic [lifestyle]. Some people didn't have a problem; most of them were road cyclists and they were always with many of their teammates. Whereas, I was in a house completely alone; there were no other people. [I had] one or two brief friendships; it wasn't a big deal and I didn't want this way of life.*

By using the repetition of the word 'alone', as a complementing narrative device, he highlighted the value that he placed on relationships. Throughout his narration Manolis neither ignored nor completely rejected the 'elite athlete life' norm, which remedies that in order to succeed you have to deprive yourself and focus only on the sport (Danish, 1983). He did look further though, to confirm his reconstruction of self as an elite athlete away from these typical robotic performance boundaries. In his quest to feel that his story and beliefs of alternative routes to success exist, he met successful elite athletes who fitted his view of cycling at the elite level. For these successful elite athletes balance was a key element and the question he posits highlights and confirms this viewpoint. As if he was looking for evidence to verify that his choice had reasoning and his mentality is justifiable.

> *At a point I hosted them at my place in my hometown in Greece and we did winter camps. I tried and created myself the atmosphere that I needed. I couldn't do it in Austria so I said to them: 'Why don't you come over in the winter at my place?' Many times it has to do with whether an athlete looses or wins generally in his life. If I had nothing else in my life I would stay. If it was solely this and I had no other support or financially my future was depended solely on the bike or if I was so sick and obsessed about the glory of the sport and about making the magazine covers, I would stay. It's usually on this [last point] that most people risk for the most. Well, I chose not to [risk] and left. The team [in Austria] had no problem. I went back to my hometown [Greece] and I was still a member of the [Austrian] team for 2 years as a professional. During my preparation to qualify for the Olympics, I tried to do as many races as possible by travelling. The pro team was getting together at least 6 to 10 times per year for doing the races on their calendar. So, in 4 or 5 of these races, if not 6, the [Greek] national team wanted to go too, thus it was very convenient [for me to travel and be a member of the team abroad].*

At this point of the narration Manolis revealing his agency in a more practical way explains how he created the conditions and the quality in his life, combining elite level training with his continental team and living in Greece. His initiative derived from the fact that he had nothing to lose. This move abroad wasn't his only opportunity or a critical

investment on his future. He had more options so he negotiated and claimed the terms and alternative ways under which he would continue to pursue his dream.

> *So yes, I was feeling lonely. I was an immigrant again. In California I was also alone. Though it was a beautiful place and I had too many friends and it was awesome, I was an immigrant. When I was in Austria I was again an immigrant but I lost everything else--the beautiful place, the pleasant atmosphere, and my friends. This move affected my identity. I wouldn't be the same person I am today. It has to do with the way I travel. A lot of people leave for 4 years and they never leave; in fact they never left home, as they didn't absorb a single thing. That's why they [Greek coaches] were yelling at me at some points. Because when the training was over [in training camps and races abroad] and I had free time I was going out to see a few things, to meet people. I wanted to chat, to see. I was travelling and I was absorbing. That's why I give a lot of importance in the way, the trip to get there, as in the Odyssey. When an opportunity like this comes up, enjoy it. Open your eyes and you will have a great time. You will have a great time and you will see great things. When I went to this village in Austria I said to myself: 'Here not only I won't learn a thing (OK, I did see some things and I learned a bit as everywhere there is something to absorb) but compared to the place I was living before I felt it has nothing to offer me.' I asked myself: 'What this place has to teach me from its life?'*

The most prevailing and repetitive 'theme' in Manolis tale was that he paralleled his migration experience with the Odyssey. This metaphor is taken from Cavafys' words: "When you start on the way to Ithaca, wish that the way be long, full of adventure, full of knowledge". And this was exactly what Manolis conveyed in this last part and throughout his tale, that the trip is more important than the destination. His destination was 'Olympics' but the way to get there was to live through the experience of staying abroad in a team and environment that deprived and foreclosed his being and doing (in terms of living his everyday life the way he wanted, preserving a multidimensional identities). That the everyday experience that comprised quality of life and the maintenance of a multifaceted identity was more important than the foreclosure to an athletic identity that may lead to the desired outcomes and sport achievements. Manolis through his narration, plotline and Odyssey trope (allegory) claimed an alternative route to sport success.

Synopsis of the analysis for the first research question.

What came up from the analyses was that the migration experience had a significant impact on these athletes' identities. This was a result of their physical and mental relocation and the change on the taken for granted habitus. Since identities are in constant formation and never fixed or finite, the migration transition intensified these processes and caused major formations, negotiations and reconstructions. These processes were traced in the athletes' narrations, and in the way they storied their experiences (i.e., narrative devices employed) revisiting their priorities and reconstructing their identities in order to maintain or attain integrity and a sense of coherence between the lived and the told.

The migration experience with the identity reconstructions that provoked impeded the feeling of belonging. The narrations bring to the fore the issue that certain aspects of these athletes lives were faltered or lost (e.g., socializing, bonding, exploring). They tried to compromise the preservation of multiple roles and identities, what they missed the most, and their dream for a professional sporting career. The inner 'battle' against the loss of their relational and discovery facets of their selves declared a resolution. At the end, both cyclists terminated their contracts and returned in their countries because their priorities couldn't be met. With intermediate breaks of their migration experience to visit Greece -that rejuvenated their performance and psychological state-, Nick prolonged the duration of his migration experience whereas Manolis arranged a permanent settling in Greece and continued to be a member of the continental team in Austria without staying abroad and until the Olympics.

The analyses based on the Douglas and Carless (2006) narrative identity framework provided important insights in immigrant athletes' psyche. Specifically, the potential of the narrative approach (as a sport psychology practical technique or part of broader interventions) is apparent in that it acted as a magnifying glass for the peculiarities of the human experience and its impact to the formation and reconstruction of identities.

Exploring and Re-representing Narratives: Motivation and Adaptation Processes through Fiske's Model

To address the second research question I employed Fiske's (2004) adaptation pathways, which comprised the core social motives (belonging, understanding, control, trust, self-enhancement) in a two-way approach in order to explore: (a) cyclists' motives to migrate and transfer in teams abroad, and (b) adaptation processes that contributed in these

cyclists' decision to return in their home country or wish to extend their stay in the host country.

The analysis focused on each interview separately, and traced the relevant events that reflected the abovementioned core motives. Each event was interpreted in view of Fiske's (2004) theoretical background. By attending more closely to the content the co-constructed meanings of sub-themes were identified and named accordingly. All cases were included, while distribution (e.g., how many stayed or departed, adapted or not) was not under scrutiny. There was an attempt to elucidate variation in cases, in terms of the fulfillment or skip of each pathway and their share in the cyclists' decision to depart from the host country or their will to stay more (extend their stay). These issues were re-presented through 'cleaned up' excerpts derived from the cyclists' narrations. The excerpts that were dialogically co-constructed during the interview process, located in specific contexts (spatial, temporal) and referred to specific audiences, were re-interpreted and backed up with relevant references.

a) Motives to migrate.

Overall reasons to migrate.

This analysis pertained to the cyclists' motives without acknowledging the underlying factors that weighted the cyclists' decision and reasoning.

Performance enhancement.

Julie went to a team in Northern Italy in 2002 when she was 22 years of age and stayed there for 2 years. She mentioned: "The reason I left was mainly that I wanted to increase my performance. To be prepared for points race [a track cycling discipline], so the more road races I could compete on the better for me, as this would help me for my discipline, mostly by enduring in high intensities [during races]. Because here [in Greece] there were almost no races, whereas in Italy every two weeks or ten days we were racing." Qualifying for the Olympics was a motive to level up performance: "I was aiming for the 2004 Olympics and in order to reach the point and achieve a good result there, even to qualify since I didn't have raced enough, I chose to go there as I thought that once I will have a team to participate with in some races abroad that will help increase my level. But basically it wasn't this only. More things came up like personal experiences and character building and everything. However, my primary goal was to attain racing kilometres in order to deal better in my discipline [the points' race] and it was similar to road races."

Julie closed her thoughts about the motives to migrate with the following statement: "I believe that if I had stayed in Greece this would be harmful for me [meaning her performance] and that's why I left."

Manolis had already a migrating background from his youth as they moved with his parents until they found a permanent place to live. In 2000, when he was 28 years old, he signed with a team in Austria and stayed there for 2 months. He was also in a preparation aiming for the 2004 Olympics. He explains his thinking to migrate: " In Greece more or less I was in the higher level in terms of cycling disciplines, in mountain biking. In road racing I was in the first three riders in some races, even in a national championship. So it is obvious that in order for a cyclist to increase his level has to race often and train with high level cyclist that's why I chose to go to the team abroad....So obviously I wanted to go there to increase my performance, to be with high level athletes and race expensive races; and by saying expensive I mean distanced races, far away in Europe with a lot of expenses for travelling. And of course the team spirit [was also another reason]."

Professional investment and living the dream.

Nick went abroad when he was 18 years old, in 1999 and stayed for 4 years in a team in North Italy. He wanted so badly to go and follow his destiny and we witness this as he points out his reasoning to migrate: "The point is that when I took the decision in this age you don't easily look at the financial part, for sure. You face it as an investment. I mean I was facing it like an investment. I wanted to go there and race, I wanted to see what cycling abroad was like. I wanted to see how all these things I am watching on TV really are. To understand up close what is going on, how they function. And as I told you it was a team that wasn't professional but it was the incubator for riders for the professional team. The first day I arrived it was the shooting of the team which was together with the professional team, the team Polti and it was Virenque, Gotti and all these [great riders] that I was watching on TV! I was as if they throw me, as if I was living a dream. I couldn't realize what was going on. The bikes we used were the same with the professionals', the cars the same. It was completely the incubator to the professional team. So even if it was psychologically difficult for me –so very difficult, because I left Greece in a young age, leaving friends, family, everything, home- we could say I was living my dream". "Still, I didn't mind. I realized it when I left. I couldn't realize it before. I mean I knew something like this will happen [missing his own people] but it's not like I was bonded so much with

something in Greece. Of course in this age you don't really think. I mean others went to Universities, there are cases for example that one should go to a university in Athens. I looked at it like this, as an investment for me personally. As I am going to do what fits me, what I am made for".

Tim left when he was 22 years old (last year in the under 23 category), in 2005 and stayed in a continental team in Czech Republic for two years. In terms of the motivation to migrate he cited that: "The reason that I chose to leave [Greece] was that by watching the continental team -we were participating in the same race and I was with the national team- I had noticed that they were seriously organized and at that time in 2005 I said to myself that if everything goes well and I will be in shape during summer I will try by myself to find a team [abroad]. I wanted this [to happen] since forever. I mean I wanted to go to any team [abroad] but I was trying to sign with an organized team. The good thing is that the general headman of the national team knew them [the team from Czech Republic] and he put me in touch with them. Actually he helped me, he was my manager."

Tim articulated that: "I liked this team because above all I wanted to become a professional and secondly since I had this opportunity and they were so organized, I saw that through teams like this one I could accomplish all the things I've been thinking of. For me it was ideal, and I said 'here we are'. I wasn't looking for anything else. This 'package' [offer/contract] was perfect for me." "I had thought about it and sleep on it and when they invited me to the training center in Trikala I told them that once I get the opportunity to leave [in a team] abroad I am going leave and never come back. I told them I wanted nothing else but to race abroad. I wanted to leave because after 2003 that I had finished with my army duties, I began to cycle more seriously and systematically. It was my goal to become a professional cyclist. Gradually, I realized through racing that the Greek level and mentality couldn't provide me anything else; the fact that there were no organized teams, not only professional teams but organized clubs that we could race abroad. This led me to the decision to leave abroad and race exclusively abroad. Because that was what I wanted, it was my dream."

Money incentive.

Alex signed with a team in Austria in the age of 25, the year 2000 and stayed for 5 years. About his decision to go to a team abroad he stated: "I wanted to become a professional and here [in Greece] we knew nothing. I wanted to reach to sign with a pro-tour team and earn for 4-5 years 400 thousand a month, for example, and make my living

in 5 years, and not to work again for the rest of my life." So his motive was to increase his performance in order to get a better contract with a higher level team and make his living."Of course this is the goal when you are a professional; you don't go there for the fame and all that. You cannot eat these. Or the jersey [of the national or world champion] you cannot cut it into pieces and eat it. Professional means money."

In terms of the motives to migrate [to depart the home country and sign with teams abroad in order to pursue a professional sporting career] the findings on the migration incentives of Greek elite cyclists did not bring to light new or gripping aspects on athletes' motives and reasons to depart from their home country. From earlier studies on immigrant athletes' motivation (e.g., Botelho & Agergaard, 2011; Magee & Sugden, 2002; Molnar & Maguire, 2008; Stead & Maguire, 2000) there was a convergence in the same inferences. These athletes migrated for a combination of reasons such as to increase their athletic performance, personal and sporting development (gain experience and opportunities), as well as, their economic growth. Maguire (2008) in a consideration of the processes that regulate the global flows of athletes, categorized the athletes of his study as 'nomadic investors' because their migration was characterized by a mixture of cultural, professional and economic incentives and this multidimensional perspective came up throughout this analysis. However, by utilizing Fiske's (2004) core social motives in a different direction (and not the one focusing solely on adaptation issues), this inquiry aimed to provide new perspectives on research about athletes' motives to migrate contributing to an in-depth understanding, while bringing to the fore psychosocial aspects that underlie their decisions to depart their home country.

Integrating Fiske's framework.

By interpreting the overall motives to migrate under the lens of Fiske's (2004) core motives it can be observed that there was already a lack of trust in the practices and the Greek cycling reality. The cyclists had realized that in Greece they couldn't accomplish their goal, meaning that their actions (i.e., winning races and being the best rider in Greece) couldn't ensure the attainment of their goal thus limiting their sense of control over the contingencies of the outcome of their actions. The researcher's reflection was that since feelings of trust were absent, there is the understanding that they needed to find this in another environment, thus they rejected Greece as a place that can offer them the opportunities to reach their goal and seek another place to do this. Feelings of belonging at this point seemed to stagger. The sense that their level was higher compared to the Greek

standards fits to the motive of self-enhancement and the call for improvement (Battochio et al., 2013); as well as to the motive of belonging that in terms of the sport context couldn't be fulfilled. They felt that they don't belong in the narrow and limiting Greek cycling scene and they had to go and do what they dreamed of and are made for.

To deepen the analysis, what seemed to surface was that Greece hadn't had the infrastructure, experience, education and expertise in the sport of cycling to provide these cyclists the prospect of a professional sport career. Thus, these elite athletes realized that they had limited chances to stay in their home country and fulfil their vision to become professionals. In order to pursue their dreams and goals they had to alter and transpose the feelings of *control* over the situation, since they already nurtured feelings of not *belonging* in this environment, they didn't *trusted* that the conditions and Greek background/situation could provide them the necessary opportunities and provisions to achieve their goals. *Self-enhancement* was evident since they were the best in their country and as we will see further down, they were positive that they could make it in a professional team. Most of them in their short narrations characteristically mentioned that were confident [of making it in a higher training and racing level] that they will live up to the new team's expectations.

Narrating how they ended up signing with the specific team abroad Alex –like the other cyclists- states that actually there was *no choice over the place and the details of the contract.* This theme prevails in all the cases of this study since the first offer seemed to be the best one. The *risk* factor was always present, in terms of whether or not they were going to adapt and what they left behind or sacrificed in order to pursue their goal. This theme was also present in Molnar and Maguire's (2008) study with Hungarian footballers, which they also seemed to rely on connections made by agents, managers and friends.

Trusting.

The sub-theme emerged for this overall theme was labelled *choices and risk.* This theme pertained to the trust the athletes showed to their capabilities –due to high levels of self-enhancement (and knowing they were the best in their country)- and the decisions and instigation from their coaches/managers. The athletes were overwhelmed that their dream would come true and despite the limited or non-existent knowledge (lack of understanding) about the situations in the new macro and micro environments (e.g., country and team) they took the risk to sign contracts in abroad teams.

Choices and risk.

In Alex's words: "First of all I didn't choose. In the beginning I didn't chose to go to Austria. I cooperated with a coach that was living in Germany and Austria and was coaching professional athletes racing in big team such as Team Mobile, Gerolstainer and the like. This man was about to come in Greece and take over the national team. I wanted to go abroad [to pursue a professional cycling career] and the president of the cycling federation gave me his phone number and told me 'if you won't leave stay here to train'. So, he told me 'call this man and start training with him because he is about to come in Greece as a coach'. That's how it started."Finally, he [the coach] didn't came to Greece. He stayed abroad. From the moment I started my collaboration [with the coach in Austria] and after the first-second phone call, I understood that he knows what he is talking about. He talked to me about nutrition and stuff like that, that seem alien [here in Greece] and we decided to take the risk. We agreed that we are going to risk for a year time and if I can make it professional that's good. If not then…"

To take the risk seemed a conscious decision since the new coach earned his trust and understanding. November 1999 being in Greece, Alex started his cooperation with the coach in Austria and in April 2000–during the Easter holidays- the coach takes him to his house there [Austria] to race with an amateur team. Alex participates in two races in which he takes the fourth and sixth position. This was a *shopping window* (Falcous& Maguire, 2006) and the first continental team interested in him showed up. After that he came back in Greece and won the national road championships (both the road race and time-trial). His coach in Austria made the connection and arranged Alex to compete in a (high class) big category race with the continental team on August that year in Germany. As Alex described: "There for the first time I see (alive) Ullrich, Zabel and I was thrilled." He was excited to race next to his 'heroes', a fact that promoted self-enhancement. He tried to earn a place among them, to belong.

Julie in her narration described: "I left for Italy to join the team in 2002. That year I was already with the national team, preparing for the points race. I had raced some world cups abroad and they had arranged in the beginning of the year [to go to the team in Italy for a trial]. A coach from Spain saw me in some world cups and asked me if I was interested to go for a trial and sign with a team abroad, in Italy specifically. He told me he was going to look for a team and if he finds something that he will be interested too and I could take over, he will let me know so as to go and test me. He searched and found this

team and texted me if I was interested to send my cv and go for a trial. They (the team in Italy) said ok so I went there for an interview, together with my parents though because I was 22 years old. And I went there and their reception was unbelievable, as if they knew me for years."

About the same issue Manolis mentioned: "I didn't have a lot of options. It was the first team that my coach, that he was also a manager helped me to sign. He found the team, and they trusted him that there was a case that a Greek athlete could race in the 2004 Olympics. I mean they invested in the fact that Greece took over the organization of 2004 Olympic Games. So they were counting that there was going to be a free slot for Greece and since they knew that I was one of the best mountain bike athletes they wanted to help me step up my performance that's why they signed me in the team. So I didn't choose to go there, it was the first proposal and me and my coach accepted it."

Nick referred to his dream of becoming a pro-rider but also to the conditions under which this took place: "I was so enthusiastic with professional cycling and this was my dream. That's why I tried. And a lot of people helped me to get a contract in a team abroad. It doesn't happen suddenly a Greek athlete to sign with a team abroad when our culture [in this sport] is zero. For sure my coach and another guy have the greatest share. A very important factor for this transfer abroad was that we were for a training camp in Italy a month before the world championships. So there from the ten races we participated I won the three of them and in all the other races I was ranked between third and sixth. Which you know, is very difficult for cycling." "When we were in Italy they [the team abroad] proposed us me and a friend of mine to go there. And I was hesitating; I remember that I was a bit wavering for not for this transfer- but for this transition. At the end my passion was too much that I stopped wondering about it. After winter that we had raced in the world champs and we started talking with some teams from Italy and they said they wanted to try me in the beginning of the year. So I went there they tested me for 15 days, they were excited and decided to keep me."

These last lines rendered Nick as an athlete to the hands of the team abroad as if he had no saying about this. The phrase "they were excited and decided to keep me" reveals his almost unconditional acceptance of their offer. He further added that "At that time Italy was the best cycling 'school', we could say, in under 23 category. Indeed, they had the best 'school' because if you watched world championships the first three were Italians. After 90s, from '98 till '03, a real ranger happened after all the foreigners went there… "

Tim described his experience of the first contacts with the team and signing up: "I had a very good season then in 2005. In August when I return in Greece and I was in the training center in Trikala, an UCI low ranked race preceded in Czech Republic that together with the national team coach we had the opportunity to make an acquaintance with the continental team that I singed later on. After this tour in Czech that I had a really good performance, every day I was in the top ten riders, with very strong teams racing. We had 180 athletes participating every day, I came back in Greece and they proposed me to go there for a trial. Together with me another teammate of mine from Greece came. We raced in a few races ahead of the world road championships in Lisbon. In the first couple of races I was in the first five athletes and two weeks before our departure to the world champs I felt down in a small 3day race in Czech Republic –while they were still testing us- and broke my collarbone. But things went so good that they had already offered me a contract and told me there is no reason to worry. Then I went to Greece to recover with my collarbone and on December of 2005 I left for Czech Republic, signed the contract and a procedure of new bikes, clothes and interviews began. And this is how all started." "When I broke my collarbone they took me to the hospital and they were so attentive with me. We left with the cars even though the race was in progress. They [team's stuff] were so attentive with me, even the doctors. The behavior in the hospital was incredible….the exactly same day they arranged me the tickets to return home, we had a small meeting with the coach, the director of the team and the general sponsor and they announced me that they were interested to sign me up. They wanted to invest on me and offered me a two year contract, for a start. So they told me to return home, have a rest and then come back again."

Understanding.

The sub-theme for this core motive was *unknown/ unfamiliar environment*. This pertained to lack of understanding in term of awareness of the new environment and led to limited control.

Unknown/ unfamiliar environment.

Alex storied his reasons to migrate and underlined a very interesting fact that these first Greek cyclists were 'guinea pigs', meaning that they were the pioneers by doing this move. A common characteristic of all the cyclists was that there was no prior knowledge on how it was like being a member of a higher level team abroad and what a contract with

a team abroad entailed. Thus, there was limited or no understanding or a sense of control over the situation (i.e., migration experience) they were going to face. He outlined: "It's noteworthy to mention that in Greece until then (meaning November 1999 when he started the collaboration with the coach in Austria) we had no clue about professional cycling. We didn't even watch... we only watched in TV. There was not a single professional Greek cyclist and all we knew was based on rumours. Honestly we knew nothing."

In the same lines Tim stated:"Nobody gave me any information about Czech Republic. I had collected them by myself when I went in a race there with the national team. I saw the team and during the race I developed some kind of relationships with some of the team's riders because we were in the same group and they treated me differently. The general headman of the national team provided me with a few information, such as how the country and people are like, because he didn't knew a lot about the city and the team. So, I acquired most of the information by myself."I only knew that I am going to a professional team in Czech Republic. In a country that's not in the European Union, with different currency, different lifestyle. Things would be more serious, the conditions more difficult in terms of cycling. That's it; I didn't know a lot of things."

Nick was the first of the Greek riders that signed with a team abroad and refers to this " Nobody had a clue about what I was about to face once I got there. Nobody(...). However, my personal coach was supporting me and urged me so much to go. He was telling me 'look if you stay here what you are going to do? You have won everything".

In this regard Evans and Stead (2012) observed that unfamiliarity and unawareness of the new conditions was a factor that affected players' of his study to migrate, as well as their preparation period. The longer period of preparation facilitated adaptation processes by lessening the possible challenges.

Belonging.

The sub-theme emerged was: *questioning the training regimesand mentality of their country*. This reinforced a lack in trusting and controlling, led to a detachment with the donor country practices and people and was characterized by disapproval and disbelief. It also led to a realization of the differences in mentality that in turn enhanced trusting, belonging and understanding towards the candidate host country.

Questioning the training regimes and mentality of their country.

Alex portrayed this issue: “From the moment I started [the cooperation with the coach in Austria] everything changed. Until then we raced in every kind of race here in Greece, everything from road to track. We were training with the federal coach that at some point left and we were a bit lost in space. We didn’t know…yes, now that I am thinking back, I don’t even know what training program we were following. It was a kind of …whatever. However, we had successes in Balkan track championships. We were trying to get the qualification for the Olympics in track cycling. We had achievements like national track records and things like that but in general things were a bit confused.”From the time he decided to begin his preparatory phase in Greece with a new coach he starts to question and it is more obvious that he is not contented with the coaching practices of his country. Self-enhancement was evident, even though the training practices were questionable and with no clear purpose or plan.

Since Alex did not approved the coaching regimes that all these years he was following, he hindered the core motive of *understanding* and *trusting* evoking a chain reaction through which [in turn] rendered the motives of *controlling*, *self-enhancement* and consequently *belonging* even more difficult to be fulfilled. Processes of deconstruction were taking place, in his words a ‘brain off’ that erased all previous practice and build up new ones. These processes provided an opportunity for comparison, of realizing the first differences and the sights of disintegration/ estrangement. Alex brought up the results of his ‘brain off’ process: “After that in the world champs I saw the first diversities because I had learned [with the new coach in Austria I had brained off] … in the national team the guys/ juniors and men categories were ‘whatever’ as we say, with things like nutrition and training and I was.. I had entered in a completely different mode. I was like a real professional.” “I saw them in a different way and they did too. Because for example one day it was raining and they didn’t go out to train whereas I went out for a four hour training a day before the race. And this was our difference” “They didn’t know yet what was going on and it was like…let me remember exactly now… Yes, of course, we sat down to eat and the others [teammates from the national team] were eating bullshit and I was eating only salad and rice or something similar and they were telling me ‘what are you doing, are you sick? What are you doing?’ And I was trying to explain that things are a bit different than they thought. But I was..it was obvious that I was distancing myself from them. These things were more obvious of course the next year when I really went there to be a professional [I signed]” In this race he realizes his differences with his teammates in terms of mentality. He saw his teammates from a different perspective. Disintegration, he

felt they couldn't understand him –his ways -, he felt that he stopped belonging, distanced and detached. Feelings that were more intense the next year that he finally signed for good with the pro-continental team: "The news that I am going to sign with this team in Austria came when I was in a training camp with the national team in Chania. Of course even though I was with the national team I was doing my own training program, totally. I was following my own regimes. Which means that the national team may had a three hour training and I had then six hours training, things like that. I was doing my training and I was completely committed in this and I didn't care anything else. I was in a process of 'brain off' as I told you in the beginning."

"So after I finished with the training camp in Chania and along with the news for my transfer in the professional team, we had to race [with the national team] in the tour of Rhodes. Back then tour of Rhodes was one of the biggest cycling events -around the world not only Europe-, Cancellara and Armstrong were racing among others, huge athletes; athletes that we watch now racing tour de France. And there it happens, the first 'blast'. [At that race] I participated with national team since my professional team from Austria didn't get an invitation to race. So I race with the national team wearing the cycling pants of my team from Austria and the jersey of the Greek champion and one day (in one etap) I finish third and in another one I win, and back then I remember it was Cancellara, Koch and other monsters [great athletes]. And then I leave for the team abroad with a different mood that 'ok now we are doing here something great'."At the end of his preparatory phase all the good results boosted his psychological state, promoting feelings of self-enhancement, trust, controlling, understanding and finally belonging to a higher level.

The differences in mentality can be traced in Alex's reference about the reaction of his teammates for leaving for a team abroad: "Nobody knew what this was all about. Some were suspicious, some jealous, others were saying things. Anyway, the point is that I didn't listen to anyone. I was focused and I was going on [to fulfil my goal]. I am telling you. I didn't even had a relationship back then. Nothing, only eat, sleep and train, nothing else." He was so focused and committed in pursuing his goals, and after he 'brained off' he knew what it takes to get there. Alex narrates his first contact with the team: "My first impressions were amazing, I was astonished because I went there, and I left from a team that we had the very basic staff, a bike and nothing else, I went there and saw 50 bikes, four cars, trucks with washing machines inside, camper and things like that and I had a small culture shock."

Julie compared the practices in the host and donor country: “There was a team spirit there [in the team in Italy] that I had never lived before in Greece. I mean even if there were people [women] in my team in Greece, I have never lived something similar in terms of cooperation, and that impressed me. Also, in the races I was impressed of how organized we were racing. We were organized in my team in Greece but it couldn’t be compared with how organized they were.” “The difference is that there was respect. There was a respectful attitude that I had never experienced in Greece. [This was a fact] not only in the sport environment but also in the social environment, everywhere. I mean in Greece it was in order to survive people do everything, step over dead people. Whereas the team spirit there, the fact that they were treating you as one of their kind, this was the most evident thing to be honest. Because no one respected you in Greece. I mean if I leave out the coach I had from the beginning of my career [in Greece] all the others were looking for their own behalf. After I went to Italy I could see no reason why I should continue cycling when I came back in Greece.” “In general they take all things, not only sports, more seriously than us. I mean they count everything, every little detail counts. However, cycling there is their favorite sport. It’s how they treat here football. And of course they keep the rules something that we don’t do here. In terms of the team for example if you were in a team in Greece they wouldn’t bother to treat you or give you bikes and staff. I mean in Greece if they had an athlete that was hardly with the group [meaning that wasn’t such a good athlete] they wouldn’t pay any attention to her. They wouldn’t pay the attention that the team in Italy gave me, that in the beginning, my performance wasn’t that great.”

Controlling.

Controlling as an overall theme consisted of the sub-theme named *preparatory phase/ brain off*. This sub-theme considered the pre-relocation experiences of the athletes that aided relocation.

Preparatory phase/ brain off.

In Alex’s words: “From the moment I decided to train with the coach in Austria the focus is changed. I mean a process of ‘brain off’ takes place, all the precedents are erased and now there is only training and blind implementation of the program: eating, training and sleeping. There is nothing else. Until then here in Greece we didn’t know exactly what we should do; we were going out [staying late at night], eating bullshit and all these staff.”

"My coach had the role of manager there, anyway he had the connections because I didn't knew nobody (..). Until then my preparation was changed by 180^0. We go on with countless kilometers training. Saturday I was from 21.00 o'clock [in bed], which here in Greece this is out of question. Food, no ice-creams, sweets and things like that..crepes and things like that and waffles. And my body type has completely changed. From 74 kg I drop off to 68 kg in a year. And now my performance starts to increase. [In the past] Before I was winning some of the races in Greece but now I win all the races in Greece and by miles; I feel that I am playing with the athletes here". This increased performance promoted *self-enhancement*, and fired up a 'chain reaction' thatfostered the core motives of *trusting* and *controlling*. Alex reflected: "I continued to train with the coach there [in Austria] and in 2001 I leave to Austria during summer for three months July, August, and September until the mid of October and race with an amateur team. However, I was into another process that of staying alone there and racing every week, even big races abroad." He continued to add: "I was in Vienna as a guest for a trial [in order for the new professional team to decide whether they will sign him]. I was staying by myself in an apartment and the last days in October before the world championships, I was about to go for a race in Spain with the Greek national team. At that moment I was like a kid that goes to the playground [so happy]. I was itching for the days to come and be with the other guys [Greek teammates] and race in Spain with the national team". After the first three months as part of his preparatory phase and even though he did started a procedure of disintegration and deconstruction from his previous athletic practices, he did missed his teammates.

Julie reported an experience that prepared her move as follows: "In 2000 that was Olympic year we were with the national team for a training camp in Spain. This was very good for me as I lived some situations by myself, because at that time I was nineteen years old. The national team was mostly comprised by older guys and men so it was a bit difficult for me. But I learned a lot of things. I learned to live by myself, to survive. Anyway it was a bit difficult because I was always [living] with my parents in my town."

In Tim's case he started the 'brain off' process by himself. The determination to leave abroad made him stand out from the rest of his teammates in the national team, and easily a process of disintegration was in the making: "In the beginning of 2005, and after the 2004 Olympics they decided to operate this training center in Trikala. All the athletes going to this center were interviewed and at that point I had declared that my goal wasn't just to race with the national team. My aim was to get better through all they can offer and

the racing abroad with the national team and finally sign with a team abroad. So everyone knew this very well including my coaches, the general headman of the national team and I believe and the other people above them from the federation knew it that I wanted to leave." "And I am not going to hide that I was the only one that was thinking like this and that's why I was kind of distanced in the training center; because I was focused. And everything I did that period and until that period I went in the training center, were revolving around my ambition, if we could name it like this, my dream."

Self-enhancement.

The sub-theme that represented issues of *self-enhancement* was *self-confidence*. This sub-theme referred to the immigrant athletes' perception that they could handle the migration experience and manage possible challenges.

High self-confidence.

Nick characteristically explained how his confidence stayed high: "At that point I realized that my level wasn't respectable only in the Greek racing sphere. I have already had some achievements in international races but when you go to Italy which is considered to be the most difficult -in terms of level- country and you realize you win races, or you are in the first three or six athletes, you realize. I understood that I wanted to do it and move on, to make a step forward. I didn't want to stay (limit myself) in the narrow Greek borders. I was elaborating on this. I mean I was sick with professional cycling. I was watching races on TV all the time, I was reading magazines, I was watching them and admiring them [professional cyclists]. Ok, don't look now [that the access is easy] with the internet and satellite channels. Back then it was really difficult to be informed (updated) for professional cycling. I remember we were buying videotapes, or if someone would bring us from abroad, literally. And with the cycling magazines only a shop in Thessaloniki was bringing them. But I was sick. When we say sick, we mean it. I mean with the videotapes.. I was watching all the time, on and on and I was watching the same race even if I knew what was going to happen at the end. Just to look at them. I didn't want anything else. And my coach understood that I had this passion and since he saw that my level wasn't for staying in Greece and I was thinking of going abroad, and I was determined..because it wasn't easy."

Tim was also confident of his decision: "I was determined, and said that if an opportunity comes up and the team satisfy my needs and requirements, I would go without

a second thought. Honestly [I wouldn't think of], no teams here, no friends, no family, nothing." We can see how determined he was from this story: "In the beginning the first things I did when they announced me that I am going there at first for a trial, basically I felt so sure that they will offer me a contract. I felt it before they offer even if I knew that this is a trial, just to see me. I felt it deep inside me and said that since this happened, this move, that's over, I am going to sign a contract and be a professional. The first things I was thinking of where how am I going to arrange my staff, how I am going to leave Trikala and return to Thessaloniki. And all these things I wanted to be done as quickly as possible. I was begging these things to be done in a minute. I mean to close my eyes and say 'I have arranged everything and I am in the plane leaving'". "When I announced to my teammates in the training center that 'guys I have this opportunity and I am going to take it and leave', nobody believed it. Their reaction was so strange and nobody believed that I am determined and I am going to leave, leave forever and leave them and live by my own [abroad]. Nobody believed it and in the beginning everybody said 'don't leave, stay here, where are you are going to go all alone, and in the past other athletes have left and they felt alone and staff like that. But I didn't listen to them. I didn't listen and it I didn't care since I had made my decision and said 'I don't care even if I will be living alone [there], since this opportunity come up and enter this cycle, I will do it." "In general everybody around me (best friend, girlfriend, brother, parents) were telling me the same thing 'go and don't even think about it' and this was very important. But even if they didn't encourage me, believe me if no one didn't want me to leave I would do it. I wouldn't listen to anyone, no one could influence me. It was as if I was wearing blinkers and my eyes were on my road without being influenced by anyone."

Alex in the same lines with Tim referred to the 'blinkers' and commitment to a goal: "[When you are in a team abroad] you learn to be autonomous and if you have never left you can never become [autonomous]. But you can learn all these staff. I believe if you are focuses to what you want to do and see only this and nothing else you have no problem in adapting. As I did in the first two years. Ok, I may be living in Athens while my parents were living away but I was nearby all the time. In the beginning you may have a 2-3 week period of adaptation, being panicked. But there are other people that don't adapt easily…It needs to be psychologically ready to do this thing [go to a team abroad]. In my case it helped a lot the smooth transition, that first I changed my training program, my mentality, my nutrition and all these, so everything was smooth. And [together with the coach from Austria] we were talking about how it is to be a professional cyclist, what you have to do,

that you have to be by yourself. And I wanted so badly to leave and I didn't care for nothing else. I went there alone and in the beginning I liked it very much because I had blinkers. I was seeing only this thing. I kind of had a clue of what I was about to face. I had my coach that he had been through it, he was living there and knew exactly, he was telling me how it's going to be. I didn't went there as a complete unknown with hope as my boat. More or less I knew what was going to be like."

He went on to add: "Only my coach in Austria and my coach here [in Greece] knew and encouraged me. Only these two knew what professional cycling meant, my coach in Austria that was planning my training program and my coach here that was implementing it. Because I am telling you here nobody knew what was going on. However, you discover most of the things along the way. Still, I was determined, that's it. That I was going to be in heaven. I will go there and do what I wanted."'I was self-confident that now I am going there…and since I had won in the tour of Rhodes. I knew that what I do have an effect." Coaches that possessed the knowledge encouraged him to make the decision and leave. He trusted them, they in turn, increased his self-enhancement and understanding of the conditions he was about to face. They promoted feelings of control of the situation he was about to live. In general, they fostered his belonging in the new team abroad, trusting (his coach and new training regimes) and self-enhancement (trusting in himself that he is going to make it), his sense of understanding and consequently controlling of the situation.

In terms of building confidence, Battochio, Schinke, Battochio, Halliwell and Tenenbaum (2010) documented this pathway as a sub-strategy for controlling. This sub-strategy in Battochio et al.'s study (2010) was powered by positive and successful experiences. The althetes in the abovementioned study were transitioning from a playing level to another level and career stage and applied the pathways as strategies to adapt in new sporting environments. In this study, the relocated athletes were transitioning both at a higher level of performance and a different country. Self-confidence was required and related to self-enhancement because in their case served as a prerequisite to make the move, take the risk and migrate abroad.

b) Adaptation processes and motives to stay or depart the host country.

In terms of adaptation processes that contributed in these cyclists' wish to stay or depart the host country, and following the analysis all five of the adaptation pathways

(understanding, trusting, self-enhancement, controlling, and belonging) were represented in the cyclists' tales and labelled the overall themes.

Understanding.

Under the overall theme labelled *understanding*, the high order themes emerged were referring to *language* and *culture*. Specifically, the high order theme of *language* consisted of the following sub-themes: *language acquisition* (fostered or hindered) and *communication in a common language*. The second high order theme was *culture* that consisted of: *cultural understanding* and *interpersonal communication* including social relationships relating to cultural traits.

Language.

This high order theme refers to the learning of the host country's language or to the use of a common communication language that bridges the first challenges of relocation. While a common communication language may be a faster 'solution' to ease the challenge of understanding, sometimes it does not include all team members as some of them may be not familiar with English for instance. It may also act hindering the broader communication with the whole team, by postponing the acquisition of the host country's language.

'Language acquisition' (fostered or hindered) and 'communication in a common language'. Considering understanding, in terms of language acquisition, the role of a teammate or another person that could aid the procedure was significant, a finding consistent with Battochio et al.'s (2013) study with archival data on the post-relocation adaptation of baseball and hockey players. Battochio and colleagues (2013) highlighted the role of social support in the adaptation process and outcome of relocated athletes and they located two sub-themes that have common grounding with our theme of 'language acquisition'. Specifically, under the overall theme 'fostered understanding' they located a sub-theme namely 'language advice' describing the guidance of teammates and coach in learning the language of the host country. In the same way the sub-theme 'language reinforcement' under the overall theme 'fostered control', depicts the support and encouragement to relocated athletes to use the language and thus develop their proficiency.

In this regard, Alex mentioned that "with my teammate from New Zealand we were talking all the time in English and I was learning Austrian little by little, from hearing. However, I was facing difficulties in terms of the language. In emergency situations they were talking in German and I couldn't understand a thing". The consequence of relying in mediating communication with another language (e.g., English) revealed the 'other side of the coin' of this assistance and ease that his teammate provided to him. As Alex continued his narration he reflects that "with the intercom [during the races] our coach was speaking in German for all the others and he was speaking in English for me. Sometimes, in order to understand I was always next to someone who new German well and could translate for me in English. It was helpful (at that moment), however, later on, years after that, I think of this [that we were speaking English] as not the ideal; because I was never under acute stress to learn German. Of course after some time, since I was there for 6 years, I learned the language." In this case where English was the 'common' language while the language of the host country was German, the intention of teammates or coaches to facilitate understanding may not always have the desired outcome as it hinders/delays the process of the host country's language acquisition.

Language and accommodation was something to worry about, as Tim comments. "I didn't know if they [team] could speak English, which was the most important to me and how I could adapt in terms of stay… These were my basic worries that were solved as soon as I got there, because all the team embraced me both the athletes and the team's staff. They even were speaking in English first and then translating it to Czech for me in order to learn the language little by little (gradually)." However, the first communication attempts were made with a teammate from Slovakia that functioned as a conduit between the newcomer and the rest of the team as he was speaking fluent English and Czech, whereas the majority of the team was not familiar with the English language.

As far as preparation for communication difficulties, Tim describes: "in terms of language, I was supplied from Greece with two vocabularies from Greek to Czech language and the opposite and I tried to read them by myself, but it was too difficult as they have difficult consonants. So, in the beginning I tried to listen and not to speak. I was trying to say it from the inside and talked to English." Tim also mentioned how the mechanic of the team, and the masseur helped him with the language and the Czech cycling 'argot' that he would need when communicating through the intercom during the races. He characterized his interaction with the team's mechanic as a 'small school'. "Once I began to understand, one day my coach announces me that 'I will stop explaining you the

training program in English. From now on I will speak to you in Czech since you understand'. And I learned Czech very fast, in a year; because every single one were talking to me in Czech while explaining (the meaning) to me in English." In this case there is an application of Battochio and colleagues' (2013) sub-themes language advice and reinforcement, where the team encourages and guides the use of the host country's language.

This willingness to learn the language of the host country was perceived very positively and had reciprocal effects. Tim understood that and articulates it with the following words "I wasn't selfish, in terms of 'I don't want to learn the language because I am Greek and I don't aim to stay here forever' or that 'I have aspirations to transfer in another team'. All of the team saw the endeavour to learn the language in such a good light and appreciated it; and near the end of my career in Czech they wanted also to learn Greek. This was so gratifying. They considered it (the endeavour to learn the language) as something very gentle; it was something unusual for them as they previously had teammates from other countries that they didn't want to learn the language".

Tim goes further to connect this event with broader characteristics of Greek people "they (his team) had realized this Greek value that we have, that we are hospitable, we are warm and willing; and we are not cold as people, and they could see this through me and my attitude towards their language". Through this excerpt is seemed as Tim felt like the carrier of all the Greek values, a representative of Greek mentality that could be valued and appreciated not solely about his characteristics as a good athlete but also as a person. The fact that his teammates expressed the interest to learn his language has been documented in Battochio and colleagues' (2013) findings under the theme 'language model' that pertained to athletes –usually established immigrants- being models in terms of language acquisition. An uncommon finding though, was that an athlete from the host country was learning the native language of the newcomer athlete and this act was highly appreciated by the newcomer. These authors acknowledged that "shared language lessens the cultural divide in a team" (p. 106). Additionally, Battochio et al. (2013) emerging theme of 'cultural appreciation from sport team' pertained to integrative actions on behalf of the team that was characterized by openness towards the newcomer athlete culture and respect. An example of this kind of action, that these authors located, was the integration of traditional food from the country of the newcomer on the menu of the immigrant athletes. Through the analysis and interpretation in this study the willingness of some of

the teammates to learn the language of the newcomer athlete, as in Tim's case, served such a purpose.

Julie explained that in the beginning a manager's friend (that could speak a little English) happened to be around and helped in terms of communication in a common language; after that a teammate played a more active role in helping her learn the language. "I was trying to learn the language. I couldn't understand what they were telling me and I was asking again and again. I was lucky because after my first week a teammate from Spain came in the [team's] house, and she could speak English. So, she helped me to get over this in the first year. When I couldn't understand, she would explain. She was also helping me with my reading (of Italian) the afternoons; to understand the basics and was teaching me the cycling jargon, so I could understand what was happening. Because latter on in the races, when we had to use the intercom I couldn't understand a thing." An additional element to consider was the role of another newcomer (teammate from Spain) and the coincidental fact that she also arrived in the team at the same period, sharing the experience of relocation and aiding communication and understanding.

Culture.

This high order theme refers to cultural awareness and characteristics that may ease or hinder interpersonal relationships. The role of language is significant but the cultural traits of host and donor countries play also a vital part in fostering or hindering understanding.

*'Cultural understanding' and 'interpersonal communication' (social relationships).*In terms of the cultural understanding Nick was clear enough when he stated "So, here is what happened, what I told the Italians when I was leaving, when I was about to leave after 4 years; I told him [the coach]: 'Look it's hard for me. Let me tell you something: I am neither from Ukraine, nor from Russia. I've been to Ukraine, Russia, Romania, and I know where they live. If you come see where I live, you will ask me why I cycle.' I am 100% sure. Everyone from the team who visited me in Greece had asked me the same question. My German teammate had told me: "I am wondering why you Greeks cycle" and it makes sense. I was feeling ashamed to show him pictures from my holidays. Why? Because when he saw them he almost committed suicide. He said: "What is this? Where do I live? What am I doing?" In the same lines he argued that the weather affects the tendency of people to do certain sports "the northern Italy that has a tradition in cycling is not like us. See the south Italy, how many cyclists do they have, in Cicely? They don't

breed athletes compared to north Italy". He continued by arguing that when in Greece people go to the islands for holidays in Germany they have 12ºC and they are in their misery. Making his point Nick attributes the fact of his departure to a cultural gap between host and donor countries that is also related to the weather conditions. Indeed, weather hugely affects the lifestyle of people, while divergence in climate conditions may cause stress to relocated athletes (Evans and Stead, 2012). There was an undermining of his social life, due to in part of the professionalism and different conditions not only sociocultural but also pertaining to weather conditions. Unfamiliarity with cultural and social norms as an issue was traced in Schinke et al.'s (2011) study, as part of the challenges relocated athletes had to face inside and outside sport contexts and where related to the cultural gap between the host and donor countries (e.g., characterized by individualistic or collective approaches). Mesteirjahn (2011) in his study also located similar adjustments that the relocated athletes had to make such as to understand the lifestyle and social norms of the host culture, which pertained to differences between the mentality of Americans and Europeans.

In terms of interpersonal relationships and communication, Manolis described how his teammates functioned by narrating the relationship with two of his teammates (an Austrian and an Italian) by saying that in races they were friendly and helpful but at the end of the race everybody disappeared and no communication was preserved between them. He said "we could talk in the phone in between races but not in a friendly level, for example to invite me in their house or train together for one or two months. The kindness was ending there. It's not like the Greek temperament, or of a Cretan that he will say 'hey guys come over'. At some point I hosted some [of my teammates] in my place and we did a winter camp. They never did the same. Ok sometimes it happens (…) and the specific teammate from Italy happened to come from north, very close to Austria. So they had similar temperament with Austrians and Germans. He was also less communicative due to the fact that he wasn't speaking fluently English. I think the most important is the language (of the host country) to feel at ease with communication." Thus, interpersonal communication and understanding were hindered due not only to language restriction but also to cultural traits.

To sum up, some teams relied on a mere communication in a common language (i.e., English) such as Alex's team that may act hindering the acquisition of the host country's language, while others prioritized, encouraged and actively engaged to work together with the newcomer to reinforce language acquisition, such as Tim's case. Julie's

case showed that sometimes the first issue to be solved is to communicate, no matter the language and as a second step to begin acquire the language with support from the team (either be a teammate or coaching staff). In terms of cultural understanding and interpersonal communication Nick and Manolis stressed the significance of cultural understanding and the role language plays in interpersonal bonding. But it was not limited to language as it entailed cultural characteristics and mentality. The issue of understanding in terms of language was a significant aspect of adaptation processes, since the specificity of cycling with the use of intercom during long road races demands fast and efficient communication which is crucial in defining the final outcome. There is no time to waste due to misunderstandings, hence issues of communication (either them based in a common language or the acquisition of the host country's language) need to be arranged from the first moment relocated athletes ender the team.

Belonging.

The overall theme of '*belonging*' is composed by the high order themes of '*belonging in the subculture of cycling'* and *'teams' mindset/ structure'*. Under teams' structure/mindset the subtheme emerged were issues of relatedness or un-relatedness and loneliness that have their origin on the divergence of the cultural background between host and donor countries, teams' mindset and lack of social support.

Belonging in the subculture of cycling.

In terms of belonging Alex commented that "when I came in Greece (with the continental Austrian team) to race tour of Hellas my behaviour was misunderstood because all the time I was hanging out with the Austrians and not with the Greeks and this was perceived as snobbery. In a way slightly, it was snobbery because in order to be accepted (from the new team) you have to be a part of them all the time. I mean when I was coming in Greece I couldn't ignore my people and go with the Greeks and have fun and stuff like that. I was part of this team [meaning his continental Austrian team] and I ought to be with them. What I did during the off season, October-November when I was coming in Greece it's a different story". This issue was embedded to the cycling subculture and the silent rules of belonging that connote loyalty, ensure respect and a place in the team.

Teams' structure/mindset.

Issues about relatedness. Another incident that facilitated integration and the sense of belonging was that the team was newborn without established athletes, and as Alex

explains: “I was very lucky for the fact that the team I went to join was in its beginnings, so I went in its birth. And the rest of the roster were strangers among strangers, hence we bonded well together. There was a friendly atmosphere and our manager looked after us like we were his sons. We were going out for dinner. There was no strict professionalism”. With the term ‘professionalism’ Alex referred to the friendly atmosphere and implies that the interest of the team was not restricted in performance attainment but entailed more intimate relationships.

Julie also commented on how lucky she was that she joined a team that was so bonded. “The whole team staff was very positive with me and all of the team was in the mood of team work. (There was this mindset) that we are a team and if we don’t work together, we weren’t going any further. And the main reason that we had this message in our heads was the coach and the manager that kept on reminding us those things.” This prevailing mindset fostered belonging and a sense of collective action that were cultivated due to the role of coach and manager in preserving this ideal.

The first contact with the team was also important as it can influence the latter impressions about the team and atmosphere within it. Tim provided a vivid picture “when we [with another teammate] took off, the team’s director was waiting for us. (..) he had a sign that was in Czech saying ‘ Greece- Czech, 1-0’. It was about the euro in football where one day before the Greeks had won over Czechs, and he did it for fun, to break the ice. And when I saw it I understood. This was very good. We were laughing for days. They were very friendly and welcoming”. In this instance, humour was a device that may act facilitating relatedness and create common ground through a shared positive climate. In another excerpt it is shown that the team’s structure was an additional factor to promoting belonging “what impressed me was their pace and way of functioning. Even from the preparatory phase, in the beginning of the year. Before the basic winter training that was intense, a lot of people [i.e., mechanics, physiotherapists, nutritionists] were around us and were interested in each athlete individually. And I didn’t felt as a stranger that came for the first time in the team. I felt as being a member of the team for years”.

Issues about un-relatedness and loneliness. From the beginning for Nick the sense of belonging was fluid. He was just 18 when he left and had to get used in a new way of life (i.e., to cook, to have roommates, to make new friends and so on). “The most important is that I didn’t have my own people around. I believe that if I had just one person with me, let’s say my brother or if I was older and had a wife, things would be a lot different for me. There I had no one to feel close”. This change in the everyday life that

took place in unfamiliar contexts appeared difficult in combination with the absence of social support, depriving feelings of belonging. Even though Nick realized that he belongs to the sport context of the host country and team, he didn't felt the same in terms of the social context and this fused his feelings of belonging: "They didn't kick me out of the team nor did I leave because of a conflict. I left the team in a very good atmosphere. I explained what exactly is happening and the reason why I wanted to leave. I told him [coach] that I cannot stand this anymore and I cannot perform in this environment here… Overall, this thing bothered me, I went racing, I was winning and I had no one, no one close to me to celebrate, to share with. Whether I was sad or happy I had no one to share. With whom to share? With the strangers? And with my teammates it's not the same. I felt close to them but not so close as my own people". Sharing was more important than any sporting achievement. Intimate relationships with his family and friends in his home country couldn't be replaced by relationships with the new teammates for some athletes and this has implications on the effectiveness of adaptation processes. Later on, he had to prioritize his values and finally chose to depart the host country, for a number of reasons but also due to the unfulfilment of the feeling of belonging and relating, which were central composites that weighted more in his decision. Issues of homesickness and loneliness surfaced also, in Campbell and Sonn's (2009) study, and they were accounted by these authors as a part of the incitement of culture shock. As the overall themes were analysed further their argument seem to apply and cultural components seem to partly influence such feelings. Other studies in sport psychology (Schinke et al.,2011) and sport sociology (Maguire & Stead, 1996) have also identified issues of loneliness and lack of 'relatedness' with family and friends, depicting that this issue is omnipresent and warrants more attention.

Manolis as a person with previous migration experiences was clearer of what he was looking for. "When I went there I didn't like the way of life. I mean it wasn't the only thing I had in my life. I chose to have a quality in my life and I left. I didn't like this sober way of life. (…) the landscape was beautiful but 8 o'clock everybody was in their homes sleeping. If the whole team was there it would be different for sure. And it's not about friendships as I make friends relatively easy. Let me put it another way. In order to give your maximum in the trainings you have to have the proper mindset, and there I didn't have it any more. I was going for training black hearted. I was all alone. I had no team". The importance of social support and social life is obvious. The lack of a structured and

bonded team affected equally the sense of his motivation for training (that would impact his subsequent performance), self-enhancement and consequently control.

At this point it is important to comment that frequently the overall themes of 'belonging' and 'trusting' overlap. This may be due to their direct connection with human interaction, while both belonging and trusting depend on 'relatedness' (Ryba et al., 2012); meaning the relationships formed with teammates and coaches and the social support or lack of it that impacts adaptation processes. A characteristic of cyclists' narrations was the social support from other relocated, native athletes and teams' staff or the lack of it. As Cambell and Sonn (2009) outlined, social support deriving from various sources (e.g., family, indigenous teammates, friends) was central in athletes' sense of 'kindredness' that enhanced the sense of self. Kindredness referring to the sharing of the shame habitus or implicit experiences among indigenous players, facilitates trusting and consequently belonging, a founding consistent with 'relatedness' located in this inquiry.

Cambell and Sonn (2009) in their study found that relocated athletes managed relocation stress through team's acceptance and a fostered sense of belonging. In some cases (e.g., Tim, Alex) teammates' acceptance had to be earned through practices of 'testing' that were parts of the cycling subculture. An additional case is the willingness to learn the native language that through the mechanism of 'understanding' the sense of belonging is fostered. Agergaard and Ryba (2014), provide a different perspective in terms of belonging and argue for processes of adaptation to unfold in a translocal interchange, where the immigrant athlete develops a local but also, a transnational sense of belonging.

Self-enhancement.

The overall theme of *'self-enhancement'* consisted of the high order theme *'respect'* which in turn comprised by the sub-themes: *'gaining respect from being a national champion/attaining the expected level of performance'*, *'gaining respect from personality characteristics'*. These two sub-themes are sport or personality related and refer to the self-enhancing properties of earning team's respect through attaining supreme performances during a race or training, from the mere fact of wearing a national champion jersey or from a valued personality. Another overall theme that emerged was *'media'* and pertains to the media publicity that the newcomer athlete draws and considered to foster the sense of self-enhancement. The final theme was *'logistics'* that included the material conditions and equipment supplied in the athlete by the host team that reinforced the self-esteem.

Respect.

Being a national champion/attaining the expected level of performance. Enhancing self was a pathway that seemed to lead to belonging. In order to achieve belonging (and to gain trust) someone has to engage and attain certain accomplishments (to self-improve) and these very achievements are the source of self enhancement. Alex seemed to understand the functioning of the new team. That he had to be a good athlete in order to be part of the new team and belong. "Their behaviour towards me was very good, especially when I was racing with the champions' shirt. That offered me a prestige. I mean always [before a big race] when they were presenting the teams, they were presenting first the yellow jerseys, then the green, and after that the national champions. So I was always in the first raw. (…)They were showing respect to me. You gain respect through the races. Now, if I couldn't win a race abroad, I couldn't 'win' their respect." Thus, the sporting achievements, which in Alex's case verified with a jersey indicative of the athlete's bigger achievement, and the attainment of a good performance, were the ticket to win team's respect and self-enhance.

Similarly, Julie when describing her team winning the overall in Tour of Italy was overwhelmed. Her description highlighted how team achievements promoted self enhancement and reinforced feelings of belonging and trusting. Which in their turn resulted from a good understanding of the circumstances and demands of the team, facilitating feelings of control (specific actions leading to certain outcomes). "When we were at the podium I was with the jersey of the national champion. I felt incredible. They were referring to me as 'sola greca'. That I was Greek, I had raced the Tour, and my team was first. I will never forget this feeling in my whole life (…) I mean even though another girl [from my team] had also won the tour (individual standings), we felt that we had put so much effort to achieve this that it was as if each one of us had also won. And then the team was convinced that ok you can handle this". The sense of trusting on behalf of the team was an important factor that could secure the position of the rider and the renewal of the contract, promoting feelings of self-enhancement. This sense of trusting was mutual and related to controlling, in terms of the team's effectiveness in strategy, tactics, and training regimes for enhanced performance, reinforcing the trust on behalf of the athlete towards her team and of course impacted, through the path of performance enhancement, the sense of self-enhancement.

The adaptation to new training regimes was not an easy task but in the case of Nick his great condition and performance verified his potentials and fostered self-enhancement. The attainment of the expected performance promoted the sense that he can meet the team's demands and functioned in a similar way as in July's case, provoking a chain reaction to enhance the sense of belonging, control and trust. Nick gives an example of this: "we went for a training camp (..)and some tests took place. Within all of the team I was climbing with the two or three best athletes and we were about fifteen. The coach was amazed, he was shocked (..), he was really enthusiastic about me and there was (the point) when he started encouraging me". The image of wearing a national champion jersey was also present in Nick's narration as he mentioned that "I was racing with the Greek national champion jersey and they (the Italians) were impressed. Even in Bergamo, which is a big city, and we were stopping in some coffee shops during training, they had started to recognize me. You know the champion of Greece in cycling, a recognition that I don't have it in the city I live for many years. I had greater recognition over there (Italy). Strange thing but that's how it was".

Personality characteristics. Manolis viewed self enhancement from another angle. To gain respect not from sport achievements but from his own personality: "there was friendly atmosphere and we had some good times.(…) Some times the level of the person is more important. I mean I had lived in US, California. As a person I had a lot to tell about life and maybe more than they would say. Because I wasn't that young when I went there, I was almost 30. I wasn't a kid. I was a man most of the times older than them and I could advise them not only about sporting related matters but also about life. It has to do with respect. I had gained respect in a personal level. So there were never problems about 'you are not as good as we are'. He was mature and self-aware and this was mirrored in his narration.

Media. Media attention and the publicity given to a new athlete signing in a team was also a means to self-enhance. In Tim's case "they were coming from various Czech cycling sites, newspapers and local channels to the city I was living to interview me. And they were impressed from the fact that a Greek had managed to join a team from Czech, because there was never a Greek in their team. It was mostly Germans, Slovaks and athletes near Czech. So there was mobility around my name." The media acknowledged that for Tim (a Greek) being in a Czech team was something special and fostered some reputation around his name by showing their interest for his transfer.

Logistics. The excerpt that follows is about self-enhancement that derived from the logistics in the host team. Julie never had a kind of treatment from the Greeks that would confirm the value of her performance. Self-enhancement (makes her feel that she is worthy/valuable) as a pathway, had a direct consequence in trusting (the team valued and trusted her –treating her equal as the other riders- that she was going to fulfill their expectations, so they had to ensure the best conditions and material for her), understanding (that they are professionals in their ways of functioning), belonging (that it is appealing to be part of such a team), controlling (because it shows that achievements makes you valuable/worthy of these things they generously offer---what you give is what you take). "Once, I signed with the team, they gave me three pairs of shoes, two bikes and all the clothing. Before I left Greece they were treating me as…I mean, no one ever gave me a bike. And I went there and they pampered me. All that I was living, all this seemed to me as 'who am I and they treat me like this'. And I thought probably I am good [in cycling], since they treat me like this. I said to myself 'I guess I am worthy of it'. Until then, I couldn't realize –except the fourth place in the world champs- how good I was or how much merit has what I am doing. And I went there they measured me and gave me a custom bike. They were professionals in everything. They were organized".

Controlling.

The overall theme of *controlling* comprised of two high order themes: *control on behalf of the teams' actions –or actions beyond athletes' control*- with the sub-themes of *role clarity*, *training philosophy* and *external barriers to control* (terrain). *Role clarity* derived from the coaches' directions about strategy and tactics in a race. The sub-theme called *training philosophy* and *external barriers*, consider elements over which the athlete had no impact (control) on, pertained to different training regimes and terrain. On behalf of the *actions under athletes' control* the sub-theme that emerged was *personal initiative*, where the athlete exerts control over the way or in which the performance enhancement - and if it- will take place.

Actions controlled by the team or actions beyond athletes' control.

Role clarity. The sense of control was maintained once the team was organized under specific instructions and the optimum performance was attained. As Alex comments, "when I was out of shape, I had to work for them [teammates]. I could finish last [in a race], I could have a 10 minute gap from the peloton; but if my guy won, I would also have

credits form the job that I would have accomplished. I would go back to bring water, to be the 'waterboy', I would do anything. Which [in other races] they had done the same for me. (…) Because I knew that if someone from my team would win, we would take money, and our contracts would be renewed. And all this is a chain (…). We were all working together, our performances were similar (…) but we had different roles. From the beginning of the year we had made out the races, who should be in shape early in the season, February, March; who should be in shape on April, or May, who in one-day races, in tours and so on". Thus, the role clarity was an important element that enhanced feelings of control and minimized misunderstandings. In the same ground Manolis narrates how role clarity reinforced a smooth environment with teammates: "..each one of us had different goals. This helped in terms of vanishing rivalry among us. For example, one wanted to be the national champion of Austria, which was in a different period. The other wanted to have good results in the world cups. I wanted to succeed in Greece, to wear the jersey [of the national champion] and gather points to qualify for the Olympics. These things help". Therefore, controlling was deeply connected with understanding the specific role each athlete had, the reasoning of each decision pertaining to the racing and training design and tactics.

The pathway of controlling was also related to self-enhancement. In Julie's example, she had to do exactly what she was told, to follow the directions of her coach, in order to achieve the desired outcome (and thus self-enhance). In a similar route, trust derived from the relationship between her and the coach and a sense of belonging is fostered: "after I signed they told me that 'from today on you are with us. We will have you as an assistant for start'. They considered me as the sprinter of the team, but I was the second stronger (in sprints), so at the end I would propel the other girl. They also told me 'whatever we say you should follow, you should race certain races and so on (…). We had to cooperate perfectly, to do as I told in order for the team to achieve a result. We had our team leader and we had to promote her and depending the race profile to promote whoever was better at the certain terrain."

Training philosophy and external barriers to control (training terrain). The terrain of the trainings was also a factor that impacts on control. Tim, a rider that was specialized in uphills, tells us that he couldn't train in steep and prolonged uphills [because there weren't any around his city] and that made him feel incompetent and helpless. All this "in combination with the fact that the training schedule was based in a different philosophy and we didn't do any high intensity training sessions because instead we were racing often,

caused me a lot of stress. Whereas in Greece we did exactly the opposite; we did a lot of interval training, with more intensity because there were fewer races. The first six months were very difficult for me. I had reached a point that I said 'there is no case that I will improve my performance, I have ruined everything. I came here with ambitions to excel and I am never going to achieve this because the place I live restricts me. I was disappointed." When Tim realized that he had no control over the terrain or training philosophy he started questioning the development of his abilities and his performance. He continues on the impact of this situation on his psychological state: "the most disastrous thing for me was that I had left myself psychologically to be overwhelmed by the feeling of failure. That I wasn't climbing prolonged uphills and in races with big uphills I would be any good and capable to win or help (a teammate)".

Nick was, as were all of these athletes, sure that if he could follow the paths of his new team he could advance his performance level. "I was about to fulfil my dream. From then on I knew that by going there my performance will increase. Plus all the additional advantages that I would enjoy in a country like this". He knew that this process would generate the expected outcomes. Clearly he argues for the reasons that keeping him there: "the trainings and team functioning was something that I haven't experienced before. It had nothing to do with the Greek standards. I mean, I was seeing a great gap and I am telling you that the only thing that kept me in Italy at that moment was the races and trainings; nothing more". He knew that the way to enhance his performance was by staying there and lived through the migration experience for four years.

Actions under athletes' control.

Personal initiative. The choice of departure (in two months) was Manolis case. Even though he acknowledged what was needed to do in order to attain his goal and increase his performance level and race Olympics, he chose another path. He didn't want to compromise and miss other values in his life. "*Elite sport is very good and needs dedication. You have to erase a lot of things and maybe this robotic [routine] is what is needed sometimes. It didn't fit with my mentality. I wanted for my free time a different way of life; I couldn't stand [living] this robotic. Some people didn't have a problem".* Thus, he decided to exert control over his own life and chose not to miss other qualities in life such as socializing."At some point I hosted them in my hometown and we did winter camps there. So, I tried to create myself the atmosphere that I needed. I mean I couldn't do this in Austria, so I said 'why don't you come over here (in Greece) during winter?' So, I

gathered the team and I was better than I was in Austria". Control was related to self-enhancement, comprehensive understanding (e.g., team's dynamics, philosophy and functioning, structure). It reinforced trusting which is a prerequisite of belonging.

Trusting.

The overall theme of *trusting* comprised of the high order themes namely *trust on behalf of the coach and teammates, questioning trust in the subculture of cycling* and *trust on behalf of significant others*. This theme included the trust a coach express towards the newcomer athlete, building trust with the teammates (forming relationships and bonding), questioning trust as a practice inside the subculture of cycling and usually has hindering effects, and trust in terms of significant others, such as the immigrant athletes' family.

Trust on behalf of the coach and the teammates.

Teammates play crucial role in building a trusting environment and a link between the new athlete and the rest of the team (Battochio et al., 2013; Ryba et al., 2012). Alex commented "with my teammate from New Zealand we were getting along together very well. Whereas the opposite with the one from US and the other from Denmark. (…) it's not an easy task to live together with another four different persons. Sometimes you want to be alone, and stuff. And I began to getting psychologically tired. (…) so, I was looking for opportunities to go for races in Greece. The last years I had discussed this with the manager and he agreed. Because he could see that this [Austria] may be the most suitable place to train, but psychologically I couldn't stand being abroad for so long. He trusted me, that when I would be here [Greece] in June, I wouldn't go out in mpouzoukia and I would do my training. Mpouzoukia were for October only". The support and bonding with teammates builds a trusting environment that in some cases leads to self-awareness and self-development: "with my teammate from New Zealand we had some crazy conversations. We were the psychoanalyst of each other; conversation after conversation. Why are we here, what we do here, why do we do this, and so on, and this helped of course". It may also act by buffering issues of loneliness.

Trusting can be considered from the opposite side (direction), that of the team. In Tim's case he observed"I was functioning in the team as I should. I mean I was sacrificing myself in order to help (his teammates during races). I wasn't hesitating to spend my powers (energy) for someone. This was the first thing that from the first race led the whole team, athletes and staff to integrate me straight away. Since the race was over they were

treating me as if I was in the team for years…I won their trust because I was conscious of what I was doing".

Questioning trust in the subculture of cycling.

Tim described a practice that derived from the subculture of cycling. During the winter season, in the beginning of the preparatory period usually trainings are slow-paced and "nobody goes fast", as Tim explains. However, the pace during the last kilometers of the training was as if they were racing and his teammates even though were asking about his characteristics as a cyclist, they were distanced. Nick describes the event in the following words: "In the beginning in the trainings I felt that they were 'checking' me in some parts of the training. I could see this mostly in uphills, because they could see that I am thin. That I am dry and they had saw that I had a gift in uphils. I felt that they thought I am threatening them; that they thought that I would be the leader in their team. Their attitude wasn't with a bad intention, it was something natural, as I learned later on and I understood this in the beginning of the season when newcomer athletes arrive. I understood that they were staying 'if he is good? If he is better than us? What will happen? Maybe we will leave and he will stay?' And this was the threat. This made me feel stressed about how my future behavior should be. Because in a lot of instances you race together with these athletes and you need to help them or they need to help you. They count on you and you count on them. This was the burden and the stress I had (…) However, I didn't feel a threat in the fact that they may criticize me, or if they couldn't see me as a friend; or as if I should push myself in training in order to prove to them something. No. I was just focused in being right, not to cause, unwillingly, any trouble and cause reasons to fight or be misunderstood. And this was something they realized and appreciated so after the second day this stopped to apply in trainings. Everything was 'back to normal'. It was as if I passed a small test for them". After this incident took place the mechanic and the masseur of the team explained him that the cause of this attitude was that they wanted to see his level. However, this climate may cost the building of a trusting environment among the teammates. The delicate handle of the newcomer plays an important role in balancing the situation and the team should act in ways that ease adaptation challenges. Agergaard and Ronglan (2015) in their study referred to the rivalry among elite athletes to get selected by the coach in order to be part of the main team and play more time, as an 'internal competition'. They argue that responsible for this situation, is in part the over-manning

which is a characteristic of most of the professional teams and they go no by placing boundaries between competition and collaboration.

Trust on behalf of significant others.

The issue of trust pertains not only to teams and newcomer athletes, but also to the family of the immigrant athlete. In Nick's case, and due to the fact that he was just 18 years old the trust was an important aspect to establish feelings of assurance: "The unknown was scaring me. The fact that I didn't knew what I would have to face. After the second or third time I went [for the trial] my mother came along to see out of curiosity. To see what was exactly going on. And she was reassured. When I came back after the trial I told her that they take care of me so much. And this was true because I was also young. So any doubt she may had vanished." But does this count in for Nick to feel the necessary trust to his team? So maybe there was a level of trust in the sport domain but lacked from other domains of social life. He notes that "everything there was about the bike. The social relationships, friendships and any other contact had to do with the bike. Whereas here it's not like this." This narration showed that trust was not cultivated in all areas of the athletes' life and even though it may be balanced for a short period by self-enhancement (e.g., performing excellent in trainings and races) this had an impact on the feelings of belonging.

Synopsis of the analysis for the second research question.

Overall, being guided by Fiske's (2004) theoretical framework, and deductively analyzing the interviews for the second research question, I reached to the conclusions that the fulfillment, omission or balance of the core social motives impact significantly in the behaviours and decisions (motives and intentions, being and doing) of a person that functions and interact in and with various contexts. Hence, the stories people co-construct are composed and apprehended inside historical, institutional, and dialogical contexts (Riessman, 2008) and these stories are a plea for belongingness (the basic social motive), an attempt to eschew rejection and exclusion/ ostracism.

Thayer-Bacon (1997) brings to the surface the importance of interconnections with people, cultures, social contexts and our surroundings, past, present, future. My argument when combining Fiske's (2004) framework and Thayer-Bacon's (1997) relational epistemology that is based on relations and supports the notion that "we are contextual social beings" (p.241), is that in any environment (e.g., vocational, familial or other) a

person seeks to relate and interact with others in order to satisfy the core motive to belong. This quest leads to a balance and not necessarily a fulfillment of all the core social motives. I am explaining my understandings:

A person needs to *understand* the contexts, the rules (social norms) and the communication codes. This understanding, as Fiske and Yamamoto (2005) argue, is the basis of their appraisal of their own rejection (exclusion) and approval (inclusion). Understanding, as in this study, can have the meaning of communication (e.g., in terms of language acquisition, subtle communication codes and micro environments) or knowledge about the new environment (e.g., in terms of the sociocultural conditions and macro environments).

There is a need to feel secure and to do this, after understanding is fulfilled (up to a point), a person has to know the outcomes of her/his actions, to be aware that there is a consistency between certain behaviours and consequences, fostering feelings of *control* and trust. Fostered control emanates from feeling effective when functioning in micro and macro environments, reinforces feelings of confidence and self-enhancement and is highly depended on understanding (as in the case of Alex where the climate in the team with the role clarity prevented misunderstandings).

Self-enhancement is about improving oneself in order to be skilful and competent in specific contexts and is related to self-esteem. A person can enhance her/his self by comparing the skills and behaviours with other people or other people's perception of herself/himself (Fiske & Yamamoto, 2005). Bonding with others and reinforcing secureness reinforces *trusting* relationships, and is a prerequisite of belonging.

Lastly, *belonging* as the basic social motive is characterised by attempts for being accepted and an aversion on being rejected (Fiske, 2004). People when interacting with others want to know their intentions, capabilities of enacting them and be ascertained whether the other is a friend or an opponent (Fiske & Yamamoto, 2005). There is a need to know if the environment is safe or unsafe for their psychological and physical integrity.

What is important to notice is that the fulfillment or balance of the core social motives is different for each individual. The circumstances and their interaction with the contexts and people act as mediators to the priorities and psychosocial needs. Thus, there is a case that an individual may balance, for the short-term, the feeling of trust with increased sense of self-enhancement (e.g., Nick) or in the case of the motives to migrate may balance the hindered understanding with an enhanced sense of self-enhancement and belonging, for another athlete this may not be enough. The sources of these core social

motives vary depending on spatial and temporal features, perceived situation, contexts and individual psyche.

What the analyses did was to utilize Fiske's model not only to understand the athletes' motives to extend their stay or return from their host country and team –looking how and if processes of adaptation weighted this decision- but also to trace motives of departure from the home country through a novel approach. Evident in the analysis was the applicability (utility) of the theoretical framework and its capacity to extend our understandings of these cyclists' –beyond adaptation strategies employed- to motives to migrate and subsequently extend their stay in the host country or depart.

At this point it is useful to make a remark. Due to the linkage of the core motives and their interdependence some sub-themes did overlap and fitted in two or more overall themes. This was made visible in Battochio et al.'s (2013) study, in which they omitted the self-enhancement pathway because its parameters overlapped with parameters of the other four pathways. They go on to explain their decision by saying that "one might self-enhance through effective control strategies or through effective appraisal, leading to better understanding" (p. 111).

The boundaries of separating and categorizing are obscure and depend on the interpretative lens employed by the researchers. Thus, in this case all the overall and sub-themes were included and positioned under specific pathways –that often do not match with previous studies' categorization- to highlight the chain reaction relationship that should also be embraced in the interventions employed to aid adaptation and inclusion. The subjective interpretative perspective of researchers and practitioners may endow with a host of different approaches that intervene to foster adaptation through one pathway or another and the multiplicity of these approaches and interpretations should be outlined and not removed.

Discussion

In this chapter the findings for each research question were discussed further in a reflective manner in view of the current scholarship. Limitations of the inquiry were acknowledged and discussed. Implications and future directions were provided to extend the knowledge in the field of sport labour migration.

First Research Question: Identity Reconstructions via the Identity Narratives

Taking a closer look at how migration triggered identity fragmentations, negotiations and reconstructions, the migration experience of the two cyclists marked a transition that provoked culture shock and acted as an incentive for each cyclist to re-create his own identity through narratives. As in the study of Douglas and Carless (2009) once the performance narrative no longer aligned with the athletes' priorities and values, they experience narrative wreckage as they seek asylum in non-existent alternative narrative resources. Finally, the cyclists' reconstructed their identities anew, following a period where they tried to dissociate from the elite sport culture and commit themselves in a wide open and polyphonic narrative construction of selves.

In Nick's tale, the fragmentation of his identities became apparent when the relational self opposed the performative self. In line with Douglas and Carless (2011) comment, what a relational storyteller perceives as threat is not the underachievement or the failure to attain optimum performance, "but the experience of isolation through a loss of intimacy or relationship" (p.13). As Nick's story evolves, cultural differences lived in everyday life become obstacles for his adaptation to the new environments. In this respect, the fact that Greece still maintains strong characteristics of family relations and the collective self plays an important role in the psychological wellbeing of the person (Chroni et al., 2013) added up to create conditions that intensified feelings of isolation and restriction in these cyclists' social life.

Manolis found himself facing a junction early on: he had to choose between a shrunk life and a quality life. When he viewed the absence of quality in social life, he started asking himself "What is this for?" By rejecting the monotonous robotic life of a

pro-cyclist he preserved his need for discovery characteristic of his identity and way of life. He chose a life that was going to make him a better man and not degrade his being; he wasn't enraptured with reaching the 'destination' of achieving great performances (Douglas & Carless, 2006) but with enjoying the way. In his words, "The road and the trip to get there are more important".

Ryba and colleagues (2012), studying elite Finish female swimmers, found that when they moved to Australia for a training camp their acute cultural adaptation became apparent in everyday practices and was based in satisfying their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Similarly, our cyclists had to come to terms with each day, giving emphasis to their senses of agency and competency (i.e., making their decisions to leave the country and team), as well as to the missing link of relatedness when they couldn't identify with a way of life that jostled their values. All in all both narrators here claim not a cycling victory, but a relational and discovery self, respectively (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Douglas, 2009).

In the two narratives a fragmentation in the sense of identity takes place. Nick and Manolis initially questioned their motives for being abroad "What is this for?" After questioning their decision and life priorities, they started to narratively negotiate and re-construct their multiple identities and struggle to come to terms with the new realities and standards. This situation lasted four years for Nick and two months for Manolis. At the end, Nick described how he became tired of trying and Manolis explains that he would make some negotiations, yet as the story unfolds he quickly realizes that he don't want to bargain and degrade his values and identities.

Finally, the outset of the process of reconstruction is the point where both of them understand and have to confess (to their teams and to themselves) that their relational and discovery identifications were what matter the most and were vital in order to preserve a homeostasis. This was done by using narrative mechanisms that shifted from a blindfold performance plot, in a more relational and discovery oriented schema. Linguistic features such as alternations in verb tenses and persons, repetitions, direct speech, and rhetorical questions were being used to form a dialogue with themselves, the interviewer and the audience adding their personal touch in their narrative canvas; all these narrative 'tools' aim to ascribe meaning and align the lived, perceived and told.

The tales narrated here are at odds with master narrative plots (Sparkes, 2004) revolving around performance-related life events and athletic identity; they constitute attempts to dialogically construct an identity (Carless & Douglas, 2013). Through storying

their experiences, the two cyclists created space for dialogue among and between their different identities as friends, sons, travellers, and not only as athletes or teammates. These narrations were attempts to claim ‘a life’ not only beyond, but also along their athletic careers.

Conclusions on migration as a transition

As this inquiry embarked to grasp the lived experiences of two migrant cyclists, the issue that surfaced was that of identity fragmentation, negotiation, and re-construction. While experiencing a life in different and unfamiliar environments and social spaces, the two cyclists tried to find coherence through and within their own stories from the past, which would bring them to terms and help them make sense of their present selves as well as future lives.

The transitions lived through the migration experience provoked changes in the everyday habitus (Carter, 2011). The different way of living and functioning, of mentality and culture, brought up negotiations and reconstructions in these cyclists identities that were ‘traced’ by using Douglas and Carless’ (2006) framework of alternative narratives. The dialogical tales that emerged from the two interviews generated space for negotiation, alignment and quest for coherence.

Migrating to pursue a professional career and stepping up performance was a challenging experience for the cyclists in the present inquiry. For an elite athlete who is transitioning to a team and a career abroad everyone anticipates a success story (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Douglas & Carless, 2011); that he/she will accomplish the dream and make everyone proud--family, friends, social network, and nation. However, this is not always the case and athletes that found themselves outside the borders of a performance narrative struggle in order to find alignment with their identities and their experiences (Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2011). When performance narratives become the benchmark of what is acceptable and logical a lot of athletes are marginalized. All the taken-for-granted routines for these cyclists were concealed and they storied their migrating experiences with more emphasis on what they missed the most and could not stand living without and sport achievement wasn’t one of those.

There is more than a single road to live the dream of being a professional athlete (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2011). Through the storylines that these cyclists dialogically constructed, they provided a space that allows and reinforces the creation of multifaceted identities that abide prioritization to values other than sport

performance and form a narrative in ways that don't conform to dominant narrative scripts but in their lived experience. From these tales it made vivid that unfamiliar spaces (i.e., different country) and situations (i.e., living and training with a team as a professional, changing one's daily routines) are transitions that can triggered narrative wreckage, initiating a sequence of processes namely fragmentation, negotiation, reconstruction, in a quest for an evolving balanced identity. The narrative mechanisms that the cyclists employed to negotiate these processes reveal the path that led them to reconstruct their identities and consequently, leave their teams and return home.

What was observed aligns with what Douglas and Carless (2011) found in their study with female golfers and articulated in the following words "the participants did not portray life in elite sport as the media portray it, nor did they portray life as it is represented in sport psychology and sociology textbooks and journal articles" (p. 4). They started wondering on why such issues that are crucial to the healthy development of a person's identity were silenced. The homogenization of athletes, by grouping their sameness while ignoring their differences reflects the broader trend of research to reproduce and reinforce norms. It is maybe the empiricist epistemological positioning of the insofar research in sport settings enforces this thinking. Commenting on this issue Thayer-Bacon (1997) drawing on Harding (1993, p. 65) notes that humans are diverse, manifold and miscellaneous and not homogenous as being treated by those that adopt the empiricist epistemology. Knowledge is constructed and positioned in the specific social context from which it derives thus as Harding (1993, p. 57 as cited in Thayer-Bacon, 1997) argues "all bear the fingerprints of the communities that produce them. All thoughts by humans start off from socially determinate lives."

Implications.

It is crucial to acknowledge the importance of alternative narrative schemas as means to reconstruct identities through different transitions (e.g., migration, injury, retirement, withdrawal) and situations where the performance plot does not align with the experiences lived and the attainment of a balanced life and healthy identities (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2011; Sparkes, 1996). The enrichment of the narrative resources by accepting and embracing alternative and diverse narratives will aid integration interventions and positive transitioning across the different phases of an athlete's career.

Athletes should have the opportunity to draw from a rich repository of narrative schemas to relate, problematize, or reflect. The plurality of narrative repertoires (Smith &Sparkes, 2009) may encourage and inspire other athletes to share their intimate thoughts about experiences, foster the sense of belonging thus constructing a healthy sense of self, preserving psychological wellbeing and symphony among stories lived, told and the teller's identities. More importantly, it provides athletes with alternative ways and understandings of who they are or who they want to be and for what reasons. It raises their awareness of the impact of their micro (e.g., subcultures of specific sport, local contexts) and macro environments and contexts (e.g., historical, political, social, cultural) in the formation and reconstruction of their identities, as it raises their feelings of agency by claiming alternative ways of being and becoming.

Not only athletes, but coaches and sport psychology practitioners may benefit from cultural sensitive, life-long professional advancement programs that reinforce the use narratives. Using stories in team staff education may aid our understanding of the holistic approaches that focus on the athlete as a person having a life outside of sport, and promote psychological wellbeing during and after the spam of the athletic career (Douglas &Carless, 2008). Sport psychology consultants need to raise their awareness and elaborate on the impact of the migration experiences on athletes' identities in order to act as a conduit between them and the new environment in order to aid smooth adaptation in the new contexts while taking care of the human being and not only the human doing.

Limitations and future research.

The tales narrated here derived from a single interview with each cyclist, which might be limiting yet the interviewer felt that she exhausted all migrating stories' details with these athletes (since after a point there was repetition of the same events). The small number of interviewees was an inevitable limitation due to the small number of cyclists migrating from Greece. Of course, the findings and conclusions while they were not representative of Greek athletes moving abroad to play their sport, they provide an opportunity for a first-hand reflection on the migrating experiences of the first generation of Greek cyclists migrating to pursue a professional sporting career.

Future research should further explore any multiple simultaneous transitions like the two faced by the cyclists here. Furthermore, cycling and its different disciplines (i.e., track cycling, road, mountain biking) should be further studied as the migration phenomenon in the sport is not new one, and is burgeoning and expanding across Europe

in less developed European countries (i.e., Greece and other Balkan countries). Additionally, the socio-political context of the host country could be taken into account in more detail as it may add more depth and a holistic exploration of the sport migration experience. In this study only a few characteristics of the countries were considered. For example, North Italy at the time that the two cyclists migrated (1999 and 2002) considered to be the best global finishing school for cycling. Austria was also developing in terms of the cycling expertise and the same applied for Czech Republic that was a new member of the European Union when the athlete signed the contract (2005).

In terms of the methodological approach, more research is required to look into the different narrative devices that athletes employ in order to make sense of their experiences, specifically of critical moments throughout their careers and lives. Narrative approach should be employed more broadly as a therapeutic device (Leahy & Harrigan, 2006) and a complementary tool that promotes inclusion and well-being.

Second Research Question: Discussion on Motives to Initiate, Prolong or End the Sport Migration Experience under the Lens of Fiske's Model

The studies utilizing Fiske's model have been mainly focused into adaptation processes and sub-strategies that athletes implement in order to adapt and correspond to the adaptation pathways (Battochio et al., 2010; Battochio et al., 2011; Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2011; Schinke et al., 2012; Schinke & McGannon, 2014; Schinke et al., 2013). To enrich the applicability of this model and the research perspective, the pathways were used in a different direction aiming to locate the motives to begin and terminate the migration experience and explore their relation or correspondence with the pathways (i.e., core social motives). With this purpose in mind the researcher derived to the observation that these decisions to depart and return respectively are closely associated with the balance of the social motives introduced by Fiske. Especially, the decision to leave the host team and country was deeply related to issues of adaptation, thus adaptation processes came up as a by-product of this inquiry.

The aim was not to generalize across cases but to draw attention to the unique features in each cyclist's story through a common starting point of view which was Fiske's (2004) model. Thus, the researcher 'drew a line' and approached the narrations with this theoretical perspective, emphasizing the different and distinctive elements and events without overlooking at the similarities in each cyclist's case.

Unlike the approach for addressing the first research question to attend on how the narrative was conveyed and co-produced, this was not the focal point while reasoning with the second research question. Here, the focus was mainly on what was said, however in order not to sterilize the setting under which the interview, interpretation and analysis performed, some contexts were given attention such as the subculture in the sport of cycling. The thematics extracted from the stories and researcher's interpretations were guided by Fiske's (2004) theoretical conception of core social motives (adaptation pathways) and the quest for understanding the underlying processes behind the motives to initiate, prolong or terminate these cyclists' migration experience.

What came up, not from the beginning of the story but throughout its development, was a quest for integrity, detachment from their homeland –or home practices, cycling subculture and climate- and a plea for identification with the host country and practices. The formation of a plotline that tried to satisfy or align these athletes' needs with the situation they face and their experiences is guiding each other interchangeably.

The cyclists' first impressions reaffirmed their choice to leave and seemed to satisfy their needs and motives, at least in the beginning. Each of these cyclists' narration served to support the theoretical drive of our inquiry, that Fiske's core social motives were present to a different extend in the narrations and had a significant share in impacting these athletes' decision to migrate, stay or return back. Indeed, not all the pathways were evident in all the five different narrations. However, this fact added up in the findings and highlighted the special features, peculiarities and uniqueness of each participant. Each narration and identity is unique and multilayered, yet there was an attempt to focus both in the common and distinctive elements that constituted some or all of the core social motives.

It is argued in previous studies that when migrating athletes found in their new team other athletes from their homeland that migrated before them, it eased their stay in terms of minimizing feelings of loneliness, while simultaneously fostering feelings of intimacy, being more open to relate and show trust towards the new team (Battochio et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2007; Schinke et al., 2010; Kontos, 2009). In these cases with the Greek migrating cyclists there was no such a case and neither they had a clue of what they were about to encounter. Previous knowledge (e.g., inclusive reputation for the team from ex-relocated athletes or support from migrated teammates from the same country as Schinke et al. (2010) mentioned was absent thus feelings of uncertainty arisen. Yet, there was a counter-balance of the lack of familiarity (*understanding*/awareness) with feelings of

self-enhancement (i.e., high self-efficacy that these athletes can make it in the new environments and fulfil the new team's expectations). This finding reinforced the view suggested by Battochio et al. (2013) that all the pathways involve the social factor; meaning that understanding appears to be social as well as the rest pathways.

In this part of the discussion the fact that all of the athletes had liabilities with the national team should be acknowledged. In a lot of instances they had to travel to their home country in order to join the national team and depart for races abroad together or meet the national team in races abroad. This contact with their ex-teammates may have acted as a reminder of what they left behind and what they earned from leaving abroad; which in some of the cases as we noticed reinforced these athletes' decision to leave their home country; whereas in other cases it wakened feelings of nostalgia and the wish to return home.

Up to this point the findings can be paralleled with those of Battochio's et al. (2010) and Hagy's (2002). More specifically, common elements inside themes were located such as the role of coaches and teammates in terms of the sense of trust. The relevant themes in Battochio's et al. (2010) study were trusting coaches and teammates and support from their side and in Hagy's (2002) study, reinforcing trust. Self-efficacy and motivation (Hagy, 2002) ascribing to control, as well as confidence and understanding coaches' expectations by the newcomers (Battochio et al., 2010) also came up in this study. Themes of learning and overcoming personal difficulties (Hagy, 2002) and learning and effort (Battochio et al., 2010) that pertained to self-enhancement were revealed also in the findings of this inquiry.

In terms of family support (Battochio et al, 2010; Campbell &Sonn, 2006; Hagy, 2002) ascribing to belonging, this aspect was mentioned from all of the cyclists, however there was no integration of it into the belonging category because it was considered that this category entailed bonds with the host team that foster the extension of the stay abroad, whereas bonding with the family back home fostered the decision to return. Due to the double meaning and function of the family relationships and its supportive role to the athletes in order to migrate and stay in the host country it was considered both as fostering/balancing factor (i.e., to endure the challenges and accomplish the dream), enhancing belonging with the host team or as a hindering/unbalancing factor (i.e., inciting feelings of homesickness and loneliness) hindering belonging with the host team. This feature was strongly dependent to the fulfilment and balance of the other four core motives.

Referring to feelings of connectedness and communication, Schinke and colleagues (2011) in their study noted that social network services like Skype and Facebook may intercept feelings of loneliness experienced by relocated athletes. Even so, the years from 1999 to 2005 which the cyclists in our study migrated, these networks were not widespread and could not operate as to ease feelings of homesickness, thus the instrumental role of these networks simply didn't applied. Shinke et al. (2011) when discussing the challenges newcomers had to face in the new culture outside the sport context they considered unfamiliarity with the social norms and cultural ignorance being one of the stressing factors. In this case with the Greek cyclists this was apparent, since they were the first ones going in teams abroad, hence there was a lack of general and specific knowledge (lack of awareness) about what they were going to experience.

Sport related adjustments such as conditioning and new athletic roles were among the challenges migrated athletes had to face (Schinke et al., 2011). In the same manner, the higher level of intensity and different training regimes where challenging for these cyclists (i.e., Julie, Tim); however it deemed important and a prerequisite for achieving supreme performances and professional mentality and was acknowledged by some riders (i.e., Alex, Tim). One of the athletes found no difficulty in adapting in the new advanced training programs (i.e., Nick). Another perspective was articulated that combined the necessity of the intensified and differentiated training practices with the knowledge an athlete gains from the interaction and socializing with the rest of the team (i.e., Manolis). The "little fish in a big sea" syndrome experienced by college athletes (Schinke et al., 2011) was also evident in our study since these cyclists were the best in their country and had to adjust to new roles, secondary or assistance oriented; from being the leading actor and winning national championships to being the water boy.

The cyclists were aware of the higher level of other European teams and knew well that in order to enhance their performance and secure their place in the team, they had to work hard and carry out successfully all the positions and liabilities the coach would ascribe them, and their roles encompassed. As it can be noticed in the narrations of the interviewees (i.e., Alex, Nick) being around professional athletes and often renowned cyclists racing pro-tour was a dream for them. These professional cyclists were their heroes and the mere fact of being next to them was a privilege and the first small step to be one of them someday. Being there among them was already an achievement for them reinforcing self-enhancement.

When studying migrating athletes motivation and objectives similar to this study's findings (Maguire & Stead, 1996; Maguire & Stead, 1998; Stead & Maguire, 1998, 2000) prevailing themes appeared to be the quest for sport experience, the professional career opportunities offered in the host country and their lack of in the donor countries. The quest for sport experience also included a stepping up in sport performance and knowledge, testing themselves in a higher performance level, and apart from entailing personal investment and growth; it considered to be a logical progression. Financial incentives were also mentioned without being a main reason. The preparation mentioned in some studies included psychological readiness while, confidence was a key factor –also present in this inquiry- and pertained to coping and meeting the new team's expectations (Stead & Maguire, 2000). In contrast to athletes that had a lot of offers from other teams in different countries and had to choose, the athletes in our study accepted almost the first offer they got, similar to Molnar and Maguire's (2009) observations for Hungarian footballers. These cyclists spoke about perceiving a true interest in them that was accompanied by mutual respect. All of them dreamed to train or race next to their heroes, the pro riders they watched in grand tours and this was reinforcing their will to sign a contract with a team abroad. Making their dream come true was also evident in Stead and Maguire's (2000) study.

The cyclists in this inquiry mentioned that they were highly motivated to migrate in order to enhance their performance due to the upcoming Olympics (i.e., Julie, Manolis) and the wish to become professional cyclists (i.e., Tim, Nick, Alex). How conscious –and not imposed- was the decision to migrate is questionable due to the nature and mentality of the subculture of elite sports in that young athletes have more chances to attempt a professional career and in cycling (in Greek mentality) by the age of 22 an athlete has to decide whether or not wants to try it. As one cyclist explained (Nick) teams abroad have their under 23 category (from 18 to 22years of age) that is considered to be a step before the professionals. During this time young athletes have the opportunity to think and decide if they want to continue and sign with a professional team (after the age of 23); that is why most of them decided to migrate in a young age (between 18 and 22 years old). However two of them migrated at a more mature age (25 and 28 years old).

Another element that showed the bidirectional effort in order for the pathways to be fulfilled was evident in the understanding from the new team of the newcomer's desire to return in a regular basis in the home country (also located in Stead & Maguire, 2000) and

meet with his/her intimate people. This was an important factor in extending the stay and contract period of the migrated cyclist in our study.

By incorporating Fiske's pathways in this attempt to locate the motives of Greek cyclists to migrate in teams abroad a trend towards disintegration from the Greek standards, and an emotional detachment in terms of the Greek level of infrastructure and mentality, was observed. On the other hand, as the interview progressed it was noticed that for most of the cyclists -and as Stead and Maguire (2000) argued for the Nordic/Scandinavian players in their study- even though they have been crossing the borders of another country, they were still attached in their homeland both culturally and emotionally; a fact that also surfaced when analyzing the first research question on identity reconstructions.

In order to contextualize and 'interpret' athletes' motives to migrate, scholars developed typologies (see Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1996, 1999) based in the experiences and objectives of the migrating athletes. Even though the categorizations suggested were not fixed and exclusive and combinations may be in operation depending on the case (e.g., career stage, character), in this study the explanatory mindset behind this rationale was taken into account. However, it was not integrated in the discussion, because the aim was not to categorize but open up the understandings and highlight the specificities of each cyclist in fulfilling or surpassing Fiske's pathways. Agergaard (2008) when mapping women handball players' motives with the existing typologies observed that there is variation in sports with different impact than football for example, where the financial factor don't have the same importance. It is in the study by Botelho and Agergaard (2011) that an additional motive to migrate elicited from the interviews and it was migration for the love of the game. Thus, the blind application of typologies in such sports may act by restricting the view and understandings on athletes' motives and experiences.

The findings in this inquiry indicated that the contentment and balance of the core social motives (i.e., adaptation pathways) had a major impact on cyclists' motives/decisions to depart and return in their home country. Adaptation processes where interdependent from the fulfilment of some of the pathways and the delicate attainment of balance. The interconnection of the pathways presupposed that one pathway would lead to the next one and so forth. In cases that some of the pathways were omitted the existence of other pathways and their intensity seemed to fill the gap and bring off equilibrium. However, it must not be overlooked that a variety of reasons that are rooted in Fiske's

pathways were responsible for the incitement of stress in the relocated cyclists or the ease and successful adaptation in challenging situations.

This study may extend Tenenbaum and colleagues' (2003) work in elite cyclists' adaptation, were they located patterns of failed or successful adaptation with corresponding effects in their performance. Feelings associated with effective adaptation were low levels of state anxiety, high vigour, and positive feelings such as hope, clarity in thought, social support, flexibility referring to the sport context, in addition these cyclists seek to be accepted from their team (fit in) and enhance their performance; opposite negative feelings (e.g., helplessness, fatigue, tension) where experienced in maladaptive cases. As Schinke et al. (2010) first conferred, adaptation processes located in the aforementioned study paralleled the understanding, self-enhancement, controlling and belonging pathways from Fiske's model. This inquiry offered a support of the applicability of Fiske's pathways in this sample of elite migrating cyclists from Greece, not only in terms of their adaptation strategies but of their rationale behind important decisions to migrate, extend the stay or return from the host country.

Limitations.

The experiences and motives of the cyclists of this study are by no way representative of the sum of the cyclists migrating from Greece abroad. Due to the retrospective nature of the interview there is always the questioning of accuracy in remembering. When reflecting on autobiographical memory Neimeyer and Metzler (1994) argue that it is "a process of personal reconstruction than one of faithful reconstitution" (p. 105).The role of personal identity is central in memory processes and endows with structure and stricture in the remembering of memories.

A containment of this study is that, even though it embraced a cultural sport psychology perspective (Ryba & Wright, 2010), the socioeconomic background of the cyclists wasn't taken into account. A small trace that derived from the narrations was Tim's statement that "...when I was about to leave I returned in my hometown [from the training camp] and sold everything that I didn't need motorbikes, laptops, mp3, things like that so I didn't have to ask for money from my parents". This athlete migrated in 22 years old, stayed for two years in the team in Czech Republic and his narration is performance oriented (performance narrative). He makes clear that he could live in Czech without any problems "especially the second year the feeling was more intense. I was going in Czech with flair. Everything was happening as if I was Czech, honestly". These details together

with Manolis narration that highlighted the possible vocational opportunities back in the donor country (e.g., to take over family business or having a degree that will guarantee a good job) and economic ease of the athlete were located only by these two athletes and directed to understandings that socioeconomic factors do impact decisions to stay or return and may affect the implementation of a specific narrative mode. Manolis point can be traced in his narration: "..if I had nothing else in my life I would stay. If it was solely this and I had no other support or financially my future was depended solely on the bike or if I was so sick and obsessed about the glory of the sport and about making the magazine covers; I would stay. It's usually on this [last point] that most people risk for the most. Well, I chose not to [risk] and left".

As far as differences pertaining to age and their impact to motives to migrate or depart, no distribution or excessive disparities were observed. Nick's narrative account gives a possible elucidation "the point is that when I took the decision in this age you don't easily look at the financial part, for sure. You face it as an investment. I mean I was facing it like an investment...in these [young] ages you don't usually look for the economic [benefits] for sure. You look at this [the migration experience] as an investment". Only Alex that migrated in the age of 25 clearly mentioned money as the primary incentive, however according to the narratives and their analyses, there is no evidence that as the athlete grow up could be motivated more by economic factors.

Concerning the whole inquiry, as a researcher and a cyclist I knew all of the interviewees from common racing in the national team, thus there may be bias in the interview procedure from both sides. Nevertheless, Sparkes (1996) noted that there are certain advantages from being an emotional insider compared to a detached outsider. The insider perspective offered possibilities for a deepened understanding both through empathetic listening, encouragement and familiarity with the interviewer; and that's why narrative methodology was chosen as proper for this study. Previous studies incorporating the insider perspective have highlighted its strengths (Battochio et al. 2010). The limited number of our interviewees is due to the fact that these cyclists were the only ones in Greece, at the time of the commencement of the study, which migrated with salaried contracts in teams abroad.

Implications.

As Battochio et al. (2010) accurately argued "adaptation is both a process and a desired outcome, with contributive aspects within the process, likely piecing together as

part of a larger approach to intervention" (p. 297). The researcher decided to begin with the roots of the initiation, extension and termination of the sport migration experience and their intersection; and as it was mentioned before the act of departure of the host team and country entailed adaptation issues that were located by using Fiske's adaptation pathways (core social motives) as a framework. Intervention programs may leverage the understandings of the roots of the sport migration experience and built personalized interventions.

The present study aimed to deepen the understanding on the reasons why athletes migrate to pursue a professional sport career away from their home country and why they extend their stay, or return back. The novelty of this study was that it utilized Fiske's theoretical model to explore not adaptation processes per se, but the motivations of the migrating athletes; adaptation issues came up as they were rooted in the decision to leave the host team and country and consist the core social motives. Because the stressors experienced by relocated athletes were different depending on the career stage (Battochio et al., 2009) and possibly performance level, a lot of factors should be taken into account in order to design and implement a program that will foster smooth adaptation. The integration and practical application of mental training techniques on each of Fiske's pathways endow with solid and comprehensive interventions (Schinke, Tenenbaum, Lidor & Battochio, 2010) that professionals working with such groups of athletes and teams could consider and implement.

In terms of the decision to extend or terminate the migration experience, knowledge on this part will promote the implementation of efficient interventions that will place collective responsibilities in both the host team and the newcomer athlete. The effort to learn about immigrant athletes' understanding –or lack of- and experience of the new country and culture, as well as the knowledge about their own cultural background, will provide sport science and team staff with supplies in order to develop cultural awareness and competence (Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009). Adaptation is an ongoing, fluid (Schinke et al., 2011) and multifaceted process; feelings of trust and understanding need to be carefully cultivated and Fiske's model provide the theoretical insights for such an approach.

Migrating cyclists may optimize the experiences shared in this inquiry as they provide self-understanding and awareness and they may aid adaptation in the first steps of pursuing a professional sport career. The findings here can provide host teams (e.g., team's staff and teammates) with a first understanding of the relocated athletes' perception and

some of the challenges they face, while rise the teams' awareness of their potential active role in fostering the fulfillment of some or all of the core social motives. Professionals (e.g., sport psychologists and consultants) working with athletes and teams may also be benefited from this inquiry as they can better understand the experiences of the relocated cyclists, parallel their stories with athletes from different sports, enrich their view about possible interventions and promote balance and feelings of comfort and familiarity. Thus, in order for sport professionals to foster coping and self-regulation (Schinke et al., 2010) for relocated athletes they first have to understand the "why's" of the athletes and this can be done by utilizing elements from Fiske's model.

In consonance with Schinke and McGannon (2014) it is urged that future studies integrate and activate the micro environment (i.e., coaching staff, sport psychologists, teammates) in practices and interventions that foster and smoothen the adaptation of immigrant athletes, transforming this process into a mutual interchange and emphasizing reciprocal responsibility.

Future directions.

Since research on migrating athletes' adaptation is in its early steps (Kontos, 2009) there is a need for more in-depth exploration of adaptation and acculturation processes, the challenges encountered by migrating athletes in the short and long term relocation, covering as many sports as possible. So far, mostly team sports have been addressed regarding this migration transition (e.g., football, basketball, hockey-NHL, handball, ice-hockey, cricket, soccer, baseball), thus there is a gap considering research in individual sports (e.g., cycling, motocross), even though there is a growth in athlete mobility (Schinke & McGannon, 2014) in a lot of different individual sports, not only across countries but also across continents (i.e., motocross).

In the part that Schinke and McGannon (2014) referred to the acculturation process as separate transition that warrants effective coping both from the newcomer and host team, we hasten to add our stance of viewing sport migration as a momentous transition. Thus, adaptation or acculturation derives from this transitory process and is overtly or covertly affected from the micro and macro environments/contexts in which the athlete functions. Indeed, the different sociocultural environments inside and outside sport (see Schinke et al., 2011) incite stress in the relocated athletes and derange the balance of the adaptation pathways.

Upcoming inquiries could take into consideration athlete socioeconomic background, socio-political environments of host and donor countries as these important elements may add depth and a holistic perspective of the sport migration experience. Additionally, further studies could explore adaptation processes (e.g., successful or failure adaptation) in more individualistic sports by applying qualitative methodology in order to add depth and detail. Cyclists' migration has not been explored hitherto thus more studies are needed to extend our findings and surpass the speculative or empirical nature of some points in our discussion. The mapping of elite cyclists' trajectory and trend could be a starting point that will enlighten all the forthcoming research about cyclists' migration.

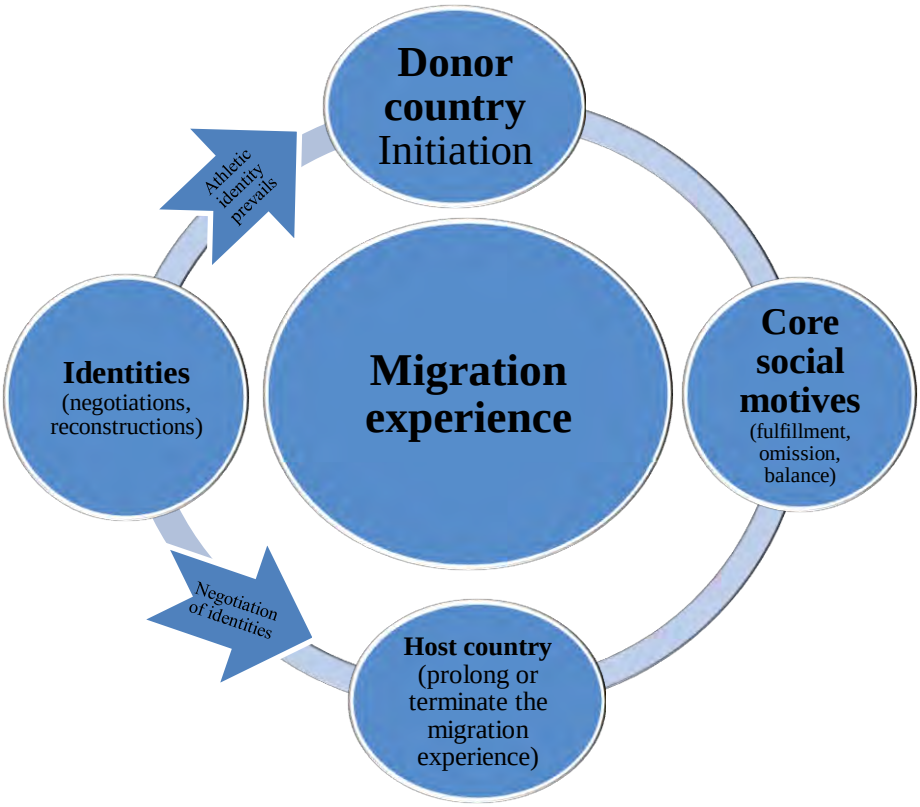

Figure 5.1 Factors affecting the course of migration experience

Interconnection of the First and Second Research Questions and Results

From analysing the narratives for both research questions it emerged that in order to initiate the migration experience the athletic aspect of a person's identity prevails and is the main driving force. However, to prolong this movement or put an end to it, certain circumstances should be met and revolve around the fulfillment, omission or balance of the core social motives (Fiske, 2004). The identity negotiations and reconstructions that take place throughout -or before- the phase of migration have a merit on whether the

person will stay in the host country or depart. This depends not only in the subtle balance of the core social motives but also in the route of identity negotiations that lead to a settlement and reinforce the sense of belonging and preservation of multiple identities or negotiations that cannot compromise alternative ways of being and hinder belonging, leading to decisions to depart the host country.

Closing remarks.

Elite athlete's profile is constructed and affected by economic, historical, sociocultural and institutional structures, such as state regulations, media, and the production of scientific knowledge. When an athlete realises that the scenario of her/his life does not align with the dominant script of 'how it is to be an elite athlete' feels detached and marginalised. The narratives inside an athlete in such cases should not be muted. It is similar to a state of experiencing narrative wreckage (Frank, 1995, as cited in Douglas & Carless, 2011) and can be argued that it is a state of narrative unconformity/discrepancy that may have psychological consequences nurturing feelings of isolation and directly impeding feelings of belonging.

Indeed, as Fiske and Yamamoto (2005) conclude, people suffer under social rejection which can have harmful effects on the general well-being of a person causing psychological (anxiety, depression) and physical damage (cardiovascular and immune system malfunctions). McLeod (1997, as cited in Douglas & Carless, 2011) made this point earlier when referring to the silencing of alternative narratives, to highlight that the mental health and well-being of people whom their stories don't align with the dominant plotlines are in danger.

Future scholarship should be inclusive and open aiming to encourage polyphony and alternative identities to co-exist and develop in healthy environments. There is a need to embrace alternative plot-lines and be open-minded in our policies since today contexts tend to be multicultural and more complex in order to construct 'realities' and 'truths' and breed a healthy environment where elite athletes may unfold and develop their full potentials through their lives simultaneously as athletes and as persons, possessing different and divergent roles and identities.

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APPENDIX 3.1.

CONSENT FORM

1. Purpose of the research study

The present study aims to provide an understanding and further investigation of the sociological and psychological factors of sport migration phenomenon.

2. Procedure – Interviews

You will participate in an interview, which will be conducted in a place and time of your own preference. When this interview will be transcribed you will be asked to read the text and confirm that these are your opinions. If a question makes you feel uncomfortable I will withdraw it.

3. Dangers

It is suggested that there aren't any.

4. Anticipated outcomes

Through interviews and observation it is expected that parts of the motives, expectations of the athletes, procedures of personal and professional adjustments, factors affecting athletes' performance and parts from the integration process and formation of social networks and relationships will be unfold.

5. Publication of data-results

Your participation in the research entails that you agree with the publication of the data and results of the research, with the condition that the information will be anonymous and your name won't be revealed. The gathered data will be coded in numbers, so that your name won't be shown. However, due to the fact that professional cycling in Greece isn't

developed, all the cyclists that were and are professional athletes with a contract are very few, thus easily identifiable. I want you to know that there is the possibility of your identification. This research will be published in scientific magazines that are meant for specific audiences (academics, researchers, students), however it is accessible to everyone.

6. Information

Don't hesitate to make any questions about the purpose of this research if you have any doubts or questions, ask me to give you additional information.

7. Freedom of consent

Your consent to participate in the research is voluntarily. You are free not to consent or to interrupt your participation whenever you want, without any previous warning.

I read the consent form and I understand the procedures that I will follow. I consent to participate in the research.

Date:

Name, surname and signature of the participant	Name, surname and signature of the researcher