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The Socialization of Motivation in Adolescent Athletes

By

Enrique García Bengoechea   Ⓒ

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Socialization of Motivation in Adolescent Athletes* submitted by *Enrique Garcia Bengoechea* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy.

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Thesis approved by the examining committee on _April 29/03_

This thesis is dedicated to my family, my friends, my teachers and mentors in San Sebastián, Madrid, Québec City, and Edmonton, the athletes I had the chance to work with as a coach, and the victims of the political conflict in the Basque Country.

Abstract

The impact that others exert upon adolescent athletes' sport motivation can be seen as part of an ongoing socialization process in which athletes are both influenced by and influence other individuals around them. Although there are a fair number of studies dealing with motivation in adolescent athletes, adolescence represents a relatively understudied period from the point of view of work that has adopted a socialization framework rather than merely a focus on topical issues within motivation. Twelve athletes (ages 13-17) involved in a variety of individual and team sports participated in a series of semi-structured interviews in which their perceptions of the motivational influence of others on their sport participation were explored. Qualitative analyses revealed that others play, more or less intentionally, five major motivational roles, namely (a) providers of support, (b) sources of pressure and control, (c) sources of competence-relevant information, (d) agents of socialization of achievement orientations, and (e) models to emulate. Further analyses suggested the significance of two dynamics within these roles. The first concerned the degree of consensus or diversity in the messages that others send to athletes in the context of their role as providers of informational support, sources of competence-relevant information, and agents of socialization of goal orientations. The second involved the development of compensatory connections through which athletes actively attempted to offset the motivational deficits of a particular interpersonal relationship by relying more on other relationships. Compensatory connections were particularly evident within the context of the role of others as providers of informational, emotional, and companionship support, and as sources of competence-relevant information. Results are discussed in light of the

available literature on significant other influence in youth sport and in reference to a system-style model of socialization (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998) that serves as a theoretical framework for this study. Implications for intervention to improve motivation during the specializing and the investment years of sport participation (Côté, 1999; Côté & Hay, 2002) are outlined. Suggestions for future research on the socialization of motivation in youth sport are provided.

Preface

With this thesis, an old dream of mine that started many years ago, when I was still an undergraduate student at the National Institute of Physical Education in Madrid, becomes true. This dream started to materialize 10 years ago when I left my home country to come to Canada to take a Master's degree at Laval University in Québec City. Going through the process of completing this thesis was, in a sense, a fight against the mental limits and barriers I set for myself. In this regard, I can say that I did it both "my way" and "despite myself." Looking back at what I have gone through during the past years in my life reminds me inevitably of Ry Cooder's introductory words to the Buenavista Social Club album: "I felt that I had trained all my life for this and yet making this record was not what I expected in the 1990s." What initially started mainly as an intellectual quest soon became a search to redefine my own identity and to find the meaning of life in the context of a world whose geographical, cultural, and ideological borders had expanded considerably from those I knew 10 years ago. Despite the uncertainties surrounding my life at the present moment, one thing is sure: some things will never be the same.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the University of Alberta and the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation for giving me the opportunity to carry out Doctoral studies in a most stimulating environment and for their generous financial support. My appreciation is extended to the members of my Supervisory Committee, Candidacy Examination Committee, and Final Examination Committee, for their time and considerable help. In particular, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. William B. Strean, for granting me the freedom to pursue my interests and for his help and moral and financial support. Special thanks also to Dr. Marcel Bouffard, for the stimulating and challenging conversations and for believing in me, and to Dr. Genevieve M. Johnson, now at Grant MacEwan College, for introducing me to systems and ecological theories of human development. My deepest thanks to my fellow graduate students and to everyone at the Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation and the International Centre of the University of Alberta, and at the Edmonton Hispanic Bilingual Association. You made me feel like at home since the first day and I will always treasure the wonderful memories. Last, but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to and admiration for the athletes and the parents of the athletes who participated in this study.

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Motivation involves the internal processes (i.e., needs, emotions, and cognitions) that give behavior its energy and direction (Reeve, 1996). As discussed by Reeve, the study of motivation addresses more than just the problems of students--or athletes'--lack of interest, low effort, and disengagement. It is also about fostering psychological growth and healthy development. For example, several motivation theorists have posited the existence in the human being of an innate energy or tendency to grow and develop as competent and well adjusted individuals (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Harter, 1978; Maslow, 1987; White, 1959). Such an innate tendency, however, can be either nurtured or thwarted in the course of an individual's daily interactions with his/her environment. Therefore, as Vallerand (2001) has recently suggested, motivation should be seen in terms of an ongoing transaction between individuals and their environments.

Contemporary theoretical models of human development put the emphasis on the dynamic relations that exist among multiple levels of organization that constitute the ecology of human life (e.g., Bronfebrenner, 1999; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Lerner, 1998, Wachs, 1999). These levels range from the biological, through the psychological and the proximal social relational (e.g., involving dyads and peer groups), to the sociocultural level (e.g., including educational and political institutions) and the physical spaces of human development. These levels are considered as structurally and functionally integrated, thus requiring a systems view of the processes involved in human development (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Lerner, 1998; Sameroff, 1983). Of particular importance when considering the impact of the environment on the motivational characteristics of an individual is the nature of the proximal social relational or interpersonal context in which the individual in consideration interacts and engages in

relationships with other individuals. In fact, processes occurring at the proximal (i.e., face to face) level not only mediate the impact of the larger, more distal, sociocultural context on the individual (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1995, 1999; Wachs, 1999) but are also posited as the "engines" of human development (e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). During their years of participation, adolescent athletes interact, in a more or less direct and continued way, with a number of people whose degree of interest and involvement in sport and in athletes' lives vary considerably. Recognition of the social nature of sport has led to an increasing interest in the role that different social agents play in such an arena. Brustad (1996a), for example, concluded that children and adolescents' sport motivation should be considered in relation to significant others' (e.g., parents, coaches, peers) belief systems and behaviors.

The impact that others exert upon adolescent athletes' sport motivation can be seen as part of an ongoing socialization process in which athletes are both influenced by and influence other individuals around them (see Greendorfer, 1992; Weiss & Hayashi, 1995). In line with Bugental and Goodnow (1998) the term socialization, as used here, refers broadly to any process of social influence occurring between or among members of a social group as they engage in and share the activities of everyday life. This definition underscores three important characteristics of the way in which socialization has increasingly come to be understood by anthropologists, sociologists, developmental and social psychologists. First, socialization is considered as having to do with every aspect of life rather than only with the development of appropriate or moral behaviors. Second, rather than taking the form of any simple internalization of the values and standards of others, socialization has come to be seen as involving the active contribution of the

developing individual to socializing events and situations. Third, the process of socialization has come to be perceived as one in which many people--often with varying interests and agendas--have an investment or a stake in what happens.

As it applies specifically to sport, the study of socialization involves the set of processes through which people become and stay involved in and disengage from sport participation, as well as the consequences or outcomes of such processes (Greendorfer, 1992). Within the general framework of socialization previously outlined and the more specific framework of sport socialization, the focus of this study was on the processes of interpersonal influence through which adolescent athletes stay involved or maintain their involvement in competitive sport and on the motivational consequences resulting from such processes. Thus, an attempt was made to integrate the findings into a coherent body of knowledge about the process of socialization in general and sport socialization in particular (see Greendorfer, 1992).

The present study is also situated within the period corresponding to the specializing and the investment stages of sport development (Côté, 1999; Côté & Hay, 2002). In the specializing years (typically between ages 13 and 16) adolescents focus their energies in one or two sports. While fun and play remain central elements of participation, sport-specific development through practice emerges during this period as an important characteristic of the athletes' involvement. The investment years (typically ages 17 and up, although it can vary considerably depending upon the sport) represent, essentially, an extension of the specializing years. During this period, athletes are committed to pursuing an elite level of performance in one or two sports. Consequently, the skill development, strategic, and competitive aspects of sport become progressively

the main focus of this stage. What differentiates mainly the specializing years from the investment years are the significantly higher amounts and intensity of practice during the latter period (Côté,1999; Côté & Hay, 2002).

Practice that is purposefully and systematically designed to improve the current level of performance (i.e., "deliberate practice"; Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993; see also Côte & Hay, 2002; Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2001) usually requires considerable amounts of effort and, often, is neither inherently enjoyable nor does it lead to immediate gratification. Therefore, provided the increasing importance that deliberate practice takes throughout the specializing and the investment years, adolescent athletes in these stages of development must deal with numerous motivational constraints (e.g., Côte, 1999). In addition to this, the adolescent years represent an interesting period for the study of motivational issues in sport for several other reasons. For example, the search for self-identity becomes prominent during the adolescent years (e.g., Rice, 1999). However, an increased commitment to reach higher levels of performance during the specializing and, particularly, the investment years may be accompanied in some cases by a lack of time and opportunities to explore other options in relation to identity formation. This comes at a time in which the number of sport dropouts reaches a peak (e.g., De Knop, Engström, & Skirstad, 1996; McPherson & Brown, 1988) and may magnify the challenges of career termination for some adolescent athletes (Kerr & Dacyshin, 2000). Furthermore, although there is fair number of studies dealing with motivation in adolescent athletes, adolescence represents a relatively understudied period from the standpoint of work that has adopted a socialization framework rather than merely a focus

on topical issues within motivation (e.g., participation motives, goal orientations; see Greendofer, 1992).

The present thesis is organized as follows. In Chapter One, the literature concerning the influence of others on adolescent athletes' motivation and motivationally relevant self-perceptions and affect is reviewed and discussed. Based on some of the limitations identified in this literature, the purposes of the study are outlined next. A system-style model of socialization (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998) is proposed, and then explained, in order to address some of the noted limitations in the literature and to provide an organizing framework for the present study. Finally, delimitations and limitations of this study are outlined. Chapter Two provides a rationale for and describes in detail the methods used in this investigation. Chapter Three presents the results and in Chapter Four these results are discussed in light of the existing literature. Finally, Chapter Five contains my overall conclusions along with some implications for intervention and future research.

Chapter I

Literature Review

During the past 25 years, research efforts in sport psychology have addressed the impact of parents, coaches, and, to a lesser extent, peers on children and adolescents' experiences in the athletic domain (e.g., Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992; Hellstedt, 1988; Weiss & Smith, 1999). Typically, this research has been primarily concerned with the identification of links between significant others' belief systems and behavior and athletes' psychosocial responses. In this chapter, relevant literature on parental, coach, and peer influence, respectively, is reviewed first with particular attention to studies linking significant other variables to athletes' motivation and motivationally related self-perceptions and affect. Next, several limitations of this literature are identified and the purposes of the present study outlined. Lastly, the characteristics of a system-style model of socialization (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998), which serves as a theoretical framework for this study, are described.

Parental Influence

Parents represent central socializing influences in the lives of most children and adolescents. For example, growing out of a concern with promoting children and adolescents' health, the cumulative results from a number of studies have underscored the important role of parents in socializing their children's physical activity patterns. Specifically, these studies have shown that parental belief systems (e.g., value of physical activities, perceptions of children's abilities) and related behavior (e.g., encouragement, support) are linked to children's degree of involvement in physical activities (e.g., Brustad, 1993; 1996b; Sallis, Prochaska & Taylor, 2000). Likewise, research has provided support for the hypothesis linking parental role modeling behaviors to

children's levels of participation in physical activities (e.g., Anderssen & Wold, 1992; Gottlieb & Chen, 1985; Mota & Silva, 1999).

In relation to sport, there is considerable evidence indicating that parents play an essential role in introducing their children to and getting them initially interested and motivated in this domain (e.g., Côté, 1999; Greendorfer & Lewko, 1978; McCullagh, Matzkanin, Shaw, & Maldonado, 1993). As children develop their own interest and motivation, parental involvement in their children's sport participation does not necessarily decrease. Indeed there is also substantial evidence that many parents remain highly involved throughout their children's athletic careers and that children's sport often becomes central in family life during adolescence (e.g., Côté, 1999; Kalinowski, 1985; Smith, 1988). As a result of such patterns of involvement parents are prominent elements in the dynamics of the youth sport context (Strean, 1995).

Because of their continuous and intense involvement in their children's participation, parents have many opportunities to communicate their appraisals about their children's current aptitudes and future possibilities in sport (Brustad, Babkes, & Smith, 2001). This coincides with a developmental tendency in young children to rely primarily on adult, and especially parental, sources of information (i.e., feedback) to estimate their sport abilities (e.g., Horn & Hasbrook, 1986; Horn & Weiss, 1991). Indeed, research in the athletic domain indicates that children are likely to adopt their parents' appraisals of their physical competence (e.g., Babkes & Weiss, 1999; Kimiecik, Horn, & Shurin, 1996). Perceptions of competence are a key construct in several motivation frameworks currently used to explain achievement behavior (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles-Parsons et al., 1983; Harter, 1978, 1981; Nicholls, 1989). Eccles, Jacobs, and

Harold (1990) found that parents' view of their children's sport competence and parents' view of the importance of sport competence for their children have significant influence on the development of children's interest in sport and of their view of their own sport competence. Similarly, Jacobs and Eccles (1992) found that children's own self perceptions of ability tended to be congruent with their mothers' perceptions of their ability, which in turn were mediated by their stereotypical gender role beliefs. More recently, in investigating children's physical activity levels, Kimiecik et al. (1996) found parent-child perceptions of physical competence to be significantly related. As Kimiecik and Horn (1998) pointed out, this relationship is important because it has also been found that children's perceptions of their own competence are significantly related to their attraction to physical activity and to their own physical activity levels (Brustad, 1993; Dempsey, Kimiecik, & Horn, 1993; Kimiecik, et al. 1996).

The relationship between parents and children's perceptions of competence has also been found to hold in the youth sport context. Babkes and Weiss (1999) found that youth soccer players who perceived both their mothers and their fathers as having more positive beliefs about their soccer competency were more likely to prefer internal criteria for judging their competence, prefer optimal challenges, and report higher perceived soccer competence. On a related note, research in the youth sport domain suggests that parents are likely to influence the development of their child's expectancies for successful performance. For example, Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1985) found that greater perceptions of parental (and coach) satisfaction with athletes' season-long performance and a lack of noncontingent parental reactions were significant predictors of higher generalized performance expectancies among young male wrestlers.

Two alternative, though somewhat related, theoretically based explanations have been offered to explain the influence of parents on children's perceptions of competence in the physical domain. Based on Eccles and Harold's (1991) expectancy-value motivational framework, Brustad (1996a) suggested that parents shape children's ability perceptions in two ways. First, parents serve as interpreters of information about their children's achievement outcomes and thereby influence children's cognitions, attributions and self-perceptions in a given achievement domain. Second, parents are likely to provide more opportunities for their child in those areas in which they hold high expectations of success for their son or daughter. The latter hypothesis has been supported by Brustad (1993, 1996b) indicating that children's perceptions of physical competence are significantly related to the amount of parental encouragement they receive to be physically active.

Drawing upon Harter's (1978, 1981) competence motivation theory, Babkes and Weiss (1999) contended that significant others, and especially parents, exert a primary influence upon children's emerging self-related perceptions through the feedback they provide for children's mastery attempts in achievement domains. The nature of significant others' responses to children's mastery efforts and performance outcomes conveys a wealth of information to children about their personal aptitude in that particular domain. In support of Harter's hypothesis, Babkes and Weiss (1999) found that youth soccer players who perceived both their mothers and their fathers as giving more frequent positive responses to successful sport performances were more likely to report higher perceived soccer competence.

Research investigating parental influence on young athletes' psychosocial development within an achievement goal framework (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1989) has also linked children's perceptions of their parents goal orientations and their own achievement goal orientations. Goal orientations represent subjective ways of defining success and judging about one's competence (e.g., Duda, 1992, 1999). Two major goal perspectives operating in sport have been labeled as task and ego orientation, respectively. In the first case, subjective success and perceived competence result from believing that one has personally improved, mastered the task at hand, and/or exerted effort. In the second case, a person feels successful and competent when superior ability relative to others has been demonstrated (Duda, 1999).

Duda and Hom (1993) found that children's perceptions of their parents' goal orientations were significantly related to their own goal orientations in basketball. That is, children who were higher in task orientation perceived their significant parent to be higher in task orientation. The same was true for ego orientation. In an extension of the previous study, Ebbeck and Becker (1994) found that higher perceived parent task orientation for athletes' participation was associated with higher scores on children's task orientation in soccer. Perceived parent ego orientation and, unexpectedly, perceived parent task orientation predicted a higher player ego orientation.

White (1996, 1998) extended previous research on the socialization of goal orientations by investigating the relationship between goal orientation and perceptions of the motivational climate initiated by parents among young female volleyball players. Her findings revealed that a climate where parents emphasized success without effort predicted ego orientation. The results also indicated that players' perception of a climate

fostered by parents that focused on learning/enjoyment predicted players' task orientation. The link between parent-child goal orientation in the youth sport setting is important because there is considerable evidence demonstrating the advantages of adopting a task versus an ego orientation in sport in terms of a variety of cognitive, affective, and behavioral consequences (see recent reviews by Duda, 2001; Roberts, 2001). However, the mechanisms through which parents influence their child's goal orientation remain as yet unspecified.

Parental attitudes and behaviors have also been associated with children and adolescents' affective reactions in sport. In particular, parental attitudes and behaviors that can be considered as positive and supportive (see Smith et al., 2001) have been linked to favorable affective outcomes for children and adolescents in sport. Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) reported that greater enjoyment in young male wrestlers was related to their perceptions of parental satisfaction with their season's performance, positive parental involvement and interactions, and low maternal pressure. Contrary to predictions, however, a subsequent study (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel, & Simmons, 1993) failed to show a positive relation between enjoyment and perceptions of positive parental involvement, interactions, and satisfaction with performance in a large youth sample of football, soccer, and volleyball players. In an attempt to explain these intriguing findings, Scanlan et al. (1993) hypothesized that parental influence may be sample dependent. That is, the overall parental role and involvement in the second study did not seem to be as intense or extensive as it was in the first, which may have reduced the impact of parents.

Brustad (1988) reported that for both male and female young basketball players, greater enjoyment during a competitive season was predicted by low perceived parental

pressure. Hellstedt's (1988) findings revealed that higher enthusiasm for participation in early adolescent skiers was related to perceptions of positive parental involvement and support. Similarly, Leff and Hoyle (1995) found a positive association between perceptions of parental support for sport participation and enjoyment and self-esteem in young tennis players. Van Yperen (1997, 1998) further illustrated the positive impact of perceptions of parental support on athletes' affective responses in a series of recent studies with elite male adolescent soccer players. Specifically, his results underscored the buffering effect of perceptions of parental support when athletes experience negative situations such as interpersonal conflict with teammates or the possibility of dismissal from the team.

Consistent with, and extending previous findings, Babkes and Weiss (1999) reported that youth soccer players who perceived both their mothers and their fathers as giving more frequent positive responses to successful sport performances were more likely to experience greater enjoyment of soccer participation. In addition, soccer players who perceived greater involvement from their fathers in the form of instruction and game attendance and who perceived less pressure to perform reported greater enjoyment, perceived competence, and motivation.

An additional way in which parents may contribute to young athletes' positive affective reactions in sport emerged in a retrospective study with elite skaters who competed at the novice, junior and senior levels (Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1989). Specifically, these athletes recalled that a source of their enjoyment was bringing pleasure or pride to their parents through their performance and talent.

Conversely, parental attitudes and behaviors have also been linked with unfavorable affective outcomes in the form of stress and anxiety in youth sport participants. These parental attitudes and behaviors are mainly related to the degree of pressure exerted on athletes to participate, the evaluation of and reactions to athletes' performance, and the expectations held for athletes' performance. Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1984) found that perceptions of parental pressure to participate were predictive of competitive stress in young wrestlers. Hellsted (1988) also reported a relationship between high levels of perceived parental pressure and negative affective responses among a sample of early adolescent ski racers. The data also indicated that, in general, the majority of both male and female athletes perceived moderate to strong parental pressure both to compete in and not to withdraw from the sport. In line with previous findings, Gould, Eklund, Petlichkoff, Peterson, and Bump (1991) also found a positive relationship between precompetitive state anxiety in young wrestlers and perceptions of parental pressure to participate.

In an extension of the Scanlan and Lewthwaite study (1984) Lewthwaite and Scanlan (1989) reported that higher levels of competitive trait anxiety in young male wrestlers were predicted by perceptions of parental negative performance reactions (i.e., shame, upset), adult negative performance evaluation, and parental pressure to compete. Consistent with these results, Weiss, Wiese, and Klint (1989) found a positive relationship between precompetitive worry cognitions and concern about negative evaluation from parents in their sample of young gymnasts. Finally, in a retrospective study (Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1991), former elite skaters identified several instances

of negative relationships (e.g., interpersonal conflict, performance expectations and criticism) with significant others (e.g., parents) as a source of stress.

In sum, the research reviewed in this section strongly suggests that parents' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are a particularly important aspect to consider when examining the nature and motivational consequences of the experience of children and adolescents in sport.

Coach Influence

Research investigating the influence of coaches on young athletes' psychosocial development has also consistently found a relationship between coach variables and athletes' self-perceptions, motivational characteristics, and affect (e.g., Allen & Howe, 1998; Black & Weiss, 1992). Unlike research concerning parental influence, however, research on coach influence has focused mainly on coaches' actual or perceived behavior. The potential influence of coaches' belief systems on athletes' psychosocial development remains, unfortunately, largely unexplored. In this section, several lines of research that demonstrate the impact of coaches' behaviors on young athletes' self-perceptions, motivational characteristics, and affect will be reviewed.

In the late 1970s, recognition of the potential impact of youth sport coaches on athletes' psychological well-being prompted Smith, Smoll, and their associates to carry out a systematic program of research over a period of several years (Barnett et al., 1992; Smith & Smoll, 1990; Smith, Smoll, & Barnett, 1995; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978, 1979; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993). Using a mediational model of coach-athlete interactions, Smith, Smoll, and their colleagues sought to determine how observed coaching behaviors, athletes' perceptions and recall of

the coach's behaviors, and children's reactions to their athletic experiences are related to one another. Briefly, the model assumes that the ultimate effects of coaching behaviors are mediated by the meaning that athletes attach to them. In other words, what athletes remember about their coach's behaviors and how they interpret these actions affect the way athletes evaluate their sport experiences.

The cumulative results of their research program indicated the positive effect of supportive and instructional coaching behaviors on a variety of important psychosocial outcomes relevant to motivation. Supportive behaviors refer to a coach's tendency to reinforce desirable performance and effort and to respond to mistakes with encouragement. Instructional behaviors reflect a tendency to provide technical and tactical instruction and to respond to mistakes with information on how to improve. Specifically, Little League baseball players responded most favorably to coaches who engaged in higher percentages of supportive and instructional behaviors. They were better liked and were rated as better teachers; their players reported that they enjoyed more playing baseball; and a higher level of attraction among teammates was found regardless of won-lost records (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979). Moreover, low self-esteem children who played for coaches who were trained to engage in these behaviors exhibited a significant increase in general self-esteem over the course of the season (Smith & Smoll, 1990; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979; Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993). In addition, coaches' supportive and instructional behaviors were associated with children who reported lower levels of performance anxiety (Smith, Smoll, & Barnett, 1995) and higher levels of motivation as manifested in lower dropout rates (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992).

Building upon the initial work of Smith, Smoll, and their colleagues, research grounded on Harter's (1978, 1981) competence motivation theory has provided further evidence of the key motivational role of coaches' feedback in response to young athletes' performance successes and errors. Results from research guided by Harter's motivation framework (e.g., Allen & Howe, 1998; Black & Weiss, 1992) have provided further support for the notion that positive coaching behaviors (i.e., supportive, instructional behaviors) are linked to positive psychological reactions in young athletes in terms of self-perceptions, affect, and motivation. Black and Weiss (1992) examined the relationship between perceived coaching behaviors and perceptions of competence and motivation in competitive age-group swimmers. Coaches who were perceived as giving more frequent information and praise following desirable performances, and more frequent encouragement combined with information following undesirable performances, were associated with athletes who reported higher levels of success, competence, enjoyment, effort and preference for optimally challenging activities. Similar to Black and Weiss (1992), Allen and Howe (1998) found that more frequent praise and information in response to a good performance was related to higher perceptions of physical competence in female adolescent field hockey players. Likewise, perceptions of more frequent positive coaching behaviors, such as those including praise, information, encouragement, and corrective information, were related to higher levels of satisfaction with the coach and satisfaction with team involvement.

Findings from this line of research point also to the importance of the quality of feedback in terms of contingency to athletes' performance and specificity in terms of skill-relevant information. Specifically, in a study with female junior high school softball

players, Horn (1985) found that coaches' criticism towards players was associated with higher levels of perceived competence and positive reinforcement was associated with lower levels of perceived competence. In an attempt to explain these unexpected findings, Horn argued that positive reinforcement was not always given contingent to performance, but rather given randomly or used as encouragement. On the other hand, criticism was usually contingent to performance errors and was often given along with valuable information in the form of instruction on how to improve.

In addition, this body of research highlights the necessity of considering individual differences, and particularly gender and age differences, in the way athletes interpret coaches' feedback and in the way such interpretation may affect athletes' perceptions of competence (Allen & Howe, 1998; Horn, 1985). For example, results from Allen and Howe's (1998) study suggest that coaches' encouragement and corrective information in response to errors is a form of helping behavior that could be interpreted as indicating lower ability and to which adolescent females may be more sensitive than previously recognized. The need to gain a better understanding of the "functional significance" (i.e., psychological meaning; Deci & Ryan, 1985) of coach feedback given to young athletes in response to their performance attempts is further evidenced in a study by Amorose and Weiss (1998). Contrary to predictions, in this study both the younger (ages 6-8) and the older (ages 12-14) participants saw athletes who received evaluative feedback in the form of praise after a successful performance as possessing high ability and athletes who received criticism after an unsuccessful attempt as having low ability. Contrary to the hypotheses as well, both younger and older participants perceived athletes who received informational (i.e., skill-relevant) feedback in response to a successful

performance as having lower ability compared to athletes receiving praise or neutral feedback.

Based on the tenets of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991) and the hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Vallerand, 1997, 2001) another area of research has investigated coaches' influence on athlete's motivation through a number of psychological mediators, namely perceptions of autonomy, competence and relatedness. From this standpoint, the coach's behavior is presumed to have important effects on athletes' motivation because it will likely influence their perceptions of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Vallerand & Losier, 1999; Vallerand, 2001). Unlike other lines of research on coach behavior, research grounded on a self-determination perspective has focused mainly on the effects of the coach adopting an autonomy-supportive versus a controlling (i.e., highly directive) interaction style. Recent research in the sport domain has started to provide initial support for the hypothesis that coaches adopting an autonomy-supportive style will instill higher levels of intrinsic motivation in their athletes than those who favor a controlling style (see Vallerand, 2001; Vallerand & Losier, 1999). For instance, Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, and Brière (2001) found that university swimmers were less intrinsically motivated with coaches who used a controlling approach than with those who endorsed an informational style. Intrinsic motivation, in turn, had a positive impact on persistence. In another study, Blanchard and Vallerand (1996) had high school basketball players complete scales assessing their perceptions of competence, autonomy, and relatedness in basketball, as well as an scale assessing their motivation. In addition, athletes completed a scale measuring their perceptions of their coach's interacting style. Consistent with previous

findings, a path analysis revealed that the more the coach was perceived as autonomy-supportive for his or her athletes, the more competent, autonomous, and related to their team these athletes felt. In turn, athletes' perceptions of competence, autonomy, and relatedness were positively related to their motivation.

A final line of inquiry on coach influence on young athletes has been grounded on a goal perspective framework (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1989). Rather than focusing on specific coaching behaviors per se, researchers within this emergent tradition have considered the characteristics of the situational goal structure or motivational climate induced by the coach's behaviors in a given sport setting. Dependent on what the coach values and emphasizes in that particular setting, two different motivational climates have been identified by the researchers. A task-involving or mastery oriented motivational climate has been conceptualized as an environment in which athletes are reinforced by the coach when they experience improvement, encouraged to work hard and help each other learn, and led to believe that each team member contributes to the team's outcomes (Newton & Duda, 1999). Conversely, an ego-involving or performance oriented climate has been defined as a context where athletes perceive that poor performance and mistakes will be punished, that high ability team members will receive the most attention and recognition, and that competition between team members is encouraged by the coach (Newton & Duda, 1999).

Research on coach-induced motivational climate has provided evidence that there is much to be gained in motivational terms by creating a mastery-oriented or task-involving environment in sport when working with children and adolescents. Perceptions of a mastery-oriented climate in different youth sport settings have been associated with

positive consequences. These include higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Newton & Duda, 1999; Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992), the belief that effort leads to athletic success (Newton & Duda, 1999; Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992; Treasure & Roberts, 1998), lower levels of performance worry, and greater satisfaction with sport participation (Walling, Duda, & Chi, 1993). Furthermore, Treasure and Roberts (1998) indicated that participants perceiving a mastery-oriented climate derive satisfaction from mastery (i.e., learning, improvement) experiences. In contrast, perceptions of a performance-oriented climate have been linked to a number of negative consequences. These are the belief that high ability and deception are more likely to lead to athletic success (e.g., Newton & Duda, 1999; Treasure & Roberts, 1998), the experience of worry and tension (e.g., Newton, Duda, 1999; Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992), and less satisfaction with sport participation (Walling, Duda & Chi, 1993). In addition, Treasure and Roberts (1998) reported that young athletes perceiving a performance-oriented climate derive satisfaction from outperforming others.

Roberts, Treasure, and Kavussanu (1997) suggested that the nature of the motivational climate created by the coach influences the achievement orientations of athletes through their perceptions of the behaviors necessary to achieve success. Consistent with this socialization hypothesis, a positive relationship has been found between perceptions of a mastery-oriented climate and task orientation and perceptions of a performance-oriented climate and ego orientation (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1998).

Little is known as yet, however, about the specific ways in which situational characteristics (i.e., motivational climate) interact with individual dispositions (i.e., goal orientation) in order to affect young athletes' motivation and subsequent patterns of

behavior. In regard to this, the findings from a study with adolescent female athletes by Newton and Duda (1999) are noteworthy. These results revealed that affective and/or state responses of individuals in a particular situation (e.g., enjoyment, tension) seem to be more dependent on the characteristics of the motivational climate than on enduring dispositional characteristics, whereas attitudes and behavior (e.g., importance, effort) are best predicted by enduring dispositional differences. Furthermore, their results indicated that strong motivational climates created by coaches may override the influence of individual dispositions on athletes' perceptions and beliefs, particularly when one's goal orientation is not very strong.

Taken as a whole, the literature reviewed above illustrates the significance of considering the impact of the motivational climate--as reflected in the goals to be achieved, the evaluation and reward process, and how individuals are requested to relate to each other--on young athletes' achievement patterns and motivation.

Additional evidence of the potential impact of coaches on outcomes that are more or less directly related to young athletes' motivation comes from a variety of sources and lines of research. For example, positive interactions with coaches and perceptions of coach support and satisfaction with athletes' seasonal performance have been linked with athletes' enjoyment of sport (Scanlan et al., 1993; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986). Conversely, negative relationships with coaches and perceptions of negative coach evaluations and reactions to athletes' performance have been associated with the experience of stress and anxiety in youth sport (Gould & Weinberg, 1985; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989; Scanlan et al., 1991). Research on sources of competence information in sport also indicates that children show an increasing tendency during late childhood and

early adolescence to rely on their coach's feedback in order to estimate their ability (Horn & Hasbrook, 1986; Horn & Weiss, 1991). Furthermore, it has been shown that positive self-perceptions and affect experienced by adolescent athletes are related to their opportunities (i.e., amount of playing time provided by the coach) to demonstrate competence over the sport season (Petlichkoff, 1993; Weiss & Fraser, 1995). In another example of the potential influence of the coach, coach behavior has been found to relate significantly both with the task (Gardner, Shields, Bredemeier, & Bostrom, 1996; Westre & Weiss, 1991) and the social dimensions of team cohesion (Gardner et al., 1996) across different youth sport samples. The motivational relevance of the latter finding is highlighted by findings from Spink (1995) suggesting that perceptions of social team cohesion are positively related to the intention to continue to participate during a following sport season. Finally, there is increasing evidence suggesting that the coach plays a significant role in shaping the "moral atmosphere" (i.e., the moral norms and related behaviors endorsed by a group) of youth sport teams (e.g., Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner, & Bostrom, 1995; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996; Stephens, Bredemeier, & Shields, 1997).

In sum, the literature reviewed here provides compelling evidence of the central role that the coach plays in determining the quality of the experience of children and adolescents in organized sports. From this standpoint, consideration of the characteristics of the interaction between coach and athlete appears to be particularly important in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of the outcomes that young athletes' derive from their sport participation and their motivational implications.

Peer Influence

Research concerning peer influence on young athletes' psychosocial development lags substantially behind research assessing parental or coach influence (e.g., Brustad et al., 2001; Weiss & Smith, 1999). This may be an important oversight particularly during the adolescent years. For example, Eccles, Wigfield, and Schiefele (1998) noted that the role of the peer group is likely to vary across development, with peers playing a particularly important role in relation to motivation and achievement during adolescence. Not only are adolescents more sensitive to and place more importance on peer acceptance and support as means to validate their self-worth (e.g., Harter, 1998) but they also typically spend considerable more unsupervised time with peers than children do. Therefore, adolescents should be especially vulnerable to peer group influences on their goals, interests, and values (Eccles et al., 1998). Additionally, it appears that peer relationships involve a different set of socialization processes than adult-child relationships (e.g., Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; Youniss, Maclellan & Strouse, 1995). In the former case, relationships are characterized by the use of symmetrical reciprocity and follow the principle of cooperation between equals. Conversely, power asymmetry and unilateral authority are more typical of relationships in the latter case (Youniss et al., 1995). Further supporting the need for research on peer influence in the youth sport domain, Harris (1995; see also Bugental & Goodnow, 1998) contended that socialization processes are context-specific and that the peer groups of childhood and adolescence rather than dyadic relationships (e.g., parent-child) are the main contexts of socialization.

Brustad (1996a) attributed the lack of research on peer influence in sport to the difficulty of studying children's peer cultures as well as to the shortage of theoretical frameworks from which to study children's peer interactions. However, the available research indicates that we cannot draw a comprehensive picture of the developmental outcomes of youth sport involvement without taking into the consideration the influence of peers. For example, reviews of the youth sport participation motivation literature (Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992; Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989) have concluded that the opportunity to make friends and develop affiliations are at least as important as achievement motives in influencing children and adolescents' interest in sport involvement. In support of this conclusion, Wold and Anderssen (1992) found that children whose best friends take part in physical and sport activities are much more likely to take part themselves than are children whose best friends are not involved in such activities.

Given the potential implications of friendships for children and adolescents' development and socialization, recent research efforts have started to examine issues related to the nature of friendship relationships specifically in the youth sport domain (Weiss, & Smith, 1999; Weiss, Smith, & Theeboom, 1996). This research has underscored the multidimensionality of friendship relationships in youth sport. Furthermore, some of the identified dimensions of friendship relationships may have consequences for youngsters' motivationally relevant self-perceptions and affective reactions in sport. This is the case, for example, of self-esteem enhancement, which involves saying or doing things in a way that enhances another child's perceptions of athletic ability and self-worth. Likewise, another dimension, pleasant/play association,

reflects the enjoyment that youngsters derive from and the positive affective tone that characterizes certain relationships with their peers in sport. On a negative side, the conflict dimension that emerged in the Weiss et al.'s (1996) study is representative of the potential for negative affective experiences involved in relationships with peers in sport (see also Brustad et al., 2001).

A related area of recent interest among sport researchers is that of peer acceptance. In contrast with friendship, which is typically considered as a dyadic manifestation of peer relationships, peer acceptance is examined in relation to one's perceived status within or liking by the peer group (Bukowski & Hoza, 1989). Peer acceptance and popularity among youth are likely to be gained by doing well in highly valued achievement areas, such as sport (Brustad, 1996a; Weiss & Duncan, 1992). Research shows that both girls and, particularly, boys believe indeed that they become popular among peers through athletic accomplishment (e.g., Adler, Kless, & Adler, 1992; Chase & Dummer, 1992). This belief seems well justified since there is also empirical evidence linking the possession of athletic ability and the attainment of peer acceptance and popularity, especially in the case of boys (e.g., Buhrmann & Bratton, 1977, cited in Brustad et al., 2001; Weiss & Duncan, 1992).

Research in the physical activity domain (e.g., Duncan, 1993; Smith, 1999) further illustrates the significance and the necessity of investigating the psychological correlates and motivational implications of friendships and peer acceptance in the youth sport domain as well. For example, Smith (1999) examined a model of peer influence on physical self-worth, affective responses toward physical activity, and physical activity motivation in an adolescent sample. Results revealed that friendship and peer acceptance

predicted affective responses to physical activity and self-worth respectively. Affect and self-worth, in turn, mediated the association between peer relationship variables and motivation.

Another line of research that highlights the influential role that peers play in youth sport concerns the type of sources of information that children and adolescents prefer to judge about their own physical competence or ability. This research has documented a developmental pattern whereby the use of peer comparison and feedback increases steadily in importance to become the privileged source of sport ability information during the childhood and early adolescence years (Horn & Hasbrook, 1986; Horn & Weiss, 1991; Horn, Glenn, & Wentzell, 1993). Excessive reliance on social comparison and feedback from others may, however, contribute to lower children's perceptions of physical competence which, in turn, explains in part the sharp decline in sport involvement observed during early adolescence (see Brustad et al., 2001). Some evidence supporting these hypothetical links can be found in a study by Weiss, Ebbeck, and Horn (1997). In this study, a profile representative of youth in early adolescence (ages 10-13) emerged that was characterized by lower perceptions of competence, lower self-esteem and higher competitive trait anxiety. These youth also reported a strong preference for peer comparison and evaluation by coaches and peers as criteria to judge their physical competence.

Additional evidence of the motivational implications of peers in youth sport contexts comes from different areas of research. For example, results from Scanlan and colleagues (Scanlan et al., 1993; Scanlan et al., 1989) underline the importance of positive interactions with and support from teammates as a source of sport enjoyment.

Likewise, research on factors affecting sport commitment suggests that the opportunity to make and being involved with friends is a significant incentive in youngsters' resolve to continue sport participation (Carpenter & Scanlan, 1998; Carpenter, Scanlan, Simmons, & Lobel, 1993). Furthermore, recent research on sources of sport confidence indicates that adolescent athletes gain confidence from a nurturing climate in which athletes get positive feedback from teammates among others (Vealey, Hayashi, Garner-Holman, & Giacobbi 1998). On the other hand, as the results from the previously mentioned study by Weiss et al. (1997) suggest, peers can be also at the origin of the experience of stress and anxiety (Scanlan et al., 1991). Finally, research has started to uncover the potential contribution of peers to the development of moral attitudes and behavior in sport (e.g., Mugno & Feltz, 1985; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995) and, more recently, as "colearners" (Eccles et al., 1998) in the skill development process (d'Arripe-Longueville, Gernigon, Huet, Winnykamen, & Cadopi , 2002, Weiss et al., 1996).

In conclusion, the research reviewed in this section highlights the key role that peers may play as socializing agents in the youth sport setting. Moreover, it suggests the need for continued research in this neglected and necessary area of the study of sport socialization.

<div align="center">Literature Critique</div>

The literature previously reviewed provides compelling evidence of the significance and the necessity of studying children and adolescent athletes' motivation within the social, and particularly the interpersonal, context in which sport participation occurs. Specifically, the literature examined has increased substantially our knowledge and understanding of the influential role that parents, coaches, and, to a lesser extent,

peers play on children and adolescents' sport motivation and of some of the processes through which they exert their influence. Despite its many merits, however, from a socialization perspective this literature can be considered as relatively limited on several grounds.

In a thorough review of literature on socialization processes, Bugental and Goodnow (1998) noted that the original emphasis within studies of socialization was on single-source, one way effects. That is, parents were seen as shaping children, society as molding individuals. A close look at the studies reviewed in the previous section reveals that, for the most part, they assessed the influence of either coaches, parents, or peers (i.e., single source-effects) on athletes' self-perceptions, motivation characteristics and affect. The implicit assumption underlying the methods used in these studies seems to have been that parents, coaches, and peers exert an impact on young athletes that is independent of each other. Alternatively, it is also possible that single-source studies have been more popular due to the relative methodological ease and greater simplicity in examining relationships. However, in a study examining the relation between parental childrearing attitudes and children's experiences in sport, Averill and Power (1995) showed that an adequate understanding of the outcomes of the interaction between the coach and the athlete cannot be obtained without taking into consideration the nature of the parent-athlete interaction. Specifically, their findings revealed that mothers and fathers who reported the highest level of involvement in their child's soccer experience had children reporting the lowest level of cooperation with the coach.

In line with Bugental and Goodnow (1998), Weiss and Hayashi (1995) noted that sport psychology research dealing with socialization has been primarily conducted within

a unidirectional approach to socialization (i.e., significant others having an impact on young athletes or one-way effects). However, these authors demonstrated that socialization is a reciprocal process in which young athletes and significant others mutually influence each other. Specifically, Weiss and Hayashi (1995) found that young athletes and their parents are aware of each other's behaviors and expectations. Parents, especially, reported attitudinal and behavioral changes as a consequence of their son or daughter's intensive sport involvement, supporting the existence of reverse socialization effects through sport participation.

In a review of literature on sport socialization, Greendorfer, Lewko, and Rosengren (1996) noted the lack of systematic research on sport socialization. Specifically, they criticized the lack of scope of much of this research (e.g., research delimiting significant other influence to "parents" only). This lack of scope is also evident in the literature on significant other influence on young athletes' motivation. For example, even when considering the influence of "parents" on youngsters' sport motivation, most of this research has not differentiated between mothers and fathers in considering potential effects. However, the work of several researchers demonstrates the importance of examining the effect of gender differences in parental attitudes and behavior on children's psychosocial responses in the youth sport domain. For instance, White (1998) found that adolescent female athletes recognized some differences between their fathers and mothers' achievement related preferences. White (1998) also reported that the athletes perceived differences between fathers and mothers with regards to the extent to which they made them worry about making mistakes. The lack of scope of the literature reviewed above is further evidenced in the fact that almost no research has

examined the potential motivational influence of siblings. This may be a critical oversight because most children are likely to spend more time in direct interaction with siblings than with parents and significant others (Parke & Buriel, 1998). Therefore, siblings may play a critical role in the socialization of children and, presumably, adolescents also (see Parke & Buriel, 1998).

Recent research by Côté (1999) on the influence of the family on the development of talent in sport constitutes a step forward toward the examination of social influence processes from a more comprehensive perspective. Côté's (1999) work is particularly relevant because it addresses the influence of the whole family environment (not just parents) in helping athletes cope with motivational constraints as they develop over time. Moreover, this work focuses on patterns in the *dynamics* within the influence of the family rather than on *linear processes* of influence (e.g., greater perceived levels of parental satisfaction with performance predict greater levels of enjoyment), as most research investigating significant other influence in youth sport has typically done. Côté's (1999) research is particularly valuable as well because it provides initial evidence of the role that siblings may play at different stages of sport development. From a motivational standpoint, results from his study highlight the important role that older siblings may play as models of work ethic during the specializing years (ages 13-16, typically).

In connection with the previous point, Greendorfer et al. (1996) also noted that research on sport socialization has paid little attention to understanding the differential impact of various significant others upon young athletes. Again, the same critique could be addressed to research concerning significant other influence on young athletes' motivation. This is unfortunate, because determining whether there are specific

motivational roles under the purview of specific social agents could make a crucial contribution to our understanding of processes of social influence in youth sport and to the design of appropriate interventions to enhance motivation. On a related note, very few studies have explored the relative influences of significant others upon athletes' motivation characteristics. In one of such studies, Peiró, Escarti, and Duda (1997) examined significant others' socializing influences on Spanish adolescent athletes' goal orientations. Assessments of the perceived goal perspective emphasized by mothers, fathers and coaches allowed for a more effective examination of which significant other was more influential in terms of the athlete's adopted goal orientations. Consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Duda & Hom, 1993; Ebbeck & Becker, 1994), results suggested the existence of a significant relationship between the goal orientations adopted by adolescent Spanish athletes and their perceptions of their significant others' goal orientations. Thus, this study provided further evidence that an athlete's dispositional goal perspective is developed through socialization processes. Likewise, this study extended previous research by suggesting that the significant adults who play the most important role in the adoption of female athletes' goal orientations are parents and, to a lesser extent, coaches. With regards to the male athletes, their parents, as well as their coaches, emerged as very influential in terms of athletes' personal goal orientations.

Referring in particular to the literature on socialization within the family, Parke and Buriel (1998) suggested that we do not yet understand well how the impact of different social relationships changes as children develop. A similar point has been made in relation to the sport domain (e.g., Brustad, 1996a; Coakley, 2001; Smith et al., 2001). Brustad (1996a), for example, contended that the nature and extent of each source of

social influence varies greatly according to the age and developmental status of the athlete. Therefore, he strongly recommended that researchers adhere to a developmental perspective that acknowledges the effect of age and developmental status in the study of social influences on young athletes' motivation. To date, however, this has been the exception rather than the norm in the available literature. A notable exception is represented by the previously mentioned study by Côté (1999). Qualitative analyses of retrospective interviews with athletes, parents, and siblings allowed Côté to identify three distinct periods or stages of sport development from early childhood to late adolescence. Each of these stages was marked by specific patterns in the dynamics of family involvement in the children's sport as well as in processes of social influence.

Finally, from a methodological standpoint it has been argued that our understanding of athletes' development through sport may have been impaired by research designs relying primarily on group rather than on individual data (Brustad, 1996a). In this regard, Brustad emphasized the need for research approaches focusing on aspects of individual change over time and recommended specifically the use of qualitative as well as longitudinal research methodologies. In a related vein, Greendorfer et al. (1996) deplored the lack of naturalistic research in the study of sport socialization. More specifically, Grotevant (1998) concluded his review on adolescent development indicating that researchers probably have not listened carefully enough to what adolescents are saying in their own words to make sure researchers' theoretically derived constructs are in line with the adolescents' realities. Arguing that researchers ignore the issue of the meaning that adolescents' attach to their experiences at their own peril, Grotevant (1998) urged the former to get familiar with approaches that attempt to deal

more directly with the realities of the people they seek to understand. Finally, he called for research that rejects the positivistic notion that there is an objective reality out there for scientists to discover "and will allow scholars into the lived experiences of adolescent themselves" (1998, p.1136).

In sum, despite the many and important insights gained from the literature on significant others' influence in youth sport, several shortcomings of this literature have been identified. These include an emphasis on single source, one-way effects, lack of scope, emphasis on linear rather than on dynamic processes of influence, lack of attention to the differential impact of others, and limited use of longitudinal and qualitative designs.

Purposes of the Study

In an attempt to address some of the limitations previously identified, the focus of the present study was on the processes of interpersonal influence through which adolescent athletes maintain their involvement in competitive sport and on the motivational consequences resulting from such processes. More specifically, this study attempted to determine *who* are the individuals perceived by adolescent athletes as having an influence whatsoever on their sport motivation and *how* these individuals exert their influence over the specializing and the investment years of sport involvement. In addition, important objectives of the inquiry were to gain a better understanding of the *differential impact* of influential others upon adolescent athletes' sport motivation across development and the ways in which these influential others are *interconnected* in producing their impact.

Theoretical Framework

As Bugental and Goodnow (1998) explained, the reaction against the initial emphasis on single-source, one-way effects within studies of socialization took two overlapping forms. The first was concerned with asking how multiple sectors or parts of any social context are interrelated or interconnected. The second put the emphasis on the role of the person seen as being molded as an active contributor to the socialization process. Both directions are incorporated into system-style models of socialization (e.g., Bugental & Goodnow, 1998), which provide a theoretical foundation for the present study.

System-style models of socialization are mainly concerned with the *dynamics* within a social context and have been prominent in analyses that attempt to describe the *interconnections* among members of a family and the various parts of a social context (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; see also Parke & Buriel, 1998). These models are consistent with and draw upon larger developmental systems models of human development (e.g., Ford & Lerner, 1992; Lerner, 1998; Sameroff, 1983). Briefly, system-style models of socialization propose that any social context can be seen as forming a whole such that change in any one part flows on to change in others, either dampening or heightening the conditions already existing, until a new but temporal stabilization is achieved (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998). Consistent with these positions, Gould (1996) argued that because the youth sport setting involves the extensive interplay of a variety of social systems and subsystems, to fully understand the setting one must examine the various systems and their relationships. Therefore, Gould concluded, a systems approach "would be especially appropriate in studying socialization into and through sport" (p.

417). Also in line with this conceptual orientation, Weiss and Smith (1999) suggested that future investigations examining the link between significant others' influence and the psychological development of young athletes should consider the interplay of social networks (i.e., parents, peers, and coaches) that impact upon children's and youths' sport experiences.

Notions stemming from system-style models of socialization are becoming increasingly popular among developmental psychologists investigating socialization processes within the family and the peer group. As an example of the former, Parke and Buriel (1998) argued that consideration of parent-child or sibling-sibling relationships alone is insufficient because they fail to recognize that "the properties, functions, and effects of the family unit cannot necessarily be inferred from these smaller units of analyses" (p. 487). As an example of the latter, Rubin, Bukowski, and Parker (1998) proposed that peer relationships must be understood according to their place within the network of other relationships. An important methodological implication outlined by Bugental and Goodnow (1998) follows from these related proposals. The specific research strategies for exploring the impact of the social group may vary, but the common aim is "to create some merger between a focus on interactions between two people and the recognition that other members of the social group are also a part of that interaction" (p. 440).

<div align="center">Delimitations/Limitations</div>

The present study is circumscribed to a period corresponding to what Côté (1999; Côté & Hay, 2002) defined as the specializing and the investment stages of sport development. These stages have been described in more detail in the Introduction section.

All athletes in the investment years, however, took part in individual sports (swimming, tennis, and badminton). This circumstance should be taken into consideration when interpreting and attempting to extrapolate the current findings to other groups of athletes (e.g., athletes in team sports).

In line with the tenets of an interpretative phenomenological approach (see Smith, 1995) in which the present study is grounded, it is assumed that what a respondent says in an interview represents a manifestation, though not a transparent one, of his or her psychological world or "reality." Despite the measures taken to ensure the "richness" of the data collected during the interviews, there are some limitations to the extent to which the respondents are able to dig into their own psychological worlds and to put them into words. This is even more so taking into account the young age of some of the participants in this study. Likewise, despite the steps taken to ensure confidentiality in the participants' responses and to make them feel at ease, some participants may not have felt necessarily comfortable talking about the negative influence that others such as coaches and, particularly, parents may *currently* have on their sport motivation. Therefore, it is possible that the responses of some participants may have depicted a somehow more positive portrait about the motivational influence of certain individuals than it was actually perceived by these participants.

Finally, the role of the researcher in qualitative inquiry deserves consideration as well in this section. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher becomes the main instrument of data collection and analysis. As such, the researcher is highly invested in the research process and brings to it his/her personal background, experiences, and theoretical frames of reference. In my case, these potential "biases" include my own experiences both as

participant in sport and as coach. Specifically, I took part intensely in competitive soccer (goalkeeper) during my childhood and competitive basketball during my adolescence and early adulthood. Likewise, I coached and implemented fitness programs for adolescent basketball players of both genders for many years and also taught adolescents of both genders in the context of secondary physical education classes in Spain. Furthermore, I did not start this project with no "a priory knowledge" of theoretical frameworks that are relevant to the topic under study. Indeed, during my graduate studies I became acquainted with a number of relevant frameworks stemming from the sport, educational, and social psychology, and from the human development literatures. Nevertheless, in line with Smith (1995), I consider these frameworks as necessary tools for the interpretative process rather than as obstacles to it. A discussion of the procedures I used in this study to minimize the impact of potential biases and enhance the credibility of the research process has been included on pages 51-52 in chapter Two.

Chapter II

Method

Given the purposes of this study, a qualitative approach involving the use of semi-structured interviews was deemed most appropriate. In recent years, there has been growing advocacy for an increased use of qualitative methods and approaches in sport psychology in general and in youth sport research in particular. For example, in a chapter dealing with future directions in youth sport research, Gould (1996) encouraged researchers to use qualitative research methods to a much greater degree. Based on the work of Patton (1990), Gould argued that qualitative research methods provide a wealth of detailed information and depth of understanding not resulting from traditional quantitative methods. More recently, Brustad et al. (2001) concluded that qualitative research methodologies, including interview approaches, remain a primary recommendation for research on children and youth's experiences in sport. To date, however, qualitative or naturalistic research on the topic of social influence on young athletes' motivation is scarce. However, it has been suggested that qualitative research methodologies are particularly well suited for the study of interpersonal processes (e.g., Corsaro & Miller, 1990; Charmaz, 1995; Peshkin, 1993; Strean, 1998). For example, Charmaz (1995) stated that grounded theory methods are suitable for the study of interpersonal relations and the reciprocal effects between individuals and larger social processes. She also suggested that these methods are useful for studying social psychological topics such as motivation, personal experience and interpersonal cooperation and conflict. Bugental and Goodnow (1998) explained that within what have been called interpretive approaches to socialization (e.g., Corsaro & Miller, 1990) the emphasis is on there being input and influence on both sides in a given social interaction

or relationship. Furthermore, among the "breadth of desirable outcomes" of qualitative research, Peshkin (1993) provided examples demonstrating the suitability of this kind of research in describing, and thus allowing for a better understanding of, social processes, relationships, and systems. Likewise, Peshkin argued that the interpretive function of qualitative research is particularly suitable for clarifying and understanding complexity. Peshkin noted that this is important because "most of what we study is truly complex, relating to people, events, and situations characterized by more variables than anyone can manage to identify, see in relationship, or operationalize" (1993, p. 27). More recently, Strean (1998) extended the conversation regarding qualitative inquiry by discussing specific ways in which we may put it to good use in sport psychology. Among the objectives that this kind of inquiry can help to achieve, Strean identified the description and interpretation of both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes and situations that may enhance our understanding of psychological aspects of sport.

Participants

Qualitative research focuses typically on a small number of participants selected purposefully (Patton, 1990; see also Côté, 1999). The sample in this study consisted of 12 athletes whose levels of involvement in sport ranged from the specializing to the investment years (Côté, 1999; Côté & Hay, 2002). The patterns of involvement (e.g., amount of hours spent in training and intensity, competitive level) of six athletes were characteristic of the patterns described by Côté (1999; Côté & Hay, 2002) as typical of the specializing years. The athletes interviewed in this group included one 13-year-old female, "Sheryl," participating in basketball, fastball, and volleyball; one 14-year-old male, "Ralph," playing soccer and volleyball; two 15-year-olds (one female, "Jill,"

involved in track and field and soccer, and one male, "Daniel," taking part in soccer and snowboarding); one 16 year-old male, "Brian," taking part in football and basketball, and one 17-year-old male, "Neil," playing soccer and football). Depending on the period of the sport season, a typical practice week for these athletes included between 6 and 10 hours of training in a particular sport. These athletes competed in different leagues and contests at the city level. The patterns of involvement of the remaining six athletes corresponded to the patterns described by Côté (1999; Côté & Hay, 2002) as characteristic of the investment years. Participants in this group included four 14-year-olds (one female swimmer, "Kirsten," one female badminton player, "Miriam," one male swimmer, "Samuel," and one male, "Nelson," involved in swimming and basketball); one 15-year-old female badminton player, "Sarah"; and one 17-year-old female, "Anna," who competed in tennis. Unlike athletes in the specializing group, these athletes were engaged in a full year round training (with a short break period). Depending on the period of the sport season, a typical practice week for these athletes included a minimum of 10 hours of training and could go up to 20 hours (including fitness) in the sport they gave priority to. One of these athletes, Nelson, participated in swimming at a level corresponding to the investment years while being involved in basketball at a level typical of the specializing years. These athletes competed at the provincial and the national levels. Côté and Hay (2002) indicated that although athletes typically enter the investment years at the age of 17, there exists great variability among sports. For example, Côté (1999) reported that the participants in his study (three rowers and a tennis player) entered this period at around age 15. Participants in both groups came primarily from middle class families and represented an ethnically varied sample.

Participants were recruited using both a direct and an indirect procedure. In the first case, I asked permission of coaches in a variety of youth sport settings to explain the study and hand out personally an information form to athletes. In the second case, I asked other people to hand out the information form on my behalf to athletes in their networks that met the requirements for participation in this study. All participants were recruited from a variety of youth sport settings in a large Western Canadian city. Following standard ethical procedures, participants filled out an informed consent form, which was also signed by one of their parents.

Next, I will introduce the participants one by one so as to allow the readers to get a sense of them in terms of their family sports background, their own levels of involvement in sport, and their motivational characteristics. In short, the following profiles portray a group of athletes belonging to middle to upper-middle class families, taking part in sport in a variety of competitive levels, and reporting a multiplicity of participation motives ranging from intrinsic to extrinsic and from achievement to non-achievement motives (see Scanlan & Simons, 1992).

As much as possible, I have made an effort to capture the way in which these athletes expressed themselves during the interviews. In order to respect the anonymity of the participants, all of the following names are pseudonyms.

<div align="center">"Sheryl"</div>

Sheryl is a 13-year-old athlete involved in basketball and volleyball at the junior high school level, and fastball at the AA level. She considers that if her family would not have been athletic and had not provided her with certain experiences (e.g., playing volleyball for fun during summer) she probably would not be playing sports. Her father

currently plays in a golf league and is involved in recreational squash. Her mother curls in a league. Sheryl's sisters (12- and 10-years-old, respectively) participate in competitive gymnastics and play soccer in a community league. The whole family practices swimming, water-skiing, and downhill skiing for fun. Sheryl tried out different sports in order to find a goodness of fit in terms of skill and enjoyment. She also got introduced to some sports through friends. The availability of programs outside of school was another factor that helped her to become involved in sports.

In general, Sheryl plays sports to stay fit and because she really enjoys it and gives her something to "push herself forward." Specifically, she also plays fastball because of the competitiveness of the AA league and in order to be able to get a scholarship one day for a university in the United States. Likewise, she would like to keep up with basketball and volleyball and go as far as she possibly can with both sports--while balancing it with playing piano. Her particular goal for this season in fastball is to be able to stay on top of her game mentally. As for basketball and volleyball, she wants to play her best game taking advantage of what she learned the previous year. In sum, she wants to be able to keep up with everything that she is doing and stay fit when she gets older, like her parents and grandparents, because she considers it is a really great way to be, a great lifestyle.

To some extent, Sheryl participates in sports just because that is what she does -- that is part of her lifestyle and of her identity as a "jock." Although she wants to try other things, at the same time she does not want to give up what she has in her sports. She plays to have fun and because it allows her to meet many new people and be great friends with some of them. She plays also not just because of the sports, but also because of what

she gets out of it (e.g., self-discipline, learning to work with other people), but mostly, she does it because she enjoys herself. Sheryl feels most successful as an athlete when she knows she has played her best and tried her best, even if she did not come out with the best outcome.

<div align="center">"Ralph"</div>

Ralph is a 14-year-old athlete involved in soccer at the club level and volleyball at the junior high school level. Ralph has always liked sports. His mother played volleyball and she suggested he should try. It also looked like a fun game, and it is taught in physical education classes. His parents got him involved in soccer after he saw some people playing and felt like playing.

His number one goal as an athlete is to keep himself in shape. He plans to play soccer until he is older just to keep in shape and because he loves the game. As for volleyball, he just does it mostly to stay in shape for soccer season. Although he enjoys the game, since he is not the best player, he is just glad to play each year.

Ralph finds sports both physically and mentally challenging. He enjoys the action and speed of soccer very much and the fact that it takes a lot of skill to become a good player. Next season he wants to be the captain again --he likes having leadership skills-- and to go to Cities, Provincials, and even Nationals with his soccer team. He wants to try to make the senior team at school in volleyball. That is one of his goals, to play more competitively and just test his skills that much more. As he put it, "I am a very competitive person and I like to push myself as far as I think I can go."

Besides keeping in shape and being a competitive person who likes to win, Ralph plays sports to be able to keep focused and because it allows him to release his emotions

in an acceptable manner, within the rules of the game. Sports also keep him mentally sharp, which helps with school.

Sport is the most fun for Ralph when he knows he is doing his best and he is helping others on his team to do their best. Wining also makes sport more fun for him. Sport is not that fun for him when he or others on his team get frustrated and when the other team is not playing "fair or clean." Ralph feels most successful as an athlete when he is making his plays and is doing his best to help others. As he suggested as well, "winning is a bonus."

<p style="text-align:center">"Jill"</p>

Jill is a 15-year-old female athlete taking part in track and field (middle distance running, cross-country) at the city level. She also plays community league soccer. Jill's sister (14-years-old) is involved in recreational hockey, community soccer, school cross-country running and school basketball. Her father does leisure distance running and skating, and curls in a league. Jill became involved in track and field because her grade three physical education teacher, who was also the school running coach, recommended that she joined the club.

A typical practice week for her includes 3 or 4 practices a week. Her goals in track field are to have fun, do her best, and keep improving. She does not set goals too high, but rather tries to set reasonable goals taking into account the caliber of her opponents in races. What she likes about track and field is that it keeps her in shape and gives her confidence when she finishes a race with enough energy. She also likes to run because, as she put it, "I have talent, it is easy for me." As for soccer, she likes that there are different skills involved and the teamwork. What she does not like about track and

field is that it takes off a lot of her time, which is not always good for school, and sometimes when she is really tired and does not perform well.

Jill practices track and field because she has done it for a long time. In this regard, she remarked: "I would not ever want to quit; even if I am old, I might still run outside with other people." Likewise, she enjoys it, and she considers that it is good for her health, allows her to have a healthier lifestyle and learn to organize her time better. In this way, as she suggested, "I have activity as well as schoolwork and social life."

As for soccer, she has done it for a long time too, and she likes to play and succeed, she likes the sensation of being outside, and she thinks that it is good for health again. She likes the game and to improve. In this regard, she suggested, "I don't want to lose my talent, so I keep at it." Jill considers that it is good to have in the background of her life. As she concluded: "even though I may not play when I am older, it is good to know that I did it once and did it well."

<p style="text-align:center">"Daniel"</p>

Daniel is a 15-year-old athlete involved in soccer and snowboarding. Daniel started to play soccer with his father in his backyard. He has been playing soccer for 9 years mainly at the city level, although he also had the chance to play for representative teams when he was younger.

What he likes about playing soccer is the fact that he has so much fun just running around and scoring goals. He also enjoys being good at it --and being told so--being able to beat lots of people at it, and winning. He does not really have goals as a soccer player, other than being able to keep on playing and just doing his best. As for the next season, he would like to do really well in the team. In his own words: "Try as hard as I can, score

lots of goals and help to score lots of goals to try to get my team really far and hopefully make it to Provincial championships."

Daniel's mother is one of his biggest influences why he plays soccer because she always tells him he is pretty good and she always wants him to keep on playing and doing his best. Daniel also plays soccer because he really likes it and because since most of his friends play soccer, he wants to be able to spend more time with them. Sport is the most fun for him when things are going well in the season either at a collective or an individual level. Daniel feels most successful as a soccer player usually after he scores a goal or helps win the game or when the team wins an important game.

Regarding snowboarding, Daniel became involved because two of his friends went snowboarding and he wanted to go with his friends. What Daniel likes about snowboarding is that, although there is some competition to try to be better than the other people on the hill, "there is no pressure at all." It is basically self-expression, he is just doing it all by himself and he learns at his own pace. He feels good just riding in the mountains and being in the outdoors. Having taken part in a few competitions already, with little success, he hopes to be able to win some competitions in the future.

"Neil"

Daniel's brother, Neil is a 17-year-old athlete who plays club soccer in the goalkeeper position and high school football. He became involved in sports when he was six or seven because his parents wanted something for him to do and encouraged him to play sports. Later, he got involved in hockey for some time through some kids that he had met in skating lessons. Once in high school, he also decided that he would try football

because his friends were playing, and he found it very fun after the first year, so he continued playing.

What he likes about playing soccer is the fun, the challenge, and the competitiveness: "Playing at a high level gives me the chance to test my skills against the skills of the other players around the city." He enjoys playing soccer so much that he always wants to be playing this sport.

As for football, he finds the sport physically challenging and fun, it gives him something to do sometimes, and it allows him to release his stress and to be with his friends. He also finds the competitiveness of football--comparing his athletic abilities against other people--attractive. Neil plays football as well to get in shape for soccer. It is also sort of his "break" from soccer.

What he does not like about playing competitive sports is that coaches sometimes do not really know his limits and expect him to do things he is not capable of. Since he enjoys playing soccer so much, he wants to become the best athlete that he can in order to make it eventually to the college or professional level. On the other hand, since he does not have aspirations in football after high school, he does not want to become so involved in this sport to the point that it is not fun anymore. For next season, his last season, he wants to win everything he can with his team in football. In soccer, his season goal is to make it to Nationals or at least to Provincials with his team. He also wants to keep continually improving on all levels, in soccer and football.

Neil feels most successful as an athlete when he scores a touchdown in football after beating his opponent and, in soccer, even if they do not win, when he feels he played a good game and did everything he could. In his own words, sport is the most fun

for him when "I just go out there and play with my friends not caring about whether I win or lose."

<p style="text-align:center">"Brian"</p>

Brian participates in football and basketball at the high school level. He is 16-years-old. His only family member taking part in sports is his father, who plays recreational golf. Brian always liked sports, so he took the opportunity to start playing basketball in junior high school and then football in high school. A typical practice week for him includes 8-10 hours of training during football season and about 8 hours during basketball season.

Brian plays basketball to have some fun and stay in shape. As for football, he would like to play in the Canadian Football League if possible one day because, as he explained: "It would be like showing that I am actually a real good football player." In terms of the current season, he wants to improve himself and make sure he is the best player he can be and contribute to the team the best that he can. As for basketball, this season Brian wants to improve his play a bit, because he considers he does not have the best shot.

Brian plays sports mostly for the self-gratification and because he likes sports and thinks they are good for him: "I am doing something good with my time that keeps me out of trouble and eventually may help me out later in life." Brian likes the physical aspect of sports: "Being out there, working with my hands but at the same time using my mind with strategy to work against the other team and thinking about what I am doing." Another important reason why he plays sports is because of the great friendships that he can make with his coaches and teammates.

Being in the "team atmosphere" is what makes sport the most fun for him in general. Conversely, when his team is losing or when there are people with bad attitude on the team is when sport is not that fun for him. Brian feels most successful as an athlete when he is doing his best--and he feels the "adrenaline rush" exciting him, making him try his hardest, and giving him the greatest feeling--and he is helping the team as much as he can. He also feels most successful when his team is winning.

<div align="center">"Samuel"</div>

Samuel is a 14-year-old male athlete involved in swimming. Samuel has already been swimming for seven years. Samuel's sister (16-years-old) swims at the Junior National level. His father is a former Olympic athlete and currently takes part in fitness activities and recreational running. His mother takes part in fitness activities. Samuel got involved in swimming because he was playing hockey at the time and he did not like it very much, so his parents suggested that he try swimming and he tried it out and he thought it was pretty fun. When he was 10 years old he was ranked fourth in Canada in two hundred meters backstroke. As he admitted, "I started to descend ever since and have been trying to get my competitive edge back."

A typical practice week for him includes about 16-18 hours of training. What Samuel likes about swimming is that, unlike in hockey, he can make mistakes "without anybody looking and pointing the finger at me." What makes swimming fun for him is interacting with other people, how hard it is, and having goals to achieve.

Samuel is motivated for challenges (e.g., do a hard swimming set or reach a certain goal) and wants to do anything that he can do to achieve his goals. Samuel does not really have long-term goals. As he put it, "I am in swimming because it is fun and I

like doing it." His goal for this season is to get a Junior National time, which he finds hard to achieve but still thinks he can. Samuel swims because it is challenging: "not too challenging though, but challenging enough to keep me busy." As he suggested, "I do not like to get bored in swimming, because it is very time consuming."

<center>"Kirsten"</center>

Kirsten takes part in swimming. She is 14-years-old. She got into swimming when she was nine because her mother suggested she should and encouraged her to try it. So, although she initially did not want to, she tried it for a year and really liked it and kept coming back ever since. Kirsten's younger brother plays hockey at the Novice level and soccer under nine. Her father plays hockey recreationally.

A typical practice week for Kirsten includes about 16-18 hours of training. Her goal for this season is to have her Junior National time in backstroke and to try to improve some of her other strokes, but her ultimate goal is to participate in the Olympics.

What she finds the most fun in swimming is going to competitions and meeting different people from everywhere and making friends with them. She also likes seeing her friends and her coaches everyday because they help her to push for her goals. However, she finds swimming too time consuming and wishes she had more time for her friends from school.

The reasons why Kirsten swims are because she likes to meet new people and being with her friends, and because she likes the physical activity, which helps her to become fit. Furthermore, she enjoys swimming and being in the water and cannot actually see herself doing anything other than swimming as a sport.

"Nelson"

Nelson is a 14-year-old practicing swimming and basketball. He used to go to the pool with his father and his sister and always liked to swim and do laps on his own for the sake of it and in exchange for small rewards (e.g., drawings on his arm) from the lifeguard as well. In grade four, his swimming instructor recommended at the end of the lessons that he try a swimming club, because he really liked it and was good at it. As for basketball, he started to become interested because his father always used to watch it on television. However, he made it clear that "it was my decision to try it, and after I did, I really liked it." Nelson's sister (12-years-old) is also involved in swimming and his brother (7-years-old) in basketball.

A typical practice week involves about 16-18 hours of training in swimming and about 5 hours in basketball. What Nelson likes about swimming is that it is fun, the challenge of it is really fun--seeing how hard he can swim, how long he can keep going; the mental challenge of overcoming his pre-race worries and fears. Nelson practices swimming as well because it helps him with the strength for basketball. The less enjoyable part about swimming is always being tired afterwards, not having any energy after the practice.

As for basketball, he finds the game really fun; he really enjoys basketball and understands it, and just loves to play. He takes part in basketball mainly because he finds the game really fascinating and understands it. He likes to watch the game and analyze it, to watch himself in videotape and see how he can improve. It is sort of the challenge of seeing what he can do, but mainly the fascination about the game. In particular, he likes getting physical in the post and trying to outplay his opponent.

His goal for the current season in swimming is to get his Junior National time in 1500 meters freestyle. As for long-term goals, he wants to get his National time and improve stroke technique. In terms of basketball, Nelson wants to improve some of his skills (dribbling, three points shooting), make it to the high school team next year, and, eventually, play university basketball.

<p style="text-align:center">"Sarah"</p>

Sarah is a 15-year-old involved in badminton. She got introduced to badminton through her father, who used to be a competitive player. Sarah's father is currently involved in playing badminton and tennis on a recreational basis. Sarah has been playing badminton competitively for about 6 years. She has been taking part in Provincial competition and, for the past two years, in National competition. A typical practice week for Sarah includes group training twice a week and individual training and conditioning with her sister, Miriam, and her father three times a week.

What she likes about badminton is that it gives her something to focus on out of school. It motivates her to do well at something besides school. She can also relate to what other people are talking about. She specifically likes badminton because it is fast and interesting and fun to play when one gets to understand it. She likes it also probably because she learned it when she was little and it became a part of what she does and a routine. Sarah plays badminton because she enjoys it and it is a great way to meet people. She thinks of it also as a great thing to do after school--rather than being at home or at the mall. It is a great way for her to keep fit and in shape. Sarah likes being active. Playing a sport motivates her to be active, which otherwise would be difficult for her. Sarah considers that being active is good in terms of her self-image and self-confidence, and in

terms of health. Furthermore, as she explained, "it gives me also something to be proud of, a sense of accomplishment when I do well."

Her goal for this season is the doubles National title and being in the top four in the country in singles. She also wants to be number one in Provincials both in singles and in doubles, which she considers a realistic goal. She also wants to improve fitness and mental strength. Badminton is the most fun for Sarah playing in practices, without pressure to win, just for fun and to learn. Sarah feels most successful as an athlete when she does her personal best and improves in self-referenced terms (e.g., go longer than she ever had running). She also feels successful when she does her best when compared to other people.

<div align="center">"Miriam"</div>

Miriam, Sarah's sister, is 14-years-old and also plays badminton. Her father got her involved when she was little and she started to like it. Miriam has been playing badminton since she was six. Two years ago she started to play National competitions. Last year, she won the National title in her age group. She practices five days a week, two days with the training group and three days with her sister and her father.

What Miriam likes about badminton is that it keeps her fit and the fact that she has made a lot of friends from other parts of Canada. She also likes the fast intensity with which the game is played. She thinks it is fun to know how to play badminton. The only thing she does not like about it is that it takes a lot of work, which can be really tiring, so she needs a break sometimes. Miriam plays badminton because she is doing really well right now and she thinks that if she can continue doing well that will keep her interested. Furthermore, badminton keeps her fit and active, which is how she likes being. In her

own words: "It makes me feel better about myself and also helps me with physical education classes in school."

Her goal right now is to win another National title, but her long-term goal is to be top ten in the world by the time she is about 25-years-old. As she put it, "I think it would be a great accomplishment, like something to do with my life besides school." She also wants to be more consistent with some of her shots.

Badminton is the most fun for her during tournaments, because that is when she plays her best and when she gets to see a lot of people that she knows. Miriam feels most successful when she feels she is progressing and getting better than she was before. Winning important championships (e.g., Nationals) also makes her feel successful because she knows that what she is doing is worthwhile and her hard work pays off.

"Anna"

Anna is a 17-year-old involved in tennis. When she was younger, her parents enrolled her in a number of different sports. From there, she started to get more involved and more interested in some sports. She started to play tennis when she was 10- or 11-years-old, and she loved it immediately. Last year, she was placed top four in the Province and went to Nationals. Anna's brother (20-years-old) plays competitive rugby. Her mother is involved in recreational running and, more recently, tennis. In a typical week, Anna trains for about 20 hours (including fitness).

What she likes about sports is the competition: "I like to know that I am not the best, because it makes me want to be better." She likes the way that she bonds with other people because of practicing the same sport, that is, the friendships that she can make from being involved. She also likes the training part--the feeling of exhaustion after

practice that makes her know that she has worked really hard--and the circumstance that it reflects on other areas of her life (e.g., school). On the other hand, she does not like to be let down, that is why she plays individual sports. She also does not like playing against people who cheat or losing against people that do not train as hard as she does or who display a bad attitude on the court.

Her goals for this year are to place top five in the Province and make it to Nationals. Long-term goals include getting a scholarship to play tennis at a U.S. university and see how far she can get from there in the college circuit. The reasons why she plays tennis are both personal and monetary. Anna likes the feeling of attaining realistic goals that she sets for herself. She likes to win, as well. Contrary to a time where she played more for other people, now she plays for herself and for her own achievement and self-confidence. She plays also for monetary reasons (e.g., getting scholarships) and to be recognized for her skills and have the chance to play on a better circuit. Anna feels most successful when she achieves something she thought was out of her reach. Another thing that makes her feel successful is seeing her success reflected on paper (e.g., rankings), that is, getting recognition from other people and associations. Finally, she feels successful when other people notice and make her realize her improvement, regardless of competitive outcomes.

Data Collection

Drawing on insights from an interpretative phenomenological approach (Smith, 1995), semi-structured interviewing was used as the main data collection technique in this study. Seidman (1991) pointed out that at the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language. Therefore,

as a method of inquiry, "interviewing is most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language" (Seidman, 1991, p. 7). From a phenomenological perspective, the aim is to learn something about the respondent's psychosocial world. More specifically, Smith (1995) noted that, in general, researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of a respondent's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic. In a similar vein, Seidman (1991) argued that the goal is to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study. Towards this end, interviewers use primarily open-ended questions in an attempt to build upon and explore their participants' responses to those questions. Thus, the semi-structured interviewing method gives the researcher and respondent much more flexibility than the more conventional structured interview, questionnaire or survey (Smith, 1995). This allows the researcher to follow up particularly interesting emerging avenues and the respondent is able to provide richer accounts. Specifically, Smith (1995) noted that during semi-structured interviews the ordering of questions is less important, the interviewer is freer to explore interesting areas that arise, and the interview can follow the respondent's interests or concerns (which facilitates rapport with the respondent). In sum, the investigator uses the interview schedule as a guide rather than let it dictate the agenda.

From a phenomenological perspective, it is assumed that what people say in an interview has some ongoing significance for them and is a reflection, though not a transparent one, of their own psychological world. At the same time, it is recognized that meanings are negotiated within a social context and that therefore this form of interviewing can also be seen from a symbolic interactionist position (Smith, 1995).

Trying to understand the content and complexity of the meanings that people attach to their experiences is a central concern within a phenomenological framework. This involves the investigator engaging in an interpretative relationship with the transcript. Psychological meanings are not transparently available. Rather, they must be obtained through a sustained engagement with the text and a process of interpretation. This dual aspect of the inquiry is captured in the term "interpretative phenomenological analysis" (Smith, 1995, p. 19).

In addition to collecting data through semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to complete an information form. Besides usual demographic information, on this form participants indicated their years of experience in competitive sport (specifying sport and level of competition) and whether any of their family members took part in sport activities (specifying type of activity and level of involvement).

Interview schedule and procedure. Each participant took part in two semi-structured interviews. Interviews were typically spaced one week apart. This allowed time for the participant to mull over the preceding interview but not enough time to lose the connection between the two (Seidman, 1991). The first interview lasted between 45 and 65 minutes. The second interview lasted between 40 and 75 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The purpose of the two interview series was to reconstruct the participants' experience within the context in which it occurs. People's experience becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them (Seidman, 1991). Therefore, doing two interviews with each participant not only allowed to establish rapport with them but also to avoid the danger of "treading on thin contextual ice" (Seidman, 1998) as a

consequence of exploring my topic in one-shot interview with a participant whom I had never met before. The two interview series allowed participants to reconstruct with more detail their experience within the context in which it occurs and to explore their meaning. In addition, they gave more flexibility to the investigator to explore potentially interesting research avenues that emerged along the way.

For the purposes of this study, an interview schedule was constructed based on the work of methodologists such as Smith (1995) and Seidman (1998), the sport motivation literature, and the feedback from three pilot interviews with two athletes. The interview schedule consisted of three interrelated parts. The first part contained questions about the interviewees' sport background, participation history and current levels of involvement. These questions served as a "warm-up" for the participants and also to facilitate rapport and provide a general context for the subsequent questions:

1. How did you get involved in competitive sport?

2. For how long have you been practicing/playing (sport) and at what level of competition?

3. How often do you practice and compete? Tell me about a typical week.

The second portion of the interview schedule included questions stemming from motivation theory currently used in the youth sport domain and was intended to assist me to understand better the participants' conceptions of motivation and to get to know them better from a motivational point of view:

1. What do you like about practicing/playing (sport)? What you don't like about it?

2. Tell me about your goals as an athlete.

    Prompt: career goals, season goals.

3. Tell me about the reasons why you practice/play competitive (sport)?

4. When is sport the most fun for you? The least?

5. Can you think of a moment when your motivation as an athlete was particularly high? Low?

   . Prompt: how did you get out of that situation? Was there anybody who helped you out?

6. What makes you feel most successful as an athlete?

   Prompt: can you think of a moment when you felt particularly successful as an athlete?

Eventually, some of these questions yielded information relative to the influence that others have on the participants' sport motivation. This information was used as data to develop the theoretical categories that constituted the outcome of the analysis process.

The third part of the interview consisted of questions aimed at tapping the participants' perceptions of people around them and their influence on their sport motivation. This portion of the interview consisted of an initial open-ended question which was the same for all the participants:

1. Can you think of people who have an influence--either positive or negative--on your motivation as an athlete? How do these people have an influence?

Following this initial question, subsequent questions and the order in which they were asked varied for each participant. This was done in order not to constrain the participants' responses and their evocation of individuals perceived as being influential. That is, an attempt was made to follow up as much as possible from what the participants were saying (see Seidman, 1998) and to know as much as possible about the specific

influence of the people they were referring to in the order these people came to their minds. Whenever participants had finished their account of influential people and the ways in which these people exerted their influence, they were encouraged to think about anybody else whom they perceived as having a motivational influence whatsoever. This strategy is consistent with guidelines for conducting semi-structured interviews. For example, Smith (1995) noted that the interviewer's role in a semi-structured interview is to facilitate and guide, rather than dictate exactly what happens during the interview. This allows the interview to enter areas that the investigator had not predicted but which may be most relevant and enlightening for the topic under consideration. Indeed, as Smith argued, these novel areas or avenues are often the most valuable, "precisely because they have come unprompted from the respondent and, therefore, are likely to be of special importance for him or her" (1995, p. 17).

During each interview clarification (e.g., "what do you mean by . . . ?") and elaboration (e.g., can you tell me more about . . . ?") questions were used as needed in an attempt to get richer information or data from the participants. With the same goal in mind, participants were occasionally requested to tell a story that illustrated what they were saying (e.g., Seidman, 1998). In particular, the second interview with each participant provided an excellent opportunity to ask clarification and elaboration questions to shed more light into issues that remained more or less unclear in the first interview. Whenever appropriate, more specific follow up questions were asked, for example to tap affect (e.g., "how did that make you feel"?). Additional strategies aiming at eliciting richness and depth in the participants' responses included the use of neutral rather than leading questions, open rather than closed questions, and avoiding jargon

(e.g., terminology from motivation theory). Overall, an attempt was made to try to encourage the respondent to speak about the topic with as little prompting from the interviewer as possible and to let questions follow, as much as possible, from what the respondent was sharing (see Seidman, 1998; Smith, 1995).

At the beginning of the second interview, the investigator went briefly over the topics discussed during the first interview and the participant was given the chance to make additional comments to what he/she said during that interview. Likewise, the same opportunity was given to him/her at the end of the first and the second interviews. Finally, the participant was thanked for sharing his/her experiences at the end of each interview.

Data Analysis

Data analyses involved a process of reducing and shaping the interview material into a form in which it could be shared or displayed (Seidman, 1998). The end result of this process was an organized and coherent system of conceptual categories that emerged from my interpretation of the participants' responses (Charmaz, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The process of data analysis started after the first interview with the first athlete was completed. That is, data collection and data analyses were a simultaneous process that informed each other at different stages of the inquiry (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Ellis, 1998). As a result of this process, the data gathered became increasingly more focused around emerging themes and questions.

The first major analytic phase of the research consisted of coding the data. In short, coding is the process of defining what the data are about (Charmaz, 1995). Initial codes were used to start breaking the data into meaningful units and to begin to see

processes at work. Focused codes that made the most analytic sense and that captured the data most accurately and completely were then used to sift through larger amounts of data. At this stage, coding became less open-ended and more directed than at the initial stage. It also became more selective and more conceptual (Charmaz, 1995). In some cases, codes were named after the words of respondents themselves (i.e., "in vivo" codes; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In other cases, codes were named after concepts already existing in the literature. In the latter case, I made certain that that these codes and the categories they represented were embodied in rather than forced on the data (see Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A delayed extensive literature review helped to reduce the impact of potential biases in my interpretations and, therefore, to avoid the danger of forcing preexisting concepts on the data.

Categories were developed from meaningful or potentially meaningful segments or units of data identified in the data set (see Merriam, 1998). The process of filling out emergent categories was assisted by constant comparison procedures wherein one respondent's experiences and perceptions were compared with another respondent's in an iterative process, using the look/feel alike criteria advanced by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Entering meaningful units of data into a word processing program on a personal computer facilitated the constant comparison process. In such process, subsequent units were compared to units already coded and integrated into emerging categories and were either added to them or used eventually to develop new categories. In sum, the search for emerging categories and for connections between them entailed a recursive movement between noted similar instances in the data and the emerging categories during the process of organizing the data according to their commonalties (see Polkinghorne, 1995).

This recursive movement was carried out until a particular category was saturated, that is until no new information about this category (e.g., characteristics, processes involved, dimensions) seemed to emerge during the coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The last step in reducing and shaping the interview material into a form in which it could be shared or displayed involved the actual write-up in the form of a report for publication (see Smith, 1995). Briefly, the write-up took the form of my interpretive analysis interspersed with verbatim extracts to illustrate my conclusions. This strategy was chosen because of its potential to help the readers "see" how the researcher came about his conclusions about the data and how such conclusions were grounded in the participants' perceptions and experiences (Charmaz, 1995; Ellis, 1998). As Charmaz (1995), explained, "this keeps the human story in the forefront of the reader's mind and makes the conceptual analysis more accessible to a wider audience" (p.47). In sum, through writing and rewriting I made an attempt to make my analysis progressively more abstract and to define essential processes, patterns and relationships while providing sufficient actual data to demonstrate how my analyses are grounded in lived experience (Charmaz, 1995). Naturally, the vast amount of information gathered in the 24 interviews forced me to make some painful choices and made it impossible to include all the meaningful units of data that were at the origin of my conclusions or that made up a particular category in the final text. Nevertheless, even though the voice of all relevant participants is not represented by the quotations used to illustrate my interpretations and conclusions, their point of view is included in the generalizations that are presented to explain the processes, patterns, and relationships at work in a particular category (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Referring to the development of emerging theory in qualitative analysis, Morse (1994) stated that the goal is to be able to place the results in the context of established knowledge, to identify clearly findings that support established knowledge/theory, and to claim new contributions. In line with this position, and with Charmaz (1995), the ultimate purpose of the procedures previously described was to develop a theoretical analysis that fits the data and has relevance to the area of study.

Validity Issues

Several authors have emphasized the interactive character of data collection and analysis in qualitative inquiry, and, therefore, its constructed nature. For example, Seidman (1991) pointed out that researchers are a part of the interviewing picture. They ask certain questions, respond to their participant in certain ways, and at times even share their own experiences. In the same vein, referring more specifically to data analysis, Smith (1995) argued that analyzing data from interviews involves a close interaction between the investigator and the text. Thus the investigator attempts to understand what the participant is saying, but as part of the process, he or she draws on his or her own interpretative resources. In line with Seidman (1991) and Smith (1995), Charmaz (1995) concluded, "from the beginning, the researcher actively constructs the data in concert with his or her participants" (p.32). Recognition of the constructed nature of knowledge in qualitative research has led a growing number of scholars to question the use of the traditional notion of validity and to seek alternative, more appropriate criteria to judge their work (see Sparkes, 1998). Bloor (1997), for example, contended that validation techniques or procedures in qualitative research should not be seen as tests. Rather he considered them as opportunities for reflexive elaboration and an enhanced understanding

of "how research findings are constituted in the creative process of the research, rather than being preexistent and simply awaiting discovery" (p. 49, cited in Sparkes, 1998).

In light of the previous considerations, and in order to provide as many as possible "opportunities for reflexive elaboration on the creative process of constituting research findings," several procedures were adopted during my study. First, a peer debriefing strategy was used throughout the inquiry process. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested, by being exposed to the critical questions of an experienced research partner playing the devil's advocate, potential biases are brought to light, meanings explored, the basis for interpretations clarified. In such a way, aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind are made explicit and, therefore, subject to exploration. Second, the use of constant comparison procedures ensured that the different pieces of information that came to light were checked (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) against at least one other source of information (e.g., the second interview or another participant). Moreover, the participants in the study were given the opportunity to react to my emerging interpretations and conclusions during the second interview with each of them. The purpose of such "member checks" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was to generate a dialogue through which my constructions are negotiated in order to make them recognizable to the participants as adequate representations of their own realities. Furthermore, once the analysis was completed, I went back to the original material in order to make certain that the integration of meaningful segments or units of data into particular categories made the most analytic sense. In addition, readers are provided with enough illustrative material to make sense of the research from their own standpoints while still being able to "see" how the inquirer came about with his own

interpretations and conclusions (Ellis, 1998). In a similar way, provision of detailed description of the circumstances in which the data were found to hold will eventually enable readers to make a judgement about the potential "applicability" of the findings to a different set of circumstances (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, the credibility of the findings presented was enhanced by my total or full immersion in the data. As Seidman (1998) pointed out, in addition to articulate the criteria that guided the inquiry process it is also important that qualitative researchers affirm their judgement as researchers. They have done the interviews, studied the transcripts, read the related literature, and mentally lived with and wrestled with the data. Therefore their feelings of rightness and coherence about the process of working with the data are important.

Chapter III

In this chapter, results concerning the perceived role of others on adolescent athletes' sport motivation are presented first, followed by results regarding some of the dynamics within these perceived roles.

The Perceived Role of Others on Adolescent Athletes' Sport Motivation

An analysis of the ways in which the participants perceived other people as having an influence on their sport motivation revealed that others played, more or less intentionally, five major motivational roles. These were, respectively, providers of support, sources of pressure and control, sources of competence-relevant information, agents of socialization of achievement orientations, and models to emulate. These categories overlap to some degree in that the same action may be classified as corresponding to different motivational roles depending upon the circumstances in which it is carried out and upon how it is perceived. For example, telling an athlete that he/she "can do it" may be perceived as information indicating competence, as emotional support, or both, depending upon who is sending the message and upon the circumstances in which the message is sent. Table 1 on page 90 provides a comprehensive overview of all the individuals involved in playing each of the five identified perceived motivational roles.

Others as Providers of Support

The perception that others were "always there" and/or were "always behind" to provide support and help whenever needed was often mentioned as a particularly positive motivational influence by athletes in this study. Underlying such a perception was the feeling that others care about athletes and about what they are doing and, eventually, belief enough in their abilities so as to dedicate a number of resources or behave in

particular ways toward athletes. Others showed that they were "always there" and /or "always behind" in a number of ways. Based on existing theoretical and empirical work (e.g., Cutrona & Russell, 1990; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Rosenfeld, Richman, & Hardy, 1989) I labeled these, respectively, tangible support, informational support, emotional support, task challenge support, task appreciation support, companionship support, and autonomy support. The common denominator among these different types of supportive behaviors is that athletes saw them as facilitative of their sport involvement and as enhancing, in one way or another, their well being in relation with their sport practice (see Leff & Hoyle, 1995; Rosenfeld et al. 1989).

Tangible support. The term "tangible support" was used to denote the perception that others provided concrete assistance to athletes, either in the form of material aid or physical help with non sport-specific tasks. Parents were the major providers of tangible support to participants in this study. They did so, mainly, by performing a variety of services intended to help athletes stay involved in sport and progress as athletes. These services included things such as waking athletes up early in the morning and helping them get ready for practice/competition, driving athletes places where they have to go or arranging rides for them, providing supplies athletes need, or paying for all the costs directly or indirectly associated with participation. Jill, a 15-year-old athlete involved in track and field and soccer, provided some concrete examples of how her parents give her tangible support:

They [parents] come all the time and cheer you on, and drive you places where you have to go. If it's a tournament, they'll bring you back and forth, and give you hands and stuff, supplies that I need. Like if you need another bottle of water, they will go get it;

if you need your lunch, they'll get you one; if you need money to phone them (laughs) that

too. And then, how like, if I want to take training courses or whatever, go to extra

practices, they'll take me there, do whatever is necessary, or like help me get involved

with stuff like for practices and make it possible for me to do stuff.

Mothers, in particular, played an essential role in helping athletes get ready for practice/competition and in ensuring that everything was taken care of, both before and after, so that athletes could save their energies for performance-related endeavors. Nelson, a 14-year-old athlete involved in swimming and basketball, made this clear when he elaborated on the influence of his mother on his motivation as an athlete:

My favorite is after a hard basketball game or a hard swim meet. I get a back

massage or something (laughs). I really like those, they help me to relax. And

that's probably the most supportive, she helps me to relax. Or if I have an early

game she wakes me up early enough, makes me a good breakfast, make sure I get

good food to eat and everything is ready, I'm all ready to go. And even though

she's not right there with me when I'm playing or swimming, the influence is still

there, because she has put good food into me, made sure I'm all ready to go.

Tangible support also took the form of other people (e.g., relatives, friends, teachers, and, most often, one parent or both) attending the athletes' games/competitions. With no exception, athletes in this study reported that at least one of their parents was present most of the time during their games/competitions. Sarah, a 15-year-old badminton player, and Brian, a 16-year-old involved in football and basketball, offered their view on what it means to them to have their parents attending their games:

Sarah: *It is support, definitely, and just someone there to take care of you in case you get sick; or someone to drive you to and from the venue or just out to dinner or something.*

Brian: *She [mother] always came to my games and was always cheering me on, so it was more psychological than anything else . . . It is like being there, them [parents] supporting me, you know, just being on the sidelines there for me.*

Informational support. The perception that others provided advice and guidance vis-à-vis potential solutions to a problem or task was referred to as informational support. Depending on the nature of the situation, a number of individuals were involved in providing this type of support to athletes. Parents, in particular, and older siblings and coaches to a lesser extent, played an important role in providing advice and guidance with regard to decisions involving the management of the athletes' sport careers (e.g., decisions about whether to stay involved or not). Kirsten, a 14-year-old swimmer, recounted how her parents helped her in a particularly difficult moment of her swimming career:

I told my parents [that] I didn't know if I want to swim anymore. They said that was fine, but they said I should think about how much time I have put into it already and just to quit now what would that do. They said it was my decision. And I actually thought about it and what I would be missing, like my friends, my coaches, swimming itself. And then I realized that from there on I would get right back and keep on going.

Likewise, parents, coaches, and, to a lesser degree, older siblings were instrumental in helping athletes cope with temporary performance setbacks by reasoning

with them and helping them put things in perspective and see things in a different--

usually more positive--way. Anna, a 17-year-old tennis player, reflected on the way her

mother tries to help her when she feels down after a defeat:

> *The way that she sort of helps me deal with it is she sort of puts things into*
>
> *perspective. She is like, "look at all the things you have accomplished this whole*
>
> *year," and she just sort of tries to throw in a lot of positives rather than focusing*
>
> *on the one negative, "I lost." She is like, "you are going to learn that much more*
>
> *from losing the match than what you would from winning it."*

Sheryl, a 13-year-old athlete involved in basketball, volleyball, and fastball, also

felt that her fastball coach played a pivotal role in helping her team keep things in

perspective and remain positive during a particular time in which they went on a losing

streak:

> *We would be sitting after a game and he would be telling us about how this*
>
> *happens to all the teams, and that this was our turn because we had been playing*
>
> *for two years together ad it wasn't like we ever had anything like this before.*

When the nature of the situation or problem required the provision of task specific

information, coaches, in most cases, became the main points of reference for athletes.

Coaches, through instruction and feedback, provided essential information necessary for

the development and improvement of sport skills and competencies. Specifically, the

available data highlight the motivational importance of coaches giving individual

attention to athletes and pointing out regularly strengths and weaknesses in order to help

them with their skills. Neil, 17-year-old athlete who played soccer (goalie) and football,

recalled a particularly positive motivational experience he had with a coach at a soccer camp:

> *I went to the camp to improve. After the camp was over, he told us, everybody, individual weaknesses, strengths, and took individual time for the all of us. That gave me a good perspective on what I had to do in order to get to the next level. It didn't motivate me as much as it like helped me focus my motivation towards, for example, my communication on the field. I always had the motivation to improve, and finally I found what I could direct it towards, you know, concentrate on improving my communication. And so far it has improved, it's a lot better. So yeah, I know he had a big part in my improvements. Like I was always motivated to improve, and I had something to fix it on.*

The present data also draw attention to the importance of coaches providing constructive criticism and feedback to athletes on how to fix their mistakes and improve. Brian, the 16-year-old football and basketball player mentioned earlier, offered his view of what is to be a good coach, whereas Anna, the 17-year-old tennis player also mentioned earlier, shared her experience with a particularly motivational coach:

> Brian: *You have the coaches that are out here just telling you and swearing at the players, "ah, you're not doing this right." But then, you have the coaches that are out there telling them, "okay, you weren't doing this right, but this is how you do it, and next time do it right," you know? Giving them a chance to fix what they did wrong, and telling them what they did wrong, not just that they did something wrong.*

Anna: *She is very smart in that way. She knows how to tactfully pick apart the game and to show where I went wrong, but still in a nice way that if I am still upset about it still makes me feel as though I am getting something out of it.*

The important role that parents, and particularly fathers, played in providing task specific information to their children should not be overlooked, however. Thus, several athletes reported that their fathers were responsible for introducing them to the basics of different sports. In a similar vein, other athletes described how their fathers currently gave varying degrees of technical information and feedback and, even, played, in a way or another, the role of "second coaches" who provided considerable assistance to their children:

He [father] goes to a lot of competitions that I've gone to, and he goes to a lot of world class competitions and he analyzes the strokes. He has everything for a scientific view, so he tells me the perfect form. He just, he is a second coach, but he has this scientific approach. (Samuel, 14-year-old swimmer)

Athletes in this study also got technical feedback from their mothers. However, this feedback was, with notable exceptions, less specific (e.g., "you don't seem to be running fast enough") than the feedback that athletes typically got from their fathers.

Likewise, the role of peers (teammates) in providing task specific information deserves special attention. The existing data suggest that engaging training environments often take the form of learning communities where athletes have the chance to spontaneously help each other out and learn from each other (in particular, less experienced from more experienced ones in team sports/games settings), and, importantly, enjoy doing it. Nelson, the 14-year-old swimmer and basketball player

mentioned earlier, discussed the important role of teammates in giving technical information and help:

> *In practices we watch each other play [and], of course, in games. In practices, me and my fellow post player we'll help each other with our moves, to get around guys ... We are always giving each other advice ... And that always helps, because you can't always see everything when you're on the court playing, but the guys on the bench can.*

Miriam, a 14-year-old badminton player, elaborated on the reasons she likes helping out younger players in her club. In so doing, she pointed to a process through which older players "socialize" younger players into becoming helpers as well for still younger ones:

> *It is not really like a break. It can help my skill just doing shots and things when I help people who are younger than I am. I love doing that. Because people have taken the time to help me, so I like doing that and then I like that people who are older than me help me. And we play a lot of games, so after we are done playing the games they will tell me what they noticed about my game that was really predictably and I should change.*

Ralph, a 14-year-old soccer and volleyball player also alluded to the process through which younger players are socialized by older ones into becoming helpers as well. Specifically, Ralph recalled how being helped by older players on his soccer team made him feel that he should do the same for other players. Furthermore, Ralph offered some insights into the advantages of receiving feedback from teammates, particularly skilled ones, rather than from coaches:

Well, sometimes it hits a little closer when someone your age tells you you're doing something wrong than someone older than you that you figure doesn't play the game. And when you got someone that plays the game besides you, and that you see plays the game well, telling you that you should do something differently, it helps. And it just shows that, "well, since he's a good player, maybe that will help me to be a good player," rather than a coach who you don't see how he plays.

As the experiences of Miriam, her sister Sarah, and Jill illustrated, having siblings close in age who participated as teammates in the same training environment might be an advantage in that siblings could practice together and give feedback to each other both inside and outside of regular team training hours. For example, Jill, the 15-year-old soccer player previously mentioned, explained how she and her younger sister and teammate are constantly picking up things (e.g., "what went wrong, what's good") to help each other out to improve and to keep each other in the game.

Emotional support. This form of support involved the perception that others offered comfort, reassurance, and encouragement during setbacks, as well as provided an "outlet" for athletes to talk about what they are going through in their sport practice. The role of others as providers of emotional support relied upon their ability to connect with the athletes' experience and to understand what it is like for them. Sheryl, the 14 year-old basketball, volleyball, and fastball player, and Miriam, the 14-year-old badminton player, described this quality in her sisters and her mother, respectively:

Sheryl: *People who are in drama get kind of the time you have to put in it. But they don't exactly get like the mental part of it, but [name of sister] and [name of*

sister] know how, when I'm really mad about the game, they just leave me alone because I don't want to be thinking about this. Or when I'm really upset about how I played bad, they know how I feel, and they'll just kind of say how stupid mistakes they made in their last game or whatever, so we are always behind each other.

Miriam: *She [mother] is always there, she is always watching us. Every time we come back from training she always asks how it was and even though she doesn't play she knows what it is like for us.*

Parents, and principally mothers, were the main sources of emotional support for athletes. The circumstance that, in general, mothers were not perceived as being particularly knowledgeable about their children's sport did not hamper, however, their role as providers of emotional support. Sarah, the 15-year-old badminton player, exemplified a typical pattern of paternal and maternal support that emerged from the participants' accounts and that was associated with different motivational roles:

My dad used to play competitively, so to me it is more technical feedback. Like if he is watching us play [he would say], "when you hit this shot you should do it like this" or, you know, "it would be better if you did this." But my mom comes to the [name of club] too and watches us, and has a more supportive approach. She doesn't know particularly that much about the game, but she is really encouraging; we sort of share a lot about, like, what we feel and stuff with her, so she gives us more like emotional support, like encouragement, and my dad is more technical.

Other individuals involved in the provision of emotional support to athletes were people with whom athletes shared things in common (e.g., people who participated in sports or other demanding physical activities) and who were close to athletes. This included athletic friends, siblings, close relatives such as cousins, and, to a lesser extent, coaches. As the experience of Kirsten, the 14-year-old swimmer mentioned earlier, further illustrated, the availability of close people who could relate to the athletes' experience and understand what they were going through was particularly important for female athletes in this study:

> *And my cousin understands what I'm going through because dancing is really hard too, and she's been dancing forever. So she's there for me all the time too. I call her in Toronto, like we talk at least three times a week. We try to find times at night . . . So we can always talk if I don't see her for at least a few months of the time. It helps.*

Task challenge support. This category represented the perception that others were challenging athletes to apply more effort, do better at the task at hand and, eventually, achieve more. Through their cheering on the athletes and their encouraging them when they do something well (e.g., saying, "keep it up") or when they make mistakes (e.g., saying, "pick it up and keep going"), coaches and teammates became instrumental in accomplishing this motivational function. Likewise, coaches, teammates, and, eventually, spectators, contributed to motivate athletes by challenging them to work harder (e.g., telling an athlete that "she can do more" when they are doing fitness activities) and to perform better (e.g., asking athletes to go and get one or two more goals). Teammates, specifically, challenged and pushed also each other to work harder by spontaneously

competing with each other during practices and competitions. Nelson, in reference to swimming, explained how he and one of his teammates are always competing with each other (e.g., trying to pace off each other during training sets or races). As he explained, doing that gives him something to go for and helps each other to work harder. Miriam, the 14-year-old badminton player, talked about the importance of others in both challenging and helping athletes to stretch their limits. Her account underscored the potential advantages of having a close sibling as teammate when it comes to receiving this kind of support:

> *And she [older sibling] was really great before Nationals. She wanted me to do really well, so every day she came down here and she just practiced with me non-stop. Like she would push me to the limit, and it was really helpful . . . If I was tired, or I didn't want to do anymore, she would tell me, "okay, you have to do this, if you go for five more minutes then you will be that much better than anyone else." So she would just push me and keep me when I was tired. She would not let me quit. She would tell me to keep on going.*

Task appreciation support. The perception that others value and acknowledge the work being performed was referred to as task appreciation support. Others communicated this type of support mainly by complimenting and praising athletes when they did something well or when they applied effort and worked hard. Parents, coaches, and peers (teammates) were the main providers of task appreciation support. The role of teammates in offering task appreciation support deserves special consideration. In fact, the overall picture that emerges from this study highlights the importance of athletes engaging in positive, supportive interactions and never discouraging or getting down on each other in

order to sustain high levels of motivation. Samuel, the 14-year-old swimmer referred to previously, described the atmosphere within his team: *"In the pool we say 'good job' to each other, 'that was really hard, but we did it,' kind of thing, and out of the pool we never discourage each other saying 'oh, you suck, I can beat you.'"* Daniel, a 15-year-old athlete involved in soccer and snowboarding, alluded also to the positive motivational impact of a positive, supportive practice environment created by peers in snowboarding:

> *Just going out, everyone has so much support for each other. There is no one putting each other down. Like "that was a cool trick," or "you will get it next time." Or something like that. That is the kind of interactions you have. Everyone just motivates each other.*

Conversely, one of the most commonly cited negative motivational influences among athletes in this study concerned teammates having negative attitudes towards themselves, the others, and the activity (e.g., getting frustrated and upset, complaining all the time about everything, criticizing teammates, trying to get out of drills). Specifically, athletes reported how such teammates bring the entire team down and ruin the sport experience for the whole team. Moreover, they reported having a hard time motivating themselves and focusing, not feeling like playing, and, even, considering dropping out if many people on the team were like that. Ralph, the 14-year-old soccer and volleyball player, and Anna, the 17-year-old tennis player, expressed their feelings of frustration about teammates displaying a negative attitude:

> Ralph: *It's not fun when people around you are getting upset. Like this year we had one player that always got upset and when he got upset he started criticizing*

others on the team. And that ruins the sport for the whole team when someone is

like that.

Anna: *It is really hard to play with people like that. It is really hard to get*

motivated yourself when you have two or three other people besides you pulling

you down or trying to pull you down. It is very hard to do that. It is very hard to

focus on your own when you always have people like that.

Companionship support. The term "companionship support" was used to indicate

the opportunity to engage in social and recreational activities within the context of casual

relationships and friendships that athletes enjoyed in connection with their sport practice.

The "social" aspect of participation represented an important incentive for athletes in this

study. Being involved in sports was a good opportunity for athletes to meet other people,

be with friends, and have fun with friends:

It's also social sometimes, just be with his friends, just to play for fun, social.

(Neil, 17-year-old soccer and football player)

Just everyone interacting together makes it fun, 'cause that is why you are doing

it too, it is the social point of view. Instead of going home and sitting by yourself

you are going somewhere you can be with your friends for a couple of hours.

(Sarah, 15-year-old badminton player)

Practicing together the same sport allowed athletes to develop unique bonds with

teammates with whom they could share common experiences and interests.

Acquaintances forged in sport became in this way a chance to do or talk about things that

athletes would not normally do or talk about with "regular" peers or friends. Conversely,

through sport, athletes had the chance to get to know other athletes with whom they could

talk about non-sport related topics such as school and share recreational activities such as going to movies. Sheryl, the 13-year-old athlete involved in volleyball, basketball, and fastball underlined some of the processes involved in the creation of special ties with peers as a result of being on the same sport teams:

> *You have developed certain bonds because you can do stuff together that you wouldn't, like I have friends that I will take out to my cabin because we can do athletic things out at my cabin, and they can swim. I wouldn't take somebody who couldn't swim out to my cabin. And you just have special, like a different bond . . . It's just kind of, when you're on teams together you have different experiences, so you kind of understand each other better.*

In addition to teammates and acquaintances made through sport, both older and younger siblings also played sometimes the role of companions that helped athletes have a break from the demands of training and competition. For example, Samuel, the 14-year-old swimmer mentioned earlier, explained how he and her older sister, a competitive swimmer as well, not only talk about swimming but also engage in relaxing and fun activities together after practices. Likewise, Kirsten, another 14-year-old swimmer presented earlier, reflected on the relaxing effect that her little brother's fun loving attitude has on her:

> *When I am like a little tired, or stressed out, or whatever, he's always there. Sometimes he does the stupidest things, but they're hilarious. They make you laugh and you forget about everything, because he just does weird things, he's weird sometimes, but he's funny.*

Autonomy Support. This final category of support represented a perceived tendency on the part of others to involve athletes in decision-making roles and to foster in athletes a sense of responsibility for their own learning. For example, several participants mentioned that others were "always behind" them to refer to the perception that others, particularly parents, supported and respected whatever decision athletes made regarding their sport careers. The overall picture that emerges from this study highlights, indeed, the positive motivational influence of parents not pressuring or forcing athletes to do things they do not want to do, and not expecting athletes to continue doing something that they do not like. In a related vein, results from this study underline the positive motivational influence of perceived lack of parental pressure to perform or do well. One 14-year-old, Ralph, stressed the positive influence that his parents have on him by backing his decisions regarding participation in sports:

> *As for sports, I've always had a good influence from both my parents. They've just always been behind me a hundred percent . . . They won't stop me from doing something. They'll give suggestions, but they don't force me to do things.*

Another 14-year-old, Miriam, described how she benefits from a perceived lack of parental pressure to perform and to train whenever she is not feeling well:

> *We call our parents from the tournament and tell them how it went. If we lost, they'll go "that's okay, better luck next time." Like they don't get mad or anything. And if I had a bad day and I am like mad at myself, because I always get mad at myself, they'll come up and help me calm down or just say "yeah, you don't worry about it, you'll have a better day the next time." There is no*

pressure, like if I am not feeling well one day it is not like I have to go play. I can

take a break. It is just calming, like nothing has to be.

The role of coaches in supporting athletes' autonomy is worth mentioning as well. Coaches' support of athletes' autonomy took different forms. These included being supportive of other activities that athletes do outside of sport and which may temporarily conflict with practice/competition schedules, and asking for and taking into account athletes suggestions and input regarding a variety of aspects of training and competition. Likewise, coaches supported athletes' autonomy by wanting athletes to play for themselves rather than for other people, and by not telling athletes exactly what to do or how to do it so as to foster athletes' initiative and problem solving skills during game situations. Miriam expressed her liking of her badminton coaches' instructional approach:

I like the way my coaches help me. I don't know how to say it. I like the way they

coach. Like they will give me strategies but they won't tell me exactly what to do.

They just say "play your own game, you can do it, you know how to do it," this

kind of thing. They taught it to us. All the time they just say, "play your own

game, don't listen to or give up to your doubt." I find that really good for me.

Athletes reported a number of benefits from having a coach who was perceived as supporting their autonomy, namely being motivated, feeling respected as person, feeling inspired, and being confident in their abilities to accomplish things. After explaining that her current fastball coach asks for and takes into account players' suggestions when the team is not doing well, Sheryl said, *"he is really motivational, and there are people who prefer a coach who becomes negative when you are doing bad because it makes them work, but I don't really feel that way."*

Others as Sources of Pressure and Control

On a negative side, athletes reported the psychological experience of pressure and the experience of feeling forced to act in certain ways coming from a number of individuals in the sport environment. By wanting their children to be involved in sports, parents became sometimes one of the reasons why athletes took part in their sport. Both Nelson and Anna coincided in their strong perception that some of their current teammates participate in swimming and tennis because their parents want them to do so. Anna acknowledged also the experience of indirect pressure to participate from their parents when she was younger and did not want to play soccer. As she recalled, *"my parents, again, did not force me to go, but they sort of did in a way because they wanted me to go and play, and I hated it."* Furthermore, Anna explained that although her parents always tried not to push her as a tennis player, knowing that they expected her basically to be the best that she could be, there was a time when she played more for them than for herself.

Likewise, by wanting athletes to do well in sport, coaches occasionally became a source of pressure for athletes (e.g., trying not to disappoint the coaches' expectations regarding an athlete's performance). Furthermore, in their attempts to bring athletes to increased levels of performance, coaches sometimes pushed athletes too much or too far in terms of what athletes felt they were actually capable to do or, simply, were willing to do. Neil alluded to some of the motivational consequences of coaches having unrealistic expectations regarding what athletes are capable of doing:

> *It [football] is not really so much fun this year because the coaches have been really pushing us. We have a game every week and they push us so much that we*

are exhausted and we can't perform when we have a game the next day. It seems

real unrealistic sometimes and just puts too much pressure on you. And

sometimes you just can't deal with it. You get sick and tired of that thing every

day. So sometimes you just want them to leave you alone.

Two athletes taking part in net games, Sarah (badminton) and Anna (tennis), reported the experience of pressure stemming from the feeling of having a reputation to live up to or a status to maintain. People at the origin of this particular experience of pressure were younger players looking up to older athletes, opponents/competitors, parents of other players, and people in the crowd (i.e., spectators). Anna recalled how feeling this way translated into increased pressure to beat other players:

So it was a lot of sort of, I guess, not back stabbing but just sort of like you feel

that people were friendly, but they really weren't once you started to threaten

their children's place. So there is a lot of pressure from parents and people that

watch, a lot of spectators . . . so it's more pressure and more pressure to beat

people. And there is also a lot of talk about like, if you walk off court and you just

lost to someone that most people think you shouldn't lose to, you just hear it

forever.

In connection with the experience of pressure, athletes occasionally reported feeling forced to act in certain ways by their coaches. Coaches became overly controlling by making sure that athletes performed skills in specific ways, with little or no rationale to it, or by expecting and asking athletes to do things, both in practice and competition, that did not make much sense to them. Nelson recalled how his basketball coach became

a negative motivational influence by wanting him to perform a skill in a very precise

manner:

> *I think he [coach] is a bit of a negative influence because at the beginning of he*
>
> *year he was really onto me about my free throw shot. And then he put a little too*
>
> *much pressure on me to do it a certain way . . . I think he probably had negative*
>
> *influence by putting too much pressure on me. And he kept talking and making*
>
> *sure I did everything every time I went up to the line.*

Likewise, Miriam shared her negative experience with a badminton coach who,

with little or no background to it, would just give her negative feedback about her skills

and tell her that she had to change them. Miriam expressed her feelings about such a

situation:

> *I didn't appreciate, like if he had some sort of, like if he showed me what it was*
>
> *that was wrong and why it was wrong, then I would listen to him and maybe try*
>
> *and change it because it might help my game . . . If he just tells me "I don't like*
>
> *that, you have to change it," like I wouldn't listen to him because he didn't tell me*
>
> *why or he didn't explain it to me or anything.*

Nevertheless, there were situations where athletes actually expected and wanted

their coaches to adopt a predominantly controlling or highly directive style of interaction.

This was the case when athletes acknowledged the benefits of having a strict coach able

to impose discipline so as to get them to do things that athletes knew were important for

their performance but that they would not necessarily do if left on their own. This was

also the case when athletes expected coaches to be strict enough and to have the

necessary authority to deal, even by the means of punishment, with problematic athletes

or with athletes that did not work hard enough during practices. This is how Anna felt about his tennis coach being usually very strict and even controlling regarding training matters:

> *So even though I love tennis, there can be a tendency to look for a way out of something that I hate. Like if I had a choice I would not do the sprints at practice and rather do them with my trainer on my own time, where it's a more comfortable environment and better conditions. But my coach keeps me in line, has me do the things I hate and doesn't let me back down from certain drills, which is an excellent trait.*

Some elements of authority and control, perceived as necessary, were also manifest in Sheryl's evocation of her current fastball coach, who had a particularly positive motivational influence on her:

> *He is more person-person relationship than coach-athlete, and yet at the same time he is the coach . . . There are times when you talk to your parents and there are times when your parents are the authority figure. This is what this coach is like. Because if we are not being respectful to somebody else, or if we are not doing something, probably he is going to yell at us because we are not doing what he told us a million times. Then he's the coach person. But when we are talking about something, he is [like] a person-person. And it works out that way.*

Others as Sources of Competence-Relevant Information

The motivation to improve their existing skills and, thus, become better athletes, was a common and important theme among the participants in this study. In this context, other people became, in a way or another, necessary points of reference for athletes to

determine whether they were actually making any improvements or not. Sarah, suggested in this respect that *"the other people motivate you because if you are doing whatever by yourself all the time you can't even tell if you are getting better."* More specifically, athletes inferred relevant information from others about their current sporting abilities and about their future possibilities through social evaluation and social comparison processes.

Social evaluation processes. Getting from others the message that one has the abilities or the potential to achieve his/her own goals often had the effect of increasing athletes' sense of competence or belief in their abilities, which, in turn, enhanced athletes' motivation to stay involved in their sport and work harder. Parents and coaches were instrumental in boosting athletes' self-confidence in relation to particular tasks and/or goals. Parents and coaches did so by conveying positive expectations regarding athletes' potential/ability (e.g., always saying, "you can do it" to an athlete), and by helping athletes make the link between effort and success (e.g., telling an athlete he/she can do things if he/she works hard). Coaches, in particular, also bolstered athletes' self-confidence by helping them realize their improvements and by making athletes feel an important part of the team (e.g., giving an athlete credit for the team's victory). Samuel, the 14-year-old swimmer, illustrated the powerful effect of coaches and parents expressing confidence in athletes' possibilities. In the first interview, Samuel made the following comment regarding the motivational influence of others:

> *My parents are also very important [for my motivation as an athlete]. They do basically what the coach does. They just tell me that I can do it, that I have the ability to do it, and that someday I [may] just do it if I really work hard.*

In the second interview, Samuel explained how being told that by his parents and coach, *"let's me know that I can do things and, by knowing that, I won't resist myself from trying to do it, because I know I can do it. I believe I can, so I will."*

In addition to parents and coaches, teammates were also instrumental at times in enhancing athletes' sense of confidence or belief in their abilities. They did so mainly by complimenting athletes when they do something well and by expressing confidence in athletes' possibilities to be successful in accomplishing particular tasks or goals. Based on his personal experience in basketball, Nelson stressed the importance, especially in games, of saying *"great shot, do it again"* when someone makes a good play, so, as he put it, *"he will go on a streak."*

Conversely, getting from others the message that one is not good enough at what he/she is doing resulted often in athletes reporting temporal losses of motivation in relation to the task at hand or their sport and, eventually, doubting their abilities for more or less extended periods of time. Coaches and, to a much lesser extent, teammates, siblings, and school peers, were the main sources of negative competence information/feedback in this study. Ralph described a situation in which his volleyball coach provided feedback that he interpreted as indicating low ability and the ensuing negative feelings he experienced:

> Q: Can you think of a particular moment or situation when your motivation to play sports was particularly low?
>
> *. . . and I also had a coach not this season, but the season before. We were doing stretches in the dressing room and he said if we couldn't do a particular stretch*

we shouldn't be playing the sport, and that just cut my motivation in half and just

made me not want to play the sport.

Q: Why was that?

. . . it just made me feel like he thought I wasn't good enough to play the sport and

it just made me angry and not want to do what we were told, and we ended up

doing really bad that game.

More subtly, as described by Miriam, coaches also conveyed negative competence information through regular procedures such as grouping arrangements during practice sessions:

I am kind of in the middle. Like there are people that are worse than I am and

there are people that are better than me, and I am always put with people that are

worse than me and I can never play with older people to get better. So sometimes

I get frustrated that my coach doesn't think that I am good enough to play with

older people.

As noted earlier, losses of motivation and doubts about one's abilities following feedback signifying incompetence or low ability were not necessarily permanent. Neil's experience with a soccer team from which he got cut, indicated that an initial period of doubt in one's abilities following events signifying low competence could be followed by an increase in motivation to demonstrate competence to others and oneself:

I started to doubt my abilities, and I was like "they didn't want me in soccer

either just like they did in hockey," and that kind of set me back for a while. And,

of course, now I'm playing even higher level then, so that kind of pushed me

harder to prove them wrong, because I knew I should have made the "A" team.

A similar effect was reported by Daniel when he explained that the fact that his coaches give him negative feedback about his soccer ability (e.g., by telling him that he is a weak player) *"kind of makes you want to try harder at the same time because you want to prove him wrong; and sometimes it kind of puts you down because you kind of think you are a weak player maybe."* Similar also to Neil, whose conviction that he should have made the "A" team despite what his coaches thought fueled his motivation to prove them wrong, Daniel still considered that, contrary to what his coaches tell him, he is *"probably one of the best on the team."* Anna illustrated further the potential buffering effect of high perceptions of ability against the impact of negative competence information. Despite having struggled with her motivation during a whole season because of having received almost no attention from one of her former tennis coaches, she found the strength to keep on going and still believe in her abilities:

> *I wanted to prove that I would not be tossed and forgotten along the side while the others progressed. I found it within myself to almost breed a certain attitude towards the coaches to train harder, practice with higher intensity and make a great effort. Sometimes I prevailed and I felt proud, and sometimes I just couldn't compete with the favoring [players] and I'd lose in matches. But I never did give up on my ability.*

Social comparison processes. Competition (i.e., comparing and testing skills against others, doing better than others) was another important incentive among participants in this study. Sarah recalled that a moment when her athletic motivation was particularly high was when she started playing national competitions one year ago, *"because it was like all these new players and I wanted to know how good they were and*

how I compared to them." Similarly, for Neil, the "competitiveness" of soccer and football was one of the most important reasons why he practiced these sports: "*like it's you against them, right? Just to prove yourself against these people. Just to compare your athletic abilities against them.*"

Having a comparative standard of some sort became often a means for athletes to push themselves harder and find the motivation to keep on going. Trying to do better than or, at least, keep up or move up with everyone else as they progress, was, thus, a way for athletes to stay motivated and keep continuously improving their overall skill level. Daniel and Miriam explained how this happened for them in snowboarding and badminton, respectively:

> Daniel: *Everyone just basically motivates each other because if you do a good trick then they want to do a better trick, so the level keeps on going higher because everyone just wants to beat each other basically.*

> Miriam: *It is sort of the people I interact with, they help me out because if everyone else is working hard then you have to work hard. So my opponents motivate me too . . . Because I don't want them to beat me, I want to stay on top. So if they are going six days a week, then I am going to play six days a week too.*

Athletes felt challenged to work harder and perform better not only as a result of "upward" comparisons (i.e., comparisons with more skilled athletes). In occasions, "downward" comparisons (i.e., comparisons with less skilled athletes) had a similar stimulating effect, in particular when the less skilled athletes threatened athletes' current status in a skill hierarchy. Anna underlined this circumstance:

I know that when I go to competitions there is always one person that is better

than me or someone that is right below me that is challenging me, that is going to

take my position or that is going to try and beat me . . . I think about that and then

I want to train harder, because that is the one person that I want to beat or I need

to beat. So that sort of helps me go through it.

Opponents, teammates, and siblings were the main comparative standards for

athletes in the present study. As discussed by Miriam, and because of the significance of

player rankings, opponents were particularly salient as comparative standards for athletes

taking part in net games (i.e., tennis, badminton). Teammates became important as

(downward) comparative standards in team sports when, for example, starting players

had to work hard in practices in order not to have their privileged position taken by

substitute players who were, as Sheryl put it, *"chasing and biting their heels."* Finally,

siblings played an important role as comparative standards within the context of

relationships marked either by sibling rivalry (e.g. siblings always competing with each

other to prove who is better) or by cooperation (e.g., close siblings being training

partners).

The relationship between Neil and his younger brother, Daniel, provides an

example of the former case. As both Neil and Daniel pointed out, competition and rivalry

(e.g., wanting to prove who is better all the time) characterized their relationship. Neil,

specifically, felt this had both negative and positive aspects. On the negative side, they

got really angry with each other sometimes and said things regarding each other abilities'

that were detrimental for their self-confidence and pulled them apart. On the positive

side, their ongoing competition helped them to push themselves further and became an additional source of motivation to improve.

In reference to the motivational influence of Miriam, her younger sister, Sarah illustrated the latter case (i.e., relationships marked by cooperation):

Also, just as a motivator. Since I said that we are really close in skill level, if she [sister] starts beating me then I know that I have to work harder. Like I know that if she is working really hard, that makes me work hard too. And if you don't have that, then it doesn't work. It is hard to motivate yourself all the time. You need someone else to sort of push you and sort of set a standard.

Others as Agents of Socialization of Achievement Orientations

Another way in which others had an impact on athletes' motivation was by conveying their priorities and values in relation to what is to be achieved and how success is to be defined in sport. Coaches and parents were the main agents of socialization of achievement orientations for the participants in this study. Brian, Neil, and Ralph offered their perspective on what they thought some of their coaches' achievement priorities and values were:

Brian: *They [coaches] always wanted me to try hard and play as hard as I could.*

Neil: *There is the coach who wants you to win . . . he gives you a speech before the game, gets you pumped up for the game, "save and win . . . "*

Ralph: *And it didn't matter if we won or lost, it was how you played the game that mattered to him [coach].*

An excessive emphasis on winning or performing on the part of coaches, as evidenced in coaches yelling at and eventually punishing athletes when they make

mistakes and being angry with athletes when the team losses, was associated with negative motivational consequences among athletes in this study. Ralph evoked his experience with one of his former coaches and explained the negative impact this experience had on his motivation to participate:

> *A coach from a couple of seasons back was just not a very nice person, and he wasn't a fun person to play under. And like he did everything to win and it didn't matter if you had fun or not. You better win or you're going to have one angry coach to deal with. And every time you messed up he'd like probably embarrass you. If you messed up in the field, he'd make you drop when the whistle and do 10 push-ups. And I just felt that was very degrading and embarrassing to force a player to do, so I ended up not playing the latter half of that season because I just felt that wasn't great of a coach to do.*

Similarly, Sheryl pointed to the negative consequences of playing for a coach who also adopted a negative approach in order to "motivate" players to perform:

> *He [coach] took players out of their positions because they made a mistake or something, and they had to sit for the rest of the game and he made them run after the game . . . And it was just like child labor. I was just really like not caring about what I was doing or anything, and it probably showed in the way I played . . . And everybody on my team was like that just because the coach and how negative he was being.*

Conversely, coaches' focus on learning, as evidenced on an emphasis on achieving individual goals, effort, and improvement, and a view of mistakes as a

necessary part of the learning process was associated with positive motivational consequences. Ralph described a coach for whom he enjoyed playing particularly:

He was always just really nice and he would support us whether we won or whether we lost, whether we did good or bad. And like he didn't get upset and he didn't get angry. He just was like telling us what we could do better and what we did wrong in a really nice way.

Anna elaborated on the positive motivational impact that her tennis coaches had on her by de-emphasizing the importance of winning or losing and by focusing her on doing her best in the process of achieving her individual goals:

My coaches, I guess, knew that I was practicing a lot for them and a lot for my parents, and trying to win more for other people than for the actual love of it, of winning and competing. And they talked to me and made it a more realistic thing of how they don't care really whether I win or lose. They do care if I go out and don't play my best. That would upset them. But they don't really care if I don't make it to nationals or if I don't win my next match as long as I go out and I achieve the three or four main goals that I wanted for that match. Then they are happy. And then, after I heard that, a lot of pressure was taken off. That sort of let my jump up and train more for me than it was for them.

This does not mean, however, that winning itself was not important for athletes in this study or that coaches' focus on winning was necessarily detrimental for athletes' motivation. As discussed by Neil, coaches played sometimes an important role in helping athletes to get also motivated to win whenever the latter felt this was necessary:

When I started off, when I was young, my parents weren't concerned about us winning or anything, go there and have fun, that's all that was about for me. And right now, a lot of times, it's still about fun, going out and having fun. But at this competitive level it comes more about winning, and so your coaches and sometimes your teammates have to motivate you to win.

Similar to coaches, parents also conveyed their priorities and values regarding what is to be achieved and how success is to be defined in sport. Kirsten, Neil, and Miriam articulated their views of what their parents emphasized:

Kirsten: *He [father] always says: "go there, try your best [swimming] and have fun" . . . He only wants me to have fun.*

Neil: *She [mother] just goes there, watches the game, enjoys the game, and she already knows what I can do, she is not expecting me to impress her, she just expects me to go out there and have fun, she doesn't care about anything else.*

Miriam: *They [parents] say like you don't have to win to make it matter. Like if you win or lose, you just have to be satisfied with yourself and how you played and if you played your best, then there is nothing else that you can do. If you lose, like if you played your best then that's awesome. Like that's the best.*

The perception that what their parents really care about is that they have fun, do their best or play to the best of their ability, and play for themselves rather than for other people was reported as a positive motivational influence by athletes in this study. Ralph, was particularly explicit in this regard: "*And just telling me to play to the best of my ability, and be a fair player, and just don't play for other people, play for yourself. And that's just the best motivation I had.*"

Parents conveyed also their achievement values by making explicit their beliefs about the importance of ability and effort to athletic success and by focusing athletes' attention on specific criteria to evaluate their performance and their physical competence. With regards to the latter, one athlete, Sheryl, acknowledged that she gets input from others to evaluate her performance mostly from her parents, because, as she explained, *"they tell me what I look like compared to other people on my team."*

The role of coaches and parents as agents of socialization of achievement orientations became most apparent when several participants expressed their achievement-related preferences and values in a way consistent with what they perceived their coaches and/or parents emphasized. As a case in point, Miriam offered a personal perspective on competitive achievement that echoed what her coach (and her parents) stress:

> Q: [In the previous interview] you also mentioned that your coach tells you that you don't have to be as good as everyone else. You just have to be as good as you want yourself to be. You said that helps a lot to keep people motivated in general. Why do you think is that?
>
> *I think, just, you don't get so competitive, like you don't have to be the best. Like you don't always have to win and you don't always have to do whatever ever you did. If you want to play, you play for yourself. Like if you do bad one time, then you just work and do better the next time. Like you try and beat your goal, your goal every time. Like you don't have to try and beat everyone else and be the best. You just, you improve your own, you raise your own standards to be the best. That*

is like what makes you, I think that is what makes a true competitor. Like you

don't always have to win. You just have to be the best you can be.

Others as Models to Emulate

Athletes frequently talked about being captivated by more elite or by professional athletes and about trying to imitate what these athletes do in order to become as good as they are and being able to do what they do one day. Participants in this study generally considered being an elite/professional athlete as something enviable because elite/professional athletes were seen as doing something that they always wanted to do, they enjoy, and excel at. More elite and professional athletes became in this way an inspiration for younger/less skilled athletes and a source of motivation for them to work harder in order to try to get at that level. Sheryl reflected on the influence that a Canadian basketball player who had made it to the WNBA had on her, *"and you see what a good player, and how hard it must have been for her to get there. And you are like 'wow, I want to do that some day'."* In similar terms, Neil admitted with a certain awe that when he looks at his favorite pro soccer goalies he wants to be like them and perform as they do, and concluded: *"it just helps me to concentrate on how hard I have to work to get at that level."* As in the case of Ralph and Anna, elite athletes serving as models to emulate could come from the athletes' family:

> Ralph: *And I have always, like I've had famous sport players in my family and I just kind of want to live up to that. And that's just another thing that has motivated me.*

Anna: *It wowed me to know that someone that I know [grandmother] was at the Olympics. And for someone to achieve that goal, maybe not to win the gold medal, but to still be able to go and do extremely well, that inspired me a lot.*

Other athletes, particularly more advanced/elite ones, were also a valuable source of technical information through observational learning. Several participants talked about watching what these athletes do well and attempting to incorporate it into their own repertoire of skills. One of these athletes, Miriam, explained why this is of particular help for her:

Every time I watch other people play I think about how I play and it kinds of rubs off and gets things going . . . I'd like to watch people play a lot more because, even when I am training, I don't concentrate a lot on how I play, whereas when I watch people, it helps. I can look at specific things like their footwork, or like the way they do things. So it helps to watch people play and then do it yourself, to try and become better, to try and be like they are. Because if they are good, then what they are doing is obviously working. Instead of just playing yourself all the time, it is good to watch people play to get a sense of what you are doing.

Although athletes looked mainly to more advanced/elite athletes for technical tips and cues, peers (e.g., teammates, opponents) could be a source of observational learning as well:

Brian: *Everybody, as long as they are contributing to the team, are trying their hardest, you can walk with them and say "oh, he's doing that, oh, that's a good part of what he's doing, maybe I should try that."*

Ralph: . . . *just that you can pick up things on other players of the other team that they do well, that you think 'if I tried this maybe it would made me a better player'.*"

Performance models were particularly motivational when they evoked in the athletes the feeling "if they can, then I can too." In other words, performance models were most influential when they were perceived as being just people like the athletes or when their experiences and developmental trajectories were perceived to be similar to those of the athletes. According to Samuel, "*They [elite swimmers] are people just like me and I guess they could encourage me because they were just like me once, they were small and little.*" Perceptions of similarity were more likely to occur when athletes had the chance to interact, more or less regularly, with their performance models, and therefore, to talk to them, see how they train and, even, get tips from them:

Kirsten: *They [Kirsten's role models] used to swim with us in our club. So you talk to them and they also help you to keep everything going. And they help you believe in yourself even more that you can make to the Olympics, because they are just like us.*

Anna: *My coach arranged a time when we could do some drills with them [Federation Cup players], play a little and ask some questions. We went through everything from warm-up routines, matches, drills, to what it was like to be on the Federation Cup. I listened to what they had to say about their journeys to get there and I found that some of them sounded quite like mine. Some didn't play competitive tennis till they were in their teens, and I started to think that we*

weren't so far off. So I got really excited at the fact that, maybe, I, too, could be

what they were.

Models were not only influential in terms of the quality of their performance. Seeing others train very hard and, eventually, put themselves through physical pain in order to improve on their weaknesses and help the team was also a powerful motivational influence for young athletes. In this sense, elite/professional athletes, teammates, and siblings (both older and younger) became occasionally true models of work ethic that helped athletes find meaning in what they were doing and motivated them to do the extra effort necessary to become better athletes and team players. Brian reflected upon the powerful impact that a teammate displaying a commendable work ethic had on him:

> *He [teammate] was always out there because he played all the special teams as*
>
> *well, and was just getting battered up and bruised . . . But when you look at*
>
> *somebody like that who is putting himself through all that because they want to*
>
> *help the team and they want to win, it just gives you some reinforcement to why*
>
> *you are out there and why you are putting yourself through it. And you think, well,*
>
> *if he is putting himself through all that pain all the time, you would think that, like*
>
> *me, just playing on the offensive side of the ball, I can pick up a notch and I can*
>
> *go at it harder. It is just kind of a kick in the butt [sic] to tell you to get going and*
>
> *take your play up a notch.*

Sheryl and Miriam alluded to the positive motivational influence of the hard working attitude of her young sisters and her old sister, respectively:

> Sheryl: *they [younger sisters] are in a sport that keeps them completely strained*
>
> *and always sore, but completely buffed at the same time. And that makes me try to*

work because with all the sports that I'm in I am not in perfect shape. I could be

better and they motivate me to do the extra work that I should be doing.

Miriam: *She [older sister] is motivated herself to do well. Like she will never be a*

good runner, but she worked at it . . . And she has progressed, which made me

want to progress more.

Motivational Role	Individuals Involved
Tangible Support	Parents, Relatives, Friends, Teachers
Informational Support	Parents (NTS*), Coaches (TS*), Older Siblings (NTS) Coaches (NTS), Fathers (TS), Teammates (TS) Siblings(TS), Mothers (TS)
Emotional Support	Parents (Mothers), Athletic friends, Siblings, Relatives (cousins)
Task Challenge Support	Coaches, Teammates, Spectators
Task Appreciation Support	Parents, Coaches, Teammates, Teachers
Companionship Support	Teammates, Sport Friends, Siblings
Autonomy Support	Parents, Coaches
Sources of Pressure and Control	Parents, Coaches, Opponents, Spectators, Younger players, Other players' parents
Sources of Competence-Relevant Information	Parents (SE*), Coaches (SE), Opponents (SC), Teammates (SC*), Siblings (SC), Teammates (SE), Siblings (SE), School Peers (SE)
Agents of Socialization of Achievement Orientations	Coaches, Parents
Models to Emulate	Elite/Professional athletes, Teammates, Siblings, Relatives, Teachers, Coaches

*NTS (non-task specific) *TS (task specific) *SE (social evaluation) *SC (social comparison)

Table 1. Individuals playing roles on participants' sport motivation.

Dynamics within the Role of Others on Adolescent Athletes' Sport Motivation

The circumstance that several socializing agents were involved in playing each of the motivational roles previously described provided the grounds for the study of the dynamics within the roles that others play on adolescent athletes' sport motivation. In

particular, the available data suggested the significance of two of these dynamics. The first concerned the degree of consensus or diversity in the messages that others send to athletes in the context of their role as providers of informational support, sources of competence-relevant information, and agents of socialization of achievement orientations. The second dynamic involved the development of compensatory connections among relationships or relationship systems (e.g., athlete-coach, athlete-parents, and athlete-peers) within the context of the role of others as providers of emotional, companionship, and informational support, and as sources of competence-relevant information.

Consensus versus Diversity in the Messages that Others Send to Athletes

An examination of the nature of the messages that others send to the athletes in the context of their role as providers of informational support, sources of competence-relevant information, and agents of socialization of achievement orientations revealed the existence of three types of messages. Based on their degree of congruency, I labeled these, respectively, mutually reinforcing, complementary, and competing messages.

Mutually reinforcing messages. Messages were considered as mutually reinforcing when they were perceived as being consistent with and as strengthening each other. In some circumstances, receiving mutually reinforcing messages from others had the effect of enhancing athletes' motivation for the completion of tasks and/or the achievement of goals. This was the case when others in the athletes' network coincided in conveying positive information about the athletes' competence or in emphasizing the importance of athletes' attempting to play to their best of their abilities and of playing for themselves rather than for other people. For example, in order to explain the positive

motivational influence that both his parents and his coach have on him, Samuel, a 14-year-old swimmer, stressed that they all tell him basically the same, that is, that he has the ability to achieve his goals provided he works hard enough. Another 14-year-old athlete, Miriam, explained in the following terms the positive influence of other people in her network conveying positive expectations about her possibilities to succeed in an important badminton competition:

Last year before Nationals I was so motivated. Everyone was telling me that I could do it and that I could win, and they pumped me up and tried to train me. I worked every single day. I came here [club] and I got fit and I worked on everything I possibly could.

In addition, Miriam noted the positive motivational impact of both her coaches and her parents telling her "pretty much the same" with regards to what they consider most important in terms of what is to be achieved in sport. That is, that in order to be satisfied with herself, she does not have to win but, rather, to "play her best."

As indicated earlier, a number of people were also involved in providing technical information (e.g., instruction, feedback) to athletes in the present study. These included coaches, fathers, mothers, siblings, and teammates. As a result of this, athletes were exposed to a variety of opinions and perspectives about, for example, how to perform a particular skill or the aspects of the game that they should be focusing on or giving priority to, particularly from parents and coaches. In spite of this, athletes still perceived that fathers, mothers, and coaches often coincided or agreed in the content of the technical information they give to them:

A lot of things that my mom points out are things that my coach already told me

that I should be working on. Usually the stuff with my mom and my coach, they

coincide.

(Sheryl)

Sarah provided another example of perceived congruency or consensus in the

technical information made available to athletes when she indicated that both her parents

and her coach stress the same dimensions of performance that she should be mostly

focusing on during the current season:

Feedback from my coaches and my parents is that if you are fitter then you will be

better than the person on the opposite side of the net; and mentally being more

patient with myself, and allow for mistakes, because everyone makes them.

Complementary Messages. Likewise, in the athletes' eyes, parents and coaches

occasionally provided technical information in a way that added to or supplemented what

each other were saying. Thus, by pointing out technical aspects that differed from or went

beyond without contradicting those raised by coaches, parents became valuable aids for

athletes in their quest for improved performance. This was evident when, for example,

parents and coaches put a complementary emphasis on different aspects of the game or

when, as illustrated by Miriam, they focused on different components of the performance

of specific skills: "*My dad will work on the [badminton] shots, but my coach will*

incorporate the shot into a game kind of thing. So, it will be the same thing, but just one

step higher." This was also apparent when parents and coaches helped primarily athletes

with different dimensions of performance (e.g., technical, tactical, mental/emotional) in a

particular sport. Sarah reflected on this circumstance:

My parents give me more advice on how to keep my emotions in check when I play . . . Like the coach comes out and he'll tell me what to do technically to beat them [opponents]. But my parents will come out and say, you know, you need to keep calm when you are playing, and keep cool, and don't let your emotions show. So that makes you think about how you get affected when you are upset or nervous rather than just technical, like your technical ability . . . You will make more mistakes if you are like upset or nervous. My parents make me think about that more.

Competing Messages. At times, however, parents and coaches gave technical information that clearly contradicted or conflicted with what each other were suggesting to athletes. This happened, for example, when parents and coaches held different points of view as to how specific skills should be performed or about what aspects of the game the athletes should be paying more attention to. In general, males in this study perceived that others sent more often competing messages than females did. Nelson recalled a time when his basketball coach gave him instructions that collided with what his father had taught him and he believed was the best to do in that particular situation:

That was an awkward situation because he did expect me to do that [stand in front of a taller player in the post and try to deny the pass] and I knew for a fact that he [coach] was wrong on that. And I went to my dad to get help on what should I do there. And I think he had a talk with the coach eventually. But I showed the coach that it could be done another way. And that was really the toughest situation I've been in.

Referring to the circumstance that his mother complains often that "he is not jumping around as much as the other goalies," Neil provided another example of contradictory messages:

What I have to say to her about that is that it is because I am at the right place at the right time. A lot of goalies have to jump to make the save because they have poor footwork and they are not at the right place at the right time to make the easy saves. This is what I have to say to counter her. My coach tells me "don't jump unless you have to, don't dive unless you have to." So I am always trying to be at the right place at the right time to make the easy save. My mom always says "you are not jumping around as the other goalies."

Parents and coaches sent also contradictory or conflicting information when they disagreed about the evaluation of an athlete's performance and in the subsequent feedback that they gave to him/her. This was the case of Daniel, who mentioned that his parents sometimes tell him that he has played an "awesome" game while his coach thinks he has just played a "bad" one.

Although finding themselves occasionally in awkward situations, receiving contradictory information from parents and coaches about, for example, what to do in specific game scenarios did not necessarily put athletes in a position in which they experienced conflict or pressure to abide by the expectations of either of them. When put in a similar situation, athletes in this study typically reported taking into consideration both points of view and using their own judgement to decide what to do. Some athletes also explained that they brought up and discussed with their coaches the technical advice

that their parents had given to them in order to avoid potential controversies. Nelson, Sarah, and Sheryl, offered their perspective on these particular issues:

> Nelson: *It's pretty much my own judgement that I have to go. Only my teammates, occasionally, but usually my own judgement, or I take a combination of the two [coach and father's advice].*

> Sarah: . . . *and if there is [conflicting information], then I'll discuss it with either of them [father and coach] and ask why and then do whatever I feel comfortable with doing.*

> Sheryl: *And even if my mom mentions something extra, I usually put a little extra focus on that too. Just because if she thinks that it's a little inadequate maybe I should be working on it even if my coach doesn't bring it up. Or I'll ask my coach if I should be working on that as well.*

More often than not, however, participants in this study reported that they took the coaches' technical advice rather than the parents' when both were in contradiction. Samuel, for example, said, "*I just do what I think I should do, but I usually take the coaches' [advice].*" In the same vein, Miriam admitted:

> *I react differently to what my coach says rather than, like compared to what my dad says sometimes. Like, maybe when my coach says something, my dad has said it before, but I will pay more attention to it if my coach says it.*

The Development of Compensatory Connections

Moving beyond the analysis of the motivational implications of particular relationships or relationship systems (e.g. athlete-coach, athlete-parents, athlete-peers) in order to put together multiple sources of influence revealed the existence of

compensatory connections among such relationships. Furthermore, it also provided evidence of the active role that adolescent athletes play in their own developmental trajectories in sport. Specifically, athletes actively attempted to compensate for the motivational "deficits" of a particular relationship by investing more energy into or relying more on other relationships.

The development of compensatory connections among particular relationships or relationship systems occurred both over relatively short (up to the duration of a sport season) and long (spanning an athlete's sport career) periods of time. As an example of the former, Sheryl recalled how being able to rely on her teammates for support "*balanced out*" the particularly negative motivational influence that one of her former baseball coaches had on her over the entire season. As an example of the latter, Neil elaborated on the circumstance that his mother is not "*as big motivation as she was before*" in the following terms, which speak also of the importance of considering the context in which athletes participate to understand the changing motivational role of others:

> *When I started off, when I was young, my parents weren't concerned about us winning or anything, go there and have fun, that's all that was about for me. And right now a lot of times it's still about fun, going out and having fun, but at this competitive level it comes more about winning, and so your coaches and sometimes your teammates have to motivate you to win. My mom, she is not an expert, but she says what she can to help me out.*

The development of compensatory connections among relationships or relationship systems was most evident within the context of the role of others as

providers of informational, emotional, and companionship support, and as sources of competence information.

Compensatory connections within the role of others as providers of informational support. As indicated earlier, when the nature of the situation or problem to be solved required the provision of task specific (i.e., technical) information, coaches usually became the main points of reference for athletes. Likewise, the same results underscored the important role that parents (fathers, in particular) play also as providers of technical information to athletes. However, compensatory connections in relation to the role of coaches and parents as providers of task specific informational support were manifest in two specific circumstances.

First, athletes compensated for the lack of attention from coaches by actively seeking feedback from other sources such as teammates and knowledgeable family members (e.g., parents, siblings, and cousins). This mainly happened where the number of athletes that coaches were in charge of and/or the complexity of certain game situations in team sports made it difficult for them to keep an eye on all the players all or most of the time. For example, Kirsten, noted that since her coach cannot watch everybody in the water, " *[sometimes] I would ask her [teammate] to help me and see if I can do anything better than [name of coach] may not have seen.*" Similarly, Sarah remarked that "*players coach each other too, especially when the coach can't be watching everyone. Just watching a game and giving each other feedback.*"

Second, when coaches or parents were not perceived by athletes as being knowledgeable enough about the sport or about particular aspects of it, other individuals in the athletes' network perceived as more knowledgeable were likely to take on their

role as primary sources of technical information for athletes. In this regard, Jill elaborated on the different ways in which her parents and her younger sister, with whom she plays on the same soccer team, support her in her sport practice. Among other things, Jill suggested that she and her younger sister help each other out to improve because, unlike their parents, "*they know what is going on*" and, therefore, are able to pick up more things about the game than their parents are. The case of another athlete, Nelson, provides an excellent example of a father becoming the main technical point of reference for an athlete over and beyond the coach. In an attempt to explain the reasons why he usually takes his father's side rather than his coach's when the advice of both clashes, Nelson said:

> *I go to my dad a lot because he really taught me how to play. There is always my first coach, but my dad pretty much taught me everything I know, especially in the post, so I go to him a lot to hear what I should do and how I should play this guy. And sometimes the coach, this year my coach doesn't really know the post all that well. He knows the game pretty well, but not so much the post, so the information I have been getting has conflicted. So I really have to rely on my own judgement to decide what's best to do, but a lot of the times this year I have gone with my dad's advice because I know he knows what he's doing, especially in the area I play. That's where he always used to play. He knows it very well, and I know for a fact that my coach never played there. He is more of an outside player.*

Compensatory connections within the context of the role of others as providers of informational support also occurred in relation to the role of fathers and mothers. Neil's story constitutes a case in point in that it shows that, even when they are not perceived as

being particular knowledgeable about sports, mothers can eventually take on some of the roles that fathers typically played in this study when, for different reasons, the latter are not often around. This circumstance can be seen in the following comment from Neil, in response to the question of whether he talks after the games about his performance with his father, in the rare occasions when the latter attends his games:

Yes, I do, but my dad hasn't been involved in soccer really or in any of my sports in a long time. So I kind of feel like when I talk to him he just kind of, he doesn't exactly know where I am at, in terms of skill and competition and all that. I would rather talk to my mom about soccer and sports.

Compensatory connections within the role of others as providers of emotional and companionship support. An analysis of the influence of others on young athletes' motivation revealed the importance of the availability of people who understand as an "outlet" for athletes to talk about what they are going through in their sport practice. As already indicated, this was particularly true for female athletes in this study. Likewise, such an analysis highlighted the importance for athletes of having others in their networks with whom to share social and recreational activities within the context of casual relationships or friendships.

Compensatory connections within the role of others as providers of emotional support were necessary to offset the negative motivational influence coming from school peers who did not show an interest for or an understanding of athletes' sport participation. Likewise, compensatory connections developed in order to counteract the negative impact of peers who criticized what athletes were doing (e.g., putting so much

time into training and competing) or the sport they were taking part in. Sarah and Anna

shared their negative experiences with some school peers:

> Sarah: *A negative influence is badminton being sort of a new not very popular*
>
> *sport lots of people sort of criticize it . . . people in school, like basketball,*
>
> *volleyball, and hockey those are the real sports.*
>
> Anna: *It is harder to be friends with some people at school just because they don't*
>
> *understand where you are coming from and they don't understand why you are*
>
> *doing what you are doing, they don't really have a care or an interest for it.*

Specifically, athletes made up for the lack of interest in and/or understanding

about their sport practice from peers by talking about what they were going through with

family members involved in their sport participation (e.g., parents, siblings). Likewise,

they did so by talking about their sport practice to people, such as teammates and

coaches, with whom they shared the same interests and experiences:

> *Not many of my school friends play badminton, so they don't really know what it*
>
> *is like. They play sports and they know about tournaments and competitive sports,*
>
> *but they don't really know how to play badminton, so I don't talk to them much*
>
> *about it. I will just say "it was good" or I don't really go into depth with them, as*
>
> *I do with my friends like from Calgary, who actually play badminton.* (Miriam)

Kirsten referred specifically to the buffering effect that interacting with her

coaches has against the negative influence of some of her school peers, who do not

understand what she is doing and sometimes criticize her sport (e.g., by saying

"swimming is stupid"):

You know you don't want to be around them, but you are because you are in class with them. You have to. And then, sometimes, they have an effect on you, and that doesn't help you very much. But then, when you are around the coaches and stuff they always have a positive influence on us, so we get the back up. But sometimes, just being around our friends at school, because they don't understand that they don't help you at all.

Compensatory connections within the role of others as providers of companionship support emerged also as a response to the progressive loss of social life that was eventually associated with increasing time demands in terms of training and competition. Spending more and more hours training and competing made it difficult at times for athletes to keep up with friends and acquaintances that were not involved in sport. In compensation, friends made through sport took increasingly the role of school or other friends as companions to "hang out" with and share spare time activities together. The case of Anna is presented in some detail here because it epitomizes the development of compensatory connections within the role of others as providers of both companionship and emotional support as athletes become more competitive.

As time demands associated with her progression as a competitive tennis player increased, Anna found it more difficult to have time for things other than sport and schoolwork. As a consequence, she slowly started to "lose touch" with friends because these did not understand what she was doing and, as she explained, got tired of hearing the same excuse and eventually stopped asking her to do things with them. On the other hand, Anna started to become very close with the people she practiced with because, as she put it, *"they understand the same thing that you are going through."*

The case of Anna is also noteworthy because it raises the possibility that the development of compensatory connections among relationships may not always be totally successful in making up for a given affective or motivational lack. Indeed, despite recognizing that she started to become really good friends with the people she plays tennis with, Anna concluded:

> *You are surrounded by the people that you have been going to school with for like the last eight years, and it is sort of hard to see it slip away . . . You meet a few new players at practice and you can become pretty good friends over the year. But after the year ends, you don't really keep in touch. But the people that really mean a lot are the people that you see every day at school. So it is a little bit, it is like a give and take on both sides, but it is more of a loss than it is a gain, I would say.*

Compensatory connections within the role of others as sources of competence-relevant information. Lastly, the development of compensatory connections was also apparent in situations in which athletes faced mixed messages from others regarding their sport abilities. Indeed, the process of data analysis brought to light several instances in which athletes seemed able to maintain an overall sense of athletic competence by paying more attention to or giving more weight to messages from others that were indicative of one's ability rather than of one's lack of skill. This was the case of Samuel, who despite receiving negative messages about his sport competence and worth from some school peers and, occasionally, from his sister (e.g., *"they discourage me saying that I can't do it or that it would be too hard,"* *"they say I'm stupid and I can't do anything right"*) was able to maintain a belief in his possibilities to achieve his goals also by relying strongly

on positive competence messages from his parents and his coach (e.g., saying to him *"there is no limits to what you can do," " you have the ability to do it and you might just do if you work really hard"*). In a related vein, despite recognizing that most of his coaches had, in a way or another, sent him the message that he is not a good player, Daniel, made, nevertheless, the following assertion when elaborating about his perceived soccer competence:

> *So, I don't know, I enjoy it [soccer] lots because I'm really good at it, some people say, and well, my mom does, and my brother does too.*

In conclusion, the results presented in this chapter underline that others play, more or less intentionally, five major motivational roles on adolescent athletes' sport motivation, namely, providers of support, sources of pressure and control, sources of competence-relevant information, agents of socialization of achievement orientations, and models to emulate. Likewise, the results highlight the significance of two dynamics within these roles. The first concerns the degree of consensus or diversity in the messages that others send to athletes. The second involves the development of compensatory connections in an attempt to make up for the motivational shortfalls of particular social relationships. In the next chapter, I consider separately each of the roles and dynamics outlined in this chapter and discuss them in light of the available literature.

Chapter IV

Discussion

Others as Providers of Support

The present results highlight the importance for adolescent athletes in the specializing and the investment years of having access to a network of individuals who are both willing and able to carry out a variety of supportive functions. The specializing and the investment years represent a period in which sport specific development through systematic or deliberate practice becomes progressively the most important characteristic of the athletes' involvement (Côté & Hay, 2002). Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer (1993) suggested that in order to reap the benefits of deliberate practice in a given achievement area individuals must be able to operate within three types of constraints, namely, resource, motivational, and effort constraints. Durand-Bush and Salmela (2001) provided some examples of how these constraints apply to the quest for excellence in the sport domain. First, athletes must have enough time and energy as well as access to adequate resources in terms of equipment, facilities, coaches, etc. Second, because deliberate practice is, often, neither inherently enjoyable nor rewarding in the short term, athletes have to be able to overcome motivational setbacks. Lastly, since deliberate practice is demanding both physically and mentally, athletes have to be able to maintain an adequate balance between effort and recovery in order to prevent injury and, eventually, burnout.

In these circumstances, it comes as no surprise that adolescent athletes in the specializing and the investment years benefit considerably from having a support network of individuals willing to do whatever is necessary to help athletes deal with the previously mentioned constraints. Specifically, as results from this study suggest,

receiving tangible assistance from parents (e.g., material aid, rides, ensuring that everything is taken care of, both before and after practice/competition) may be crucial in helping athletes overcome both resource and effort constraints. Having the chance to engage in relaxing and fun activities with teammates, friends, or siblings (i.e., companionship support) may also contribute to help athletes cope with effort constraints. Likewise, receiving emotional, informational, task challenge, and task appreciation support from a number of individuals within an autonomy supportive environment appears particularly important in helping participants sustain their interest and motivation over the long haul despite the ups and downs of the training process.

Results from the present study support results from a body of research that has documented the positive impact of behaviors from others that are perceived as supportive by children and adolescents both in sport and physical activity contexts. In particular, previous research has shown the positive influence of perceived support from parents (e.g., Hellsted, 1988; Leff & Hoyle, 1995), coaches (e.g., Smith et al., 1979; Vealey et al., 1998), and peers (e.g., Duncan, 1993; Scanlan, et al., 1993) on children and adolescents' self-perceptions, affective responses, and motivation. Importantly, the present results also seem to confirm previous findings from Babkes and Weiss (1999) indicating that high levels of parental involvement (i.e., instruction, attendance to games) can produce favorable motivational outcomes for young athletes provided that the latter do not feel pressured to participate and perform.

The necessary role of others in helping athletes overcome the constraints associated with increasing levels of deliberate practice through the specializing and the investment years helps explain, in part, the positive motivational impact of perceived

support from others on participants in the present study. This positive impact can be also explained in light of the crucial role that perceptions of support from significant others (e.g., parents, teachers, classmates, and close friends) play as determinants of adolescents' levels of self-esteem or self-worth (e.g., Harter, 1993). Harter's findings are consistent with a conception of perceived social support, which also emerged in the accounts of participants in this study, as information to the individual that others care about and value him or her (Cobb, 1976; Sarason, Pierce, & Sarason, 1990). According to this conception, perceived social support is more an indication that help will be available when needed than of the actual help or assistance one receives or has received in the past (see Sarason et al., 1990). This was evident in the accounts of participants in the present study when they referred to the particularly positive motivational influence of others being "always there for them" and/or "always behind them, no matter what."

Unfortunately, most youth sport research dealing with the impact of perceived support from others has conceptualized support as a unitary construct. Results from the present study, however, add strength to the notion that support from others, when considered from the recipient's perspective, is best conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Cauce, Reid, Landesman, & Gonzales, 1990; Cutrona & Russell, 1990; Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997). As a result of the way in which support from others has been typically operationalized in sport psychology research, the matching hypothesis advanced by Sarason, Sarason, and Pierce (1990) remains largely untested in the youth sport domain. The matching hypothesis suggests that the support received will be beneficial to the extent that it matches appropriately the specific needs of the recipient. According to this hypothesis, receiving, for example, mainly tangible support from

parents when what an athlete mostly needs is somebody to talk about how she feels after a series of performance setbacks, will not have such a positive impact as, say, receiving a combination of emotional and informational support.

Results from this study also reinforce the view that some forms of support from others (e.g., task appreciation and task challenge support) require task specific expertise from the providers whereas others (e.g., tangible and emotional support) do not require any particular task expertise (Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997). In the present study, the fact that mothers, in general, were not perceived as being particularly knowledgeable about their children's sport did not interfere, however, with their crucial role as providers of emotional and tangible support to athletes. In contrast, coaches, teammates, and fathers, who, unlike mothers, were typically perceived as being knowledgeable about their children's sport, were the main providers of task challenge and task specific informational support to participants.

Demographic information collected from the athletes revealed that mothers were typically less involved than fathers as current or past participants in sports and physical activities. This may provide an explanation as to why, in general, mothers were not perceived as being particularly knowledgeable about their children's sport. The finding that mothers tended to be more involved in supportive endeavors that do not require specific task expertise (e.g., tangible, emotional support) is consistent overall with findings from sociological studies on patterns of parental involvement in youth sport (see Coakley, 2001, for a review). These studies indicate that mothers typically provide a wide range of off-the field support, while fathers are more involved in coaching and league administration duties.

All of the six forms of support from others identified in this study are substantiated in the sport psychology literature as important dimensions of social influence in sport and physical activity settings. For example, several authors (Partridge & Stevens, 2002; Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997; Rosenfeld et al. 1989) have pointed out the importance of emotional, tangible, task appreciation, and task challenge support from teammates and coaches in the effective team building process. In a study of college athletes, Rosenfeld et al. (1989) reported that athletes' social support networks were made up primarily of coaches and teammates, who mainly provided task challenge support, friends, who provided for the most part listening support, and parents, who predominantly provided task appreciation support. These results contrast with findings from the present study in that, when compared to college athletes, adolescent athletes received more types of support from those in the athletic environment and more types of support from more sources outside the athletic environment. This difference may be reflective of the different developmental needs of adolescents and college athletes and of the different contexts in which their sport participation takes place.

Likewise, Côté and Hay (2002) have emphasized the importance for families of young athletes of providing for their children's psychosocial needs for emotional, informational (both task and non-task specific) tangible and companionship support. Consistent with the findings in the present study, in a study investigating family dynamics associated with the development of talent in sport, Côté (1999) reported that, during the specializing years, parents of adolescent athletes had numerous opportunities to show and provide tangible support to their children. Furthermore, Côté (1999) found that during the investment years parents played an important role as providers of non-task

specific informational support (e. g., "career advisors") and in helping athletes deal effectively with setbacks by providing emotional support in times of stress and anxiety. Again, these patterns of parental involvement and support during the investment years in Côté's (1999) study are consistent with the patterns of parental involvement and support perceived as "motivational" by adolescent athletes in this study. However, not enough evidence was found in this study, at least from a motivational standpoint, that corroborates the important role that parents of athletes in the investment years in Côté's (1999) study played as providers of companionship support.

Additional examples of the motivational relevance of companionship support can be also found in the literature on peer influence in sport and physical activity. For example, Duncan (1993) found that higher levels of companionship from peers had a positive impact on levels of affect experienced by young adolescents participating in physical education classes. More recently, Weiss et al. (1996) found that companionship is one positive aspect or dimension of friendship in youth sport.

Finally, although autonomy support is not a part of most multidimensional conceptions of social support neither in the mainstream nor in the sport psychology literatures, its inclusion as a dimension of support from others in the present study seems well justified. As a matter of fact, the participants themselves referred to the perception that others were "behind them," allowing them to make and backing their own decisions, as one of the most "supportive" and motivational forms of behavior coming from others. In this regard, these results are largely consistent with a considerable body of research that has shown the positive motivational impact that adults adopting an autonomy supportive style of interaction have on children and adolescents. This finding has been

found to hold across such diverse settings as the home (e.g., Grolnick & Ryan, 1989), the classroom (e.g., Ryan & Grollnick, 1986), the physical education (e.g., Goudas, Biddle, Fox, & Underwood, 1995), and the sport domains (e.g., Blanchard & Vallerand, 1996). In a related vein, the present results parallel previous findings indicating the positive influence of perceived lack of pressure from parents on children and adolescents' affective and motivational responses to their sport participation (e.g., Babkes & Weiss, 1999; Brustad, 1988; Leff & Hoyle, 1995). Underlying the positive motivational impact of adults adopting an autonomy supportive style of interaction towards children and adolescents is the fundamental human need for autonomy (i.e., doing things out of a sense of personal choice and freedom) that individuals seek actively to satisfy (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Vallerand, 2001).

Others as sources of Pressure and Control

Similar to these results, previous research has shown that feelings of pressure to participate in sport and/or perform and concerns about meeting parents and coaches' expectations are associated with unfavorable affective and cognitive outcomes for children and adolescents (e.g., Hellsted, 1988; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989; Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza, 1991). One possible mechanism to explain the negative influence that perceptions of pressure or control from others had in the participants' motivation in the present study is the variation in the perceived locus of causality associated with the experience of feeling pressured or controlled. The concept of perceived locus of causality refers to the degree to which individuals feel that they are the origin of their own behavior or, in other words, the degree to which they feel that they have choice (de Charms, 1968; Deci & Ryan, 1985). The experience of pressure to think, feel, and behave

in certain ways promotes an external perceived locus of causality, which in turn undermines intrinsic motivation as well as the related affective responses of interest and enjoyment. Conversely, the absence of pressure is a necessary condition for an internal perceived locus of causality, which is characteristic of intrinsically motivated behaviors and their related affective responses (Deci & Ryan, 1985, Reeve, 1996).

As the present results indicate, however, not all forms of controlling behavior from others are necessarily detrimental for adolescent athletes' motivation. Indeed, adolescent athletes may sometimes lack the necessary self-motivation to engage in non-enjoyable tasks and forms of behavior that they perceive as important both for their own skill development and performance and for the team's functioning. Therefore, they may need and even expect, at times, some form of external regulation or control from others, and from coaches in particular, in order to engage in those tasks and forms of behavior that they deem useful until the conditions are present for full self-regulation to take place. This is consistent with Vallerand (2001), who argued that non-self determined forms of motivation may at times produce some positive outcomes, and with Brophy (1987), who made the case that supplying extrinsic incentives may be effective for stimulating intensity and effort in achievement situations. Likewise, these findings concur, overall, with findings from research on talent development in various achievement areas such as arts, sciences, sport, and music (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993; Partington, 1995). This research shows that, in the process of developing their skills, there are also situations in which adolescents benefit from being reprimanded and disciplined by their teachers and coaches (see also Bloom, 2002).

Reeve (1996) explained that the internalization process through which young people accept adults' prescriptions and proscriptions as their own may occur in two ways, which produce different motivational consequences. In the first case, the social context uses pressure (e.g., threats and punishments) or attempts to instill a sense or fear and/or guilt in order to "motivate" the internalization process. The result is adherence to an internally controlling regulatory style in which the individual rigidly administers contingencies to force him/herself to think, feel, or behave in particular ways. In the second case, the social context conveys an explanation of the why of the prescriptions and proscriptions so as to energize the internalization process through an acceptance of their meanings, rationale, and utilities. This results in a more flexible and conflict-free regulation of behavior that is accompanied by a strong sense of volition, choice, and integration of the self. In line with this second option and with results from past research (e.g., Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, & Holt, 1984) the current findings suggest that coaches' controlling behaviors are not detrimental for athletes' motivation provided that athletes understand the rationale behind and the utility of the rules, limits, and constraints placed on them.

The finding that some athletes taking part in net games (i.e., tennis, badminton) reported the experience of pressure stemming from the feeling of having a reputation to live up to parallels to some extent the finding that worries about performing up to one's ability is a major source of stress in youth sport (Feltz & Albrecht, 1986; Gould, Horn, & Spreeman, 1983). Although having its origin indirectly from other people (e.g., younger players, opponents/competitors, parents of other players, and spectators) this particular experience of pressure in the present study can be ultimately considered as introjected

(i.e., self-imposed) since the athletes themselves internalize a set of demands (see Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). While this finding cannot be attributable to the nature of net games per se, but rather to the salience of player rankings, it illustrates the influence of the particular context in which young athletes' sport participation takes place in determining the types of pressure they may face. Likewise, it speaks to the influence of the context in which young athletes' sport participation occurs in uncovering the scope of sources of social pressure that are likely to impact upon them in a more or less direct way.

Others as Sources of Competence-Relevant Information

The concept of perceived competence or ability is at the core of a number of motivational theoretical frameworks (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles et al. 1983, Harter, 1978, 1981; Nicholls, 1989) that are currently used to explain achievement behaviors in sport. For example, based on the seminal work of White (1959), Deci and Ryan (1985) have postulated that individuals are innately motivated to interact effectively with their environment (i.e., to be competent). Central to all these theoretical frameworks is the notion that others in the social context play an important role in influencing an individual's perceptions of competence through the feedback they convey and/or their specific responses to mastery attempts by the individual.

Horn and Harris (1996) posited that perceived competence can be considered in a broad sense (i.e., how good one thinks he/she is at sports in general), in relation to a sport in particular, or even specific skills within a sport. Evidence about the motivational implications of perceptions of competence is abundant in the youth sport literature. A review of literature by Weiss (1995) led her to conclude that children who are high in

perceptions of physical competence display functional achievement behaviors (e.g., an internal locus of causality and appropriate causal attributions for performance, greater sport enjoyment, and higher intrinsic motivation in the form of challenge seeking). In contrast, based on a series of studies she reviewed, Fry (2001) suggested that children who are low in perceptions of physical competence and control over their sport performances are at risk of displaying maladaptive responses such as preference for less than optimal challenges and heightened anxiety.

Work on sources of competence information in adolescent athletes (Horn et al., 1993) has revealed that there is a trend through the adolescent years towards an increasing reliance on internal criteria (e.g., skill improvement over time, achievement of personal goals, enjoyment of sport activity) to evaluate sport competence. Nevertheless, results from the Horn et al. (1993) study and from subsequent work by Amorose and Weiss (1998) also indicate that adolescent athletes use multiple criteria to judge their sport competence, including feedback from coaches and parents. This is consistent with results from this study, which point to the importance of feedback or evaluation from coaches and parents in conveying information to adolescent athletes about their current sport abilities and future possibilities. In regard to this, Horn and Harris (1996) noted that as athletes progress through the youth sport system into increasingly more competitive programs the coach tends to be considered more of an authority figure both in terms of knowledge and experience. Under these circumstances, the coach is more likely to become a credible source of competence information for athletes. A majority of the participants had indeed the opportunity to train with and compete for well-respected coaches in their communities, which helps explain the important motivational role that

coaches played as sources of competence-relevant information for athletes in this study. Similarly, athletes considered some of the parents (fathers more often than mothers) in this study as highly knowledgeable and/or experienced about the sport, which may have enhanced considerably their credibility as sources of ability-related information in the eyes of the athletes. Moreover, regardless of their level of knowledge and/or sport experience, most of the parents in this study were highly involved year after year in their children's sport participation and attended often their games or competitions, which may have also bolstered their credibility and importance as sources of competence-relevant information. This was particularly evident in the accounts of one of the participants, Sheryl, when she pointed out that her mother is *"the best judge of my sport ability because she has seen me play since I started and tells me what I am doing right and wrong."*

The results provide support for the finding that positive evaluation/feedback and reinforcement from coaches, parents, and teammates in response to one's successful performances or, in general, about one's current abilities and future possibilities, has a positive effect on young athletes' self-perceptions, affect and motivation (e.g., Babkes & Weiss, 1999; Barnett et al., 1992; Black & Weiss, 1992; Scanlan et al., 1993; Vealey et al. 1998). In this respect, the results are consistent with theoretical predictions from Deci and Ryan's cognitive evaluation theory (1985), Harter's competence-motivation theory (1977, 1981) and Eccles et al.'s expectancy-value model of achievement-related choices (1983). Likewise, the findings appear to confirm the role of verbal persuasion (e.g., telling an athlete that he/she can do something) as one of the four sources of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura (1977, 1986). Conversely, the findings from this study parallel

theoretical predictions (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Harter, 1977, 1981; Eccles et al. 1983) and empirical evidence (e.g., Thill & Mouanda, 1990; Vallerand & Reid, 1988) pointing to the detrimental effects of negative evaluation or feedback from others on athletes' perceptions of competence and motivation.

The finding that negative feedback from others about one's abilities had in some cases the effect of motivating athletes to work harder and perform better in the long run is, to the best of my knowledge, undocumented in the youth sport literature. One explanation, stemming from the tenets of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991), seems possible here. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested that feedback that does not continue to affirm one's competence appears to make primarily *extrinsically oriented* individuals vulnerable to lack of motivation and helplessness. They based this conclusion on results from a study by Boggiano and Barret (1984) which indicated that, contrary to extrinsically oriented children, negative feedback to intrinsically motivated children apparently represented a challenge and therefore increased their intrinsic motivation for the activity. A close look at the participants who reported this effect suggests another possible explanation. These participants also reported that, despite some periods of self-doubt, they were able to maintain an overall sense of competence or belief in their abilities. This suggests the need to consider perceptions of competence not only as a measure of outcome, but also as a precursor of development in studies investigating the impact of positive and negative feedback on young athletes' motivation (see Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Likewise these results suggest the need for examining the long-term motivational implications of the feedback received by athletes with regards to their abilities.

Research on sources of physical/sport competence has also documented a growing reliance on peer comparison through late childhood and early adolescence (Horn & Hasbrook, 1986; Horn & Weiss, 1991) and a decline in the use of peer comparison over the later adolescent years (Horn et al., 1993). This finding seems logical taking into account the increasing capacity of adolescents to evaluate their own competence by using self-comparison processes, internalized or self-determined performance standards, and internal information in order to judge their competence (see Horn and Harris, 1996; Weiss, 1995). Nevertheless, as McCullagh and Weiss (2001) concluded, and results from this study support, it remains clear that in many activities individuals must determine their own capabilities by observing others. Indeed, social comparison processes are a natural developmental occurrence through which individuals look for opportunities to assess their abilities in various achievement areas in relation to the skill of others (Brustad et al., 2001). Therefore, as noted by Deci and Ryan (1985), social comparison is an important means through which people obtain effectance or competence-relevant information.

The findings from this study suggest, however, that the motivational implications of processes of social comparison in adolescent athletes go beyond being just a means to determine or assess one's capacities. Rather, they indicate that if adolescent athletes are to progress optimally, they may need indeed other athletes around them who, by getting better than them, are, so to speak, "setting the bar higher." This, as Feltz and Lirgg (2001) pointed out, may be particular true for athletes whose confidence in their abilities is generally more robust and therefore may use the "upward" social comparison as a challenge and motivation to surpass the comparative standard. Likewise, as the findings

illustrate, in order to progress optimally adolescent athletes may also benefit considerably from being around other athletes who, although still not as good as them, are starting to "threaten" their current position or status on a team (e.g., starter), or their placement in a given ranking. Thus, *challenging* comparative standards (whether based on "upward" or "downward" social comparative processes) may be a powerful means for athletes to motivate themselves to keep working hard in order to reach still higher levels of performance.

The salience of comparative standards during the adolescent years may be accentuated by the structure of the sport environment, which typically promotes an extension of the peer comparison group in the form of, for example, not only all-league but also all-city and all-state or province representative teams (Horn & Harris, 1996). For example, two badminton players in this study reported that knowing that their friends from another city were improving their playing level motivated them to train more in order to keep up with these friends and, therefore, still have a chance to make the provincial team going to nationals.

Finally, the present study extends existing work on social comparison processes in youth sport by illustrating the important role that siblings close in age and skill level and practicing the same sport can play as challenging and motivating "upward" or "downward" comparative standards for adolescent athletes. What is more, in line with previous work on the influence of the family in the development of talent in sport, my findings suggest that challenging sibling comparison may occur within relationships marked either by cooperation or rivalry (see Côté, 1999; Côté & Hay, 2002).

Others as Agents of Socialization of Achievement orientations

Achievement orientations involve differences in the "meaning" that individuals attach to achievement activities and experiences (Ames, 1992; see also Hall & Kerr, 2001). Recent theoretical and empirical work both in the academic and the sport domains has underscored the important motivational implications of two of these orientations. In the first case, which has been labeled as "mastery" (e.g., Ames & Archer, 1988), "task" (e.g., Nicholls, 1989), and "learning" (e.g., Dweck, 1986) orientation, the individual's primary focus or goal is to become proficient at the task at hand. Moreover, he/she uses mainly self-referenced cues (e.g., improvement, effort) as criteria to evaluate success. In the second case, which has been termed as "performance" (e.g., Ames & Archer 1988, Dweck, 1986) and "ego" (e.g., Duda, 1992; Nicholls, 1989) orientation, the individual's main concern or goal is to demonstrate superior ability relative to others. In addition, he/she uses mostly normative or other-referenced standards as the basis to determine success. Achievement goal theorists and researchers have also emphasized the key role of the environment in providing cues to individuals that encourage a particular achievement orientation or goal perspective. Thus, by making certain cues, expectations, and rewards salient, adults establish a "motivational climate" that conveys certain achievement preferences and goals to children and youth (Ames, 1992; Treasure, 2001).

The present findings provide additional evidence that coaches and parents are instrumental in shaping a motivational climate by making explicit their beliefs and preferences regarding important achievement-related variables such as what is to be achieved and how success is to be defined in sport, how ability is best judged, and the contributions of effort and ability to athletic success. The finding that some of the

participants in my study expressed their achievement-related preferences and values in a way consistent with what they perceived their coaches and/or parents emphasized supports the view that achievement goal orientations are developed through socialization processes and reinforces the important role of parents and coaches in such processes (e.g., Peiró et al., 1997). However, contrary to the results from a recent study (Escartí, Roberts, Cerbello, & Guzmán, 1999) I did not find enough evidence in the accounts of my participants pointing to the role of peers as agents of socialization of achievement orientations. This difference, however, may be due more to the characteristics of the design used in this study, which did not focus specifically on the influence of others on adolescent athletes' achievement orientation, than to the actual impact of peers on athletes in both studies.

In accord with an emerging body of research (e.g., Newton & Duda, 1999; Treasure & Roberts, 1998), these results suggest that coach behaviors that are congruent with a mastery oriented or task-involving climate (e.g., emphasis on achieving individual goals and doing personal bests, viewing mistakes as a part of learning) are associated with positive motivational consequences in adolescent athletes. Importantly, more advanced athletes (i.e., those in the investment years) seemed to benefit as much from such an environment than less advanced ones. It appears, thus, that a mastery-oriented climate may compensate to some extent for the added pressure and demands than increasingly competitive sport programs place upon adolescent athletes in the investment years. Moreover, the results suggest that fostering a predominantly mastery oriented or task-involving climate within a team is not incompatible with seeking out competitive outcomes (i.e., winning) as well (see Duda, 2001; Gill, 1993; Martens, 1997). In fact,

many of the athletes who reported the benefits of a mastery-oriented environment were eager and highly successful competitors in their age group. Rather, the problem seems to be when coaches lose perspective of the purposes of participation during the youth sport years and adopt a "*winning at all costs*" attitude (and a negative or aversive coaching approach; Smith, 1998) in which fun and long-term development are sacrificed for short-term competitive outcomes.

Similar to coaches, the findings indicate also that the perception that parents' achievement preferences and values are framed primarily in a mastery oriented or task-involving manner (e.g., by putting the emphasis on having fun, trying hard, and doing personal bests) may be conducive to enhanced motivation in adolescent athletes. These results echo preliminary evidence from White (1996, 1998) suggesting that a climate fostered by parents that focuses on learning/enjoyment (i.e., a task-involving climate) is linked with positive consequences such as lower levels of competitive anxiety.

Others as Models to Emulate

The process of modeling involves the cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes that occur as a result of observing adults and peers, while models are people whose behaviors, verbal and nonverbal expressions operate as cues for the modeling process (Weiss, 1995). Results from the present study provide strong support for the notion that modeling can serve both an informational and a motivational function (see McCullagh & Weiss, 2001; Weiss, 1995). In the former case, the results indicate that adolescent athletes can benefit considerably from observing other athletes, and particularly more skilled ones, whose performances provide valuable information for skill learning and improvement. In this regard, these results stand in apparent contradiction with Butler

(1989) who found that children under the age of 8 years primarily look to peers for observational learning whereas children older than 8 years use peers primarily as social comparison cues to appraise one's relative ability. Moreover, the results suggest that, in some cases, observing others perform (i.e., vicarious experiences) can trigger important reflection processes about one's skill execution that do not necessarily occur when athletes are actually performing and that may be conducive to skill improvement.

Beyond the provision of skill-relevant information, the current findings add further evidence for the importance of the availability of appropriate role models for young athletes to develop a positive attitude towards and a valuing of achievement (see Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). Participants in this study often considered elite/professional athletes as particularly positive achievement role models because the latter were typically seen as doing something they love and excel at, and for which they are socially recognized. This can be partly explained in terms of Yando, Seitz, and Zigler's (1978) developmental modeling theory, which posits that the observer's motivational system is one of the critical factors impinging on an individual's observational learning of physical and social skills. Yando et al. (1978; see also McCullagh & Weiss, 2001) described the motivational system as the intrinsic (e.g., the desire to develop and demonstrate competence) and extrinsic (e.g., the desire to receive social and tangible reinforcement) motives underlying an individual's attempts to imitate or emulate others. Also from a motivational standpoint, Brandstätter (1998) has stressed the important role that significant others play as models and as mentors in shaping and elaborating visions of desired possible selves, which, in turn, become the key motivational source of intentional development during adolescence.

Likewise, the present findings reinforce the contention that models that are perceived as being similar are likely to enhance self-efficacy and motivation to perform like the model and engage in subsequent mastery attempts (McCullagh & Weiss, 2001; Weiss, 1995). However, extending previous findings in the academic and the sport psychology literatures (see McCullagh & Weiss, 2001; Schunk, 1987) the results indicate that perceived similarity, and the ensuing enhancement of efficacy beliefs and motivation, is not only likely to be evoked only by same sex or same-or similar-age models. The perception that the developmental trajectories of the adult models, that is the perception of what these models had to go through to reach their actual status, was similar to what the young athletes were actually going through was also a powerful motivating factor for participants in this study. Furthermore, the present results suggest, in line with Bandura's social learning theory (1986), that modeling is also a powerful means of transmitting values and attitudes such as those required to overcome the effort and motivational constraints associated with increasing levels of deliberate practice through the adolescent years. In particular, the results relate to the motivational advantage for adolescents in the specializing and the investment years of being surrounded by teammates and older or younger athletic siblings who display a commendable work ethic regarding training and competition. This is also consistent with and expands findings from Côté (1999), who reported the significance of older siblings acting as role models of work ethic for athletes' sport development during the specializing years.

Consensus versus Diversity in the Messages that Others Send to Athletes

A characteristic of contexts often emphasized in analyses of socialization within socio-cultural perspectives is the degree to which there is homogeneity or heterogeneity,

consensus or diversity in the information about the world that is available to individuals in a given group (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998). In the particular case of this study, a situation where homogeneity/consensus prevailed was when parents and coaches sent messages to athletes that were congruent about, for example, how to perform a particular skill, their abilities to achieve their goals, and the relative importance of certain goals. On the other hand, heterogeneity/diversity applied when parents and coaches sent complementary and/or competing messages about, for example, how to best train for an upcoming event or which tactics to use during a game. Once thought of as an automatic source of difficulty, the presence of a variety of messages and positions is increasingly seen as an open window for benefit and mutual facilitation and as offering the individual an opportunity for exploring alternatives and making choices (e.g., Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; Corsaro & Eder, 1990). This was clearly the case in this study when, for example, athletes received skill-relevant information from parents and coaches that brought their attention to different yet complementary aspects of their training or their game. Apparently also, athletes in the present study were in most cases able to deal with competing technical messages from coaches and athletes in a constructive manner through the exercise of personal judgement and choice. This finding can be interpreted as an indication that adolescent athletes are active contributors to their own socialization rather than passive recipients of external influences (see Bugental & Goodnow, 1998). Nevertheless, it is also possible that the circumstance that parents of athletes in this study were not typically perceived as being overinvolved or negatively involved in their children's participation may have contributed to ease potential tensions.

Based on the findings of a field study with youth sport coaches, Strean (1995) concluded that for many youth sport coaches success in working with athletes depends, to a significant extent, on effective communication with parents. The present results indicate that the result of effective communication between coaches and parents may be conceived in terms of ensuring that the amount of mutually reinforcing and complementary messages containing skill-relevant information that is sent to athletes is maximized. This raises the issue of the extent to which parents should be taught and how they should be taught about their children's sport. In regard to this, Strean (1995) argued that parental involvement may depend on their level of knowledge about their children's sport. Although his findings provided evidence that some youth sport coaches perceive less knowledgeable parents as being less "problematic," Strean (1995) remarked that there remains sound rationale for helping parents understand the sports their children play. As he pointed out, "if parents are going to intervene, it seems that it would be preferable if they do so from an informed perspective" (1995, p. 33). Likewise, the results here provide evidence that another result of effective communication between coaches and parents may lie in maximizing the amount of mutually reinforcing and complementary messages emphasizing achievement values consistent with a mastery or task orientation (e.g., exerting effort, playing to the best of their abilities).

As for competing messages, one could intuitively argue that coaches and parents should attempt to co-ordinate their efforts in order to prevent parents from sending this kind of messages to athletes. However, based on the present results, it seems more realistic to suggest, in line with Bugental and Goodnow (1998), that, to the extent that competing messages still offer the athlete a degree of choice and sufficient rationale, they

are not necessarily detrimental for athletes' motivation. However, there are good reasons to think that in the case in which these messages are overly competitive with or antagonistic to one another and are accompanied by pressure to abide by the expectations of the sender regardless of alternative points of view, negative motivational consequences could ensue (see Strean, 1995).

From a methodological point of view, both the results from Strean (1995) and the present findings reinforce the necessity of analyzing the impact of the coach-athlete--and the parent-athlete--relationship within the context of what some authors have referred to as the "athletic triangle" (e.g., Smith, Smoll, & Smith, 1989; Wylleman, 2000). In other words, both sets of findings attest of the relevance of taking into consideration what Bronfenbrenner (1979) called "second party" or "third order" effects when examining processes of social influence in the youth sport domain. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined such effects as the indirect influence of third parties (e.g., parents) on the interactions between members of a dyad (e.g. coach-athlete). Taking Bronfenbrenner's proposals further, several authors have argued for the need to develop comprehensive system-style models of socialization that include the mutual influence of all members in a giving social group or setting (e.g., Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; Parke & Buriel, 1998). The results, for example, draw attention to the motivational advantages for adolescent athletes of being surrounded by people such as parents, coaches, peers, and siblings who coincide in giving positive competence feedback (e.g., by conveying positive expectations for success) to them. That is, these results suggest the possibility that additive influences may exist within the role of others as providers of competence-relevant information. This possibility further illustrates the significance of moving towards adopting system-style

frameworks of socialization if we are to understand some of the motivational dynamics within the youth sport context.

Finally, the finding that female athletes in this study perceived, in general, more consensus than male athletes in the information that others make available to them in the context of their sport participation is difficult to interpret based on the data available. Based on these data, it is difficult to determine whether this pattern is reflective of enduring gender differences in perceptions of the sport environment or, rather, a product of the specific characteristics of the sample in this study or, even, a social desirability effect in the responses of female participants. More research examining specifically this issue is necessary to provide more definitive answers.

The Development of Compensatory Connections

The finding that athletes attempted to compensate for the motivational "shortfalls" of a particular relationship by investing more energy into or relying more on other relationships is particularly significant on several grounds. For example, Parke and Buriel (1998) contended that the challenge for future work within comprehensive system-style approaches to socialization is to determine the circumstances under which "strong, weak, or compensatory connections might be expected between relationship systems" (p.485). In this study, one of such circumstances deserving particular attention concerns the dynamics within the role of others as providers of task specific informational support. For example, although athletes typically reported taking the coach's advice when the technical information they receive from parents and coaches collides, there was some evidence that this trend may be reversed when the coach is not perceived as being as knowledgeable as one of the parents. Likewise, there was some indication that traditional

gender roles in regards to patterns of parental involvement in youth sport may be inverted to some extent when fathers are away from home for different circumstances. As Coakley (2001) has pointed out, and these results corroborate, these traditional gender roles imply that fathers are typically more involved on technical and administrative issues than mothers are. In addition, the results highlight the important role that peers (i.e., teammates) may be called to play when, because of not being able-- or willing--to pay enough attention to his/her athletes, the coach does not meet adequately the athletes' needs for skill-relevant information at a given time.

The significance of examining the phenomenon of motivational compensation is further emphasized when one considers the development of compensatory connections that occurred between relationships operating in two or more settings. Within the framework of his hierarchical model of motivation, Vallerand (2001) recently proposed that "the dynamic interplay between motivational processes in different life contexts may also lead to what may be called the compensation effect" (p. 313). Specifically, Vallerand (2001) suggested that it is possible that losses of motivation in one life context may be made up for by motivational gains in a second life context. For instance, some evidence exists that losses of motivation in the education context can be compensated for to a certain degree by gains in motivation in the sport context (see Vallerand, 2001). I also found evidence that the progressive loss of social life that was in some cases associated with increasing time demands as adolescents progress through the investment years can be compensated for to a certain extent by an increasing reliance on teammates as companions and friends. As Brandstätter (1998) stated, human development over the life course appears as a story of gain and loss, of success and failure. Therefore, Brandstätter

(1998) explained, efforts to keep this balance favorable are an essential aspect of human activity whose outcomes have a profound impact on individuals' self-perceptions and future expectations.

The results also revealed that negative sport-specific motivational influences from peers at school were "balanced out" by positive motivational influences from peers and coaches on the sport team and family members at home. In so doing, the present findings also provide evidence that motivation in youth sport is not only the result of influential relationships within this particular setting, but also of influential relationships in other settings such as school and home and of their respective linkages. Thus, these results provide support for the relevance of considering relations or linkages between two or more settings in which the developing person participates in order not only to understand processes of human development in general but also motivational issues in particular (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1999; García Bengoechea, 2002).

Several authors (e.g., O'Connor & Rosenblood, 1996; Vallerand, 2001) have proposed that a homeostasis mechanism within the self seems to exist in order to restore a general equilibrium of the self in the case of losses in one particular life context. These results suggest that a similar mechanism may be at play to restore a general equilibrium of the self in the case of motivational losses in one particular relationship directly or indirectly related to the youth sport domain. Recent work by Harter, Waters, and Whiteshell (1998) on relational self-worth provides indirect support for this argument. Specifically, Harter et al. (1998) found that adolescents' perceived worth as a person varied depending upon which interpersonal contexts one considers (e.g., relationships with parents, teachers, or friends). For example, the perceived worth of some adolescents

was high around their friends but low around their parents. Importantly, the adolescents' perceived worth in a particular interpersonal context (e.g., with teachers) was strongly associated with their perceptions of support from others in that interpersonal context (i.e., from teachers). It seems then, as the results point out, that adolescent athletes may actively seek to compensate the psychological deficits associated with a lack of support from others (e.g., school peers) in one particular relational context by investing more "relationship energy" (see Parke & Buriel, 1998) into other interpersonal contexts (e.g., with teammates).

The previous considerations raise a critical issue when looking at the socialization of motivation in the youth sport domain. The conception of individuals as active contributors to their own development is prominent in contemporary theories and models of motivation, socialization, and human development in general (e.g., Brandstätter, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Lerner, 1998). For example, Deci and Ryan (1985) postulated that organismic motivation theories such as self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 1991) tend to view the individual as active, that is, as being volitional or intentional and initiating behaviors rather than being pushed around by the interaction of physiological drives and environmental constraints. Likewise, Bugental and Goodnow (1998) explained that there is a common concern in contemporary accounts of socialization about how to make sure that individuals are portrayed as actively influencing the settings that they encounter. Within the framework of an action-theoretical perspective on human development Brandstätter (1998) contended that activities of intentional self-development must be viewed within the larger context of processes that serve to actualize and stabilize one's

identity. Thus far, I have referred to a series of compensatory actions by the athletes that served, so to speak, the purpose of maintaining a "motivational homeostasis" within the self. Particularly important in this respect also, Brandstätter (1998) noted, are intentional processes that protect and defend the self against events and changes that the individual perceives as dissonant with his/her existing self-schema. There was some evidence that athletes were able to maintain an overall sense of athletic competence by relying more on information from others that signified high rather than low ability when faced with mixed messages from different people. This, according to Brandstätter (1998), can be seen as an instance of activities of self-verification (Swann, 1983) through which the individual intentionally and preferentially selects social or informational contexts that are likely to provide self-congruent feedback on those dimensions of the self-concept that define one's personal identity. Although, to some extent, self-verification tendencies are operative on automatic levels, only those activities of self-verification that intentionally serve the purpose of reducing or avoiding self-discrepant feedback should be considered as representative of an "active" individual (see Brandstätter, 1998). For example, as the results show, athletes may strategically choose to spend more time around people who are likely to provide feedback that conforms their self-views as capable athletes and worth individuals in order to compensate for the negative influence of people giving self-incongruent feedback.

Finally, the finding that the development of compensatory connections may be examined both over the short-and the long-terms is also particularly significant in itself. Indeed, it appears to provide a basis for explaining and interpreting changes in the motivational roles and the relative importance of others in adolescent athletes' motivation

as the latter develop over time. What is more, it also reinforces the view of motivation as an ongoing transaction between the individual and his/her environment (Vallerand, 2001).

Chapter V

Conclusions and Future Directions

The present study constitutes an effort to move beyond current accounts of the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes by adopting a comprehensive systems-style perspective that takes multiple sources of perceived influence into consideration and presents the developing athlete as an active contributor to his/her own socialization. Specifically, this study attempted to determine *who* are the individuals perceived by adolescent athletes as having an influence whatsoever on their sport motivation and *how* these individuals exert their influence. In addition, important objectives of the inquiry were to gain a better understanding of the *differential impact* of influential others upon adolescent athletes' sport motivation and the ways in which these influential others are *interconnected* in producing their impact.

The use of a design that involved multiple repeated interviews that did not fit the participants' responses into the researcher's preconceived categories of meaning (see Grotevant, 1998) provided the necessary depth and flexibility and proved fruitful in eliciting information that sheds light into the previous questions. Furthermore, this design was particularly suited to document some situations that speak clearly of the active role that the athletes themselves play in the socialization of their own motivation. This seems only natural taking into account the affinity that exists between interpretive methodologies and theoretical approaches that portray the individual as an active contributor to his/her own socialization and development (e.g., Corsaro & Miller, 1990; Brandstätter, 1998). On the other hand, the design used in this study was not always sensitive enough to distinguish clearly between different types of motivation existing on an intrinsic-extrinsic or self-determination continuum (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985;

Vallerand, 2001) when the participants elaborated on the influence of others on their "motivation." However, this should not be of great concern considering that, as Vallerand (2001) has recently suggested, sport participants "are not simply intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, or even amotivated, but rather have all three types of motivation to various degrees" (p.318). I found overall support for Vallerand's (2001) contention in the participants' responses to the question "tell my about the reasons why you play/participate in (sport)" in the initial part of the interviews.

The results revealed that others play, more or less intentionally, five major roles in relation to adolescent athletes' sport motivation, namely providers of support, sources of pressure and control, sources of competence-relevant information, agents of socialization of achievement orientations, and models to emulate. In light of these results, a number of mechanisms or pathways can be invoked to explain the motivational impact of others on adolescent athletes' sport motivation. These are (a) variations in perceived competence (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985, Harter, 1979), perceived locus of causality (e.g., deCharms, 1968), and perceived task value (e.g., Eccles et al., 1998) that result from interacting with others; (b) the degree to which interacting with others meets the athletes' need for interpersonal relatedness (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1991) or belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); (c) the expectations about quality of task involvement and quality of interpersonal relations that result from perceiving others' motives for engaging in an activity (Wild & Enzle, 2002); (d) the salience of particular achievement goal perspectives in the "motivational climate" that others create (e.g., Duda, 1992; Nicholls, 1989); (e) variations in perceptions of self-efficacy ensuing from seeing similar others (i.e., models) perform (e.g., Bandura, 1986); and (f) the modeling effect of admired

others in shaping and elaborating visions of desired possible selves (e.g., Brandstätter, 1998).

The present study included adolescent athletes in the specializing and the investment stages of sport participation. As Côté and Hay (2002) have indicated, the latter years represent basically an extension of the former with the difference that the amount and intensity of deliberate practice is significantly higher during the investment period. Indeed, the motivational needs and the role that others play in helping athletes fulfill those needs were fairly homogeneous across the two stages. Inclusion of female and male adolescent athletes in the specializing and the investment years who took part in a variety of sports can be seen as a strength of this study in that it increased the variability with which the influence of others might be viewed (see Seidman, 1998; see also Weiss et al., 1996). This helped to avoid the danger of prematurely reaching saturation in the process of elaborating and refining the properties and dimensions of the emerging theoretical categories. Nevertheless, as several authors have noted (e.g., Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; Parke & Buriel, 1998), it remains always important to ask about the extent to which the accounts we create on the basis of data gathered with one group apply to other groups. In this regard, it is necessary to remember that the data gathered from this study came from adolescents belonging mainly to intact middle class families in an urban North American context, and therefore may not be entirely applicable to adolescent athletes from other backgrounds. Likewise, as already indicated in the Limitations section, it is necessary to keep in mind that all athletes whose level of involvement was characteristic of the involvement years participated in individual sports. Finally, it is important to keep in perspective that data were collected more with the purpose of

elaborating and refining emerging theoretical concepts and categories (see Charmaz, 1995) than of increasing the generality of the findings. Future research should determine the extent to which the current findings are applicable to other groups of adolescent athletes.

Côté (1999) maintained that the stages of sport participation constitute a useful framework for researchers studying family influence on youth sport participation and on the development of motivation and skills/abilities in sport. The results suggest that this framework, with its description of some of the fundamental characteristics of athletes' involvement in sport at different periods or "stages" of development, can be also helpful in interpreting the impact of interpersonal influences in youth sport that extend beyond the realm of the family. Specifically, the framework seems valuable in order to gain a better understanding of the role that non-family members also play in helping athletes to overcome resource, effort, and motivational constraints associated with increasing levels of deliberate practice across the specializing and the investment years.

Recently, there has been some criticism of the research on sport socialization because a significant part of this research has delimited significant other influence to parental influence exclusively (Greendorfer et al., 1996). In the specific case of the socialization of motivation in sport, studies dealing with this topic have typically included the influence of parents, coaches, and more recently, and to a much lesser extent, peers. In response to this criticism, the present findings illustrate the need to move beyond studies examining only the motivational impact of parents and/or coaches and the payoffs of adding other individuals such as siblings, relatives, school peers, teammates, opponents, spectators, and elite athletes to the social influence equation. Additionally, the

findings speak of the relevance of examining maternal and paternal sources of influence separately and in connection with each other rather than pooled together under the label "parental" influence (see Greendorfer et al., 1996). What is more, considering that youngsters' experiences in families "extend beyond their interactions with parents" (Parke & Buriel, 1998, p.481) the present findings provide support for the need to study the complete family environment at each stage of an athlete's development (e.g., Côté & Hay, 2002). In particular, in line with and extending recent findings from Côté (1999), the results underscore the important role that siblings may play on adolescent athletes' sport motivation as providers of informational and emotional support, sources of competence-relevant information, and models to emulate. Given the amount of time that most children and adolescents spend in the company of siblings (see Parke & Buriel, 1998) further research on the socializing influence of siblings in sport appears warranted.

Beyond the influence of siblings, another area that is clearly ripe for future examination is that of peer influence in its diverse expressions and in relation to a variety of settings in which it occurs. In terms of sport-specific development and motivation, the results remind us especially that there is much to be gained when coaches facilitate an environment which resembles a "community of cooperative learners" (e.g., Reeve, 1996; Slavin, 1995). In such an environment, as the results indicate, athletes not only benefit from the expertise of the coach but also have the opportunity to spontaneously learn from and help each other out. According to Eccles et al. (1998), fostering a "co-learning" atmosphere among teammates should have a positive impact on athletes' achievement motivation by enhancing their expectations for success and their valuing of the practice

activities, and by promoting a focus on learning rather than performance goals. Future research should test these propositions also in the youth sport domain.

The present results bring also our attention to the importance for coaches of considering the internal dynamics of the team in order to facilitate an environment where athletes engage in positive interactions with and provide support for each other. In a related vein, the results suggest the critical importance of coaches dealing quickly and efficiently with teammates displaying a negative attitude towards their peers, themselves, and the activity. As Wild and Enzle (2002) have recently explained, direct constraints (e.g., negative feedback) are not necessary to undermine intrinsic motivation. Indeed, "social contagion" of motivational orientations and attitudes towards activities can spontaneously spread from person to person during social interaction. Specifically, perceptions of others' motives for engaging in an activity leads to the development of expectations regarding (a) quality of involvement in the activity (e.g., enjoyment, interest) that the perceiver is likely to experience, and (b) quality of interpersonal relations that is likely to ensue during task-related social interaction. The nature of such expectations, in turn, affects the perceiver's motivation for engaging in the activity.

The increasing influence of peers as agents of socialization of achievement-related characteristics during the adolescent years has been emphasized in both the academic and the sport literatures (e.g., Brustad et al., 2001; Horn & Harris, 1996; Eccles et al., 1998). However, the present study illustrates that the circumstance that peers come to play a central role in the sport motivation of adolescent athletes is not necessarily accompanied by a decrease in the motivational impact of parents and coaches. Specifically, the findings underscored the crucial role that both parents and coaches play

during the specializing and the investment years as agents of socialization of achievement orientations, sources of competence-relevant information and providers of different forms of support. In addition, parents and coaches were perceived as the main sources of pressure and control for athletes. These results, which have to be interpreted within the context of the specific needs of adolescents and the constraints associated with increasing levels of deliberate practice, suggest that it is indeed counterproductive to posit linear models of decreasing influence of certain social agents relative to others across development. Instead, as Parke and Buriel (1998) argued, we need models that help us understand the *changing nature* of the influence of certain social agents (e.g., parents, coaches) relative to the influence of others (e.g., peers).

Taking into account that sport-specific skill development becomes progressively the main focus of adolescent's involvement in sport during the specializing and the investment years (Côté, 1999; Côté & Hay, 2002) the finding that the coach is a central socializing figure during this period comes as no surprise. However, considering also that adolescence constitutes a stage of development marked by an increasing desire for independence and a progressive reliance on the peer group (e.g., Eccles et al., 1998; Rice, 1999), the circumstance that parents remained so central in the sport experience of most of my participants was somehow unexpected. In any case, this finding resonates with a recent review of literature by Grotevant (1998) that led him to conclude "the significance of both individuality and connection of adolescents with their parents, in contrast to notions portraying adolescent autonomy as separation" (1998, p.1121).

From an applied perspective, the findings suggest that in order to maximize adolescent athletes' motivation throughout the specializing and the investment years,

coaches and parents alike should consider the following factors. First, and foremost, athletes benefit from a supportive and dependable environment in which help is available whenever athletes need it. In particular, such an environment should be responsive to athletes' needs for tangible, emotional, and informational support. Second, a balance between lack of pressure to participate and perform and appropriate levels--and forms--of control from adults whenever required by the situation seems necessary until athletes are fully able to self-regulate their behavior in their way towards autonomy. Third, athletes need feedback and reinforcement from others that signifies competence and conveys a sense of confidence in their abilities to accomplish particular tasks and goals. Along with this, athletes benefit from the availability of challenging comparative standards that push them to work harder and stretch their limits. Fourth, athletes benefit from participating in a predominantly mastery or learning oriented environment in which winning is kept in proper perspective (i.e., winning is important, but not *the most* important aspect of participation). Last, but not least, athletes in this age need positive models of achievement and work ethic to serve as points of reference and as guides in their search for possible courses of optimal development in sport.

In all, borrowing from Csikszentmihalyi et al.'s (1993; see also Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde 1998) concept of "complex families," the results indicate that, from a motivational standpoint, athletes in the specializing and the investment years appear to benefit the most from participating in a "complex training environment." In light of the findings, such an environment can be described as one containing adequate doses of and achieving an integration of apparently polarized elements such as intrinsic and extrinsic incentives, autonomy support and control of behavior, self-referenced and social-

comparison standards, cooperation and competition. This conclusion supports Vallerand's (2001) assertion that sport participants display intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and even amotivation to various degrees and, therefore, with the hypothesized benefits of matching the "motivational climate" to the motivational orientations of the participants in sport (e.g., Roberts, 1992). In regards to the latter, it seems plausible to suggest that by providing such an environment the chances of meeting the motivational needs of as many athletes as possible would be maximized. Nevertheless, it is also true that in order to provide an environment containing the adequate doses of the previously mentioned elements a personalized athlete-centered approach would be required. This questions to some extent the possibility for consultants of offering advice to others on *precisely* how to motivate adolescent athletes (e.g., by "doing this" or "doing that"; see Reeve, 1996). Rather, in accord with Reeve (1996), a more fruitful road to take appears to be for consultants to work cooperatively with others, who know the story of the individuals they attempt to motivate and the situations involved, toward a solution.

Another objective of the present study was to gain a better understanding of the *differential impact* of influential others upon adolescent athletes' sport motivation. In other words, as recommended by Parke and Buriel (1998), an attempt was made to determine whether there are unique motivational roles or outcomes specifically within the purview of particular influential others or groups of others. In regard to this, the findings revealed that the provision of tangible support lies primarily within both the father and the mother's responsibility and that mothers are especially significant as emotional supporters during the specializing and the investment years. Not surprisingly, during this

period coaches became in general the main points of reference for athletes in regards to technical issues. Parents (mothers and fathers) and coaches played a prominent role as agents of socialization of achievement orientations and were the main sources of pressure and control. Finally, peers (e.g., teammates, friends) were the main providers of companionship support. Nevertheless, the findings showed that different individuals were involved, to a greater or lesser extent, in playing each of the five major motivational roles identified in the accounts of the participants in this study. This is important because it provided the basis for the emergence of interesting compensatory dynamics between or among relationships that allowed athletes to make up, more or less successfully, for the motivational shortcomings of a relationship whatsoever (e.g., coach-athlete) in fulfilling a given motivational role. This became particularly evident in the case of the role of others as providers of (task-specific) informational, emotional and companionship support, and as sources of competence-relevant information.

System-style models of socialization are mainly concerned with the *dynamics* within a social context and have been prominent in analyses that attempt to describe the *interconnections* among the various parts of a social context (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998). Besides the previously mentioned compensatory dynamics, results from the present study illustrate the relevance of asking about the extent to which the "messages" that influential others send to athletes are aligned or in competition with one another (see Bugental & Goodnow, 1998). Attending to their degree of congruency, I identified three types of messages that others send to athletes within their roles of providers of informational support, sources of competence-relevant information, and agents of socialization of goal orientations. I labeled these, respectively, in decreasing order of

congruency, mutually reinforcing, complementary, and competing messages. Strean (1995) pointed out that in order to understand the tensions that may exist in youth sport it is also crucial to understand the nature of parent-coach interactions. From an intervention perspective, the present results point to the necessity of helping parents and coaches co-ordinate their efforts so as to avoid sending messages that put athletes in the middle of conflicts or awkward situations. However, as the findings illustrated also, this does not mean that only mutually reinforcing messages should be aimed for and that diversity and, even, divergence of opinions between parents and coaches should be always discouraged or avoided. Instead, the current findings suggest that diversity of opinions or perspectives in the form of messages that are complementary to each other have the potential to contribute to athletes' sport-specific development and motivation. Even in the case of messages that are perceived as contradicting each other (i.e., "competing" messages), it appears that, as long as they provide an opportunity for exploring alternatives and making informed choices rather than an occasion for confusion and conflict (see Bugental & Goodnow, 1998) negative consequences should not follow. More research is needed to ascertain the degree to which consensus/homogeneity or diversity/heterogeneity prevail in youth sport contexts, the ways in which these features are manifested, and the motivational consequences in either case.

Identification and examination of the dynamics previously alluded to extend past research on the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes and represents a step forward in our understanding of the ways in which the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes actually proceeds. So is the description of some of the ways in which adolescent athletes are active contributors to their own socialization and development.

Indeed, an account of the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes that did not

pay attention to document some of the ways in which these athletes play an active role in

the process would be necessarily a limited and incomplete account (see Bugental &

Goodnow, 1998; Parke & Buriel, 1998). Taken as a whole, the findings illustrate the

significance, and even the necessity, of adopting frameworks for the study of

socialization processes in youth sport that move us beyond the analysis of one-way,

single source effects to take into account the dynamics within multiple sources of mutual

influence. In other words, this study demonstrates the benefits, both from a theoretical

and a practical perspective, of adopting a systems-style approach (e.g., Bugental &

Goodnow, 1998) for the study of socialization processes in youth sport in general and for

the study of the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes in particular.

In addition to the questions already raised, however, several important issues still

remain regarding the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes within a systems-

style framework. Notably, since the present study constitutes an initial, but by no means

definitive, attempt to examine some of the dynamics within the perceived role of others

on adolescent athletes' sport motivation, future studies using both qualitative and

quantitative methodologies are needed to further tease out some of these dynamics. In

relation with the specific dynamics identified in the present study, more work is needed

to determine the conditions under which compensatory connections between relationships

or systems of relationships might be expected in order to offset existing motivational

deficits. In particular, future efforts should attempt to shed more light into the critical

question of whether athletes can fully compensate for the motivational shortfalls of a

given relationship by investing more "energy" (Parke & Buriel, 1998) into another

relationships. Furthermore, studies are needed that clarify the conditions under which compensatory connections are more or less likely to be successful and the motivational consequences in the case the compensatory attempts do not totally achieve their purposes. With regard to the development of compensatory connections over extended periods of time, research that looks at how the relative motivational roles of influential others around athletes shift across development would be most welcomed. Having an adequate picture of how these roles shift as athletes develop would allow us to focus on the important question of whether it is possible to characterize youth sport settings in terms of the relative importance of various relationships at different points in time (see Parke & Buriel, 1998).

Our understanding of the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes would also benefit considerably from expanding the range of our analyses from the level of face-to-face interactions in order to include elements from the broader social and cultural context. Recognition that relationships are embedded in a variety of social settings is critical to understand variation in the functioning of these relationships and the meanings that the social actors attach to them (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Parke & Buriel, 1998). Ultimately, as Vallerand (2001) has suggested, acknowledging the complexity involved in social life should lead us to move from simply studying sport participants as "athletes" to studying whole individuals who in addition to being athletes are students and members of a social--and cultural-- matrix.

Finally, future studies on the socialization of motivation in adolescent athletes should continue to pay attention to documenting the different ways in which athletes contribute to their own socialization and play an active role in their own developmental

trajectories in sport. The ideal result of such continued efforts would be a more complete

picture and an enhanced understanding of the processes through which young athletes are

able to take advantage of their inner motivational resources (Reeve 1996) in order to

generate their own sport motivation.

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