INTRODUCTION

A series of cultural flows (people, technologies, finance, media images and ideologies) characterise global sport processes (Maguire, 1995). Attention here focuses on the migration of sports labour. This global flow is both gathering pace and is occurring over a more widespread geographical area and within a greater number of sports subcultures. Several questions arise in this connection. Why do athletes 'decide' to leave their native lands? How do they cope with the experience of being in a 'foreign' culture? How do people from their own 'donor' culture and people from their 'host' culture view their embarkation, arrival and settlement? What do these movements of athletes reveal about gender relations, the political economy of sport and the issue of sport, community and nationhood? What rights, if any, has this global sports labour force? How is this issue of sports labour migration linked to broader trends regarding migration and globalization?

These questions form the backcloth to this paper which is part of a broader study that has both identified key issues and problems facing sports migrants and also developed a typology of labour migration (Bale & Maguire, 1993; Maguire 1994). Several sports have so far been studied. These include basketball, (Maguire, 1988), cricket (Maguire & Stead, in press, 1996) and ice hockey, (Maguire, in press, 1996). Here we focus on association football with particular attention given to developments within the European Union and U.E.F.A. Initially, we seek to establish the extent and pattern of labour migration. In addition, we explore the issues, problems and questions that underpin such migration patterns. Finally, we link these developments to the political economy that underpins global soccer.

METHODS

A systematic survey of the official records of the Federation International Football Association (F.I.F.A.) was conducted for the year 1993 and 1994. In addition, the European Football Yearbooks for the period 1992-1994 were also examined. This material was subsequently transferred to computer and an Excel programme was used to handle the complex patterns and relationships that emerged. This archival evidence was combined with indepth, semi-structured interviews with key F.I.F.A. officials, representatives of national Football Associations and the English players union (P.F.A.).

RESULTS

While there is a clear link between the movement of players and the economic resources available to the donor and host cultures, this factor is not the sole determinant of the movement of players. This labour migration is contoured and shaped by several interweaving elements. These include the club ethos, the soccer subculture within a specific society, the cultural links between nations and the national and European wide legislation and rules adopted and enforced by government agencies, the European Commission and U.E.F. A. Several discernible patterns can be identified concerning movement within the EU and between EU, other European countries and from non-European regions.
DISCUSSION

Focusing on soccer labour migrants, this paper highlights several interconnected issues that frame both the migrants', and people from the host culture's, experiences of soccer in the European and global sports arena. These issues—which have both intended and unintended features—centre on issues of recruitment, retention and release, and are closely connected to problems of motivation, adjustment, dislocation and foreign sojourn. Questions of labour rights, work permits and salary caps also impinge on the migrant experience. The issues arising from the Jean - Marc Bosnian legal case are not confined to soccer and will particularly effect those European sports most dependent on 'foreign' labour. These sports include basketball and ice hockey. In order to work through and establish a more rational European wide policy regarding labour migration, sociological investigation of these issues is required.

REFERENCES