Identity Regulation in the North American Field of Men's Professional Ice Hockey:

An Examination of Organizational Control and Preparedness for Athletic Career Retirement

by

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Abstract

Following a significant commitment of time, energy, and role identification, athletes retiring from sport may experience any number of difficulties, including emotional distress, diminished subjective well-being, and identity disruption. These difficulties may be particularly acute for those who hold a salient athletic identity. Notwithstanding an expansive body of literature on the subject of sport career cessation, few works have examined how athletic identities have been constructed, maintained, and/or transformed by managers and organizations.

Providing a compelling case for just such an examination was the North American field of men's professional ice hockey. The field, composed of the National Hockey League, two lower-level affiliates, and a number of related organizations, has long supported the development of athletic identities. This support, despite its service to the achievement of athletic outcomes, has marginalized personal development, complicated the process of sport career cessation, and triggered the introduction of several interventions. In turn, the several questions arose: how have managers and organizations in the field regulated athletic and non-athletic identities; and how might such regulation affect preparation for the process of sport career cessation.

To answer these questions, an interpretive study, informed by Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) concept of identity regulation was undertaken. As part of the study, interviews were conducted with players/alumni (n = 3); and managers from the National Hockey League (n = 1), National Hockey League Players' Association (n = 1), Professional Hockey Players' Association (n = 1); Core Development and Career Enhancement Programs (n = 3); and seven National/American Hockey League teams (n = 7; N = 16). In addition, 3902 documents (primarily in the form of online articles, from the aforementioned organizations) were reviewed.

Analysis of the data revealed that regulation entailed the construction and maintenance of a salient and bipartite athletic identity; a largely self-directed, non-sporting alternative; and a nascent merger between the two. Consistent with Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) conceptualization, each of the identities was defined by multiple motives, sets of values and characteristics, and bodies of knowledge and skill. Building upon the conceptualization, the analysis revealed that organizations fostered identity adherence and performance, to varying degrees, through scouting, monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement; explicit conveyances; auxiliary resource allocation; exemplars; awards/rewards; routinization; and publicity. Attempts of identity disruption/change, moreover, were subject to insulative measures.

The study ultimately found that the product of regulation, and the organizational practices that undergirded as much, was an eminent athletic identity, one that could continue to complicate the process of sport career cessation. To limit the deleterious nature and occurrence of transition-related difficulties, it was suggested that manager continue to challenge extant regulation practices, and/or employ as much in novel manners. In these ways, broader identities, conducive to the process of athletic career retirement, and the long-term well-being of individuals, may be developed.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Andre Michael Andrijiw. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Identity Regulation in the North American Field of Men's Professional Ice Hockey", Pro00071595, May 15, 2017.

Dedication

To the many students who fostered a further curiosity about life, and inspired a love for teaching: Andre Abayof, Mykala Abel, Daniel Aiello, Trevor Aime, Emily Ainsley, Steven Ainsley, Gareth Allen-Symmons, David Almeida, Kevin Alp, Tyler Amodeo, Shannon Anderson, Pamela Andrews, Chris Arnold, Anthony Arnone, Keegan Atack, Michelle Atkins, Michael Atkinson, Megan Axenchuk, Cameron Baguley, Michael Barbin, Ian Barnett, Alessandro Barreca, Jessica Barrett, Steve Barry, Ian Barteaux, Nick Baskerville, Jillian Basterash, Max Bell, Meghan Belrose, Andrew Belton, Jennifer Bertrand, Jed Bick, Emma Biesenthal, David Bin, Michelle Blaha, Ben Blain, Zach Blain, Lindsay Blake, Mike Blondin, Bryan Blue, Kris Boomhouwer, Dana Boos, Olivia Bordin, Howie Borrow, Shelley Bots, Melissa Bouwsema, John Boyle, Rebecca Brandt, Andrew Brett, Kyle Brock, Allison Brown, Wade Bryant, Cory Budge, Stephanie Buga, Daniel Buglisi, Dani Burstrom, Andrew Caldana, Vincent Cancelli, Jessie Candlish, Ian Cater, Samantha Chabot, Johnny Chan, Chris Charlebois, Andrew Chau, Eric Chemerika, Kendra Chernoff, Colleen Cheze, Samantha Chilvers, Kelsi Ching, Emily Choi, Emily Christen, Lauren Christensen, Max Christiansen, Jodie Clapp, Sarah Clarke, Steve Collier, Matt Comand, Jacqueline Cormier, Kevin Corus, Garnet Court, James Coutts, Amy Cranch, Glen Crockett, Dylan Cullis, Kennedy Cumming, Shannon Curtis, Chris Daniele, Amy Davidge, Rachelle Davies, Jeff Dawidowitz, Travis DayMiko, Sarah Denobile, Jeff Der, Ian Deschiffart, Kelly Diamond, Luke Diangelo, Lia Diffin, Megan Dobson, Scott Dolson, Adrian Drechsler, Megan Dubas, Lawrence Dushenski, Tyler Dutchyshen, Evan Dyki, Shawn Eckford, Megan Ede, Corrie Effa, Fraser Ehl, Ben Ernewein, Tyson Eteli, Brett Evers, Gord Farnell, Daniel Fawcett, Matt Fawns, Mark Fay, Jessica Ferguson, Ryan Fisher, Brett Fitzpatrick, Jay Fleming, Melissa Fleming, Tyler Flemming, Alexandra Francis, Andrew Frank,

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Introduction

For many an athlete, the process of ascending to the most elite levels of sport requires a significant commitment of time, energy, and role identification (Baillie & Danish, 1992). In addition, the process may necessitate a narrow and steadfast pursuit of performance excellence, what Miller and Kerr (2002) defined as "observable, measurable athletic outcomes . . . in high-level sport [(e.g., intercollegiate, national, international, and professional competitions)]" (pp. 140-141). Despite any potential merits that may be associated with such a pursuit, there persists a concern as to the degree to which performance excellence, by virtue of the exceptional demands placed on athletes, occurs at the expense of personal excellence (see Anderson, 2012; Lavallee, 2005; Miller & Kerr, 2002; Orlick, 1998; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Personal excellence, distinct from its performance counterpart, refers "to the achievement of developmentally appropriate tasks across the length of one's life and the acquisition of personal qualities that contribute to optimal health and wellbeing" (Miller & Kerr, 2002, p. 141). The concern, as such, centres on the pursuit of performance excellence, and the potential psychological, psychosocial, and/or academic/vocational tolls that may result.

Quite often, the deleterious nature of these tolls manifests at the time of athletic career retirement (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Brewer, Van Raalte, & Petitpas, 2000; Lavallee, Nesti, Borkoles, Cockerill, & Edge, 2000; Miller & Kerr, 2002). As athletes transition to a life without sport, they may experience psychological difficulties in the form of identity disruption (e.g., Carless & Douglas, 2009; Gearing, 1999), diminished subjective well-being (e.g., Coakley, 2006; Wylleman & Reints, 2010), and emotional distress (e.g., Chambers, 2002; Lavallee, Gordon, & Grove, 1997); and psychosocial complications in the form of relational discord (e.g., Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008; Stambulova, 2009), network dissolution (e.g., Hatamleh, 2013; Kerr &

Dacyshyn, 2000), and social activity loss (e.g., Drahota & Eitzen, 1998; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). In addition to these difficulties, retired athletes may suffer from academic and vocational deficiencies, the respective products of limited educations (e.g., Hickey & Kelly, 2008; Parker, 2000) and inadequate professional qualifications (e.g., McGillivray, Fearn, & McIntosh, 2005; Robidoux, 2001).

Despite the occurrence of such difficulties, the transition away from active participation in high-level sport is not an inherently negative experience. Researchers have instead suggested that the quality of a transition experience is dependent upon several interrelated factors (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Gordon, 1995; Lavallee, 2000; Petitpas, 2009; Stephan & Demulier, 2008). Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995), for example, identified four sets of intervening factors: termed situation (i.e., the characteristics and perceptions of the pre- and post-transition environments), self (i.e., the characteristics of the individual), support (i.e., the quality, function, and availability of social resources), and strategies (i.e., the quality, function, and availability of coping skills). In a similar work, Taylor and Ogilvie (1994, 2001) accounted for the interaction between factors (e.g., developmental experiences, perceptions of control, and personal and social identities), resources (e.g., coping skills, and social support), and quality of transition. Ultimately, as Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) noted, “the particular reaction that emerges upon career termination will depend upon a variety of personal, social, environmental, and developmental factors. These factors influence the meaning of the termination to the athletes and dictate its practical implications for life after sport” (p. 359).

Central to this position, and therefore to the quality of a transition experience, is the influence of organizational actors. In sport, influence of this sort may be exerted through such means as the promulgation and augmentation of athletic identities. In the broadest of regards,

identities constitute the "categories people use to specify who they are and to locate themselves relative to other[s]" (Owens, 2003, p. 207; alternative, and more nuanced, formulations of the term include personal or role identity, "the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role, and the incorporation, into the self, of the meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance," Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225; social identity, "a definition of who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of [a social; altered determiner] category," Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, p. 259; and self-identity, "a reflexively organized narrative, derived from participation in competing discourses and various experiences, that is productive of a degree of existential continuity and security," Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, pp. 625-626, citing Giddens, 1991). An athletic identity, in particular, then, is a self-definition imbued with sporting participation (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993; Park, Lavallee, & Tod, 2013). This self-definition, although not problematic in and of itself, may become so, in part, as a result of identity regulation.

Conceived as a form of organizational control, identity regulation "encompasses the more or less intentional effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction" (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 625). Regulation, as Alvesson and Willmott (2002) explained, concerns control and the achievement thereof through the positioning of individuals within managerially inspired discourses (represented in such concepts as corporate cultures and work/professional ideologies). These discourses may be resisted, negotiated, or critically interpreted, but serve nevertheless to bound the experiences of individuals (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Thus, in a sporting context, regulation may bound individuals to not only the strict pursuit of performance excellence, but also an athletic identity.

Although seldom applied in analyses of sport organizations (e.g., Byers, Henry, & Slack, 2007), this conception of control holds pertinence to the study of athletic career retirement. Research studies have found, for example, that individuals with salient athletic identities are often susceptible to transition-related difficulties (e.g., emotional distress, feelings of loss, diminished subjective well-being, and/or identity disruption; Alfermann, Stambulova, & Zemaiyte, 2004; Blaeslid & Stetler, 2003; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Brown & Potrac, 2009; Carless & Douglas, 2009; Cecić Erpič, Wylleman, & Zupancic, 2004; Chambers, 2002; Douglas & Carless, 2009; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Gearing, 1999; Gilmore, 2008; Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000; Lally, 2007; Lavallee et al., 1997; Lavallee & Robinson, 2007; Marthinus, 2007; Stambulova, Stephan, & Japhag, 2007; Ungerleider, 1997; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008; Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998; Wheeler, Malone, VanVlack, Nelson, & Steadward, 1996; Wheeler, Steadward, Legg, Hutzler, Campbell, & Johnson, 1999; Wylleman, De Knop, Menkehorst, Theeboom, & Annerel, 1993), and lengthy periods of adjustment (Alfermann et al., 2004; Grove et al., 1997; Stambulova et al., 2007; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008; Wylleman et al., 1993). Lacking, however, are studies that have explored how these identities are maintained, reproduced, and/or transformed by managers, actors, and organizations (e.g., Hare, 1971; Fleuriel & Vincent, 2009; Hickey & Kelly, 2005, 2008; Jones, 2013; Jones & Denison, 2017; McGillivray et al., 2005; Parker, 2000; Pink, Saunders, & Stynes, 2015; Price, 2007; Stronach & Adair, 2010). Given the potential effects of athletic identities on quality of transition, further examinations of the practices and mechanisms that undergird such self-definitions are warranted. Examinations of this sort could elucidate the characteristics of a pre-transition environment (e.g., the creation or dissolution of identity-/transition-related interventions; Anderson & Morris, 2000; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982), identify the

effects thereof on developmental attitudes and behaviours, and add to existent understandings of the athletic career retirement process (Brown, 2015; Park et al., 2013; Stambulova, 2009).

Providing a particularly compelling case for just such an examination was the North American field of men's professional ice hockey. The field, composed of the National Hockey League (NHL; a 32-team venture that spans across the United States of America and Canada), two lower-level affiliates (American Hockey League, AHL; and ECHL [formerly recognized as the East Coast Hockey League]), three independent entities (Southern Professional Hockey League, SPHL; Federal Hockey League, FHL; Ligue Nord-Américaine de Hockey, LNAH), and a number of related organizations (e.g., the National Hockey League Players' Association, NHLPA; National Hockey League Alumni Association, NHLAA; and Professional Hockey Players' Association, PHPA), has long supported the development of athletic identities. This support, despite its service to the achievement of athletic outcomes, has marginalized personal excellence (Robidoux, 2001), complicated the process of sport career cessation (e.g., Andrijiw, 2010; Baillie & Danish, 1992; Chambers, 2002; Given, 2016; Howe, Howe, & Wilkens, 2000), and triggered the introduction of multiple interventions (e.g., the PHPA Career Enhancement Program, the NHLAA Breakaway Program, and, most recently, the NHL/NHLPA Core Development Program). These outcomes, in turn, prompted several questions: how, in the North American field of men's professional ice hockey, do managers and actors regulate athletic identities; how, in the North American field of men's professional ice hockey, do managers and actors regulate other identities; and how does identity regulation affect preparedness for athletic career retirement. To attend to these questions, and delineate the implications for athletes, a study of the described field was undertaken.

Review of Literature

Past efforts to explore the phenomenon of athletic career retirement (i.e., the discontinuation or cessation of high-level athletic participation) involved a multitude of theoretical conceptualizations, and resulted in the identification of several adjustment-related correlates. Initially, the aforementioned conceptualizations were drawn from gerontology, the study of aging (e.g., Atchley, 1976, 1987, 1989; Blau, 1964; Cumming, Dean, Newell, & McCaffrey, 1960; Cumming & Henry, 1961; Friedmann & Havighurst, 1954; Havighurst & Albrecht, 1953; Homans, 1958, 1961; Kuypers & Bengtson, 1973; Rose, 1962, 1965), and thanatology, the study of death and dying (e.g., Glaser & Strauss, 1965; Kalish, 1966; Kubler-Ross, 1969). When these conceptualizations were found to be unsatisfactory, the scientific community turned to utilizing models of human adaptation to transition (e.g., Hopson & Adams, 1976; Schlossberg, 1981, 1984, et al., 1995; Sussman, 1972), and developing explanatory frameworks specific to the athletic career retirement process (e.g., Stambulova, 1994, 2009; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). Researchers ultimately came to view retirement as the final stage in a lengthy course of development, and the quality of the related transition experience as being dependent upon a number of factors and resources. Left comparatively unexplored in these efforts were organizational environments, and the influences of managers and actors therein.

Theoretical Conceptualizations of Athletic Career Retirement

The foundation for explicating the process of sport career cessation, and identifying the specific factors and resources that relate thereto, may be traced, in effect, to the characterization of the phenomenon as a multidimensional and longitudinal process (Lavallee, 2000). Adoption of this characterization, on the part of researchers, brought about the introduction of transition-

based conceptualizations to the study of athletic career retirement. Researchers of athletic career retirement, accordingly, reviewed and/or employed three examples of such conceptualizations: Sussman's (1972) analytic model; Hopson and Adams' (1976) model of transition; and Schlossberg's (1981, 1984; Schlossberg et al., 1995) model of human adaptation to transition.

The earliest of these conceptualizations, Sussman's (1972) analytic model, offered a multidimensional projection of the career transition process that accounted for individual characteristics (e.g., lifestyle, motives, attitudes), situational variables (e.g., circumstances surrounding retirement, level of pre-retirement planning, social class), and structural constraints (e.g., societal definitions, economic/generational cycles). These dimensions, when considered for in tandem with a number of contextual factors (e.g., biological cycles, physiographic states, available maintenance systems), were said to shape the perceptions of a situation (e.g., evaluation of options, estimation of outcomes, availability of previous and related experiences), the use of linking systems (familial, social, and work networks), and, ultimately, one's chosen course of retirement (Sussman, 1972). The model, as constituted, illustrated how the interaction of social, biological, and physiographical elements may produce a unique and individualized retirement experience.

The first to recognize the potential application of the analytic model (Sussman, 1972) to the study of athletic career retirement were Hill and Lowe (1974). As the pair (Hill & Lowe, 1974) noted,

> An examination of various components of Sussman's model demonstrates its relevance to the study of retirement from sport. Situational and structural variables such as the circumstances surrounding he [sic] closing of a playing career, the social class of the athlete at the beginning and end of his [sic] career, and the degrees of preretirement

> preparation, all vary from player to player. Individual variables such as the athlete's personality, motives, needs, habits and attitudes also merit attention as the [sic] govern his [sic] perception of retirement. These factors, together with the various linking systems and the social and economic constraints which most retirees encounter, continue to influence the athlete in his [sic] ultimate choice of career. (p. 28)

Much like Hill and Lowe (1974), Baillie and Danish (1992) found the factors described within the model to be reflective of those affecting the nature and quality of the athletic career retirement experience.

The latter pair (Baillie & Danish, 1992), however, unlike their predecessors (Hill & Lowe, 1974), criticized the analytic model (Sussman, 1972) for its inability to predict ease of transition and developmental outcomes. In a similar vein, Taylor and Ogilvie (1994) remarked that various components of the model lacked operational detail. The model, undermined by such limitations (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Lavallee, 2000; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994), and surpassed in utility by later works, ultimately failed to garner any greater acclaim than that which was once provided by Hill and Lowe (1974).

Suffering a moribund fate similar to that of the aforementioned conceptualization was Hopson and Adams' (1976) model of transition. The model, divided into seven sequential phases, outlined how a discontinuity in biography (i.e., a transition) may result in a predictable cycle of reactions and feelings (Hopson & Adams, 1976). The seven phases accounted for within this cycle, and therefore the model, were shock and immobilization (i.e., the initial disruption to reasoning and/or understanding resulting from the change), minimization and trivialization (i.e., the attempted diminishment of discontinuity-induced stressors), traumatization (i.e., the individual's subjection to said stressors), acceptation (i.e., the acceptance of the resultant reality),

exploration (i.e., the examination of alternative possibilities, behaviours, and/or coping mechanisms), realization (i.e., the assessment and appreciation of the transition process), and internalization (i.e. the incorporation of lived experiences and learned meanings into one's behaviour) (Hopson & Adams, 1976).

Initially thought to be of aid in predicting the nature of change-induced responses (Hopson & Adams, 1976), the model was later concluded to be inadequate for delineating the complex process involved with athletic career cessation (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). The basis for this conclusion was two-fold: the model denoted neither the factors that precipitated a traumatic experience, nor the reasons for an individual to progress through the many phases of the transformative cycle (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). This conclusion subsequently led researchers to abandon the model of transition (Hopson & Adams, 1976), and turn to the work of Schlossberg (1981, 1984), and Schlossberg et al. (1995).

Schlossberg's (1981) work, and, more specifically, the model of human adaptation to transition, was predicated upon two principal questions: "what determines whether a person grows or deteriorates as the result of a transition [; and] why do some people adapt with relative ease, while others suffer severe strain" (p. 3). With the model of human adaptation to transition, Schlossberg (1981, 1984) provided a tentative response to these questions, and theorized that individual change was mediated by personal (e.g., psychosocial competence, sex/sex-role identification, age/life stage, state of health, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, value orientation), circumstantial (e.g., role change [gain or loss], affect [positive or negative], source [internal or external], timing [on-time or off-time], onset [gradual or sudden], duration [permanent, temporary, or uncertain]), and environmental factors (e.g., availability and utility of personal and institutional support systems, physical setting). Alterations to the model

(Schlossberg, 1981, 1984), on the part of Schlossberg et al. (1995), produced a subsequent response that accounted for four sets of mediating factors: termed, situation (e.g., trigger event or non-event, timing, perceived and actual degrees of control, type of role change, anticipated duration, concurrent stressors); self (e.g., personal characteristics, psychological resources); support (e.g., familial and institutional resources); and strategies (i.e., personal coping responses). Categorical differences aside, the original and modified models of human adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981, 1984; Schlossberg et al., 1995) offered researchers a means to not only describe and explain individual change, but also identify opportunities for therapeutic intervention (Chambers, 2002).

The potential utility of Schlossberg's (1981, 1984) original model, in particular, led researchers of athletic career retirement to incorporate the work into a growing discourse of analysis. Within this discourse, Schlossberg's (1981, 1984) work became oft cited (e.g., Baillie, 1993; Crook & Robertson, 1991; Gordon, 1995; Lavallee, 2000), a point of positive review (e.g., Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Chambers, 2002; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990), and the methodological base for many a study (e.g., Chow, 2001; Pummell, Harwood, & Lavallee, 2008; Wheeler et al., 1999). The work (Schlossberg, 1981, 1984), which also received empirical support from a number of sources (e.g., Chow, 2001; Parker, 1994; Swain, 1991; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008; Wheeler et al., 1996), came to be unlike any of its predecessors: most notably, it was influential in the development of several athletic career cessation-related conceptualizations (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Bruner, Erickson, McFadden, & Coté, 2009; Bruner, Erickson, Wilson, & Coté, 2010).

These conceptualizations, much like those of Schlossberg (1981, 1984; Schlossberg et al., 1995), supplied multidimensional, transition-based treatments of adaptation to change. Unlike

the work of Schlossberg (1981, 1984; et al., 1995), however, athletic career cessation-related conceptualizations were imbued with context and operational detail (Lavallee, 2000; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Four conceptualizations, in particular, reflected these points of difference: Taylor and Ogilvie's (1994, 2001) model of adaptation to retirement among athletes; Stambulova's (1994, 2009) analytic athletic career model; Wylleman and Lavallee's (2004) developmental model on transitions faced by athletes; and Stambulova et al.'s (2007) amalgamated career transition framework.

The first of the aforementioned works, by Taylor and Ogilvie (1994, 2001), came in the form of a parsimonious and operationalizable five-stage model. In developing the model, the researchers (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001) drew upon theoretical and empirical examinations that were found within and outside the then existent body of literature on athletic career retirement. The final product produced by the pair (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001), the model of adaptation to retirement among athletes, depicted the entire developmental course of the cessation process, and accounted for five related stages or considerations: the underlying causes for one's withdrawal from sport (e.g., deselection, injury, free choice); the factors affecting the transformative experience (e.g., developmental experiences, personal and social identity); the resources available to the individual (e.g., social and institutional support mechanisms, personal coping skills); the quality of the undertaking; and the potential remedying of difficult or distressful cases (e.g., through cognitive, behavioural, or emotional therapeutic strategies).

The critical response that followed, and was founded on, the work of Taylor and Ogilvie (1994, 2001) was exceedingly positive, and mirrored that which was previously afforded to Schlossberg's (1981, 1984) seminal conceptualization. The later work (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001), like its earlier counterpart (Schlossberg, 1981, 1984), received frequent reference (e.g.,

Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Lavallee & Andersen, 2000; Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler, & Coté, 2009; Wylleman Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004), and considerable empirical support (e.g., Gilmore, 2008; Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008; Lavallee et al., 2007; Stambulova et al., 2007). The aforementioned response also led to a more comprehensive conception of the model of adaptation to retirement among athletes (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001), one that accounted for non-sporting factors (e.g., educational status; Cecić Erpič et al., 2004) and corporeal (i.e., bodily) considerations (Stephan, Torregrosa, & Sanchez, 2007; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008). Altogether, the model (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001) served as a point of divergence, and was the first of several conceptualizations to delineate the complex process of athletic career cessation.

A second such conceptualization, devised by Stambulova (1994, 2009), broadened the pertinent scope of analysis in such a manner that retirement came to be regarded as the final stage in a lengthy course of sporting participation. Adoption of this altered scope, on the part of Stambulova (1994, 2009), and otherwise known as the lifespan perspective (Wylleman et al., 2004), led to the creation of a conceptualization that was not too dissimilar from others found in the field of talent development (e.g., Bloom, 1985; Salmela, 1994; Coté, 1999). Unlike the conceptualizations from this other field, however, Stambulova's (1994, 2009) analytic athletic career model was one which emphasized transitions, and a coping-based system of progression. In all, six unique stages of athletic career transition were accounted for within the model: sampling to specialization; occasional practice to intensive training; junior to senior sport; amateur to professional ranks; mastery to decline; and, finally, retirement to re-creation (i.e., re-identification; Stambulova, 2009).

Support for this depiction of the transition process was ultimately rather modest, and came similarly from the fields of talent development (e.g., Finn & McKenna, 2010; Lorenzo,

Borras, Sanchez, Jimenez, & Sampedro, 2009; Pummell et al., 2008) and athletic career cessation (e.g., Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008; Stephan, Bilard, Ninot, & Delignieres, 2003a, 2003b). Pragmatically, the model (Stambulova, 1994, 2009) found greater success, and was instrumental in the creation of a crisis-coping intervention (Stambulova, 2011). Perhaps most importantly, however, the analytic athletic career model (Stambulova, 1994, 2009) encouraged researchers to apply a broader, lifespan perspective to the study of withdrawal from sporting participation.

Emblematic of the perspective's subsequent application and evolution was Wylleman and Lavallee's (2004) developmental model on transitions faced by athletes. The model, the first to link the lifespan perspective to a more holistic or whole person approach to assessment and intervention (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Stambulova et al., 2009), prompted researchers to examine the concurrent, interactive, and reciprocal nature of development in four domains: the athletic (initiation, development, mastery, and discontinuation); psychological (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood); psychosocial (parents, siblings, peers, and coaches); and academic/vocational (primary, secondary, and higher education; and career training/professional occupation) (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004; Wylleman & Reints, 2010). The quality of the transition experience associated with athletic career retirement was thus argued to be dependent, in part, on one's development in non-sporting spheres of life (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).

Substantiation of this argument's central premise, although available (for a relevant review, see Park et al., 2013), did not arise as a direct result of Wylleman and Lavallee's (2004) developmental model. In fact, the model seldom came to be the subject of examination in the field of athletic career cessation (for a notable exception, see Wylleman and Reints, 2010). The work instead was most typically applied in the study of in-career transition and development (e.g., Aquilina, 2013; Bruner, Munroe-Chandler, & Spink, 2008; Finn & McKenna, 2010;

Pummell et al., 2008). The paucity of retirement-related research notwithstanding, the work (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004) was influential, particularly with respect to reframing athletic career cessation as a function of development in multiple domains (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Stambulova et al., 2009).

In the latest athletic career cessation-related conceptualization, such a frame was not only adopted, but also extended, so as to account for the influence of various social systems (Stambulova et al., 2007). To account for as much, Stambulova et al. (2007) merged three transition-based conceptualizations (Schlossberg's, 1981, 1984, model of human adaptation to transition; Taylor and Ogilvie's, 1994, model of adaptation to retirement among athletes; and Stambulova's, 1994, analytic athletic career model) with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model for human development (in which individual growth was attributed, in part, to micro- [e.g., family, peers, organizational members] and macro-systems [e.g., attitudes, ideologies, traditions] of influence). The resultant product was a six-part conceptualization that accounted for contextual matters (e.g., societal expectations, perceptions, and projections; cultural traditions; elite sports climate), retirement prerequisites (e.g., nature of discontinuation, sport career achievement), transitional demands (e.g., re-identification; educational/vocational training), mediating factors (e.g., availability of social and/or institutional sources of support), coping strategies (e.g., pre-retirement planning; educational/vocational development), and experiential outcomes (e.g., perceived quality of the transition; long-term consequences) (Stambulova et al., 2007). With a "multidimensional (with changes in several spheres of live), multilevel (with changes on various psychological levels - from emotional reactions to personal identities) and multifactor (with a number of factors interplayed, including national identity)" (Stambulova et al., 2007, p. 114) depiction of retirement, the amalgamated framework came to

be, arguably, the most comprehensive athletic career cessation-related conceptualization of any to its date (cf. Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001; Stambulova, 1994; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).

Factors Affecting Quality of Adjustment to Athletic Career Retirement

Central to the composition of this conceptualization (Stambulova et al., 2007), and those that came before it (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994; Stambulova, 1994; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004), were empirical examinations that correlated quality of adjustment to athletic career retirement with the mediating effects of various factors. As part of these examinations, as many as fifteen such factors were assessed (Park et al., 2013). Of those assessed, four of the most salient (i.e., most studied and/or influential to athletes' quality of transition) may be described as relating to either (athletic) identity or circumstance (autonomy, health, and sport career achievement).

Identity. An identity, in short, is a self-conception derived from categorization into a particular social space, and bound by role-dependent meanings and expectations that guide behaviour (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000). To hold an athletic identity, in particular, then, is to define oneself in terms of a sportsperson (Brewer et al., 1993; Grove et al., 1997). For individuals, the benefits of investing in such an identity are manifold: doing so promotes exercise adherence, offers a sense of stability and direction, and encourages the continued pursuit of a prolonged goal (Brewer et al., 1993; Brewer et al., 2000). With too great an investment, however, individuals may face a difficult transition to retirement (e.g., Brewer et al., 1993; Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1993).

Difficulty, more specifically, may arise from either identity foreclosure (i.e., role commitment void of sufficient self-exploration; Danish et al., 1993; Marcia, 1966; Stier, 2007) or selective optimization, "a process in which athletes give exclusive attention to their sport at the expense of all other interests" (Petitpas, 2002, p. 257). Athletes who fail to invest in multiple

activities and/or roles, as such, may cling to their sport careers, and find little satisfaction or ego gratification in other domains (Lavallee, 2000; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Studies, accordingly, found that individuals with salient athletic identities, when compared to those without, were more susceptible to transition difficulties (e.g., emotional distress, feelings of loss, diminished subjective well-being, and/or identity disruption; Alfermann et al., 2004; Blaeslid & Stetler, 2003; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Brown & Potrac, 2009; Carless & Douglas, 2009; Cecić Erpič et al., 2004; Chambers, 2002; Demetrioua, Jagoa, Gilla, Mesagnob, & Alic, 2018; Douglas & Carless, 2009; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Gearing, 1999; Gilmore, 2008; Grove et al., 1997; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000; Lally, 2007; Lavallee et al., 1997; Lavallee & Robinson, 2007; Marthinus, 2007; Stambulova et al., 2007; Torregrosa, Ramis, Pallarés, Azócar, & Selva, 2015; Ungerleider, 1997; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008; Webb et al., 1998; Wheeler et al., 1996, 1999; Wylleman et al., 1993), and lengthier periods of adjustment (Alfermann et al., 2004; Grove et al., 1997; Stambulova et al., 2007; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008; Wylleman et al., 1993).

Circumstance. In addition to the complications posed by a salient athletic identity, there exist those brought about by circumstance. Elements of an athletic career that extend beyond the direct purview of any single individual, such as autonomy, health, and achievement, were often found to influence the quality of one's leave (Park et al., 2013). As research showed, with deficiencies in any of the aforementioned, there came an increased likelihood of a difficult transition (Alfermann, 2000; Park et al., 2013).

Autonomy. A lack of perceived control, over one's career, or decision to retire, was among the most common of factors to be associated with a tumultuous period of adjustment. Studies related to the former, for example, linked a lack of self-determination to identity confusion (Lavallee & Robinson, 2007), the expression of negative emotion (Kerr & Dacyshyn,

2000; Parker, 1994), and, more generally, a diminished quality of transition (Parker, 1994; Tshube & Feltz, 2015). Works of the latter regard expanded the list of negative repercussions further: aside from the aforementioned difficulties (identify confusion [Fortunato & Marchant, 1999], expressions of negative emotion [e.g., anger, frustration, and sadness; Alfermann & Gross, 1997; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; McKenna & Thomas, 2007; Wheeler et al., 1996, 1999], and more general troubles [Agresta, Brandao, de Paula, & Rebustini, 2003; Albion, 2007; Allison & Meyer, 1988; Chambers, 2002; Cecić Erpič et al., 2004; Gearing, 1999; Gilmore, 2008; Hatamleh, 2013; Young, Pearce, Kane, & Pain, 2006]), involuntary retirees reported instances of lost confidence (Cecić Erpič et al., 2004; Chambers, 2002), diminished life satisfaction (Alfermann et al., 2004; Kleiber, Greendorfer, Blinde, & Samdahl, 1987; Webb et al., 1998), and prolonged adjustment (Alfermann et al., 2004). When these reports were coupled with those from voluntary retirees, who, more often than not, avoided tribulation, the described association was further affirmed (Alfermann & Gross, 1997; Alfermann et al., 2004; Cecić Erpič et al., 2004; Koukouris, 1994; Lally, 2007; Martin, Fogarty, & Albion, 2013; Wheeler et al., 1999; Young et al., 2006). A lack of autonomy, or perceived control, as such, was concluded to be deleterious to the process of athletic career retirement (Park et al., 2013).

Health. The problematic nature of an involuntary form of retirement, in some instances, could be traced to an individual's state of health. Athletes who retired involuntarily, due to injury or physical fatigue, were often subjected to the emotional difficulties of an untimely end (Baillie, 1992, as cited in Chambers, 2002; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008; Webb et al., 1998), and/or the ills of a lingering malady (Alfermann, 1995; Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Gilmore, 2008; Schwenk, Gorenflo, Dopp, & Hipple, 2007; Wheeler et al., 1999; Perna, Ahlgren, and Zaichkowsky, 1999, and Young et al., 2006, however, in respective studies of

collegiate athletes and professional tennis players, found no support for such a conclusion). The latter, in particular, led to complications with work (Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Schwenk et al., 2007), leisure (Curtis & Ennis, 1988), relationships (Schwenk et al., 2007), and, not surprisingly, physical activity (Gilmore, 2008; Schwenk et al., 2007; Wheeler et al., 1999).

Achievement. Additional complications arose when injury or involuntary leave inhibited goal attainment and athletic success. As scholars found, transition difficulties (e.g., sport career fixation, prolonged periods of adjustment, and negative evaluations of the change process) were commonly correlated with unmet career aspirations (Albion, 2007; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Cecić Erpič et al., 2004; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Ungerleider, 1997; Werthner & Orlick, 1986; Wheeler et al., 1996, 1999). Researchers consequently concluded that involuntary and untimely retirements were exacerbated by poor states of health, and deficiencies in achievement (Alfermann, 2000; Park et al., 2013).

Other. Retirement, whether involuntary in nature or not, may also be exacerbated by a range of other deficiencies. Any one of a number of shortcomings, in self-perception (e.g., Stephan et al., 2003a, 2003b, 2007), professional relationships (e.g., Koukouris, 1991, 1994; Werthner & Orlick, 1986), educational attainment (e.g., Cecić Erpič et al., 2004; Chow, 2001; Stronach & Adair, 2010) or financial earnings/wealth management (e.g., Corben, Fenton, Rosenfeld, & Spellman, 2012; Schwenk et al., 2007; Swain, 1991), may produce such an effect. Quality of adjustment was thus determined to be dependent, in part, on the mediating effects of psychological, physical, social, and developmental factors (Lavallee, 2000; Park et al., 2013).

Resources Affecting Quality of Adjustment to Athletic Career Retirement

Adjustment to athletic career retirement may likewise be affected by the employment, or lack thereof, of salubrious resources (Lavallee, 2000; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001). These

resources, or coping processes, may be instigated by a person, or provided by an external source. Quality of adjustment to athletic career retirement may thus be tied to not only a multitude of factors, but also the availability and exploitation of personal, social, and institutional resources (Lavallee, 2000; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001).

Personal Resources. To ameliorate the transition to athletic career retirement, individuals may employ any number of personal resources/coping processes. As Folkman and Lazarus (1991) described, such processes are "cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the [capacities] of [a] person" (p. 210). These same researchers (Folkman & Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) suggested that there were two broad approaches to coping: the first involves the alteration of a stressor (e.g., through planning, or acceptance), and the second calls for the regulation of undesired emotions (e.g., through positive reintepration, or venting). A third approach, proposed by Endler and Parker (1990), deviated from these alternatives, and accounted for the eschewal of stressors (e.g., through denial, or mental/behavioural disengagement). Altogether, then, and to manage a taxing life experience, it was suggested that individuals may employ problem-, emotion-, or avoidance-oriented coping processes (Endler & Parker, 1990; Folkman & Lazarus, 1991).

Problem-Oriented Coping Processes. Of the various coping processes that may be implemented in the course of athletic career cessation, few, if any, were found to be as effective as pre-retirement planning (Park et al., 2013). A problem-oriented coping process, planning may result in either practical (e.g., devising financial, occupational, and/or educational aims) or psychological (e.g., altering one's attitude toward, and/or receptivity to, retirement) arrangements (Chambers, 2002). The benefits of such arrangements, as researchers discovered,

were multifarious: planning alleviated the emotional difficulties associated with retirement (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Chambers, 2002; Stambulova et al., 2007; Ungerleider, 1997; Wylleman et al., 1993), bore feelings of satisfaction (with a sporting career, Stambulova et al., 2007; a post-athletic occupation, Alfermann et al., 2004, Chambers, 2002, Ungerleider, 1997; and life as a whole, Alfermann et al., 2004, Perna et al., 1999), and eased the undertaking of athletic career cessation (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Andrijiw, 2010; Stambulova, 2009; Stambulova et al., 2007; Young et al., 2006; Zaichkowsky, Lipton, & Tucci, 1997).

Said undertaking could be further eased through one's enactment of a plan, and/or engagement in active coping (i.e., the process of removing or circumventing a stressor so as to ameliorate its effects; Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). These processes, in varying instances, resulted in new foci (e.g., Alfermann & Gross, 1997; Clemmet, Hanrahan, & Murray, 2010; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Werthner & Orlick, 1986), academic/vocational development (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Andrijiw, 2010; Aquilina, 2013; Chow, 2001; Lally, 2007; Tshube & Feltz, 2015; Ungerleider, 1997; Young et al., 2006), and altered modes of sporting participation (e.g., as a recreation, rather than a profession; as coach or administrator, rather than an athlete; e.g., Allison & Meyer, 1988; Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Haerle, 1975; Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008; Young et al., 2006). The resultant ends, in turn, produced benefits similar to those derived from pre-retirement planning: individuals, most notably, experienced fewer difficulties with functional and emotional adjustment (e.g., Alfermann & Gross, 1997; Chow, 2001; Grove et al., 1997; Werthner & Orlick, 1986; Young et al., 2006).

A final problem-oriented coping process of note entails acceptance. The process, although less studied than either pre-retirement planning or active coping, was found to be a staple in many a successful transition (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Allison & Meyer, 1988;

Grove et al., 1997; Stambulova, 2009; Stambulova et al., 2007). The benefits derived from acceptance, however, were mere allusions, and failed to receive significant substantiation (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Allison & Meyer, 1988; Stambulova et al., 2007).

Emotion-Oriented Coping Processes. Afforded a similarly scant amount of attention from researchers of athletic career retirement were two emotion-oriented coping processes: positive reinterpretation (Grove et al., 1997) and venting (Grove et al., 1997; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999). The former refers to construing a stress-inducing event in positive terms (Carver et al., 1989), and was associated with the amelioration of athletic career termination (Grove et al., 1997). The latter, alternatively, denotes the overt expression of aroused emotions and feelings (Carver et al., 1989), and was suggested to interfere with more productive, problem-oriented processes (Grove et al., 1997). Of the two, then, that which was perceived as being more favourable to adjustment was the former, positive reinterpretation (Carver et al., 1989).

Avoidance-Oriented Coping Processes. Much in the same manner that venting was concluded to interfere with adjustment, avoidance-oriented coping processes (e.g., denial, mental/behavioural disengagement, and alcohol/substance use) were adjudged to be maladaptive (e.g., Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008; Grove et al., 1997; Stambulova, 2009). One such process, denial, may offer an immediate sense of relief, but exact a differed period of heightened distress (Carver et al., 1989). Linked to salient athletic identities (Grove et al., 1997), unplanned retirements (Stambulova et al., 2007), and difficulties in transition (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008), the process was found to be an impediment to adjustment (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008).

Also found to be impediments were mental and behavioural disengagement (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Grove et al., 1997; Wippert & Wippert, 2008). Mental disengagement, as

Carver et al. (1989) explained, "occurs via a wide variety of activities [(e.g., daydreaming; escape through sleep, or immersion in television)] that serve to distract [a] person from thinking about the behavioral (sic) dimension or goal with which the stressor is interfering" (p. 269). Behavioural disengagement, in a similar vein, refers to "reducing one's effort to deal with [a] stressor, even giving up the attempt to attain [a desired or necessary goal]" (Carver et al., 1989, p. 269). The two processes, much like denial, were correlated with salient athletic identities (Grove et al., 1997), and difficult periods of adjustment (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004; Wippert & Wippert, 2008).

Difficulties may also arise from the use or abuse of drugs, and alcohol. Capable of dulling physical and psychological pains alike, substance use or abuse may also impede adjustment (e.g., Chambers, 2002; Grove et al., 1997; Schwenk et al., 2007; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Stambulova, 2009), and yield a wide variety of regrettable results (e.g., familial strife, Andrijiw, 2010; murder, Fleuriel & Vincent, 2009). Given as much, the process was grouped with both denial and disengagement, and judged to be maladaptive (e.g., Chambers, 2002; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Stambulova, 2009).

Social Resources. A more productive form of coping, which extends beyond any single individual, involves the seeking out and/or receiving of support from family members, friends, and/or acquaintances. The support of others, be it instrumental (e.g., advice, assistance, information) or emotional (e.g., moral support, sympathy, understanding) in nature (Carver et al., 1989), was commonly sought by (e.g., Alfermann & Gross, 1997; Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Stambulova et al., 2007; Ungerleider, 1997; Wheeler et al., 1999), and utilized to the benefit of (e.g., Blaeslid & Stetler, 2003; Chambers, 2002; Torregosa et al., 2015; Wylleman et al., 1993), athletes in transition. Such support encouraged occupational

development (e.g., Drawer & Fuller, 2002; Reynolds, 1981; Wylleman et al., 1993), alleviated the emotional difficulties associated with retirement (e.g., Brown, Webb, Robinson, & Cotgreave, 2018; Grove et al., 1997; Wylleman et al., 1993), and eased the undertaking of athletic career cessation (e.g., Blaeslid & Stetler, 2003; Stambulova, 2009; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Institutional Resources. Quality of adjustment to athletic career retirement was similarly aided by the support of sport organizations, affiliated programs, and trained professionals (e.g., academic/career counselors, psychologists; Anderson & Morris, 2000). Participation in organization-sponsored career transition programs (e.g., the Australian Sports Commission's Athlete and Career Education [ACE] Program; the National Hockey League Alumni Association's BreakAway Program; and the Positive Transitions for Student Athletes Program), for example, has resulted in skill development (both applied and transferable; e.g., Andrijiw, 2010; Lavallee, Gorely, Lavallee, & Wylleman, 2001; Lopez de Subijana, Barriopedro, & Conde, 2015; Petitpas, Danish, McKelvain, & Murphy, 1992), continued education (e.g., Andrijiw 2010; Lavallee et al., 2001; Lopez de Subijana et al., 2015), career exploration (e.g., Andrijiw, 2010; Stankovich, Meeker, & Henderson, 2001), employment prospects (e.g., Emrich, Altmeyer, & Papathanssiou, 1994; Wylleman et al., 1993), and feelings of emotional support (e.g., Albion, 2007; Andrijiw, 2010; Chambers, 2002; Gilmore, 2008; Petitpas et al., 1992). Also of aid to retiring athletes were a number of psychoeducational interventions: in one instance, group counseling was used to mitigate stress, explore grief and loss, and identify personal and professional goals (Constantine, 1995); in another, a life development procedure, individuals were taught of how to transfer skills across domains, and cope with future events (Lavallee, 2005); and in two examples, account-making (i.e., the construction of an autobiographical

record) was employed to facilitate emotional release, cognitive clarification, and psychological adjustment (Lavallee et al., 1997; McKenna & Thomas, 2007). The support afforded by institutional resources was thus therapeutic, and of value to recipients.

Unfortunately, for many in need, such support was often limited, or unavailable. Serving to limit the efficacy of organization-sponsored career transition programs, in particular, were a myriad of management-related shortcomings: in the marketing of extant curricula (e.g., Andrijiw, 2010; Lavallee et al., 2001; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993); the provision of timely (e.g., Andrijiw, 2010), and therapeutic interventions (e.g., Andrijiw, 2010; Drawer & Fuller, 2002; Petitpas et al., 1992; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Wylleman et al., 1993; Young et al., 2006); and the availability of sustainable support (e.g., Andrijiw, 2010; Gilmore, 2008; Lavallee et al., 2001; Petitpas et al., 1992; Lopez de Subijana et al., 2015). These shortcomings paled, however, in comparison to those of organizations that were without a career transition program (e.g., Chow, 2001; Denison, 1997; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Menkenhorst & van den Berg, 1997; Stambulova et al., 2007; Wheeler et al., 1999; Zaichkowsky, King, & McCarthy, 2000). Without such programs, and the provision of relevant support, athletes were prone to developing feelings of abandonment (e.g., Chow, 2001; Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Wheeler et al., 1999), and experiencing difficulties in transition (e.g., Denison, 1997; Wippert & Wippert, 2008; Zaichkowsky et al., 2000).

Quality of adjustment to athletic career retirement, to reiterate, then, is dependent on not only a multitude of factors (e.g., athletic identity, autonomy, health, and achievement), but also the availability and exploitation of personal, social, and institutional resources. Difficulties, more specifically, may be predicted to occur with those who

> a) have most strongly and exclusively based their identity on athletic performance; (b) have the greatest gap between level of aspiration and level of ability; (c) have had the least prior experience with the same or similar transitions; (d) are limited in their general ability to adapt to change because of emotional and/or behavioral deficits; (e) are limited in their ability to form and maintain supportive relationships; and (f) must deal with the transition in a context (social and/or physical) lacking material and emotional resources that could be helpful. (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990, p. 9)

Implicit within this prediction was the influence of sport organizations and managers.

Institutional Influence. These actors, in addition to providing some form of retirement-related intervention (e.g., academic and career counseling and programs), may affect the transition process through the regulation of developmental attitudes and behaviours. Institutional or organizational influence, as such, may be exerted not only at the time of retirement, but also across the span of individual life (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). Unfortunately, and as studies have shown, the natures and outcomes of such influence may often be deleterious (e.g., Cosh, Crabb, & Tully, 2015; Fleuriel & Vincent, 2009; Hare, 1971; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Price, 2007; Robidoux, 2001; Ryan, 2015; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993).

Among the first to denote the presence of such an influence, in a study of professional pugilism, was Hare (1971). As the author of the study concluded,

> Professional boxing fails to equip its graduates for other work. In fact, it tends to prejudice them against it. Managers and trainers are opposed to having their fighters learn other trades or work at other jobs during their careers. They want a fighter to devote himself completely to boxing. They also feel that a fighter who has no other means of

> support and no other skills will train harder and, when the going in the ring gets rough, fight harder. (Hare, 1971, pp. 7-8)

Similar conclusions were subsequently drawn from examinations into, among other cases (e.g., elite level rugby, Price, 2007; minor professional ice hockey, Robidoux, 2001), the demise of a National Football League team-sponsored career counselling program (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; see pp. 182-183), and Canadian national sport organizations' treatment of elite amateur athletes (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). The latter examination (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993), in particular, called upon coaches and the organized network of elite amateur sport to heed the retirement-related recommendations of athletes, and remedy any setting that discouraged a balance of pursuits.

In a more recent collection of examinations, relating to organizational interventions (e.g., educational and/or vocational programs) and preparedness for athletic career retirement, balance was found to be oft promoted, but rarely instilled (Hickey & Kelly, 2005, 2008; McGillivray et al., 2005; Parker, 2000). The examinations further revealed that instilment was inhibited by the performance-based cultures of sporting organizations (Hickey & Kelly, 2005, 2008; McGillivray et al., 2005; Parker, 2000). Such inhibition was particularly well captured in Parker's (2000) study of English professional football trainees. As the author articulated,

> For most trainees educational achievement was an unnecessary distraction to the pursuit of occupational success. Implicit within the context of club culture was the understanding that to succeed as a professional player one had to 'think' as a professional player, and that meant 'thinking' only of football. For any trainee to admit an affinity for academic attainment or to overtly undertake steps towards post-career planning was, in effect, to admit also to the inevitability of footballing rejection. (Parker, 2000, p. 67)

McGillivray et al. (2005), in a similar study, investigated the impact of sport structures on Scottish professional football players' views of career trajectory and education. The study revealed that football clubs shaped the attitudes and behaviours of players to the detriment of educational attainment (McGillivray et al., 2005). Hickey and Kelly (2005, 2008), finally, in complementary investigations of the Australian Football League (AFL), found that players' mandatory involvement in higher education often resulted in problematical identity-related tensions: issues arose as players attempted to balance the seemingly contradictory organizational expectations of continued education (the creation and maintenance of a non-athletic identity) and athletic development (the creation and maintenance of an athletic identity).

Thus, with these findings (Hickey & Kelly, 2005, 2008; McGillivray et al., 2005; Parker, 2000), and those of others (e.g., Hare, 1971; Jones, 2013; Jones & Denison, 2017; Monk & Russell, 2000; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Petitpas et al., 1992; Price, 2007; Robidoux, 2001; Ryan, 2015; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993), the potentially deleterious effects of organizational actors were exposed: attitudes and behaviours of athletes could be shaped to the detriment of personal development, and in such a manner as to cause identity foreclosure (for findings to the contrary, see Pink et al., 2015). Still missing, however, were studies of how these effects could be achieved. To construct a study of this sort, and better understand the relationship between institutional actors and athletic career retirement, it was pertinent to turn to the conceptualization of identity regulation (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

Identity Regulation

This conceptualization, devised by Alvesson and Willmott (2002), is one of intraorganizational dynamics, and depicts identities, in part, as manifestations of managerial control. Identity regulation, more specifically, "encompasses the more or less intentional effects

of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 625). Accordingly, the conceptualization explicates how identities may be influenced or changed by those within organizations.

Central to the achievement of identity regulation, and therefore to the tenets of the conceptualization, is the use of discourse (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). The introduction, reproduction, and/or legitimization of a particular discourse, on the part of managers, has the potential to bound individual experience, and confer meaning to categorical membership (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). To illustrate as much, and denote how managers may influence employee identities, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) presented four categories and nine forms of discourse practices: the first such category addressed individual definitions, and accounted for the explicit characterization of employees and specific others; the second category turned from the specification of individuals to the transformation of action orientations, and foresaw managers influencing identity development through the provision of motivations, the communication of morals and values, and the teaching of knowledge and skills; with yet another category, regulation was suggested to be engendered through the defining of two forms of social relations, namely, group affiliation and hierarchical location; in a final category, alteration was tied to means of contextualization, and entailed the naturalization of rules and standards within an organization, and the explication of a field’s essential conditions. Ultimately, as Alvesson and Willmott (2002) argued, "ideological and disciplinary forms of power operate through (a) the supply/restriction of availability of discourses, (b) the frequency or intensity of their presence, and (c) the specific linking of discourse and subjectivity (O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001)" (p. 628).

Researchers, in lending credence to this line of argumentation, subsequently identified examples of discourse practices in empirical works of various domains (e.g., Anteby, 2008;

Empson, 2004; Gagnon, 2008; Gotsi, Andriopoulos, Lewis, & Ingram, 2010; Hancock & Tyler, 2007; Holmqvist, Maravelias, & Skålén, 2013; Langley, Golden-Biddle, Reay, Denis, Hébert, Lamothe, & Gervais, 2012). Gagnon (2008), for one, in a study of an international agency and a multinational corporation, found that socialization tactics were integral to the communication of organizational values, the naturalization of worker expectations, and the creation of conformist identities. In another study, of the labour market, Holmqvist et al. (2013) illustrated how individual characterization and group categorization served, unintentionally, to reinforce both identities and disenfranchisement. Although there existed incongruities between the findings of other examinations (e.g., Langley et al., 2012) and Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) categorization of determinative practices, evidence of identity regulation remained (e.g., Anteby, 2008; Empson, 2004).

Regulation, however, is neither absolute nor free from contestation. Organizational members are "not reducible to passive consumers of managerially designed and designated identities" (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 621), and may actively and critically analyze the discourses of a domain (Brown, 2015). Regulation, as such, is often precarious, and may prompt individuals to form, repair, maintain, strengthen, or revise constructions of the self (i.e., engage in identity work, Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). The conceptualization, as a whole then, and as Alvesson and Willmott (2002) depicted in a graphical representation (see Figure 1), considers for the outcomes that may be born from not only the discourse practices of managers, but also the interpretive activities and self-identities of individuals.

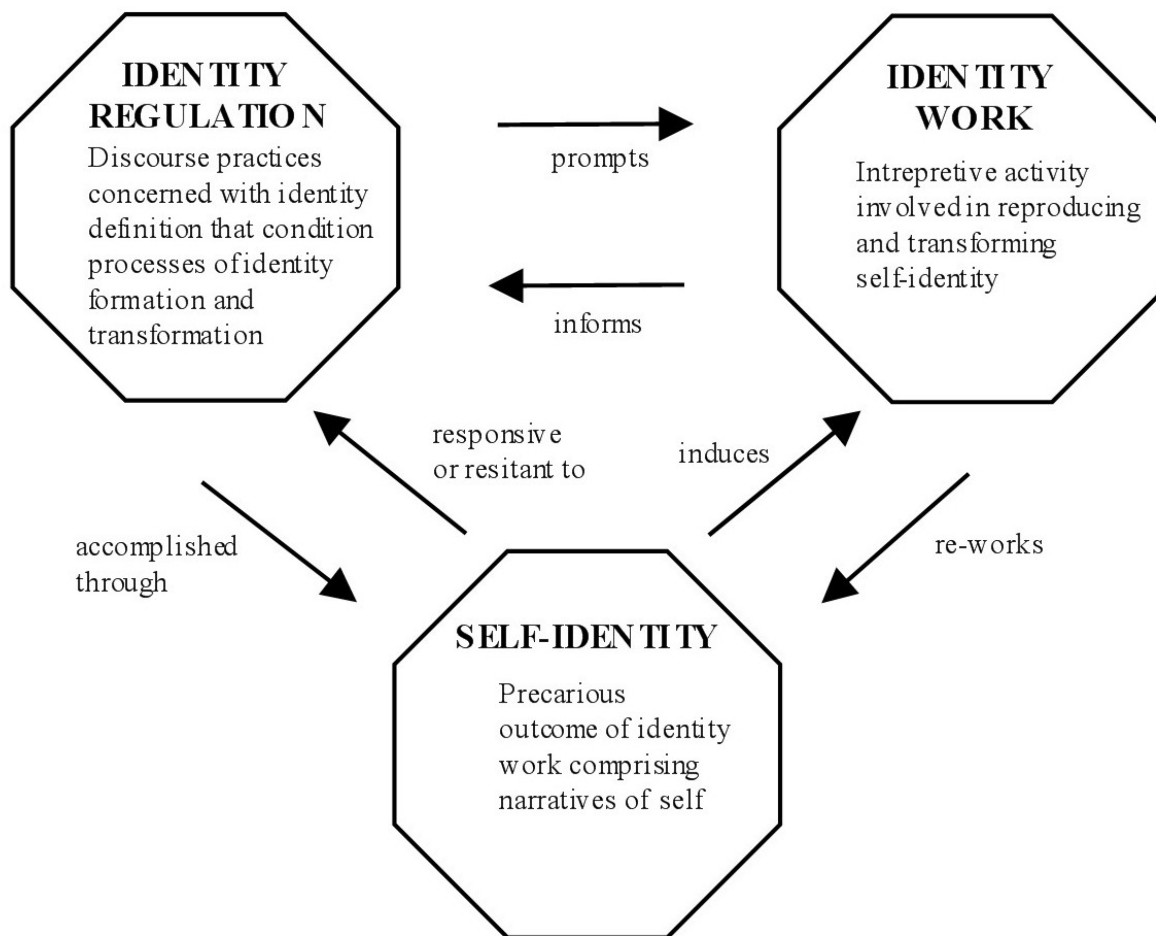

Figure 1. Identity regulation, identity work, and self-identity. Reprinted by Permission of John Wiley and Sons. From Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies, 39*, p. 627.

Summary

These points of consideration led, in part, to the adoption of the conceptualization (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) for the purposes of the undertaken examination. Past efforts to explicate the process of athletic career cessation framed the end of a career as being the final stage in a lengthy course of development (Stambulova et al., 2007; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004), and the quality of the resultant transition experience as being dependent upon a number of interrelated factors and resources (e.g., Park et al., 2013). In particular, researchers found that the quality of the transition experience was dependent, in large part, upon athletic identity salience (e.g., Park et al., 2013). Given the holistic, as well as ecological, frames that came to be applied to the process of career cessation, and the import that identity salience was found to have in determining the quality thereof, there arose a logical corollary to examine how organizations, managers, and actors shaped and informed the self-definitions of high-level athletes prior to retirement. Through such an examination, one embedded in the work of Alvesson and Willmott (2002), the tenets of individual self-definition, and their supporting means of regulation, could be delineated; and a clearer determination regarding the role of managers in a pre-retirement environment could be realized.

Methodology

As with many a study, the base for any potential determination rested in the data that were gathered from scientific observation, and an oft-implicit set of metaphysical suppositions. The latter, according to scholars (e.g., Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2004; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Willis, 2007), concerns the natures of reality and knowledge, and influences nearly every aspect of the investigative process: "ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological . . . [positions; altered noun] which have methodological implications for the choices [that are] made . . . [with regard to; altered preposition] particular techniques of data collection, the interpretation of . . . findings, . . . [and the presentation of results; altered close]" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 14). In the context of the completed work, conceptions of identity and athletic career retirement reflected the occurrence of a relativist ontology (Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Sparkes, 1992; Willis, 2007), and a constructionist epistemology (Crotty, 1998). Consistent with such suppositions, the study was additionally framed by the interpretive paradigm (Neuman, 2003; Willis, 2007), and a case design (Stake, 1994; Yin, 1993).

Ontology

As just described, the study's frame was drawn, in part, from ontology, a branch of metaphysics that is concerned with such matters as being, the nature of existence, and the structure of reality (Crotty, 1998). These matters, which underlie the very constitution of the social world, and many an examination thereof, have engendered the production of several suppositions (Sparkes, 1992; Willis, 2007): naïve realism, for example, holds that there is an apprehendable reality, driven by natural laws and mechanisms; critical realism, in a similar vein, asserts that there exists an objective reality, but adds that perceptions thereof are fallible and thus ever in need of refinement; historical realism, alternatively, claims that observable realities are

the products of social reification; and relativism, finally, rejects the tenets of realism, and posits that the social world is a product of the human mind (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). With relativism, in particular, and as Guba and Lincoln (2004) noted,

> Realities [exist] . . . in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, [are] socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions. Constructions are not more or less "true," in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. (p. 26)

Such is representative of identity, and the phenomenon of athletic career retirement.

Epistemology

In addition to being representative of as much, relativism provides the base for a related supposition, from epistemology, a branch of metaphysics that is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Sparkes, 1992; Willis, 2007). This related supposition, termed constructionism, maintains that knowledge is assembled in and out of human interaction, and transmitted in an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998). Unlike other epistemological suppositions, such as objectivism, wherein meaning is said to exist apart from individual consciousness, and subjectivism, wherein interpretation is said to be unilaterally imposed, constructionism claims that "meaning does not inhere in [an; modified determiner] object. . . . [but is instead] constructed by human beings as they engage with the world [that] they are interpreting" (Crotty, 1998, pp. 42-43). In the constructionist view, and "because of the essential relationship that human experience bears to its object, no object can be adequately described in isolation from the conscious being experiencing it, nor can any experience be

adequately described in isolation from its object" (Crotty, 1998, p. 45). The supposition, as such, captures the interplay between individual and subject, and, as evidenced by the study of identity and retirement, between researcher and researched.

Paradigm

This supposition (i.e., constructionism), when taken into consideration with that aforementioned from ontology (i.e., relativism), moved the study into the interpretive paradigm. A research paradigm, in general terms, constitutes the worldview of a scientific community, and is composed of theoretical assumptions and laws, as well as a related set of operative techniques (e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2004; Neuman, 2003; Willis, 2007). In the context of modern social science, three paradigms tend to predominate: positivism, or post-positivism, for one, favours realism, deductive axioms, and 'objective' measures, and holds that inquiry ought to result in the discovery of universal laws of human behaviour; critical theory departs from positivism's predilection for numeric-based calculations and deterministic views of human development, and maintains that the purpose of research should be to critique and transform social relations; interpretivism, finally, stands in contrast to positivism (in that it favours relativism, constructionism/subjectivism, voluntarism, inductive reasoning, and local understandings), and encourages researchers to develop an empathic understanding of life, and convey as much through descriptive means (Neuman, 2003). The latter paradigm, as Neuman (2003) further described, calls for "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (p. 76). To accomplish just that, and to understand the action of identity regulation, as well as the social world of athletes, the study was situated within interpretivism.

Design

Toward these same ends, and in accordance with the antifoundationalist tenets of the interpretive paradigm (Willis, 2007), a case design was incorporated into the undertaken examination. Case studies, as Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 104) described, are "in-depth and detailed explorations of single examples (an event, process, organization, group, or individual) that are "an instance drawn from a class" of similar phenomena (Aldeman, Jenkins, & Kemmis, 1983, p. 3)." A case, in itself, as such, may be relatively simple or complex: a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context (Miles & Huberman, 1994), or an integrated system (wherein behaviour is patterned, and consistency and sequentiality are prominent; Stake, 1994).

For the purposes of the completed work, the case reflected the former, and was that of identity regulation in the North American field of men's professional ice hockey (the project could alternatively be described, in the words of Stake, 1994, as an instrumental case study, one in which "a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else," p. 237). The field, as previously intimated, consists of those stakeholders that hold a primary responsibility of maintaining and/or supporting the ongoing operations of a professional hockey enterprise. Accordingly, the field may be said to include the National Hockey League (NHL; a 32-team venture that spans across the United States of America and Canada), two lower-level affiliates (American Hockey League, AHL; and ECHL [formerly recognized as the East Coast Hockey League]), three independent entities (Southern Professional Hockey League, SPHL; Federal Hockey League, FHL; Ligue Nord-Américaine de Hockey, LNAH), a group of employment-related organizations (e.g., the National Hockey League Players' Association, NHLPA; National Hockey League Alumni Association, NHLAA; and

Professional Hockey Players' Association, PHPA), and a small set of certified professionals (e.g., agents, private coaches, and psychologists). Lying outside and/or spanning the boundaries of the field are entities such as junior development leagues (e.g., the Canadian Hockey League; CHL; United States Hockey League; USHL; and National Collegiate Athletic Association; NCAA), equipment manufacturers, and sponsors.

To gain a further understanding of this very field, and the identity regulation that occurred therein, two data gathering techniques were employed: interviewing, and document review. The former, which was both compatible with the case design (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1993), and fit for the setting of note (i.e., wherein the opportunity to observe meaningful action was slight; Patton, 2002), was one that would call upon several individuals to describe their first-hand experiences with the phenomenon of regulation. Before eliciting any such descriptions, however, a suitable research participant selection technique was instituted.

The instituted technique, of purposive sampling, in short, is one that favours description-rich informants (Neuman, 2003; Patton, 1990, 2002). The technique was apt to both the case design and the chosen paradigm as the concern lay not in the construction of a statistically representative sample that would permit generalization to a larger population, but in how a small collection of individuals could illuminate social life (Neuman, 2003; Patton, 1990, 2002). Fittingly, and to illuminate the social life that existed within the described field, interviews were solicited from a sample of those who were responsible for the former's very being.

The process of soliciting interview participants, in itself, stretched across several months (from May of 2017 to February of 2018), and, with few exceptions, involved the use of some form of intermediary. As part of the process, contact (via e-mail and/or phone) was attempted with the public and/or media relations personnel of the offices of National and American Hockey

Leagues, as well as the pair's respective players' associations (i.e., the NHLPA and PHPA). Contact was similarly attempted with the public and/or media relations personnel of 27 and 14 teams from, respectively, the National and American Hockey Leagues (any attempt to contact the personnel of other teams was precluded by a recent change in management, a shared staff, or a prior rejection by an affiliate). In addition to seeking assistance from intermediaries, direct contact was attempted with representatives from the offices of the National Hockey League Alumni Association (NHLAA), the Core Development Program, and 14 National Hockey League (NHL) teams. Although the varied attempts across the many organizations yielded many a rejection, and disregard (e.g., the public and/or media relations personnel of four NHL teams failed to respond to multiple e-mails, and no less than four phone messages), the process also produced a diverse and informed sample.

This sample, which drew upon individuals from many of the aforementioned organizations, could, in effect, be divided into four subsidiary groups. Of these groups, two were the product of purposive sampling in its most general sense (i.e., that which sought pertinent and descriptive informants): the first addressed identity regulation at the level of a league, and consisted of individual representatives from the offices of the National Hockey League (NHL), the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA), and the Professional Hockey Players' Association (PHPA) (n = 3); the other addressed the operations of transition-related systems, and involved the current and/or former leaders of the PHPA Career Enhancement (n = 2) and NHL/NHLPA Core Development Programs (n = 1; n = 3). The remaining groups, unlike those aforementioned, were derived from a limited form of maximum variation sampling, a research participant selection technique that prescribes diversity in representation (Patton, 1990, 2002). The merits of applying this technique, as Patton (1990) explained, come in that "any

common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular . . . value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a [field/organization; altered close]" (p. 172). Of the two groups that were drawn through the use of this technique, one addressed identity regulation at the level of an organization (i.e., a team and its affiliates), and incorporated personnel managers (e.g., general managers, assistant general managers, and/or directors of player personnel) with diverse backgrounds (i.e., educational, management, and athletic experiences) and team affiliations (n = 7). The organizations represented within this group were, in turn, subjected to a form of convenience sampling. The purpose of this additional instance of sampling was to develop a nested case from which identity regulation could be examined in further detail. The study's final sub-sample thus consisted of athletes who were members of the same nested case organization (i.e., a team and its affiliates). More specifically, and in the vein of Hickey and Kelly's (2005, 2008) work, the sub-sample consisted of one development and one veteran status American Hockey League player (the league defines the former as those who have played in 260 or fewer professional games, and the latter as those who have played more; American Hockey League, n.d.; n = 2); and one recently retired National Hockey League veteran (i.e., an individual who surpassed the league average of 247.5 career games played; QuantHockey, n.d.b; the career of the individual concluded within the three years that preceded participation, and during the tenure of the organization's examined administration; n = 1, n = 3). The final sample, as such, consisted of 16 individuals (N = 16).

Absent from the sample, albeit not for a lack of solicitation, were representatives from the offices of the American Hockey League (AHL), and National Hockey League Alumni Association (NHLAA); and, in accord with the adopted maximum variation sampling technique, early- (100 games played or less), mid- (101 to 450 games played), and late-career (451 or more

games played) National Hockey League (NHL) nested case team players (the previous figures were based on an average career, of 247.5 games played; QuantHockey, n.d.b). The office of the American Hockey League declined to make a representative available for interview, and offered the following communication related thereto:

> Thank you for considering (Individual Name) as a potential interview subject. Unfortunately, we actually have minimal direct contact with players here at the league office, and (Individual Name) would not be able to provide you with answers relevant to your study. If you haven't approached them already, I think you would be much better served by speaking to someone at the Professional Hockey Players' Association or someone in NHL team management who oversees player development. (J. Chaimovitch, AHL Vice President of Communications, personal communication, August 15, 2017)

The National Hockey League Alumni Association, conversely, offered no communication at all: multiple attempts of outreach, through e-mail, phone, and the organization's official website, failed to yield a single response. Likewise, attempts of outreach through intermediaries (e.g., association and team communication personnel, study participants) failed to yield a single response from National Hockey League nested case team players. Finally, and due to temporal and practical limitations alike, no other representative groups from the field (e.g., personnel from ECHL organizations, certified professionals) were included as part of the sample.

Of the individuals and groups that were included, each was asked to participate in an interview, and exposed to one of four corresponding guides (see Appendices A through D). Interview guides, as Patton (2002) explained, "list [edited from singular form] the questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an [exchange; altered noun] . . . . [and allow for a researcher] to establish a conversational style . . . with the focus on a particular subject that has

been predetermined" (p. 343). In the context of the completed study, the predetermined subject was two-fold: identity regulation and athletic career retirement.

Prior to addressing these subjects, prospective participants were reminded of the study's purpose (i.e., to examine how organizations shape and influence identities, and how these efforts may affect the process of athletic career termination), informed of the ethical standards that were to be maintained by the researcher, and asked to provide written or verbal consent. With consent, the interviews were conducted, between June 26, 2017 and February 20, 2018 (either in person [at locations selected by the participants; n = 3] or over the phone [n = 13]); audio recorded; and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were 33 to 156 minutes in length (the average length of the interviews was 72 minutes), and produced 315 single-spaced pages of transcript. In each instance, the resultant transcript was sent to the respective participant for verification. On two occasions, the process of verification engendered concerns with regard to confidentiality, and moved participants to request edits to their respective responses. The requests of both participants were honoured, and the edited transcripts were subsequently made available for review and approved. Ultimately, the verified transcripts, of all 16 interview participants, supplied one of two segments of data that were used for the purposes of analysis and interpretation.

The second segment of data, gathered for these same purposes, was drawn from a single printed work, and a collection of internet writings: the former was Starkey's (2016) 'Chasing the Dream: Life in the American Hockey League,' a text that detailed the inner workings of minor professional hockey, and, in so doing, revealed the perspective of many a manager and player therein (n = 1); the latter was, by and large, the product of professional hockey organizations, and comprised six websites' news articles, press releases, and posts from a single year (from

June 15, 2016 to June 15, 2017; i.e., the entirety of a hockey season; n = 3901). The websites (the number of works from each source may be found in parentheses), with one exception, corresponded with the organizations that were represented by interview participants, and as such were those of the National Hockey League (NHL, n = 1144; given the overwhelming number of works on the site, two search terms, "develop" and "identity," were used to narrow the number of reviewable materials [n = 732, n = 412, respectively]), the American Hockey League (AHL, n = 1047), the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA, n = 378), the Professional Hockey Players' Association (PHPA, n = 250), the nested case team (n = 801), and the nested case affiliate (n = 281). In all, 3902 documents were reviewed as part of the study (N = 3902), and, to reiterate, the purposes of analysis and interpretation.

Analysis and Interpretation

The process of analysis, itself, proceeded shortly after the start of data collection. In the earliest stages of the process, analysis was of an informal nature: the contents of transcripts and documents were reviewed, but only in so far as to identify preliminary patterns and insights (consistent with the emergent nature of interpretive inquiry, identified regularities or understandings informed future exchanges and readings of documents; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Following the completion of data collection, the more formal process of thematic analysis began (Boyatzis, 1998).

With this form of analysis, units of pertinent data were identified, and subsequently categorized into themes. As Boyatzis (1998) further explained:

> Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. The encoding requires an explicit "theme." This may be a list of codes; a complex model with codes, indicators, and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two

> forms. A code is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon. A code may be identified at the manifest level (directly observable in the information) or at the latent level (underlying the phenomenon). The codes may be initially generated inductively from the raw information or generated deductively from theory and prior research. (p. 4; to reflect the typical use of the terms of "code" and "theme" [cf. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Neuman, 2003; Patton, 2002], the two terms were interchanged in the previous quotation)

With regard to the completed study, codes were derived inductively, from the contents of transcripts and documents, as well as deductively, from the work of Alvesson and Willmott (2002).

The three-part process of manual coding that followed was similar to that which was initially put forth by Strauss (1987, as cited in both Miles and Huberman, 1994, and Neuman, 2003). In the first part of the process (i.e., open coding), the contents of the collected transcripts and documents were reviewed in detail (i.e., line by line, multiple times); portions thereof were assigned formative codes; and, where applicable, regularities were clustered into themes (Strauss, 1987, as cited in Neuman, 2003; e.g., "I told them that in order for them to reach their full potential, for them to be their best, we, as a staff, do our best to provide them with the best: whether it's other good players to practice with, compete in games with; great coaches, a lot of coaches, a lot of assistants; great support staff, specialists that come in for player development, and strength, and skating, and biomechanics, and sport psychology. [Code: Human Resources] We moved our (Organization Name) team to (City Name), from (City Name), to limit travel, so that the guys would get better rest, and be more fresh for games, so that they could put their best

foot forward. . . . [Code: Performance Excellence] We provide the players with food and facilities. 'We're going to provide you with the best. We're going to provide you with more than other organizations do, but, in return, we're going to ask more of you' [Code: Physical Resources], Participant 05, an Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League Team). In a subsequent review of the transcripts and documents (i.e., axial coding), the focus shifted from the data to the codes, and to examining the essential and relative elements of the latter (Strauss, 1987, as cited in Neuman, 2003; e.g., Means of Regulation: Resource Allocation). The formalized codes, finally, and as part of another review, were assessed with regard to the degree to and manners in which they illustrated a particular theme (i.e., were subjected to selective coding; Strauss, 1987, as cited in Neuman, 2003; e.g., Theme: Enabling Athletic Identity Maintenance and Performance).

The final set of codes and themes, in turn, were employed in a process of interpretation (e.g., LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). As Patton (2002) explained, "interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meaning, and otherwise imposing order on an unruly but surely patterned world" (p. 480). It was thus, through interpretation, that the forthcoming conclusions and implications (on identity regulation and athletic career retirement) were derived.

Trustworthiness and Quality Assurance

Given that any rendered interpretation would be subject to future scrutiny, and in effort to ensure that the provided findings were trustworthy, a number of related and recommended tactics were incorporated into the design of the examination (e.g., Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Sparkes, 1992; Willis, 2007). To ensure the basic quality of the collected data,

for example, the representativeness of the sample and their responses was scrutinized, the sources of information were triangulated (e.g., through the construction of a diverse sample, and the use of multiple data sources), and the effects of the researcher were restricted (e.g., through the use of unobtrusive measures, the explicit conveyance of the study's purpose, the conduction of off-site interviews, and the avoidance of disruption to the extant social/institutional environment; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Willis, 2007). The coherence of the identified patterns, moreover, and where applicable, were tested against conflicting and/or outlying evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sparkes, 1992). The findings, in and of themselves, lastly, were checked by a member of the sample (namely, the lone retired athlete; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Before addressing a broader set of standards that related to the work as a whole (Miles & Huberman, 1994), it must be noted, with regard to the effects of the researcher, as the primary instrument of data collection (Creswell, 2003), that anecdotal and scientific evidence, as well as a concern for the well-being of athletes post-retirement, coloured a personal view, and rendered, prior to study, extant development systems as problematic. In addition, and given a relative lack of proficiency with the research process, it can be said that Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) conceptualization was not fully exploited, and that, as a result, the rendered findings were limited in nature. Despite these biases and faults, every attempt was made to offer an accurate and otherwise complete depiction of the collected data.

As to the aforementioned set of standards, the study, in a vein similar to that aforementioned, adhered to a number of advocated tactics (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study, in this regard, attended to the matters of confirmability, with an explicit description of the project's methods, exhibits of pertinent data, and the retention of transcripts; dependability (i.e.,

auditability), through the clear conveyance of research questions, methods, and constructs, and the conduction of paradigmatically appropriate data collection, analysis, and review procedures; credibility (i.e., authenticity), with the provision of meaningful and context-rich descriptions and a comprehensive and coherent account of phenomena, and a review of both the work's triangulation and the constituent parts of the guiding conceptualization (i.e., identity regulation); and transferability, through the construction of a diverse sample and the specification thereof, the application and supplementation of prior theory, and the acknowledgment of both limitations and the potential for further investigation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In attending to as much, the trustworthiness of the study's results could, presumably, be reaffirmed.

Results and Discussion

An analysis of the collected data revealed that regulation in the North American field of men's professional ice hockey entailed the construction and maintenance of a bipartite athletic identity; a largely self-directed, non-sporting alternative; and a nascent merger between the two. The regulatory means that engendered these identities corresponded, in many respects, to examples from Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) initial typology: managers prescribed a particular vocabulary of motives; espoused a set of desirable values and characteristics; helped develop context-specific knowledge and skills; and defined, for individuals, both their context and social position. The ultimate product of these regulatory means, and the multiple sets of organizational practices that undergirded as much (see Table 1), was an eminent athletic identity, one that could continue to complicate the process of sport career cessation.

Athletic Identity Regulation

Consistent with Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) conceptualization, the devised athletic identity, like others in the field, was defined by multiple motives, sets of values and characteristics, and bodies of knowledge and skill. Central to the athletic identity, in particular, and emblematic of its bipartite nature, were two motives: performance excellence (as Miller and Kerr, 2002, described), and community enrichment/beneficence. From each, a component of the identity could be drawn. The pursuit of performance excellence, for example, engendered an identity component with the values and characteristics of competitiveness, industriousness, professionalism, selflessness, toughness, and uprightness; and with proficiencies in technical maneuvers (e.g., skating, shooting), physical fitness/training, nutrition/food preparation, situational play, and match systems. Community enrichment and beneficence engendered a like product, but, as both motives held a subordinate position in relation to performance excellence,

the concomitant identity component lacked an equivalent level of complexity and development. The component, as it was, included the values and characteristics of uprightness, leadership, sociability, perspective, and reciprocity; as well as the skills of brand management and public speaking. With both identity components, the development of individual elements was supported by a broad range of organizational practices.

Sport Component - Motive. Spurring the regulation of these identity components, however, and as aforementioned, were rudimental motives. The sporting component of the identity, for one, was spurred by the notion of performance excellence (as described, again, by Miller and Kerr, 2002). As much was reflected in the responses of personnel managers: when asked to describe the ultimate ends of individual development, and/or what was hoped to be achieved with organizational members, the answers, despite varying levels of nuance, inevitably focused on winning and team success. Providing the most succinct and/or direct example of such a response was Participant 07, an Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team:

> Ultimately, anything you do in professional sports is to win. How do you plan to develop players that are going to play for your organization, and help you win? How are you going to develop, find, sign, and draft players that are going to maybe be assets for you to move to another organization, and get another asset that might fill either a pressing need or an organizational need? That's your end goal; your end goal is about winning, and building depth in the organization. And in order to accomplish those [goals], anybody who's in the organization [i.e., the athletes] has a plan, and typically that plan is how they're going to get to the end goal: how are we going to get a young, drafted player to the NHL; what are the areas that he needs to enhance, as an individual … to get him to that end goal - And then put the resources, time, and effort into helping accomplish that.

Moreover, and as evidenced by the responses of those who were members of the nested case, it was this motive that most instructed the identity of an athlete:

> In developing these individuals, the ultimate goal is to win championships. I mean, that's why we're in this. Right? I think that, again, we want these types of individuals because we believe that these individuals, who hold these characteristics, who play with these talents, who have these traits, will eventually lead us to championships. They'll succeed, we succeed, everybody succeeds, and everybody is better off. (Participant 03, an Assistant General Manager of the Nested Case Organization)
>
> I would say they [(i.e., the managers of the organization)] do emphasize that [(i.e., leadership)], but that's not - the main goal is just winning. If they have no leaders on the team, and they win, they're happy. I wouldn't say that they push that on you more than winning, for sure, no. (Participant 12, an American Hockey League Veteran)
>
> Well, number one, the most important thing, across the board, is winning. That's number one. (Participant 14, an American Hockey League 'Development Player')

Managers, as such, commended and promoted an interpretive framework that centred on athletic potential, and, more specifically, team success.

Sport Component - Values and Characteristics. In conjunction with as much, a number of interconnected values and characteristics were stressed: among them, competitiveness, industriousness, professionalism, selflessness, toughness, and uprightness. These values and characteristics, as Participant 16, the National Hockey League veteran and alumnus in the sample, succinctly described, were emblematic not only of the athletic identity within the nested case, but also that within the sport at large:

> The result isn't as important as the process is a huge message. Work hard, be humble, be a good teammate, that selflessness, that fraternity . . . . In general, if I had to summarize, those are the things that every team I've ever played for - NHL, AHL, (Major Junior League), Europe - those things transcend team, transcend league, and they're bred - they're the culture of our sport on a global level. You zoom out, to the thirty-thousand-foot view of our game, and those are the pillars and the foundation of a hockey player's identity. . . . You're going to hear discipline; you're going to hear compete; you're going to hear work ethic; you're going to hear community; and you're going to hear team selflessness. Those are the foundation - maybe even extrapolate that to athletics in general - but those are the things that we ... (pauses) that's what we value.

Thus, for individuals to embody the identity of an athlete, and, more specifically, that of a professional hockey player, they needed to both hold and internalize the aforementioned characteristics and values.

Of the listed, none was more central to the identity, or oft referenced in relation thereto, than that of competitiveness: "He competes his (butt) off" (Kevin Dean, Head Coach, Providence Bruins; Divver, 2016, para. 11); "He competes every night he's out there" (Gerry Fleming, Head Coach, Bakersfield Condors; Griffith, 2016, para. 12); "He's a fierce competitor" (Jiri Fischer, Director of Player Development, Detroit Red Wings; Wakiji, 2016b, para. 18); "Most importantly, he competes" (Tom Fitzgerald, Assistant General Manager, New Jersey Devils; Custance, 2017, para. 14); "His compete level all over the ice is what everybody's going to be excited about" (Joe Sakic, General Manager, Colorado Avalanche; Sadowski, 2016, para. 8). The characteristic, and its centrality to the identity, was elucidated, in particular, by Brad Treliving, General Manager of the Calgary Flames (NHL):

> Speed and skill is always at a premium… So is being competitive… It's not necessarily someone that's going to run over everyone and throw someone into the third row of the seats. That's maybe a portion of it, a facet of being competitive, but to me it's about who gets to the puck first, and on 50-50 pucks who wins the puck, and who's willing to go to areas that aren't pleasant to go to to score goals. Those are areas of competitiveness. You've got a skill set, and to reach a level that that skill set is NHL level and can be successful in the NHL… how willing are you to put the work in and have the drive. To me it's having that motor, the engine to reach whatever potential you may have. That's how we define competitive nature. (Vickers, 2016a, paras. 13-14)

Individual potential, as well as the performance of, and adherence to, an athletic identity, was thus tied to competitiveness. That is, to be a professional in either the American or National Hockey League, it was essential to compete, against members of other and allied teams alike.

As intimated by the previous quotation, the characteristic was also and often associated with intense industriousness. For an individual to embody the identity of a professional hockey player (and approach/achieve their sporting potential), it was expected that they outwork, if not outperform, fellow competitors. And although industriousness may be emblematic of many an occupation and field, it was the characteristic's explicit integration into the interpretive framework of note that made the former particularly salient. Todd McLellan, for example, shortly after taking on the position of Head Coach of the Edmonton Oilers (NHL), expressed, explicitly, the need for his team's identity to be grounded in the characteristic:

> We've got to develop a foundation of work ethic and commitment level and make sure our identity comes through not only in games but in practices and in the community, and if we can get that into place over time then we'll have success. (Tilley, 2016b, para. 17)

The pursuit of performance excellence, and the related identity component, then, were tied to a sense of continued diligence.

Diligence and industriousness, moreover, were part and parcel of what managers referred to as ‘professionalism.’ The term, despite its potential to connote a truism (i.e., a professional acts with professionalism), often held a specific meaning within the examined field. In part, and as evidenced by a pair of quotations (from individuals of different teams), the term signified a perpetual commitment to (the honing of) one’s craft: “[Referring specifically to his team’s development camp] You learn a big part of being a pro is the 365-day part of it and taking care of yourself away from the rink” (Devin Shore, Player, Dallas Stars; Stepneski, 2016, para. 11); “You want to play in the NHL you ultimately have to live and be like a pro. It’s 365 days a year” (Ken Holland, General Manager, Detroit Red Wings; Wakiji, 2016a, para. 4). When such commitment was matched with a deference to authority (e.g., coaches, managers), stoicism, and a prioritization of team good, the characteristic was fully assumed. An example of just such a match, and the personification of the characteristic, was provided by McCarthy (2017):

> For more than seven weeks this season, between Jan. 18 and the 11th of this month [March], [Josiah Didier], the St. John’s IceCaps defenceman was mostly a healthy scratch. He did get into a game on Feb. 5 against the Hershey Bears, and even scored a goal, and he had a brief assignment to the ECHL’s Brampton Beast, but mostly he found himself in seat in the press box at Mile One Centre and other rinks around the American Hockey League. But after getting back into the lineup 10 days ago, he’s playing like he never wants that upstairs perch again. . . . “That’s why he hasn’t missed a beat. It’s his attitude. It’s his work ethic. It’s his professionalism,” said IceCaps head coach Sylvain Lefebvre. . . . “He doesn’t complain. It says it all about the kid. He knew his time would

come and he's making the most of that time." When asked about all that other time as a healthy scratch, the 23-year-old Didier offered up some of that attitude to which his coach referred, saying that even though he wasn't playing, he still had a job to do. "Staying positive, working my butt off in practice, pushing my teammates to get better," said the 23-year-old native of Littleton, Colo. (paras. 4-7)

Although the term, and, as a consequence, the characteristic, engendered more straightforward definitions (e.g., goodness, Participant 04, a Representative of the Professional Hockey Players' Association; sociability, Participant 11, the Manager of an American Hockey League team), the previous reflected a common refrain (e.g., Cotsonika, 2016b, para. 27; McGran, 2017, para. 8).

Subject to a similarly common refrain was a constituent element of professionalism, selflessness. As perhaps with most any team sport, the characteristic, and its corresponding attributes, self-sacrifice and depersonalization, were perceived as being essential to the pursuit of performance excellence, and the ideal of an athletic identity. Participant 13, a General Manager of an American Hockey League team, for example, highlighted the importance their organization placed on selflessness and a "team-first" attitude:

> We have a mission statement in our organization . . . and the first line of the statement is 'family first.' . . . And when we talk about family we talk about not only immediate family, whether it's your wife or kids, or your parents, but also your family on the team: your teammates are your family; the organization is your family. You'll do whatever it takes to let your family succeed . . . . You know, you see that slogan all the time, 'whatever it takes,' but that's basically what you want: you want anybody who's not selfish, in that aspect of team-first - you're looking after your family - and sometimes you sacrifice your own accolades for team accolades, and that's what you want. That's what

> you want, you want character guys. You don’t want selfish guys. You don’t want guys who don’t care about wins and losses. Some guys worry about whether they get their goals or not; don’t really want that on a team. We want guys who want to score, but we want guys who want to score and win at the same time.

The specific degree of selflessness that was provoked by organizations, and/or that typified the identity of note, was difficult to discern. Nevertheless, indicators thereof were made available in a variety of forms: as an example, when retiring, individuals commended immediate family members for their sacrifices, and, in so doing, intimated that the time and attention that was devoted to one’s craft could often, and did, exceed that which was afforded to close kin (e.g., National Hockey League Players’ Association, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017).

As another example, physical well-being was often sacrificed in the service of team good. Although the sport of hockey quite typically demands considerable physicality and exertion, individuals were routinely ready to sacrifice as much and more, and did so through displays of toughness: by placing one’s own body in harm’s way, and by playing through (i.e., enduring) both injury and pain. A particularly vivid, although not unique, example of such self-sacrifice and toughness was described by Pinkert (2017):

> Alexander Steen played all but one game in the Stanley Cup Playoffs with a broken bone in his left foot. Steen was injured in Game 1 vs. Minnesota and didn't practice throughout the playoffs because it was too difficult to even get his skate on. On gamedays, 30 minutes before warm-ups, Steen would meet with the team doctors and take shots to numb the pain and force his foot into his skate. "I can tell you I sat in the coaches office with the trainer's room next door, and you could hear him writhing in pain to get himself ready to play," Blues Head Coach Mike Yeo said. "You feel really bad for him, but hats

> off to the guy as far as what he's given to the team . . . we didn't advance past the second round, but there was never a time where I felt guys weren't giving enough to each other or for the cause." Already playing with injury, Steen then made a desperation shot block in Game 4 vs. Nashville. Roman Josi's slapshot drilled him in the same foot, causing a bone bruise severe enough to keep him out of the lineup in Game 5 - the only game he missed in the postseason. Steen said Tuesday that he didn't think twice about making the physical sacrifices. "It's playoff time. It's something that all the guys go through on both sides, both teams," Steen said. "We had some guys we felt like were in beast mode. (Robert Bortuzzo), I told him he was in beast mode all the time. He was sacrificing himself, throwing himself into shots. (Paul) Stastny comes back from a significant leg injury, (Scottie Upshall) has got to take a shot-blocking course this summer because he's throwing his face in front of some of them. It's just part of our identity as a team." . . . "It's a real good leadership message and a message to what we're trying to do as far as a culture here," Yeo said of Steen's heroics. "He's laying it on the line and sacrificing whatever he can for his teammates." (paras. 1-7, 9)

As intimated by the previous, the identity of many a team, and, more specifically, an athlete, was tied to not only selflessness (and self-sacrifice), but also toughness.

The final defining characteristic of the devised identity, uprightness, or "character," at times, held the same meaning as both of the aforementioned, selflessness and toughness. For Participant 10, a Personnel Manager of a National Hockey League team, for example, the characteristics were one and the same: "Character to me is very simple, it's somebody who will do whatever they can for the collective good, for the good of the organization." Likewise, the previously provided statement of Participant 13, regarding selflessness and a "team-first" or

"family first" attitude, was the product of a question about "character." More simply, however, and as the response of Participant 11, the Personnel Manager of an American Hockey League team, implied, the term and characteristic may best reflect a set of basic human qualities:

> To me, character means just being a good person, who has great manners, gets along with everybody, takes criticism - if he gets criticized - and gives criticism, but in a good, proper manner, where it's not degrading to someone, or where you're not calling someone out. It's an all-around person who gets along well with everyone, has a good personality, and can be very personable. Those are kind of my thoughts on character. It just comes down to being a good person, having great morals, and being able to speak with people.

Organizations and managers, in this sense, desired to construct an identity in which, and employ individuals for whom, moral decency and respect (i.e., uprightness) were a priority, or, at the very least, a value.

The sporting component of the athletic identity, as such, and to reiterate, was primarily defined by six characteristics/values: competitiveness, industriousness, professionalism, selflessness, toughness, and uprightness. Several other characteristics, such as leadership, physical fitness, and coachability, were noted by multiple managers, and could additionally be ascribed to the identity. Confluences between the listed characteristics (e.g., between leadership, coachability, and professionalism; and physical fitness and industriousness), however, relegated the latter to a subordinate position.

Sport Component - Knowledge and Skills. In addition to the aforementioned characteristics and values, the sporting component of the athletic identity could be defined by a context-specific knowledge base and a related set of skills. As Alvesson and Willmott (2002)

explained, “the construction of knowledge and skills are key resources for regulating identity in a corporate context as knowledge defines the knower: what one is capable of doing (or expected to be able to do) frames who one 'is'.” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 630). In the context of the examined field, athletes were defined by a knowledge of, and/or a proficiency in, technical maneuvers (e.g., skating, shooting), physical fitness/training, nutrition/food preparation, situational play (i.e., having a “hockey sense”), and match systems.

Of the previous, technical maneuvers were foremost in the adherence to, and performance of, the identity of note. Within the field/sport, various competencies were taught, and/or could be attained: forwards, for example, generally tasked with the responsibility of scoring, were directed to dedicate much of their time and attention to refining such abilities as skating, passing, and shooting (as well as the component parts thereof; e.g., with regard to the former, acceleration and balance); defensemen, likewise, were required to attend to these maneuvers, as well as others more germane to their position, such as positional play, and checking (i.e., the act of separating an opponent from a puck); goaltenders, finally, and by the unique nature of their role on a team, typically were asked to hone such capacities as reactivity, and puck control (e.g., Boulding, 2016). Differences in skill sets aside, athletic identity adherence and performance were predicated upon the attainment, maintenance, and refinement of specific abilities. As the following example intimates, a failure to continually refine one’s physical skills, in light of the competitiveness and industriousness of others, could consign an individual to an alternative and/or less-desirable end and/or self (e.g., status as a minor professional or retired player):

> In a system that's all about high tempo play, [Tanner] Richard has continued to work on his skating in order to take the next step to the NHL. . . . After many practices, he is in a group that skates with [Syracuse Crunch (AHL)] assistant coach Trent Cull and, like

> many players, works with skating coach Barb Underhill during and before the season. "After practice we always grab a group of guys and do skating drills," Richard said. "Not bag skates, but just things to get your feet moving quicker. . . . I don't think I'll ever be one of the best skaters, but it has come a long way from where it was. . . ." [Syracuse Crunch Head Coach Benoit] Groulx said he has seen improvement in Richard's skating over the past month, and that could be the key to him challenging for a spot in Tampa Bay [(i.e., in the NHL)]. (Houghtaling, 2016, paras. 3, 11-13)

An adeptness with technical maneuvers, as such, strengthened standing (on a team/in a league), and, as a result, the permanency of one's identity.

Such adeptness, moreover, engendered a concentration on physical capacities. Managers, accordingly, attempted to ensure that team members developed hardy physiques, and were educated in physical fitness and training, as well as nutrition and food preparation. New Jersey Devils (NHL) Strength and Conditioning Coach, Joe Lorincz, for example, explained how his team's annual development camp offered the opportunity to provide just such an education to young and incoming employees:

> We just want to teach them what it's like to be a professional hockey player. I don't really train them throughout the week with the intention of making them better in that week, but I design the workouts to show them how we train in New Jersey and how they should be training once they get back home. During the past in camp, we have had cooking classes and a nutritionist seminar, so that once they turn pro and they're living on their own, they know how to feed themselves. It's basically a weeklong lesson in how to be a pro . . . . (Robenhymer, 2017b, para. 21)

The internalized nature of similar lessons, from other teams, and the resultant impacts on identity, were perhaps best captured in a brief comment by Curtis Lazar, a forward with the Ottawa Senators:

> I know what's expected of me and how to be an everyday NHL player and what it takes. I need to make sure my body is in tip-top shape throughout the long season so I apply those methods [that will allow me to do so; clarification added]. I'm in constant contact with Chris Schwarz and Molly Morgan our nutritionist as well so we have the tools that allow us to get to the next level. (Medaglia, 2016, para. 5)

Physical and identity performance alike thus necessitated a knowledge of, and/or a proficiency in, physical fitness/training, and nutrition/food preparation.

Athletic identity adherence and performance were not, however, predicated upon physical capacities alone. Rather, physical skills needed to be matched with "hockey sense," a discernment of situational play. Like other bodily faculties, "hockey sense" entails the perception of an external stimulus, such as an opposing player or team, and some response, such as an offensive or defensive scheme. Consequently, when "hockey sense" is exhibited, a favourable result should follow (e.g., a scoring opportunity, defensive stoppage, or change in possession). For this reason, managers placed emphasis on the discernment of situational play (i.e., the in-game application of sound judgement), and a sport-specific intelligence that was perhaps best derived from tutelage and prolonged immersion:

> He's a smart player that thinks two and three steps ahead of the game. . . . He executes what he's looking to do so quickly that regardless of his size, he can be successful. (John Chayka, General Manager, Arizona Coyotes, Kimelman, 2016, para. 24)

> What I like about him is his elite, elite hockey sense. (Ron Francis, General Manager, Carolina Hurricanes, Smith, 2016, para. 3)
>
> One of the great separators in the NHL . . . is hockey sense and he's got hockey sense off the charts. (Jeff Blashill, Head Coach, Detroit Red Wings, Wakiji, 2017, para. 11)
>
> He knows how we want to play. He's a very intelligent player. He grasps systems very quickly. (Peter DeBoer, Head Coach, San Jose Sharks, Staff Writer, 2016d, para. 15).

In a similar vein, the sporting component of the identity was grounded, in part, in an ability to digest and enact complex match systems (i.e., schemes or styles of play). Although hockey, much like any sport, may be played with relatively little structure, it, in its most elite form, involves and/or demands considerable strategizing. As a result, and as the following intimates, managers routinely disseminated and explicated organizational systems of play:

> The 36 prospects [at orientation camp] may be working to one day fill a spot on the [Edmonton] Oilers [(NHL)] future roster, but for Oilers Head Coach Todd McLellan . . . it's equally important that the coaches give these players exposure to what their teaching philosophy is like. "It's an opportunity for us to be involved and create some relationships with our future prospects and it also gives us a chance to sell our identity to these young players, because some of them are going to be Oilers for a long time. . . . There's no better time than now to get them learning and understanding what our language is and what our habits are, how we want to play the game and more specifically, the skill-set that's needed to play the game within our system." (Tilley, 2016a, paras. 1-3)

The intention of the manager, as such, and like others in the field, was to match the elite physical capacities of individuals with a context-specific knowledge of situational play and systems.

Sport Component - Context. A less frequent, or perhaps merely less pronounced, form of regulation was that which Alvesson and Willmott (2002) described as “defining the context” (p. 631). With this form of regulation, managers explicate “the larger social, organizational, [or; edit of conjunctions] economic terrain in which the subject operates . . . . [and, thus, the] preconditions for the people acting in [as much]” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, pp. 631-631; order of text rearranged for clarity purposes). For those in the nested case organization, in particular, the context was defined and/or constructed as one of privilege, exclusivity, and responsibility. Participant 03, an Assistant General Manager with the Nested Case Organization, for example, asserted the following:

> It’s certainly not a right to play in the National Hockey League; it’s a privilege - whether you’re on the management side, you’re on the training staff, or you’re a player - and we want to make sure that they [(i.e., team members)] recognize that as well. If they don’t, we make sure we reiterate that. And again, day to day, week to week, month to month, year to year, we make sure - it doesn’t matter who the player is - because, again, it’s not a right; it’s a privilege. And people pay good, hard earned money to see them, and buy the jerseys, and the other paraphernalia, and support the team, and so we want to make sure that the players understand that.

The players in the sample construed the privileged nature of their positions as akin to an “exclusive club,” one that transcended time, and, for some, carried a profound responsibility:

> I don’t know specifically, but, in general, being a professional athlete, or being a hockey player, you kind of become part of a club, almost like a fraternity, and the higher you get up in hockey, especially at the pro level, the more exclusive, and the tighter the fraternity becomes. I just think what it means to be a hockey player, at the end, is you’re a part of

something that lasts over generations, and, like I said before, part of an exclusive club that gives you self-importance, and respect among your peers. (Participant 14, an American Hockey League 'Development Player')

The meaning of a professional athlete in an organization, it's ... (pauses) it's a very unique feeling. In many ways you don't really think of it like that. Sometimes it's hard to put words to that phrase, 'what does it mean.' Obviously, it was ... (pauses) how can I say ... (pauses) to be a part of any club, not just the (Team Name), but a part of a club - and I think all NHL teams do this to their own degree, and have their own reasons for it - but you're part of something - it's to belong to something elite. You are here to basically further their tradition, further the practice of excellence, and given a task and responsibility of representing that the way very, very few people can or ever will. (Participant 16, a National Hockey League Alumnus)

The nature and effect of this responsibility were perhaps best articulated by Participant 13, who, although an American Hockey League General Manager, spoke as a player alumnus, and of 'owing the game':

I don't know if this is everybody's opinion - But, from my opinion, I don't think the team owed me anything [(upon retirement)]. They paid me, and they paid me well. They paid me to play the game, and I had the privilege of playing hockey for a living. I don't think the team owed me anything. Some guys finish the game, and they think the team still owes them, or hockey owes them. Hockey doesn't owe anybody. It's a privilege to play the game. I think it was [(Hockey Hall of Fame Player)] Jean Beliveau who had a great quote, when someone asked him about how much money the players are making now, and what would he make when he played, and, not to quote him, but, in the context, he

> said, ‘I don’t begrudge anybody making any amount of money, especially the amount of money the guys are making now. The only thing I hope is that when these guys leave the game the game was better than when they came in - that they’ve made the game better personally.’ And that’s what I think, as professionals, that we have to do. Hockey doesn’t owe us; we owe the game. We play a professional game, where we have adulation, and we get paid. It’s tough on the body, tough on the families, tough on all that. There’s a lot of negatives there, but, at the same, very few people get to play a sport, and have our egos buffed, and receive adulation, and fulfill a childhood dream, and all that stuff. The game doesn’t owe us; we owe the game. We’re in debt to the game.

Thus, in defining the context, or, more specifically, the profession, as a “privilege,” individuals could come to conceive an exclusive position, an indebtedness for “the great things that come with getting to play a children’s game for a living” (Participant 16), and a responsibility to the sport and identity that afford and promise as much. In these ways, and given the perceived disservice that may arise from identity dereliction, adherence and performance were reinforced.

Sport Component - Individual. Finally, adherence and performance were subtly reinforced through a means that Alvesson and Willmott (2002) described as “defining the person directly” (p. 629). With this form of regulation, “explicit reference is made to characteristics that have some validity across time and space and that distinguish a person from others. These characteristics suggest expectations of those people who occupy the social space that is thereby defined for them” (Alvesson & Willmott, p. 629). Subtle examples of such regulation arose at the start of many an interview, as managers, although aware of the work’s focus, were confused by an attempt to identify organization members as something other than “players”:

AA: The first question I have for you today is, please describe for me an individual, or the sort of individual, that epitomizes your organization.

07: An individual that epitomizes our organization. As a player, or as a…

AA: I should probably have prefaced that too [(given previous confusion from Participants 03 and 05, fellow National Hockey League Assistant General Managers)]. When I mention 'individuals' today, or 'members of your organization', it will be, in every case, individuals who play for your team.

07: So, players?

AA: [(Reluctantly)] Yes.

In effect, the ubiquitous use of the term "player," by managers and actors across the field, tied individuals to a solitary function and social space. As Participant 12, an American Hockey League Veteran, succinctly noted, albeit with regard to an unrelated topic, "We're professional athletes; that's what we do, we play." The term, as such, and unlike others (e.g. 'team, league, or association member'), effectively narrowed the scope and substance of the constructed identity.

Sport Component - Regulatory Practices. To realize this very identity, managers additionally employed a number of regulatory practices. That is, standard forms of identity regulation were buttressed by multiple sets of supporting procedures. More specifically, and within the field of note, identity adherence and performance were supported through audits, direct conveyances, auxiliary resource allocation, exemplars, awards and rewards, routinization, and publicity (see Table 1).

Auditing. Of these means, that which was primary to identity regulation was the most former of the aforementioned, auditing. Defined by acts of concerted examination and responses

thereto, auditing entailed scouting, monitoring, evaluating, and enforcing identity adherence and performance. For managers, regulation, most typically, began with scouting.

Prior to most any individual becoming a member of a team, or the broader field, they were scouted; that is, they were assessed with regard to their potential to perform the identity of a professional athlete. To this end, organizations employed multiple managers who scoured the globe, and investigated the natures of prospective recruits (e.g., by observing personal conduct [including on social media; "We have to do a lot of background work on them. A lot of times we can also check through social media . . . because some players are not very smart in terms of how they engage in social media," Participant 08, the Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team]; examining abilities/play, and speaking to coaches, teachers, and others familiar with the individual of interest; Participant 10). As the following dialogue, with Participant 05, an Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team, illustrates, such investigations were central to ensuring future identity adherence and performance:

> AA: How do you and the organization attempt to develop such an individual [i.e., one that possesses the desired characteristics of the team]?
>
> 05: Well, hopefully we bring people that are already like that into our organization; that's the easiest way. . . .
>
> AA: . . . When you mention bringing them in . . . how do you go about identifying some of these attributes in individuals? . . . . Could you maybe take me through an example or two about how you go about identifying these traits in individuals before you bring them on to your team.
>
> 05: I can do that. Actually, we do it a number of ways. One way is we see how they conduct themselves [(when in play)]. Without necessarily knowing the person, we just

see how they play, and that gives us an indication. Secondly, whenever we bring someone in as a free agent, or via trade, we always do a background check. I always make sure I have at least two really good sources - people who have coached him, or played with him, that know him on a personal level, and can give a good opinion on them, and someone that I trust, to get that kind of information . . . And the third way we do it as the draft, when we do pre-draft interviews. Most of the time what we're trying to get, when we're interviewing a prospect, is information on other prospects. So we often ask questions like, 'If you could get any former or current teammate of yours to come to the (Team Name), would you? Who would it be, and why? Who would you not want to bring with you, and why?' Those types of questions. And then when people start mentioning the same names on a regular basis - . . . . When four or five kids keep mentioning, 'Oh, I would really want to bring this guy with me because he's an incredible teammate,' well, that gives us good information. When two or three guys are saying, 'Oh, I wouldn't want to bring this person with me because he's an asshole,' well, that also gives me information.

Notably, scouting did not escape the purview of its targets. For example, in advance of the annual National Hockey League Scouting Combine, a near-week-long event that brings together more than 100 draft-eligible youth, and the management staffs of 31-member teams, Reid Duke (2017), a past participant of the proceedings, offered the following first-hand account and advice for attendees:

Maybe you'll be lucky and have 20 teams want to talk to you. Or maybe it'll only be two or three. You won't know for sure until you get your itinerary, and there's a chance it may shock you. But remember, there's no time to be shocked. I don't say this to scare you, but

> you are being watched. Right now, you're being watched. From the second you get to your hotel, you'll be surrounded by hockey guys. This is the combine, so there are hockey people everywhere. And they all know who you are. If you're rude to the hotel staff, someone will see it, and they will take note. If you're hanging off by yourself, or if you're the guy that wants to meet up with your buddies and go all over town, someone will notice. Trust me. You're being watched, but don't be scared. All teams are trying to do is get to know you. I'm serious. All you have to do is be who you are. Just understand that some of your most important times will be before your interviews even start. You might be ready for your interviews, but say you just have to go to the washroom. There might be five hockey guys in the washroom. If this happens, they're going to notice how you react to them. . . . You'll be ready for your interviews, but you just got your second interview in the washroom. It didn't take long. It was maybe only a few seconds. But they noticed how you acted. From my experience, teams will pay as much attention to how you'd interact with them in the washroom as they will to your interview. . . . You have to be prepared that anytime can be an interview. It's just like being a professional hockey player. When you're a pro hockey player, you can be out to dinner with friends, and someone will recognize you. As a pro hockey player, you're going to want to represent your team right, and it won't matter that you were caught off guard if you treat someone the wrong way. If hockey guys see you being rude to a waiter, how much confidence will they have that you'll represent their team right? (paras. 41-63)

Scouting, moreover, could continue well into one's professional career. Starkey (2016), for example, in his examination of minor professional hockey, shared the following insight from Eric Neilson, an American Hockey League veteran and alumnus:

> The thing is, every time the guys get on the ice, they're getting judged, they're getting watched and there are scouts. At the NHL level, those guys making millions can take a night off. Guys here [(in the AHL)], they're trying to get there, so every time the guys get on the ice, they're being watched and judged and trying hard all the time. (p. 17)

To ease the process of scouting, and watching others, several organizations, in recent years, have gone as far as to move a minor league affiliate closer to a 'parent' organization. Participant 10 was apart of an organization that made just such a move, and explained the effect so:

> It's a huge advantage for us. I mean, those players know they're being watched all the time. They even know that the fans watching them are the same fans that watch the (National Hockey League team). So, it's a big, big advantage in many, many different ways. . . . I think most NHL teams - most - not all, but most - are now attempting to have their farm teams geographically located so that they're not a long distance from the big team. Teams like (Team Name), (Team Name), and (Team Name) have their team right in the same town. . . . I think it's a huge advantage because you can use a lot of the same people to chart progress.

Regulation thus preceded employment, and entailed investigations into prospective recruits, including undrafted youth, free agents, and members of other organizations. Ultimately, the practice of scouting, in its various forms (e.g., observing conduct, and interviewing/surveying acquaintances), primed individuals for continued monitoring, and prompted both identity work and context-specific reformation.

By virtue of the public nature and consumption of professional sport, and as was perhaps suggested by the previous quotations, members of the examined field were subject to a heightened degree of monitoring that was unlike that experienced by individuals in most any

other occupation. The intense monitoring by the public notwithstanding, hockey organizations placed great emphasis on the surveillance of employee conduct. As Participants 11 and 13, managers of two different American Hockey League teams, explained, in near unison, rarely did a practice, game, or workday go by without a watchful eye:

> [(AA: To what extent do the development staff of the (Team Name) come down to (City Name), and work with the players there?)] Quite a bit. (Individual Name) is in town, at least twice a month, for weeks at a time. He comes in. We have (Individual Name), he deals with minor hockey league development, with (Team Name). He's in here all the time. Different scouts. We almost have a representative from (Team Name) at every game, in practices. . . . And I would say at every game there's always a representative from (Team Name), and for most of the practices we get guys down here too. They do a good job. And then our players, with (Individual Name), they always have his number right on hand - he talks to them, and makes them write reports after every game, and stays involved that way, and talks to our prospects quite a bit. So, they're always right on almost everything, just to keep a pulse on the players, just to make sure that everything is going well, and if they have any problems, personally, in their life, that they could talk to (Individual Name), and to other people in (City Name) too; (Participant 11)
>
> There's very rarely a day in which I won't talk to (Team Name) . . . and, for the most part, to be quite honest with you, we usually have somebody from the parent team at almost every game. They speak to me and management. They have scouts at the games. They have management at the games. We've had everybody from (the General Manager) to the (Assistant General Manager). (The Senior Vice President)'s at a lot of games. . . . They're very invested in what's going on here. (Participant 13)

Although this investment, and others of its sort, from organizations across the field, entailed applied and observational elements alike, it was the latter, subtler alternative that continuously imposed identity adherence and performance (see, for example, the previously provided perspective of American Hockey League veteran and alumnus Eric Neilson; Starkey, 2016).

In tandem with scouting, and such monitoring, organizations also and routinely conducted player evaluations. Participant 11, for example, in expanding upon their comment on monitoring (see previous paragraph), described the nature of their team's evaluations so:

> I talk to (NHL Team Name) after every forty-eight hours of games, just to stay on that same page. We let them know how players are doing. Our coaching staff does reports after every game. They evaluate the players after every game, and all that stuff goes up to (City Name), and their management, scouting staff, and coaches up there. We send video to them. We have great communication between (City Name) and here.

Organizational systems of evaluations have also grown more sophisticated over time: no longer do managers rely solely on subjective, perceptual accounts; instead, they combine observational and objective data through the use advanced statistical programs. A glimpse into one such program, and its evaluative depth, was provided by Cotsonika (2016a):

> The [Florida] Panthers' [(NHL)] analysis starts with traditional statistics and continues with the first level of so-called advanced stats, such as possession percentages and teammates' production with and without them on the ice. But it goes much deeper. The Panthers have their own algorithms, which, of course, are secret, and evaluate players' entire bodies of work, from junior to the minors to the NHL. (para. 18)

Thus, through statistics, and observational evaluations, managers could assess athletic and identity performance, and impose a heightened sense of surveillance.

Evaluation, moreover, afforded organizations and managers a means by which to address and rectify deviations from identity adherence and performance. Rectification, or enforcement, could and did entail amelioration, for minor deviations, as well as punitive measures, for marked aberrations. As Participant 05, an Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team, explained, deviations in performance could be followed by any one of a number of procedures:

> Even with our best efforts, it happens, probably, on a yearly basis, that someone is just not fit to succeed in our organization, and that they're not willing to live the values that we believe in. And how do you address that? Well… I guess your first question, how do you find out? Well, more often than not, there's a lag: you see symptoms, and you give everyone the benefit of the doubt, and you try to work with them, and educate them, push them, pull them, cajole them, use every tactic you can to help them improve, and hopefully be able to fit in, and start performing at a higher level. But, eventually, you may come to the realization that it's not going to happen, or you may no longer be willing to invest the time and all the other resources you're going to have to invest in order to help this player be what you want him to be - and you would rather spend those resources on the other guys, and helping them be all that they can be - and you will either trade him, or send him home - or, if you're at the major league level, you'll put him on waivers, and send him to the minors, so that a new set of coaches can try working with them, or . . . you're not going to renew their contract, if you haven't been able to nip it in the bud earlier. Or, sometimes, and I have a case in mind here, where someone is a pretty good player, and is not perfectly fitting in, but fits in well enough for the time being, but eventually, as time progresses, you want to maybe bring in new people, and give them an

> opportunity to see if they can't be better at living your values, and your culture, and you'll just let that player go, and replace them with someone else.

Organizations and managers, as such (i.e., through such means as trades, releases, buy-outs), and as with scouting, determined and restricted who could hold the identity of a professional athlete. In turn, they signaled to individuals that career longevity was contingent upon strict identity adherence and performance.

Communicating. To ensure such adherence and performance, organizations and managers also turned to an explicit mode of conveyance in the form of direct communication. In this regard, teams utilized and constructed various means and events to communicate and reiterate the essential elements of the athletic identity: for recent draftees and young signees, as well as prospective recruits, presentations and activities (e.g., team-building exercises) were conducted at orientation and prospect camps (e.g., Staff Writer, 2016b; see also p. 68, Tilley, 2016a); for more established organizational members and veterans, verbal reminders were provided in pre-season training camps (e.g., Wakiji, 2016c), as well as in-season meetings and practices, and through physical media such as clothing and wall signage (e.g., Cotsonika, 2017):

> At the start of every year, they lay out the goals and expectations for us. They kind of just make them clear. They further make it clear with tag lines on the walls, like, 'Character. Commitment. Achievement.' They'll print it on the t-shirts, and the shorts. (Participant 14, an American Hockey League 'Development Player').

A particularly elucidatory example of these means, including both the physical and verbal, was provided by Participant 05:

> Well, we actually prepared something . . . a booklet, if you will, of what our standards are, and what our expectations are, in terms of mindset - because a mindset - If we have a

critical mass of people with a similar mindset that will end up being our culture. So, we've kind of laid it out to them [(i.e., the members of the organization)] in writing. . . . [In the booklet] we have various letters from our leadership, from the coach, to the owner, to the general manager, stating why we did the booklet, what we're trying to accomplish here, why these things are important, why they will matter in terms of us being successful. Then we kind have our vision statement or mission statement, if we will. It's neither; it's something else, but it's similar to a mission statement. It's more of an ethos, if you will. . . . And then we go over the values - (redacted) - what they mean, why they're important. And then we have a number of examples of what they mean in the course of how we conduct ourselves, and how it translates in games. . . . [the following portion of text was moved from its earlier position to better ensure a delineation in the described means of communication] We [also] regularly communicate with players, in small groups, individually, and collectively, what we are expecting of them, what will be accepted, what won't be accepted, and we try to be very candid so that they know. Actually, the season just started, so I had a similar meeting with the entire team recently, to open up [training] camp, and I told them, at the end, 'I'm not trying to scare you, or intimidate you, or threaten you, because I can't do any of those things; I'm trying to tell you what will be accepted, and what won't be accepted, and, that way, if you decide to do something that I've told you today, that will not be accepted, you can't tell me later on that you didn't know that it would not be accepted, and that there wouldn't be severe consequences.'

Although physical media and meetings could and did pertain to typical workplace matters, such as interpersonal conduct, they also implicated broader identity considerations. Thus, through such means, the central components of the devised identity were affirmed and reaffirmed.

Enabling. In addition to these means, and those previously described (i.e., auditing), organizations and managers engendered identity adherence and performance through two forms of enabling: the creation of forums for learning and expression, and the investment of human and financial resources. Three events were particularly illustrative of the former: the annual National Hockey League Scouting Combine, team-led orientation/development camps, and multi-organization prospect tournaments. The combine, for one, and as previously noted, brought together draft-eligible youth and management staffs, and called upon the former to express and confirm, via fitness testing and interpersonal interviews, the tangible and intangible elements of the athletic identity (e.g., Robenhymer, 2017a, b).

Positive expressions, in tandem with past performance, typically resulted in draft selection, and invitation to an orientation/development camp. Hosted by individual teams, these camps entailed both on- and off-ice components, and instructed youth on such matters as "training, nutrition, sleep, safe and legal supplementation, recovery methods, mental skills/issues, [and] building [one's; change in pronoun] brand" (Participant 08). As Boulding (2016) added, in relation to one team's initiative:

> For some, like members of the 2016 draft class, development camp serves as an introduction to the NHL life. Players learn what it takes to become an elite athlete, from sleeping habits to nutrition to training. . . . For those returning to development camp, the overall event is about exactly one thing: development. Those attending their second or third or even fourth camp continue to receive coaching, both as a group and on an

> individual level, and can gauge their year-over-year progress in the variety of tasks and trials presented throughout the week. . . . [And] while the 2015 camp only featured power skating sessions on the ice, this season's iteration includes additional afternoon activities at the rink, tailored specifically to a player's position. (paras. 4, 6, and 8)

Thus, with these camps and activities, organizations imposed upon youth the essential elements of team membership and athletic identity, and prompted prospective professionals to perform the latter under the supervision of an employer (e.g., Boulding, 2016; Bratten, 2016; Staff Writer, 2016b; Stepneski, 2016; Wakiji, 2016a).

Such was also characteristic of multi-organization, pre-season prospect tournaments. With these events, organizations assembled their youngest members so as to pit them against like others (the annual Young Stars Classic, for example, is a four-team, round-robin tournament that features prospects from the National Hockey League's Calgary Flames, Edmonton Oilers, Vancouver Canucks, and Winnipeg Jets; Staff Writer, 2016a). No longer novel, these events, like those aforementioned, moved individuals to learn and perform the identity of an athlete at a time and to a degree that they otherwise may not (i.e., during the 'off-season').

In a similar vein, organizations increasingly dedicated resources to athletic development, and, as a consequence, identity regulation. Nowhere was this more apparent than with hockey operations and development staffs. When asked to comment on the changes that were witnessed with regard to these staffs, over the course of approximately a decade, Participant 05 remarked:

> Ahh… It has changed a lot. When I first took over a (redacted) team . . . we had two coaches: we had a head coach, and an assistant coach. We had no strength coach, no (position) coaches, no video coaches. It was a two-man crew. Now, it's evolved to one head coach, two full-time assistant coaches, plus a (position)/video coach, a full-time

> strength coach, a full-time player development coach, a sport psychologist that comes in and is available pretty much 24/7. We have . . . (someone) that works for us on leadership skills, leadership development. We have a biomechanics consultant that comes in, and works with our guys. We have a part-time (skill) instructor that comes, and works with our players. We've brought in (other skill) consultants, sporadically. It's come a long way. We provide a lot more meals than we used to. We provide more days off than we used to. . . . And we're not the only ones; I think every organization is the same - A lot more thought goes into our development program. A lot more resources go into it: whether it is time, money, or people. It's come along away; it really has.

Implied, but not directly referenced in the remark, were investments in the form of physical resources and infrastructure. One example of such an investment, and its effects on worker attitudes and identity adherence, was provided by Switaj (2016):

> There is a new energy around the [Boston] Bruins [(NHL)], and not just because of the upcoming 2016-17 season. On Thursday, the team's new practice facility - Warrior Ice Arena - was unveiled. . . . Features include a spacious strength and conditioning area, training room with cold and hot tubs, a locker room with the Spoked-B [(i.e., the logo of the team)] prominently displayed on the ceiling, along with a video room and players lounge for the team to eat their meals and spend time together. "Walking into this building, people want to be here and they want to spend time here," said [defenseman Torey] Krug. "It allows you to go the extra step and go the extra mile to make sure you're prepared for the season and doing the right things for your body and everything." . . . . "It's an investment - for this organization, the players, the coaching staff - for everyone to become better and to reach their potential," said Krug. "It's an old saying - to whom much

> is given, much is expected - so we have this beautiful facility here and the ownership's investing in us, and we've got to make sure we can repay that." (paras. 1-2, 16-17, 19)

The implication of the excerpt was that investment (whether financial, physical, or human in nature) engendered a sense of obligation, both to one's team and craft. In this way, organizations, including others beyond the referenced, again reaffirmed in employees an adherence to the sporting component of the athletic identity.

Modeling. Reaffirmation of this sort was additionally engendered through investments in player personnel. To educate young and incoming team members on the rigors of professional sport, and the essential elements of the athletic identity, organizations commonly employed veteran players to act as exemplars (i.e., personifications of professionals). As evidenced by the following quotation, from American Hockey League President David Andrews, such was particularly apparent in minor professional ranks: "Most of our players still have the dream [(of playing in the National Hockey League)]. Those who are beyond that, the veteran players in our league, are well compensated and they understand that's what they do. They're franchise players, they're leaders, they're there to bring these young players along" (Starkey, 2016, p. 79).

To further confirm the example that might be set by a veteran, organizations often employed the tact of naming an individual a team captain (the discursive representation of which appeared on one's uniform, in the form of a capital 'C'). The confluence between this designation and the role of an exemplar was well explicated by Starkey (2016), who offered the perspective of many a veteran captain, including the following:

> Matt Ellis called being named captain one of the highlights of his AHL career. . . . He took some time while in the [Buffalo] Sabres [(NHL)] locker room to talk about the role of an AHL captain, saying that you need to "kind of be a jack of all trades. You have to

> worry about what you bring day in and day out, but at the same time, part of the role is holding guys' hands and bringing them along for the ride," he said. "For me, it hasn't been that hard. You put your work boots on day in and day out, be a good pro, go to work and lead by example. When guys ask, you share your experiences and share your stories." "I've seen a lot, had to endure a lot, and you try to bring those experiences and help the young guys grow, and at the same time you help them understand the importance of day-to-day being professionals and coming to work and that mentality [that] you're at the American League level trying to get to the NHL." (pp. 84-85)

Not all veterans who helped others to grow, however, were ensured continued employment.

For some, modeling could result in a premature exit from the sport, and, as a consequence, the end to an identity as a professional athlete. The possibility for such an outcome to occur was made plainly evident by Vickers (2016b):

> [Matt] Stajan. The one helping [Mark] Jankowski through his first training camp experience with the Calgary Flames. . . . At some point they'll be in competition together. The thought doesn't escape Jankowski. "A little weird, but that's how this business is," he said. "It happens every year. Young guys come in and see some of their idols in the locker room. It is a little cool, but its also just part of the business." It doesn't elude Stajan, either. He knows he could very well be grooming his replacement, potentially before he's ready to be replaced. It's just that circle continuing on. "At the end of the day you're all a part of a team," the veteran said. "When you're within an organization you fight for ice time, but I don't look at it that way. You fight to push your teammates. If I'm going to play really well I'm pushing my teammate to play even better, otherwise I'm

> going to take that ice time. Teams that do that and push each other have more success." (paras. 4-5, 39-45)

Such was the capacity of identity regulation: team success took precedence over individual good, and, in the face of occupation and identity loss, the value proposition was modeled to others.

Rewarding. Notwithstanding the aforementioned risk of loss, many veterans were rewarded for their dedication to the sport, and willingness to act as exemplars (e.g., Crechiolo, 2017; Griffith, 2016; Niedzielski, 2016; Staff Writer, 2016c). The provided rewards for as much, as previously intimated, came in the form of pecuniary considerations, and work contracts. In this way, organizations encouraged continued identity adherence and performance.

As alternative means of encouragement, or reinforcement, leagues, associations, and teams devised and granted a surfeit of awards and acknowledgements. Ranging from modest to grand, these marks of recognition accounted for most every form of exceptional performance: single game exploits were recognized both in-arena and online, with a 'Three Star Award' (i.e., a player of the match honour that extended to multiple individuals); weekly and monthly honours generally passed without live spectacles, but were subject to media attention (e.g., American Hockey League, 2016c, Dionne, n.d.a); annual achievements garnered invitations to mid-season 'All-Star Games,' as well as physical trophies and public ceremonies/acknowledgements (e.g., American Hockey League, 2016a, 2017a; Dionne, n.d.b); and career or life-time achievements were marked by jersey retirements, inductions into halls of fame, and, in some instances, life-sized statues (e.g., American Hockey League, 2016b, Meltzer, 2016; National Hockey League, 2016; Stevenson, 2016). The awards and acknowledgements presented by organizations also accounted for more than statistical and easily observable feats alone. The annual commendations of the Professional Hockey Players' Association, for example, included the Heart, Hustle, and

Desire, and Built Tough Awards: the former was "presented to the player believed to best demonstrate heart, hustle, and desire each and every day, and considered by his peers to be the hardest working player in the league" (Dionne, n.d.b, para. 2); the latter was "presented to the player considered to be the toughest in the league. A player who is always there for his teammates, and helps make his team one of the most challenging to play against" (Dionne, n.d.b, para. 3). These awards, and others like them, celebrated athletic achievement and identity performance alike.

The latter, in particular, was perhaps best exemplified by the Hall of Fame of the Philadelphia Flyers (NHL). Therein, and as evidenced by the following commemorations, members were the very personifications of the described athletic identity (Meltzer, 2016):

> Class of 1988: [Bob] Clarke . . . . Clarke played an incalculable role in shaping the Flyers team identity and work ethic. The Flyers' longtime captain was the ultimate team player, caring nothing for personal stats and willing to do anything for victory; whether it meant spilling his own blood or fighting for the puck as if his life depended on it. (paras. 9-10)
>
> Class of 1991: [Barry] Ashbee . . . . Among teammates, he epitomized the competitiveness of the Broad Street Bullies-era Flyers. "Ash Can" epitomized quiet toughness, hockey smarts, a tireless work ethic and gnawing hunger to win. Ashbee possessed as much character and inner strength as anyone who has ever been a professional athlete. (para. 31)
>
> Class of 2014-15 season: . . . [Eric] Desjardins . . . . Poise, intelligence, two-way savvy, unfailing professionalism and a quietly competitive nature were defenseman Desjardins' hallmarks during a stellar 1,143-game NHL career that saw him spend 10-plus seasons and 738 regular season games in a Flyers uniform. (para. 84)

> Class of 2015-16 season: . . . [Jim] Watson . . . . Watson was highly respected in the Flyers' dressing room. He had an excellent work ethic, played through pain willingly and effectively and, above all, was a team-oriented player. (para. 98)

The Hall of Fame (of the Philadelphia Flyers), as such, was emblematic of the practice of rewarding within the field: competitiveness, industriousness, selflessness, toughness, and skill were among the characteristics that were representative of the athletic identity, and it was those that garnered the greatest praise and recognition from organizations.

Routinizing. Undergirding this practice, and central to both identity adherence and performance, was the scheduling of practices and games. With an 82-game regular season in the National Hockey League, and 76- and 68-game regular seasons in the American Hockey League (teams based in the southwest United States were subject to a shortened schedule), along with pre-season matches and multiple multi-game playoff rounds, members of the field spent the better part of every year working through a routine that was typified by practice, play, and travel. In the process, individuals were asked, on a near daily basis, to pursue performance excellence, hone individual athletic skills, and perform the role of a professional hockey player. As a result, and despite the allocation of time off, many seemingly became accustomed to the devised routine, and, when away, longed for a return to the performance of the identity component:

> The teams want us - the whole thing is they want [the American Hockey League] to be a developmental league, so that they can put all their young guys in there, get better, and work on certain areas of their game. A lot of teams are bringing skating coaches, skills coaches, and shooting coaches - a specialty guy - to go in and work with these players, so they want more practice time. Again, it’s us just going in, practicing for an hour and a

half, working out, and going home; next day, wake up, practice, work out; next day, practice, work out. (Participant 12, an American Hockey League Veteran)

I think for a lot of players, an alarm system goes off in your head on August 1. You appreciate the summer, but you get that itch to get back to work. You want to get that feeling of competition back. (Cory Schneider, Goaltender, New Jersey Devils; Lomon, 2016b, para. 8).

Signalling. The occupied nature of the season schedule, and the field's mass integration with electronic media, also allowed for performances to be routinely and publicly praised, critiqued, and referenced. Most typically, and as with awards and acknowledgements, athletic and identity performances were reinforced through commendation (e.g., see p. 58 of this work). Conversely, managers seldomly employed either critique or scorn (e.g., Dusterberg, 2017; Smith, 2017a, b). The tenor of commentaries notwithstanding, organizations and managers employed and/or leveraged internal (e.g., team websites) and external media (e.g., newspapers, radio and television broadcasts) to signal to current team members, as well as the public at large, what was and ought to be expected of player personnel (i.e., what constituted the sporting component of the athletic identity).

To reiterate, then, and, generally, as Alvesson and Willmott (2002) conceptualized, the sporting component of the athletic identity was defined by a central motive (performance excellence), a related set of values and characteristics (e.g., competitiveness, industriousness, professionalism, selflessness, toughness, and uprightness), and a pertinent body of knowledge and skills (e.g., with/in technical maneuvers, physical fitness/training, nutrition/food preparation, situational play, and match systems). As measures to support the regulation of this identity component, managers employed a number of related tactics and practices (described herein as

auditing, communicating, enabling, modeling, rewarding, routinizing, and signalling). The cumulative effect of as much was a salient and involved athletic identity component.

Beneficent Component - Motive. Beyond the sporting component of the devised identity, and the pursuit of performance excellence (Miller & Kerr, 2002), athletes in the North American field of men's professional ice hockey were defined by a commitment to community enrichment and beneficence. When asked to describe the desired qualities of organizational members, Participant 07, an Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team, for example, spoke, first, not of any particular athletic ability, but, rather, of a willingness to improve the lives of others:

> I think, first and foremost, you look at our ownership group, of the (Team Name), and they are successful businessmen who are very philanthropic, and they're very involved in the community and giving back… And not only do they own the team, but that's what they do as individuals, and that's what their idea was when they first brought the team here years and years ago, was to have strong community involvement. So, I think it starts with the ownership group, and it goes into our executive that works for the organization, and the (Team Name), and then, in turn, those traits are brought into our team, into our structure, of what we want: we want to be involved in the community; we want to be a pillar of community involvement, and that's through our players, and through our players being involved in appearances, and being involved with their own causes, and using their professional athlete status to be involved in the community, and making the community, and making lives better in the community.

This sentiment, of "making lives better in the community," was expressed, in various forms, by managers across the field:

> I think a part of their [(i.e., team members)]… I'm trying to get the proper word for this… part of their obligation is that they have to give back. (Participant 13, a General Manager of an American Hockey League team)
>
> We want people to understand that players really care, and . . . that's why there is a strong focus on community, and doing things for other people. It's kind of built into the hockey environment's DNA. (Participant 15, a Representative of the National Hockey League Players' Association).

Confirming, in effect, the conveyances of the managers, as well as the related regulation of the nested case organization, was Participant 16, an alumnus of the National Hockey League:

> For me, when I think of the (Team Name), I think of community. They were a community-driven team. It's a . . . team [that] had a very, very big role in the community - a very personal relationship with the community. . . . There was an intimacy between the team and its fans, and its community, and its initiatives within the community. That also speaks - to tie into what we were talking about before - to that privilege portion, with the responsibility and the privilege of being a player, that we have that responsibility to give back, and develop, and use our platform in a way that's meaningful and longer lasting than just the moment we're a part of. For me, that was probably the largest thing that stood out, as to the (Team Name) and what they stood for: they weren't just a sports team in a place; they were a community, and an integral part of that, a living and breathing member of the (City Name) community.

Consequently, community enrichment and beneficence were elemental motives in identity adherence and performance.

Notwithstanding this elemental nature, the motives, when compared to that of performance excellence, held a definitively subordinate position. Participant 07, who previously extolled the virtue of "community involvement," also and subsequently noted,

> I think they (i.e., performance and philanthropy/community involvement) at times go hand in hand, and at times they don't, to be quite honest [(the participant later clarified that athletic schedules often precluded beneficent work, and, therefore, the routinization of outreach)]. I think, first and foremost, you're a professional sports team, and your judged by wins and losses, so that's paramount, but, at the same time, there are other top priorities in the organization, and the philanthropic, and the community involvement, and the branding, if you will, for the organization within the city, within the (territory), within the country, within the NHL is important as well. But, it's probably fair to say there's nothing more important than having a successful team on the ice, day in and day out.

In a similar vein, within the nested case, any sense of community, and one's "responsibility" (Participant 16) or "purpose" (Participant 03) for engendering beneficence and enrichment, was definitively subordinate to the pursuit and motive of performance excellence. As Participant 12, an individual who spent time with both nested case teams, explained:

> Some teams do a lot [(of community outreach and philanthropy)]; some don't do as much. NHL - Like I said, the NHL is tough. It's really hard to pick things out. I think if you wanted to do more, you could just go to the team, and say, 'Hey, put me in as much stuff as you can,' and they'll do it, but understand that in the NHL it's hockey first. It's a business. You got to play your best, so if you're out after practice, when you should be home resting - if you're out that night, serving drinks at a bar [(i.e., at an event)] they don't want that. They don't want distractions. Obviously, they have hospital visits with

> the whole team. They have certain activities or events that they run to help out their charities, but they prefer hockey, hockey, hockey.

Community enrichment and beneficence were thus valued, but not to such an extent as to take precedence over athletic performance and on-ice success.

Beneficent Component - Values and Characteristics. This precedence, that one motive held over another, was also reflected in the constitution of the respective components' values and characteristics: whereas the sporting portion of the athletic identity was defined by multiple, easily identifiable traits (e.g., competitiveness, industriousness), its beneficent equivalent was not. This may be, in part, because beneficence was viewed as a value/characteristic in and of itself. The component, otherwise, was tied, often subtly, to the values and characteristics of uprightness, leadership, sociability, reciprocity, perspective, and humility.

These values and characteristics, however, were often afforded only limited weight. Uprightness, or character, for example, was referenced twice, but expounded only once:

> We are huge in the community. . . . Credit goes to our community relations department, but more so to our players. And our players are more than willing to donate time, and willing to go out. Some of them even come to (the community relations department), and say, 'I want to visit more hospitals, or visit more schools.' And that goes back to one of your first questions, about character: that's the kind of character guys we have, that these guys out and do community outreach. Our guys, off ice, are outstanding, every year. And I kind of give them a speech at the beginning of the season on how important it is, and these guys follow it. . . . I think it's the gesture of it, but I think it's the right thing to do, and we're trying to have character players, and that's what you do. A lot of teams are like that, . . . it's a part of their (i.e., athletes') character. (Participant 13)

In a similar vein, leadership was viewed as both integral to, and a product of, community involvement. Nevertheless, of the three managers that referenced the value/characteristic, only one drew an overt association between it and community outreach:

> The other way they're (i.e., athletes) developing . . . is ownership asks them to go out and speak to children, to charities, and at corporate events. That's great. We (i.e., the office of the Professional Hockey Players' Association) encourage the guys to do it. Do it. That's how you come out of a shell. That's how you start to develop. And that's a huge part of minor league hockey, is getting the players in front of the community. We do it with our mentorship program. . . . We work with the teams to get players involved, and if a guy's not a leader he's going to become a leader when he does that program. (Participant 04, a Manager with the Professional Hockey Players' Association)

Likewise, participants offered only scant information on sociability ("With guys going out in the community, I think that teaches them a lot. I think it teaches them how to handle themselves in different situations, in front of big crowds. . . . I think it helps the players develop as men, as adults," Participant 11, the Personnel Manager of an American Hockey League team); reciprocity ("I kind of give them a state of the union of where they are in life in comparison to other people. We're very fortunate in every aspect. . . . We are playing a game, and we're getting paid to play a game, and I think it is our obligation to give something back . . . for others betterment (order of remarks rearranged for clarity purposes," Participant 13); perspective ("[Community involvement] gives our players perspective. . . . To see a different culture, a way of life, and to be exposed to different things, it broadens their horizons, and I believe it gives them a certain maturity level, and a better understanding of the world, and perspective. . . . [And with] a clearer perspective of how the world actually works, I think it's easier to navigate the

sometimes-troubled waters of celebrity. (Participant 05, the Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team); and humility ("That quote [(i.e., "It is not a right for a player to have his professional career; it's a privilege.")] especially, to me, speaks to the humble ideal of the hockey player. . . . It's becoming. . . . I think it transcends sport though. . . . Do people like humble athletes, who give things back to their community, or do they like self-centred people? Generally, they like the former," Participant 16). The prior examples notwithstanding, the component was less well formed and attenuated than its sporting counterpart.

Beneficent Component - Knowledge and Skills. Moreover, and, again, when compared with its sporting equivalent, the beneficent component of the identity was less well defined by any particular set of knowledge or skills. In these regards, managers tied the beneficent component to only two capacities: brand management, and public speaking. The first to reference either was Participant 08:

> We want them (i.e., team members) to understand what charities are out there; how they can give back to that community; how to build their own brand; how to help our brand. Players who are not in our organization, who are just on a reserve list, we try to teach them that at our development camps, and show them what players have done, the special causes they've taken on, how they've given back to the community, and how they've made a meaningful impact where they live - and sometimes they take that and go back to their home towns and continue that in the summer. We try to get them to understand that they've got to be - that there is a community aspect to this (i.e., being a professional).

The speaking element of the component, alternatively, was referenced by Participant 11:

> We make sure that the guys go out into the community, and read at schools, visit hospitals, just to get them - as a hockey player, and as a professional athlete, you're going

> to have your fans, and you got to make sure you're giving back to the community, and you have to able to go out and talk to people, and not just go to things and just stand there, and look awkward. So, we want to prepare our players as much as we can.

Beyond these comments, however, managers made little, if any, reference to a relevant knowledge or skill. The beneficent component of the identity, as such, and to reiterate, was less well formed and attenuated than its sporting counterpart, and, thus, subordinate in position.

Beneficent Component - Regulatory Practices. This position notwithstanding, organizations and managers engaged in practices that supported the regulation of the identity component. In this regard, and just as with the sporting portion of the identity, the component was reinforced by auditing, communicating, enabling, modeling, rewarding, and signalling its adherence and performance. Consequently, community enrichment and beneficence were ensured as central elements of the constructed identity.

Auditing. Regulation of this identity component, just as with the its sporting equivalent, began prior to employment. More specifically, and as part of the process of both scouting and investigating the athletic abilities of prospective recruits, managers sought to learn about individuals' character, and willingness to engage in community enrichment and beneficence. Participant 08, for example, provided the following response to a question on how their organization developed "team-first and community-oriented" individuals:

> The first thing we do is try to identify that player when we look at signing free agents, unsigned draft picks, or unsigned college players - or through the draft - we try to identify people who have those characteristics. . . . Talk to their coaches. Talk to their teammates. Talk to people who know them. We try to do pretty good background checks.

In a similar vein, Participant 11 noted, “When we bring in players, we make sure we do background checks on their character. I think that being a good person, doing things in the community, and being personable, is big with our players.” Thus, as with performance excellence, managers assessed prospective recruits with regard to their potential to perform a portion of the athletic identity.

Unlike with performance excellence, however, community enrichment and beneficence generally transpired without stringent and continued auditing. Team members were certainly expected to adhere to the beneficent component of the athletic identity, but their performance thereof often escaped significant monitoring and evaluation (beyond, perhaps, a note on attendance, or the feedback of beneficiaries and community members). Seemingly, only when adherence and performance were entirely abandoned, or questioned, did enforcement occur. Without a particular example of abandonment or violation to note, however, it may be possible to simply suggest that the potential for stigmatization was enough to enforce compliance.

Communicating. More explicitly, the beneficent component of the identity was reinforced via direct communication. In this regard, community enrichment and beneficence were incorporated into organizational pillars of operation/mission statements, and/or espoused at team meetings. In at least one instance, both means were employed:

> As I mentioned before, it’s a pillar of what our organization is about: community involvement; charitable causes; philanthropy; and making the lives of (residents) better - in all different ways and facets, whether that’s through our foundation, or through player involvement, or whatever it might be. Encouraging it, as a pillar of the organization - I think it’s just people following that lead, being encouraged to do that, and, quite honestly, finding joy from doing that. . . . So, how is that brought up? It’s brought up at start-of-

> the-year meetings; it's brought up through meeting our staff... and giving the players options of how they can be involved in the community. (Participant 07)

Fundamental to the efficacy of direct communication, and the construction of beneficent selves, as the participant (twice) noted, were staffs that oversaw and delivered philanthropic endeavours.

Enabling. In fact, nothing better illustrated the support that was afforded to the beneficent component of the identity than the ubiquitous standing that philanthropic foundations and programs held within the field. Simply, it was rare for an organization to not have a program, staff, or entire division dedicated to a beneficent end. As a consequence, player personnel could readily be incorporated into any one of a number of available endeavours, limited and prolonged in time and commitment alike (e.g., the Professional Hockey Players' Association Grow with the Pros! Mentor Program, Reid, n.d.; the National Hockey League Players' Association Goals and Dreams Program, Vocaturo, 2016; team foundations, Lomon, 2017a). Moreover, and as Participant 08 previously intimated (see p. 91 of this work), organizations could provide player personnel with the impetus to develop standalone projects (e.g., the Ryan Callahan Foundation, Lomon, 2016c; Ryan Ellis's Elly 4 Kids, Willis, 2016; the Sedin Family Foundation, Vocaturo, 2017; the Jason Spezza Scholarship Fund, Dallas Stars Staff, 2017). Beneficence and community enrichment were thus in the "the hockey environment's DNA" (Participant 15, see p. 87 of this work), in part, because organizations enabled as much: through the construction of foundations, programs, and events; the employment of dedicated staffs; and the incorporation of (player) personnel into available vehicles.

Modeling. Those who were active in beneficence and community enrichment, in turn, were often portrayed as models worthy of emulation (e.g., see p. 91 of this work, ". . . show them

what players have done, the special causes they've taken on, how they've given back to the community . . . ," Participant 08). The clearest example of such was offered by Participant 07:

> Who epitomizes our organization is probably our team captain, (Individual Name). Any time you have a tremendous leader that guides the team by his play on and off the ice, by his charitable work - He probably epitomizes the heartbeat of our team, and what we want to be, and what we do as a group on and off the ice. . . . [And] it's one of thing of saying it, of being involved in the community, and giving back, and being involved with charitable causes, and it's another thing to do it, and he and his wife do it. They've won numerous awards over the last few years, both in the NHL and [otherwise] . . .

In positioning an individual as the standard bearer for identity adherence and performance, and attaching a beneficent component thereto, organizations effectively legitimized the pursuit of communal enrichment, and ensured the promulgation thereof amongst team members.

Rewarding. Further, and as the previous quotation from Participant 07 denoted, regulation of the beneficent component was supported through the provision of awards and rewards. In some (perhaps rare) instances, and as with the athletic component of the identity, adherence and performance engendered organizational approval, and the supply of both pecuniary considerations and work contracts. Participant 06, a Representative of the office of the National Hockey League, for example, relayed the experience of alumnus Andrew Ference, who attributed his prolonged career, in part, to a proclivity for philanthropy/community engagement:

> He [(i.e., Andrew Ference)] says to rookies, 'Look, I extended my career because I was involved in other communal/civic duties.' He's even said the [Boston] Bruins [(NHL)] signed him, or kept him, because he was such a good guy, and his name was associated with good, positive things. Let him tell you [(note: the account was not subsequently

> investigated or verified)], but he said, there's probably better defensemen that they could have signed, or at least the same, with regard to skill level, but he was such a presence, and he was doing so many great things off the ice that the organization looked fondly on that, and basically that's kind of what got him a (Stanley) Cup [(i.e., the opportunity to play for many more years, and challenge for the 'ultimate prize' in the sport)].

For his efforts, in 2014, Ference was conferred the King Clancy Memorial Trophy, an "award [that] is presented annually to the National Hockey League player who best exemplifies leadership qualities on and off the ice and has made a noteworthy humanitarian contribution in his [sic] community" (Edmonton Oilers Staff, 2014, para. 1).

The trophy, and its American Hockey League equivalent, the Yanick Dupré Memorial Award (presented for "outstanding contributions to one's [altered pronoun] local community and charitable organizations," American Hockey League, 2017c, para. 2), were the physical markers that governing organizations employed toward identity adherence and performance. Notably, these awards were undergirded by a selection process that was unlike that of most any seen with an athletic prize: specifically, at season's end, teams nominated an individual for consideration; and, from the assembled list, an exemplar was selected (in the American Hockey League, the nominee of each team was bestowed the title of "Man of the Year," American Hockey League, 2017b, para. 1). The awards, and selection processes, as constituted, ultimately afforded leagues and individual teams the means to celebrate and reinforce identity adherence and performance.

Signalling. When these celebrations and/or acts of beneficence were leveraged, through the use of internal (e.g., team websites) and external media (e.g., newspapers, radio and television broadcasts), organizations also signalled to others that the identities of professional athletes included more than a sporting component. Far more often than not, teams reported on

the beneficent endeavours of employees, and/or dedicated website spaces to undertaken and ongoing activities (e.g., foundations, programs, donations, grants, scholarships, raffles, fundraisers, and player initiatives). Most notable in this regard, from the collection of reviewed articles, was the website of the National Hockey League Players' Association, a platform that included a news section on (members) "giving back": therein, works addressed such member-led endeavours as charity road hockey (Lomon, 2016a), golf (Faas, 2016a), and ping pong tournaments (Faas, 2016b); and partnerships with philanthropies (e.g., Lomon, 2016d; National Hockey League Players' Association Staff, 2016b). With these articles, and others of their sort, the beneficent component of the athletic identity was effectively reinforced.

The identity, as a whole then, and in short, was defined by multiple motives (performance excellence; and community enrichment/beneficence), sets of values and characteristics (competitiveness, industriousness, professionalism, selflessness, toughness, and uprightness; character, leadership, sociability, perspective, and reciprocity), and bodies of knowledge and skill (technical maneuvers, physical fitness/training, nutrition/food preparation, situational play, and match systems; brand management and public speaking). To foster identity adherence and performance, organizations, namely teams, employed a number of regulatory tacks (e.g., auditing, communicating, enabling, modeling, rewarding, routinizing, and signalling).
The ultimate product of these tacks, and regulation more generally, was a substantive (athletic) identity that pervaded much of the field.

Alternate Identity Regulation

As something of a response or counterpoint to the described regulation, organizations supported the development of an identity that was separate from that which was tied to sporting participation. The alternate identity, less well-defined and more self-directed than its athletic

equivalent, rested upon the interrelated motives of personal excellence and transition preparation; was tied to the values and characteristics of prudence and independence; and encompassed professional and personal capacities alike (e.g., business and finance management, networking, and work-life/-family balance). With regard to regulation, the undertaken process was similar to that previously described, in that both forms were buttressed by a supporting set of organizational practices. More specifically, organizations fostered alternate identity adherence and performance through auxiliary resource allocation; explicit conveyances; and the use of exemplars, publicity, and surveillance. Regulation of the two identities differed, however, in that the alternate spurred proactive disruption of the other (i.e., a challenge to the status quo). Ultimately, the alternate identity was extant, but not, unlike its athletic counterpart, pervasive.

Motives. At its base, the alternate identity represented a response to athletic career retirement difficulties, the related and expressed concerns of player personnel, and a broader assurance of individual well-being. In an effort to attend to these matters, organizations, namely the Professional Hockey Players' Association, set out to support personnel in the development of a largely self-directed identity. To this end, organizations engaged in regulation that facilitated personal excellence and transition preparation.

In fact, much of the undertaken regulation was grounded in a concern for personal excellence (i.e., "the achievement of developmentally appropriate tasks across the length of one's life and the acquisition of personal qualities that contribute to optimal health and wellbeing, Miller & Kerr, 2002, p. 141). As evidence of as much, Participant 03, an Assistant General Manager with the Nested Case Organization, explained, in relation to the National Hockey League team's employment of a psychologist, that there existed a concern for members to achieve optimal health and well-being:

> We had a sport psychologist in (City Name), and the important thing about them is that they're another sounding board, in an area of expertise, that can help players cope with day-to-day issues. They may have some personal issues that they may not want to share with the coach, for whatever reason, or with management. It could be something at home, a drug issue, an alcohol issue, a girl issue, a monetary issue, heck, it could be just an every day issue. . . . They can be of good assistance to the player, not only to prepare and excel on the ice, but off the ice as well.

Participants 02 and 04, managers with the Professional Hockey Players' Association, similarly and respectively noted that their organization existed, in part, to serve the developmental needs of members ("what it [(the Professional Hockey Players' Association's Career Enhancement Program)] came to be, is, 'what are your needs'"), and "to help [individuals] become better people." The pair, moreover, stressed the import of long-term member well-being, and the need for individuals to involve themselves in developmental endeavours. In these ways, the alternate identity was defined by the pursuit of personal excellence, and the acquisition of qualities that could contribute to an immutable state of well-being.

As part of this pursuit, and the related motive, association members were encouraged to engage in continued education, and/or attain a post-secondary degree. Such was viewed as particularly efficacious to long-term development and well-being. As Participant 02 plainly stated, with regard to the work of the organization's Career Enhancement Program, "The focus was on education, not vocation. Those who were in a position to go forward [in life], it's much easier for them [with an education]." The pursuit of personal excellence was thus tied to education attainment, and association members were meant to understand that long-term well-being could be more easily achieved with some form of added accreditation.

The previous rhetoric and/or position notwithstanding, the Professional Hockey Players' Association did not discount vocation-related development, nor detach as much from traditional forms of education. As Participant 01, another manager with the association, noted, with specific regard to the organization's Career Enhancement Program, "We would like to prepare the athletes for their second career." Accordingly, association members were encouraged to explore vocational interests, and engage in related development, including post-secondary education.

The remarks of Participants 01 and 02, and the forward-looking nature of each, also underscored the import of identity regulation to transition preparation: for the management staff of the Professional Hockey Players' Association, the quality of a retirement was predicated, in part, on the development of a novel and rewarding self-definition. In this vein, Participant 04 stressed the need for members to understand the unique conditions of sport, and proactively devise transition-related solutions:

> From sitting where I've sat, for the number of years I've sat, you see that the transition is not fun for most guys. When they get in the game, everybody thinks, 'I'm going to own a bar when I'm done.' That ain't going to happen. 'I'm going to stay involved, and be a coach when it's done.' There are only so many coaching jobs. 'I want to be a general manager, or the president of an organization.' There's only so many of those. . . . Players need to understand it's [(i.e., a career in professional hockey)] a stepping stone; it's a phase of life that's very short. The apprentice that you had to get here is a lot longer than your career is going to be, and then you have a whole life after that. You got another 50 years after you're done. Figure it out. You got to figure it out while you're playing, while you have access to people, people who look up to you; that's the time to do it; not when you're done.

In this context, the call to "figure it out" was akin to 'develop a broader and/or alternate self.' In this way, personal excellence and/or an undemanding transition could be more easily achieved.

Values and Characteristics. Also encompassed within the noted call, and the broader identity, were two characteristics: prudence, and independence. The previous remarks of Participant 04 were an unequivocal affirmation of the former. When asked about the characteristics personnel ought to possess, Participant 01 offered a reiteration:

> A vision. A vision that when they play their first professional hockey game they will in fact eventually play their last professional hockey game. They have to have a vision that they have to do something after their career. Unlike National Hockey League players who might have that financial buffer, these players have to get going, I'd say, within six months after they finish playing. And they need to have a vision - and identify where they need to go, or what type of job they want.

In short, and as part of the process of developing a broader and/or alternate self, association members were encouraged to be mindful of their futures, and the prospects that may exist.

Moreover, and despite the previous remarks of Participant 04, the office of the Professional Hockey Players' Association generally did not bound the prospects of its members. That is, the office eschewed the responsibility of deciding the direction of others, and took it upon itself to instead act as a conduit for the achievement of individual interests. As Participant 02 noted, again, with specific regard to the association's Career Enhancement Program:

> The goal of the program was to meet the need of the individual who has signed up. . . . But never, ever trying to direct or persuade. [It was] completely self-directed. Laying it out . . . . Like very definitely, 'Okay, you tell me you want to be such and such. Based on what you've [(i.e., experience and/or education)] got, here's what you'll need to do.'

In this sense, and perhaps very much unlike the devised athletic identity, wherein selflessness and deference to authority were close to paramount, independence was made to be central.

Finally, it must be noted that some level of transference, between athletic and alternate identities, was expected. Participant 01, who contributed to such transference, briefly described how characteristics associated with one identity could be valuable to another: "They [(organization members)] are great with team work. They're great with handling adversity. They're goal-oriented. . . . They need to realize they have that going into the workplace." Beyond merely the workplace, however, characteristics of these sort could serve an alternate identity, and, in turn, both the pursuit of personal excellence and the construction of a positive retirement experience.

Knowledge and Skills. Consistent with these ends, individuals were also encouraged to supplement a novel and alternate identity with an applicable education. Although organizations in the field, in and of themselves, seldom supplied the knowledge and skills that were key to alternate identity construction, they did afford access to other entities that could propel the process. Accordingly, individuals, who chose to do so, gathered personal (e.g., in finance management, work-life balance, and intercultural competence) and occupational (e.g., in business management, and [social] networking; and toward career certification/accreditation) knowledge/skills alike.

Regulatory Practices. Fundamental to the accumulation of such knowledge and skills, and most illustrative of the undertaken and related identity regulation, as previously intimated, were a variety of enabling tactics. Not to be confined to a single practice, however, organizations also communicated, modelled, signalled, and monitored means of identity adherence and

performance. In these ways, and by addressing insulators of the status quo, organizations supported the construction and maintenance of an alternate identity.

Enabling. Again, however, fundamental to the processes of identity construction and maintenance were enabling entities, and, in particular, the Professional Hockey Players' Association's Career Enhancement Program. Founded prior to the turn of the millennium (1998), the program aimed to assist association members in making "a smooth transition to a second career following hockey" (Professional Hockey Players' Association, n.d.b, para. 1). To this end, the program provided, to some 1600 individuals (over 20 years), assistance with "career planning and personality testing; resumes [sic], cover letters, and interview preparation; education [(e.g., registration, and credit transfers)] . . . (Grade 12 to Graduate Studies); [and] . . . certification for specialized programs" (Professional Hockey Players' Association, n.d.b, para. 3).

The various forms of assistance were referenced, without direct provocation, by each of the interviewed managers of the Professional Hockey Players' Association, and reflected the generally self-directed nature of the alternate identity. Participant 04 described, for example, how personality testing, offered by the Career Enhancement Program, helped one alumnus to construct a business, and affirm a nascent self-definition:

> This is off-topic[, but] I had a wife call me - Her husband took the test, . . . went home, and said, 'This is bullshit. This is crap. This isn't me.' She picked up the phone, called me, and said, 'You won't believe this, that is my husband to a tee. He just won't accept it.' 'Well, talk to him. Talk to the family members.' Now the kid owns his own plumbing company. He wanted to be a plumber; the test said he was capable of being a plumber; and he went out on an apprenticeship, and now he owns his own plumbing company with

> about seven vehicles. So, it was that wife's phone call here, to say, 'He doesn't want to believe it. He thinks it's crap.' Well, it [(i.e., the manager's encouragement)] changed it.

A similar result came for at least one association member who turned to the Career Enhancement Program for résumé and interview assistance:

> In (Canadian City), their minor hockey [system] is so big that the president of the hockey association also runs the teams and the practices, and coordinates all the teams from peewee all the way up to midget - and it's a paying job - and I guess through my help, this guy, a former professional hockey player, got the job, and he just sent me a note saying, 'Thanks. You really, really helped me' - because not only was there the résumé I had to help him with - which needed a lot of help - but there was a second and third interview process, and I sort of let him know what to expect in the interview, and how to answer questions, and he really appreciated it, and got the job. That felt really good. (Participant 01)

Moreover, in liaising and constructing partnerships with educational institutions, program managers enabled association members to pursue novel interests, and construct like identities:

> Take a look at the example of (Individual Name). Look at his profile. He took all of his courses. All of them! Forty-some odd at Athabasca [University]. He wanted to be a psychologist. He's out now. Something like that (stops abruptly, as though the conclusion is self-evident) [requires quite a deal of dedication]. And every one of them [(i.e., association members who sought further education)] went through me. Every one of them. (Participant 02)

Finally, and despite, at times, enduring logistic obstacles, program managers accommodated certification requests, and, in so doing, presented formatted tracks for identity construction:

> It took us ten years to get it [(i.e., the firefighting certification program installed)] . . . . That [(i.e., the program)] was a request. The players, when they went through and [communicated; change of verb] what their goals were, lots of them said, 'That's what I want.' (Participant 02) . . . . [And we've] had about 60 players go through the firefighting program over the last four years, which gives them the basic mandatory certificate where they can pursue their firefighting anywhere in North America, except California or Quebec. The players take a pretty intense online course throughout the hockey season. And right now, as a matter of fact, the practical is going on, for four weeks, up at FESTI (Fire and Emergency Services Training Institute), which is just outside Pearson Airport (in Mississauga, Ontario). (Participant 01)

Thus, through this initiative, and those aforementioned, members were afforded the freedom to explore their prospects (be they in a trade, the sport, a medical profession, public service, or otherwise), gain an apt education (i.e., knowledge and skills), and, in turn, apply the products thereof to the construction of a broader and/or alternate self.

Further opportunity to gather an apt education, as well as a body of occupational knowledge and skills, was presented in the forms of player representation, and, to a lesser extent, member participation: the former, an elemental component of both the Professional Hockey and National Hockey League Players' Associations, and to which player personnel, from each team, elect a single member to represent the interests of the group in collective bargaining, accorded individuals access to the inner workings of a complex and decentralized organization; short of taking on the responsibility of a player representative, personnel, who expressed an interest, could engage in the latter. The product of either form of engagement, given earnest participation,

as Participant 15, a representative of the National Hockey League Players' Association, best described, was an accruement of practical knowledge and skills:

> The athletes in our membership are open and able to participate in any form of the business, or anything that is going on inside the National Hockey League Players' Association. They are welcome to be informed. They're welcome to participate, show up, learn, and understand the business: the macroeconomics of the sport of hockey, the community development sector, the education of the game. . . . There is actually an opportunity for athletes, our members, to gain some skill sets on top of being an athlete. They can gain some outside skill sets in the business environment, if they're interested in that side of development for themselves. . . . [The skills,] there are a few: definitely the economic - understanding how to comb through and understand the economic side of the business, because it drives a lot of ships there; it would be great if they can understand the overall environments of how decisions are made, how transparent those decisions are, the access they have in order to be informed, and how to make decisions in the governance of the entity that is the NHLPA - the insides and outs. These are some of the skill sets that are available for the members. And definitely the bargaining elements are there, where all parties, all members, are able to participate in the actual collective bargaining negotiations. . . . There are a lot of skill sets that are involved [(in the process of collective bargaining)]: in managing relationships; communications; consensus building; bargaining strategies; communication strategies, externally; and understanding how it all impacts each and every member across the board.

The Professional Hockey and National Hockey League Players' Associations thus enabled development apart from sport.

In a similar, albeit less exhaustive, vein, the nested case organization enabled personal development, by employing a psychologist; intercultural competence, by matching young, foreign prospects with elder team members (e.g., in living and/or rooming arrangements; the representative reference was omitted for the purpose of confidentiality); and financial literacy, by conducting information sessions:

> What you're trying to instill in the players, about being good people, being good individuals, being smart with money - if you do some kind of financial thing - I'm not saying we do it. We have done it. We didn't do it this past summer. But we had somebody come in and talk about how to balance a check book, and different things, just to be cognizant of as they go through. Again, players tend to get focused strictly, exclusively, and solely on the game, and how they can perform on the ice - which is fine, and well they should - again, we know they're human beings, and there's also, hate to say it, but the truth of the matter is there's life outside of hockey. In fact, it consumes more of their life than in the game of hockey - because, again, you got to pay bills, when you're going out to dinner, when you buy a house, or rent an apartment, etc. So, we try to instill that. (Participant 03, a National Hockey League Assistant General Manager).

As evidenced by the example of intercultural competence, in particular, the knowledge, skills, and development that organizations attempted to engender was not limited to a prospective work identity.

Rather, and given a regard for personal excellence, organizations attempted to foster characteristics and knowledge that could contribute to a heightened state of overall well-being. In this vein, for example, the Professional Hockey Players' Association devised and employed two (respectively proactive and reactive) online information systems:

> Probably the most meaningful access to them, for telling them about life skills, is what we call our Membership Assistance Program. It sends out brochures, articles, online, helping the players understand something as simple as etiquette, manners. That's all part of our Membership Assistance Program. It's an EAP [(i.e., Employee Assistance Program)], but we call it MAP. It's a map, giving you direction in life. . . . [on] cooking, nutrition, [and] budgeting. . . . And if you need counselling of any type, or the wife - we had 2700 hits last year, on our website, for what we call the Redline Program (Participant 04) . . . . Whether a player is battling through an injury, stressed, feeling anxious, feeling depressed, troubled with addiction, feeling strain on a relationship, worried about legal issues, in need of financial advice, or dealing with general mental health issues, [they or their spouses; edit of subject/noun] can call the REDLINE any time of day as a free, confidential service. (Professional Hockey Players' Association, n.d.a, para. 3)

With similar systems in place at the level of the National Hockey League, organizations, across the field, enabled individual and identity development alike.

Communicating. With these systems, and the Career Enhancement Program, as something of a base, organizations, and, again, the Professional Hockey Players' Association in particular, set out to communicate to members the opportunities that were available to them, and, in turn, the value of constructing an alternate identity. As part of the identity-related communication strategy employed by the association, managers engaged members during enrolment tours; at annual association meetings; and through player representatives, spouses, and various forms of physical and online media (e.g., "by mobile app; or a brochure, sent to the dressing room for the players to distribute; [or] with posters above the urinals, where guys are going to see them," Participant 04). Of these methods, that which was perceived by the

interviewed managers as the most effective in engendering both program participation and identity exploration was the enrolment tour, an annual trek that placed the Executive Director of the Players' Association, Larry Landon, in front of the membership of every member team:

> It's that enrolment trip. He [(i.e., Larry Landon)] really bangs that - We have a beautiful brochure, to describe it, and we really push on the player reps, and we have had success with the FESTI [(Fire and Emergency Services Training Institute)] program, and a couple of other programs, that players recognize, 'Oh, this is something.' (Participant 01)
>
> When he [(i.e., Larry Landon)] gets in front of the players, and starts to show them the different things they can do within the CEP, on a video presentation, most of them come up after and say, 'Can I get (Manager Name)'s number?' . . . . He carries their business cards with him. And then, what that allows them to do is reach out right away. And (Manager Name) will call, and say, 'Oh my god, he must have just saw Wilkes-Barre because we got four calls today'; or, 'He must have just saw Hartford because we got six calls today.' That's what happens. It's a good thing. (remarks edited for confidentiality purposes; Participant 04)

Further, Participant 04, in recounting the conveyances of the Executive Director, intimated that the effectiveness of the latter's messaging could be traced, in large part, to the personal and compelling nature thereof:

> He's [(i.e., Larry Landon)] a great example. Rick Gorman's [(i.e., a former Manager of the Career Enhancement Program)] predecessor was Phil Mazzone, who started [the program] . . . . Larry was so focused on wanting to be a hockey player that his schooling took a hit. . . . And Phil Mazzone called him, and said, 'Son, sit down. What are you doing? Look at your grades. You've got 52, 53, 57.' Larry tells the players he had a 52

> with all his classes combined. . . . So, Phil said, 'You've got twenty-something scholarship offers already, but there's no way you can go.' So, he said, 'I'm going to make you a deal. You're going to concentrate on your studies, I'm going to get you tutors, and you'll get a scholarship.' Larry trusted him; had faith in him. . . . And that's when, he will tell you, his life changed. (order of remarks rearranged for clarity purposes)

Given the results (i.e., a lifelong career in the sport), the account effectively legitimized the pursuit of higher education, as well as the work of the program manager, and allowed for the Executive Director to present himself as something of a model for others to follow.

Modeling. This model was not a solitary one, however, in that examples for emulation were provided by others, including team personnel managers. Participants 11 and 13, managers of individual American Hockey League teams, were alumni of both the Professional Hockey Players' Association and the Career Enhancement Program, and offered members of their respective organizations themselves, and their perspectives, as examples to heed:

> Every year they [(i.e., the Professional Hockey Players' Association)] came in, and they always talked about it [(i.e., the Career Enhancement Program)]. . . . They sent out - back then it was paper; now they put it all on the computer - but the different programs they have. And they kind of try to push you that way. I mean, you can only show people, and try to get them to do it, but it's up to the individuals to do it. And I know, towards the end of my career, I went through the process of - they do a profile of you - you fill out a bunch of different questionnaires, and it kind of points you to what your career may be, should be, down the road, or, with your personality, what careers you should get into. I went through all that process, just to get ready for when I was going to call it quits. . . . I think it's huge. . . . I think every player should do it. (Participant 11)

> It's [(i.e., the Career Enhancement Program)] an asset. We give a lot of hockey assets, to make the player better. The players' association is giving the players an asset. I've actually gone through it. It's been around for a long time. I did some different things with the Career Enhancement Program, when it first started. I did all my testing, of what direction I should have went in, for a vocation. I did that stuff. I think it's a massive asset for anybody. And it's a part of our players' association, so why not . . . . It's there; it's free; go do it; and I don't understand when players don't do it, because it's an asset. You've got to be lazy not to take that up. . . . And I think it's a great thing on the part of our players' association, especially with the transition of players leaving the sport. Why not look further ahead, and set yourself up for after hockey? There are only so many hockey jobs. I'm sitting here, as a (Position Title) - I've stayed in hockey my whole life, and I wake up every morning and know how fortunate I have been in that aspect, that I got to play, coach, and be a manager in hockey, but I'm the rare [case]. A lot of guys think they're going to finish the game and go coach. There are only so many coaching jobs; there are only so many jobs in hockey; and there are a lot of players that retire every year in hockey; so, I think the aspect of looking ahead, and using the players' association, or any asset like that, they'd be crazy not to. (Participant 13)

The sincere nature of the utterances notwithstanding, there existed a limitation with the models in that each was explicitly tied to sport. In addition, and unlike with the devised athletic identity, models for alternate forms of development were neither pervasive nor overly salient: Participants 11 and 13 admitted that conversations were seldom about outside pursuits; and only some team members, namely veterans and player representatives (e.g., Participants 11 and 16), were prone to speaking openly of such matters.

Signalling. With that said, organizations did make attempts to offer and promote examples of alternate identity development. The Professional Hockey Players' Association, in particular, published, on its website, articles by internal and external sources alike. Among the most prominent examples of the former was a work by Kane (n.d.), who examined the careers of goaltender and businessman Doug Carr:

> After four years of college hockey and graduating with a degree, Carr left the University of Massachusetts-Lowell to pursue his professional career. Although he went undrafted out of college, that didn't stop Carr from landing a spot in the crease that same year with the Abbotsford Heat, the AHL affiliate of the Calgary Flames. Carr joined the team for the conclusion of Abbotsford's 2013-14 season, playing in two regular season games, registering a win and a tie. Since then, Carr has withstood the ups and downs between the AHL and ECHL, where he is currently the starting goaltender for the Wheeling Nailers of the ECHL. . . . And while he continues to pursue professional hockey as his first passion, he also has his foot planted in a business venture called SidelineSwap. Following his first year of professional hockey, Carr became involved in the company when he decided he wanted to put his [business management] degree to good use in order to remain financially solid long beyond his playing career was over. Carr, who has assumed the position of Hockey Lead for SidelineSwap, is constantly challenged with a busy schedule. However, that won't deter him from using his time to pursue both passions. "I'm not going to kid myself and think hockey will last forever, but as long as I am playing it will always be the primary focus of my life. In the meantime, I still expect to stay as involved in SidelineSwap as much as I can while I'm playing the game I love. It

> provides some balance to my life and keeps me busy when I'm away from the rink, and that's something I have come to really enjoy." (paras. 10, 12-13, 20-21)

At other times, and as aforementioned, the association published works by outside authors, such as Franke (2017), who reported on the developmental endeavours of Daultan Leveille:

> Daultan Leveille's focus on his future isn't so singleminded [sic] that he can't see the forest for the hockey sticks, let alone the trees they're made from. While the one-time St. Catharines Falcons forward, who in 2008 became the first-ever junior B player selected in the first round of the NHL Entry Draft, still hopes to make it to the NHL, he's keeping his options – and his eyes – open. After blowing out a knee in his senior year at Michigan State University and not being offered a contract after the Atlanta Thrashers, the team that drafted him, relocated to Winnipeg, Leveille has learned from often painful experience not to take anything for granted. That's why he spent two days recently in council chambers at Thorold City Hall studying first aid instead of enjoying the off-season playing golf or catching up with old friends. And, on June 19 he will going to Mississauga to participate in an intense, month-long "hands-on" program, the culmination of a certification that started when he began studying the classroom portion online in February. . . . The training sets the stage for becoming a volunteer firefighter, but Leveille doesn't know when he will be taking that "next step" . . . . The Professional Hockey Players' Association, which is working with the Fire and Emergency Services Training Institute in Mississauga to offer the program to current and former players, also helped Leveille complete his bachelor of arts degree in psychology at Michigan State University in January. "I left a bit early so I had a year of course work that still needed to be done." Leveille, who hopes to earn a masters degree in counselling, said having "other

> options" is important in a profession in which a career-ending injury could happen at any time. (paras. 1-5, 7, 9-11)

Although organizations other than the Professional Hockey Players' Association also published works on developmental endeavours, they did so infrequently. A notable exception to the typical writings on the American Hockey League website, for example, was a work by Harr (2017), who detailed the "dual life" of John Muse:

> If one were to research goaltender John Muse on the internet, the most common results would be about his many years spent in the Carolina Hurricanes organization or the Texas Stars and Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League. . . . One thing you would not find, however, is that John — along with his mother, Kitty; father, Peter; and oldest brother, Charlie — helps run and operate Paul's Pizza & Seafood. . . Kitty and Charlie manage the bar, restaurant and kitchen operations as well as the business side of things while Peter handles all of the maintenance work. John, in addition to his daily duties of stopping pucks, oversees all the marketing. "My mom and brother do the majority of the work to keep everything running smoothly and I help out with the tech aspects of things along with all the merchandising," said Muse. "We installed new computer systems in the restaurant to make ordering easier, so I helped teach the staff how to use everything properly. I also manage the social media accounts, like our Yelp and Facebook pages, and will be starting an Instagram account for the beginning of the summer. We also recently started selling merchandise, so I got to design hats, t-shirts, hoodies, and polos." Prior to turning pro, Muse attended Boston College for four years, earning a bachelor's degree in Marketing while leading the Eagles to two NCAA National Championships. . . . Following the completion of the Amerks season, Muse will

> head back to Falmouth to continue improving the social media pages in hopes of bringing in more business for his family's restaurant. (paras. 1, 4, 7-9, 14)

This example, and others of its sort, as infrequent as they were, signalled to readers (be they player personnel or fans) that the identity of a professional athlete could extend well beyond sport. In turn, such an identity could be both normalized and made more acceptable.

Auditing (Monitoring). As something of an added means to such normalization, and alternate identity development, managers of the Professional Hockey Players' Association and Career Enhancement Program engaged in acts of monitoring. These acts, unlike those which were undertaken by teams, focused on program participants, and entailed genial expressions of support. Speaking on the behalf of one manager, who personified these expressions, and conveyed a sincere concern for the well-being and development of others, Participant 02 explained, for example, how, separate from any stipulated work requirements, the individual visited program participants, and offered, in effect, a form of behavioural reinforcement:

> See, a lot of these people he never met face to face. He would see, 'Oh, their team [(is coming through the area)] - ' because they used to play in (City Name; i.e., close to home), right, so that allowed a fair amount of - the ability to [meet them in person] - So he would say to me, 'Oh, I sent so and so an e-mail that I'm going to go to the game, and I hope I can meet them afterwards.' It was actually very casual. But, again, it was not something he needed to do, as part of the program; he just wanted to do it. Like, 'Hi, Bob, we've conversed many, many times through e-mail, and it's nice to meet you.' Sometimes some players wouldn't come out, especially if it was a lousy game, and they were on the lousy end, but most of them would.

The individual attention that was afforded by the manager(s), and engendered by continued communication, offered program participants an assurance, that their pursuits, and/or an emergent identity, would be supported. As Participant 16, an alumnus of both the National Hockey League and Career Enhancement Program, noted:

> [The Manager of the Career Enhancement Program] was effectively my liaison. If I had a question, 'Hey, I'm thinking about doing this. Could you help me figure it out? What are the academic requirements? What do I need for that? Can I get in there? What'll it look like doing that?' He was my liaison with Athabasca University, as far as initially helping me get signed up in specific courses, and things like that, and getting you on your feet. And then he was always just a great touchpoint. He was always open to checking in, and checking how you were charting your way. He was a great resource that was very helpful. And it's not that he was doing extremely difficult things, but he was there.

Disrupting. As a final, albeit nascent, form of regulation, the Professional Hockey Players' Association, at the time of data collection, was, by way of a merger between athletic and alternate identities, in the early stages of an effort to disrupt the status quo of the field. Granting the request of an alumnus turned scholar, with an American university, to conduct a study of the intersection between personal and performance excellence, the association hoped to find, and convey to team managers, that development separate from sport could enhance athletic prowess. As Participant 01, the association's point of contact for the research project, explained:

> We are conducting a study, with (University Name), trying to prove the hypothesis that if you know where you're going after you finish playing, you'll play better hockey . . . . Now, I don't know if the - I'm sure hoping the data proves that that hypothesis is true (Participant 04 similarly noted, "I think it's going to come back that it's beneficial, to stay

> active. I do. I really do."). And then what do you do? Then you can kind of come up to ownership, and say, 'Look, we've increased the value of your asset, the players, so we need you to increase the support for them, and what's the matter with a career counselor talking to these players, and trying to create that scenario where they know where they're going to go after they've finished playing.' You know, why if we have a sponsor of a team, like a gas company, or an insurance company, well, 'why don't you, as part of the sponsorship, take on some of the players, as far as employment, after the season.' Now, there's some CBA restrictions there, but hopefully the project will lead that way.

The intent of the manager and association, as such, was to reshape the extant athletic identity, to include an alternate component, and involve teams in a broadened regulation process. The implication of as much was that personal excellence and successful retirement experiences could be more easily achieved through these means.

To reiterate, then, and as something of a counterpoint to the devised athletic identity, organizations set out to support the construction of a self that was separate from sporting participation. This alternate self or identity, defined by two central motives (personal excellence and transition preparation), a like number of values and characteristics (prudence and independence), and several capacities (occupational and individual in nature), was undergirded by set of regulatory practices that included auxiliary resource allocation (i.e., enabling) and explicit conveyances (i.e., communicating); and the use of exemplars (i.e., modeling), publicity (i.e., signalling), surveillance (i.e., auditing), and research (i.e., disrupting). The ultimate product of these regulatory practices, and the process more broadly, was a largely self-directed, but not pervasive, identity.

Dual Identity Regulation

Unbeknownst to the managers of the Professional Hockey Players' Association, the office of the National Hockey League, and its counterpart, the National Hockey League Players' Association, embraced the notion of a dual identity, and set forth on constructing and regulating as much (grafting personal excellence onto its performance counterpart). The identity, nascent in nature, and like that which the Professional Hockey Players' Association hoped to construct, was founded upon the presumption that personal and performance excellence were inherently linked, and that each advanced the pursuit of the other (a notion similar to that which was proposed by Miller and Kerr, 2002). Accordingly, the dual identity was defined by the motives of personal and performance excellence, and the related ends of career development and transition preparation. Like the alternate that was regulated at the minor professional level, the dual identity encompassed the characteristics of prudence, self-exploration, and independence; and, consistent with the latter, a self-selected education. Finally, and although regulation tied to the identity could be construed as a form of disruption, managers, in an attempt to develop and ensure related adherence and performance, enabled, communicated, and modeled corroborative behaviours.

Motives. These behaviours, as aforementioned, were meant to affirm an identity that was rooted in the motives of personal and performance excellence. In this regard, the identity was unlike the alternate that was regulated, in large part, by the Professional Hockey Players' Association. That is, whereas the latter detached personal and performance excellence, the former did not. As Participant 09, a manager of the National Hockey League/National Hockey League Players' Association Core Development Program, explained, the dual identity focused not on personal or performance excellence, in and of themselves, but rather on both, and a holistic form of "athlete development":

I'm kind of getting into the weeds on the semantics, but we [(i.e., the managers of the program)] view it as athlete development. I'm not a huge fan of the term 'personal development' or 'personal enhancement,' because I think that takes on a different tone with a player, and it kind of it moves it away from a conversation related to performance, and talking about being an athlete - even though when we say 'athlete development' we're really talking about stuff that's taking place away from the playing surface. . . . Just to pull on this thread a little bit further, that's a big deal from my end of the world, is that if you're talking about player development then you're talking about stuff that's related to how they are in a hockey context: how hard they shoot the puck, how fast they skate, how hard they hit, how hard they train, and things of that nature. But when you're talking about athlete development, you're talking about the person, and how you develop the person in that broader context, and the idea that that broader context - although all those other points I just mentioned, in terms of skating, x's and o's, and things of that nature, that's all happening under the player rubric, under the athlete rubric, you're also talking about things such as stress management, or performance anxiety, or getting an education, or being ready to deal with their financial situation. Those are all things that impact the athlete, and, by extension, based on the argument that I was making from the get-go, that they do impact performance, so then that is athlete development, and that's why we, in order to keep it tied to performance, we really make the concerted effort not to talk about this from the perspective of 'personal enhancement'/'personal development' because then it becomes a conversation that takes them away from their primary profession, which is as a professional athlete. If you engage them in a conversation that seems like you're talking about something that has nothing to do with their sport then you're talking about

> the end of their career, which makes them less likely to want to engage with you. I think, for us - Like I said, it's kind of like splitting hairs, but it I think it's a pretty important distinction in terms of how we want to communicate with our players, and that's why using the terminology 'athlete development' is pretty significant for us. We don't use 'player development,' because, again, that very significantly denotes the physical. Athlete development, in my mind, although we care about the player component piece of it, really we're talking about neck up-related things.

The intent of the manager and program, as such, was to afford, members of the National Hockey League, holistic development, and, in turn, personal and performance excellence.

Moreover, and perhaps due to the nascent and incompletely constituted nature of the identity, other motives were affixed to those aforementioned. Participant 06, a manager with the office of the National Hockey League, for example, referenced both personal and performance excellence, as well as vocation development and transition preparation:

> Having players expand their horizons, we [(i.e., the league office)] believe, leads to better performance, makes their lives better: they can deal with situations off the ice, or on the ice, much more easily, when they are engaged in the community, and have interests outside of hockey. . . . I think the understanding was ... (pauses) the players' association and the league felt like maybe we need something [(i.e., an intervention)] for current players, because by the time you get out of the game it might be too late, to start looking for work, or another hobby, or another interest.

Differences in articulations aside, the intent of the managers was generally the same, to devise a broad-based identity that could serve personal and performance excellence alike.

Values and Characteristics. In setting out to devise such an identity, managers also recognized that there existed a need for association members to be prudent and self-explorative. Participant 06, in the immediate preamble to the previously provided quotation, noted, for example, that members ought to 'maximize their time in the league,' "be open-minded, [and] . . . get involved in learning." Participant 09, despite couching these notions in terms of a cultural change, expressed a similar refrain:

> My perspective is that it would be presumptuous to assume that we're going to impart a value onto a player. I think really what our objective is, from a programmatic perspective, is most players, when they really take a moment to think about it, understand that they're going to need to explore, and have a path or an interest outside the game, that they're going to need to pursue at one point, whether it's tomorrow or whether it's fifteen years down the line. I think most players deep down really do understand that, but they just may not be in a position to really explore it. And I think what we're [(i.e., at the Core Development Program)] trying to do, and the conversation, and the culture, that we're trying to change is to make guys more open to that dialogue, because we want them to understand that having that conversation doesn't mean you're talking about the end of your career; really what you're talking about is how you optimize where you are today so that whenever you walk away from the game down the line you're going to be able to pursue what you want to do, in a way that makes sense for you.

To construct and maintain a dual identity, then, it was presumed that one needed to possess the values and characteristics of prudence and self-exploration. Without as much, identity adherence and performance were unlikely to be sustained.

In a similar vein, adherence and performance were dependent upon expressions of independence. As Participant 09 explained,

> The way the program is designed is really to be, to a certain extent, open ended, and customized, so that the athlete sets their own plan, identifies what they want to do, and then . . . to help facilitate that in concert with the player, so that the player actually achieves what he's looking to do.

Regulation, much like that undertaken by the Career Enhancement Program and Professional Hockey Players' Association (see p. 101 of this work, Participant 02), thus called for a degree of independence (unlike that seen with the athletic identity). When as much was assumed in tandem with the aforementioned values and characteristics, the dual identity was given greater form.

Knowledge and Skills. Finally, and consistent with the value/characteristic of independence, the dual identity was defined by the pursuit and attainment of a self-selected education. The office of the National Hockey League, the National Hockey League Players' Association, and the Core Development Program, like their equivalents in minor professional hockey, seldomly assumed the responsibility of transmitting the knowledge and skills that were central to identity construction and maintenance (an exception in this regard may be construed from the comments of Participant 15; see pp. 105-106). Nevertheless, and as the Professional Hockey Players' Association's Career Enhancement Program did, the organizations afforded members access to professional and educational resources alike. Accordingly, members set out on such endeavours as to complete post-secondary degrees, and gain educations in real estate or business management (privacy concerns limited the provision of other examples; Participant 09).

Regulatory Practices. Undergirding these endeavours, and the construction of a novel identity, was the National Hockey League/National Hockey League Players' Association's

Player Development Program. To steer association members to the program, and, more broadly, a self defined by both personal and performance excellence, organizations and managers communicated and modeled the benefits and enactment of a dual identity. In these ways, and by contesting the standard form of the athletic identity that pervaded the field, organizations supported the construction of a novel/broadened self.

Enabling. Fundamental to the construction and maintenance of such a self, as aforementioned, was a system consisting of the Core Development and Rookie Orientation Programs. The former, in particular, was devised specifically for the end of "athlete development" (see pp. 117-118, Participant 09). As was noted in the press release that accompanied the launch of the program,

> Through engagement in CDP [(i.e., Core Development Program)], the NHL [(i.e., National Hockey League)] and NHLPA [(i.e., National Hockey League Players' Association)] aim to promote and facilitate healthy and productive lives for all Players during their NHL careers, and will help them transition to life and their post-playing careers. The launch of CDP coincides with the opening month of the 2016-17 season. It was created to provide NHL Players with information, resources and services to enhance their career experience. The goal of CDP is two-fold: (1) to provide Players with an opportunity to develop a path to success off the ice; and (2), to provide Players with a customized strategy to enhance their overall performance during their playing career. [The] CDP is designed to create opportunities to identify or complete educational endeavors, augment financial goals, build networking skills, establish key professional networks, and create strong philanthropic, business and career foundations (National Hockey League Players' Association Staff, 2016a, para. 2)

Consequently, the Core Development Program offered eligible participants (i.e., National Hockey League Players' Association members with a minimum of 40 games' experience) personality assessments; financial education; internship/mentorship opportunities; community engagement/philanthropy training; and assistance with post-secondary registration (Core Development Program, n.d.).

The Rookie Orientation Program, alternatively, and as its name might suggest, offered young and incoming league/association members, by way of an annual three-day symposium, information on such matters as finance management, media relations, substance use/abuse, and behavioural health. The intent of the symposium, similar to that of the Core Development Program, was "to enhance Players' life skills — both generally and as they relate to life in the NHL" (National Hockey League Players' Association Staff, 2016a, para. 5). Not simply an added resource for regulation, however, the program also acted as a forum for the communication of means that undergirded (dual) identity adherence and performance.

Communicating. As Participant 06, an organizer of the symposium/program, explained:

> It's mandatory. We get between 80 and 100 rookies every year, that we gather, before the season starts, at the end of the summer, and they're with us for two and a half days. The way we transmit the information, it's a process - We, and the PA - again, everything's done jointly with the players' association - We find the right experts in these fields. We interview them, we vet them, we have them initially present to us, and then we agree upon who should be presenting on . . . all the different factors that can affect a player. So, the rookies get two and a half days of those various educational programs. Some are done in a group session, and some are done in breakouts. . . . And we feel like we're touching every rookie with all this information every year, which is great. . . . And because we've

> administered this for about five years, and we did it in a smaller forum for about ten years before that, consecutively, we feel like probably every player in the league at this point has gone through that kind of rookie orientation training.

Such training, as the participant noted, targeted employees at the earliest stages of their professional careers, and provided the foundation for further regulation in subsequent years. Included as a part of this regulation, and the related communication efforts of organizations and managers, were gestures of outreach by association representatives; a league office-devised visiting player program; and various forms of media.

Perhaps most central of these, to member engagement, the promotion of available services, and the construction of a dual identity, was the former, the work of divisional player representatives. Participant 15, a manager with the National Hockey League Players' Association, explained the work of the representatives, and how they helped to inform members of developmental opportunities:

> We have a number of former players on staff, who were part of bargaining units in the past, and were representatives of their organizations/their teams when they played - when they were members of the association - and hold a deep understanding of how the association works - and they go out into the field, and actually build relationships: they sit down, and have discussions; have discussions separately with younger players, to give an opportunity to ask questions, and to really give an understanding of what the association provides to them, what's available to them, that we all work for them, and that they have the opportunity to engage in any discussions they possibly need to engage in, want to engage in, or participate in; they educate them on the different committees that are available to participate in, and in which their views may be shared - as well as the views

> of their constituents, of their teams, of their friends - around the league, they're able to share the views on behalf of them - and we basically have multiple meetings, multiple phone calls, throughout the scheduled season, and off-season, where players get a better understanding of what really goes on, and what's available.

The described mode of interpersonal communication, undertaken by representatives of the association, was matched by a similar means from the leaders and staff of the league office.

This alternate means of outreach and communication, termed the Visiting Player Program, afforded association members invitations to meet with the leaders and staff of the National Hockey League office, and to exploit the resources thereof to promote a personally relevant endeavour. In exchange for this invitation, managers with the office were granted, among other possibilities, an opportunity to publicize the merits of Core Development Program participation. As Participant 06, one such manager with the league office, explained:

> We have what's called a Visiting Player Program, and when teams come into New York, to play one of three area teams, and they have some time to themselves, we invite any or all players to come in to the league office, and talk to (Individual Name) and (Individual Name), and talk to us, and maybe do a little bit of media here, if they're trying to promote something that they want, whether it's hockey-related, or a cause, or something - obviously we have our NHL.com, and our NHL social here, and the NHL Network, to some degree - So, we have, not a steady stream, but a good number of players coming in every month, and that's another way we talk about the [Core Development] Program.

In addition to this mode of interpersonal communication, and that aforementioned, the league office and association, in efforts to sway member development, employed various forms of physical and online media.

Included among as much, perhaps not unexpectedly, were media standard to unionized environments, such as bulletin board announcements and pamphlets, as well as e-mails. Notable with regard to the selected media, and the broader communication strategy that was employed, was that the National Hockey League and the (National Hockey League) Players' Association worked together to engage stakeholders in the promulgation of a development-centred initiative. As Participant 15, a representative of the association, explained:

> The Core Development Program is an NHL and NHLPA initiative. It is a joint venture. From our side of things, the players' association side of things, we have meetings; we have young player meetings; we have now, along with the league, with their support - they're pushing it - because without the league you wouldn't be getting in it as well - we have messaging in the locker room, in the change rooms, in front of the athletes. Every day that you walk to your stall, in the arena, there it is, it's up on the board. Now, you can walk by it, and not pay attention to it, but you can also take the time to read it. We hand it out to every single player, in the NHL, in the stalls, to make sure that there is an awareness: something to read; something tangible to put in your hands. Of course, we send out e-mails, letting them know about the program, and what's available. And we're developing more content, long-term, to store it in a place that players can start dialing into a content-driven environment, that gets them to tweak the thought process, and make them consider a few options. So, there are multiple layers. And from the league side - I won't speak completely to everything they're doing, because I don't know everything - of course, we're all in this together, and we talk about it . . . . We sit in the room together, the league and the PA, and decide on how we're going to get this messaging into the players' hands, to make sure they're aware of it. We designed together what was going

> into the rooms, and they actually sent them straight to their communications department, to put the stuff into the room. They are telling all the teams, the general managers, the owners, about this program that exists for their players.

Thus, as Participant 15 noted, to “tweak the thought process” of player personnel, league and association officials publicized the merits of Core Development Program participation, and encouraged individuals to explore the dual pursuits of personal and performance excellence.

Modeling. In some instances, personnel did just that, and, in turn, unknowingly or not, presented themselves as models for others to emulate:

> Multiple players are taking courses, in some capacity, and its reflective in that their teammates see that they’re actually doing it, and they possibly may take classes. If players are seeing other players do it that means they openly have their books open on a plane, or are studying, or whatever it may be, and that has an effect - it has a ripple effect. (Participant 15)

The desired effect was limited, however, in that few individuals were participants in the nascent Core Development Program. To tend to this shortage, and offer models of development to others, league and association managers invited personifications of the desired identity, notably, veteran defensemen Andrew Ference and Jay Harrison, to speak at the annual Rookie Orientation Program. An illustration of the pair’s fitness to act as models may be gleaned from Klinkenberg’s (2016) profile of the former:

> Ference won the NHL's King Clancy Memorial Trophy in 2014 for leadership and contributions to his community. He marched with his wife and two young daughters in Edmonton's Pride parade, counselled gay and transgendered youths, and worked with underprivileged aboriginal students at an inner-city school. He is currently concluding

> studies in corporate sustainability and innovation in a graduate program at Harvard's Extension School, and recently became a partner in a venture-capital firm that invests in startup [sic] companies that use sustainability technology. . . . "If a brain surgeon can have outside interests and hobbies, hockey players should be able to. There is no excuse not to" . . . . "When I'm really old, hockey will be a neat thing to talk about, but as far as real impact, I hope it will be the stuff I am doing from now on," he says. "My kids won't look back and be proud of how hard I could shoot the puck. Hopefully it will be because of other things." (paras. 26-27, 29, 31)

The desire of each of the interviewed managers from the National Hockey League, National Hockey League Players' Association, and Core Development Program was for other player personnel, in time, to develop in a similar vein.

Disrupting. To this end, managers employed one final regulatory practice, disruption. Specifically, and to integrate the motive of personal excellence into the existent athletic identity, managers collected and disseminated scholarly research and anecdotal evidence to reshape the constitution of the self that pervaded the field. Participant 09 explained how research and evidence of this sort was integral to 'enhancing the messaging' that was involved in the regulatory endeavour:

> What [the] Core [Development Program] is trying to be for these guys is that baby step away from the game. And baby step is probably the wrong word, but just creating that breathing space between the player and the game, so that they can just take a deep breath, look around, and see what else is out there. And what we're saying is that based on the stories that we're hearing from other guys that that's going to help you be a better player. And then not only that, but we're sharing research from other organizations, that we've

> found, that when athletes, whether they be Olympic level, or maybe playing other sports, again, that same thing, if you take that step away you play better. Some of the research that we did when we did the initial study demonstrates that for players who are engaged outside the game, in another interest, they tend to have longer careers, and make more money. So, really, what we're trying to do is put information out there, that speaks to that, on a more regular basis, so players can consume it. And I'll be honest with you, are we there yet? No, we haven't really got that fine tuned, but that's been the objective, and it continues to be the objective, is to continue to collect those stories, and put those stories in front of players on a regular basis, so that they understand that this process is actually going to help them and not hurt them, by taking that step away from the game, and start peaking around. . . . The idea of conducting that research, and seeking to create more compelling evidence for that, is a big part of what we need to continue to do, and would only enhance the messaging that we're trying to put out there right now.

In this way, the tacks of the Core Development and Career Enhancement Programs were the same: both sought to utilize research to reshape extant beliefs, motives, and identities. Where the two tacks differed, however, was in expediency: whereas the managers of the latter set out to conduct an examination that was situated within the field, and waited upon the findings thereof (before engaging managers and organizations), those with the former used what little evidence was available to support their contention and endeavour (Participant 09 cited four studies, one internal to the players' association, and noted, "there is definitely a dearth of research out there . . . but the stuff that we've seen . . . is pretty compelling - or at least it confirms what we're seeing on an anecdotal basis from players [i.e., members]").

A paucity of evidence and/or empirical research aside, cooperation, between the National Hockey League and National Hockey League Players' Association, ensured that a dual identity was devised. The identity, nascent in nature, and undergirded by the motives of personal and performance excellence, the characteristics of prudence, self-exploration, and independence, and a largely a self-selected education, presented a novel self-construction to the field. The conditions and response of the field, however, were not of such a variety as to permit ready acceptance and change, but rather to engender both insulation and maintenance.

Athletic Identity Insulation

As evidence of as much, organizations limited their cooperation with extant programs, failed to provide like alternatives, and skirted responsibility for broad-based identity development initiatives that were couched in the notion/motive of athletic career retirement preparation. Also problematic, for alternate and dual identity regulation, were systemic limitations that arose from collective bargaining arrangements. Together, these practices and conditions insulated the described athletic identity from change.

Organizational Insulation. Central to this insulation, as previously intimated, were various forms of inactivity. As an example, organizations limited their involvement with extant development programs, and thus, with alternate/dual identity regulation. This was done, in part, and seemingly despite suggestions to the contrary from those in the offices of the National Hockey League and National Hockey League Players' Association, because team managers, simply, were unaware of an alternate possibility: "They [(i.e., the office of the National Hockey League)] are telling all the teams, the general managers, the owners, about this program that exists for their players" (Participant 15, a manager with the National Hockey League Players' Association); "As far as I know, there is no program that is a collaborative effort between the

league and the players' association to help prepare players for their post-playing career" (Participant 03, the Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team). In fact, none of the interviewed National Hockey League team managers were acutely aware of the Core Development Program, and, of the five, only two expressed some knowledge of its minor professional hockey equivalent (i.e., the Career Enhancement Program). Moreover, of those who expressed such a knowledge (including the two American Hockey League team interviewees), none noted or implied a close working relationship with the initiative.

In the absence of any such relationship, there also existed no internal, team-based alternative, or, at times, offers of support:

> [AA: As a follow up to that comment there, did they [(i.e., your team)] ever promote doing activities similar to ones you were undertaking [(i.e., post-secondary education)]?] No, never. It was never promoted by a team: in (City Name); (2nd City Name); (3rd City Name); spent some time in (4th City Name) and (5th City Name). That did not come up once. (laughs lightly). (Participant 16, a National Hockey League Alumnus)

Most, if not all, teams, as aforementioned, encouraged philanthropic and community engagement, and some supplied personal development-related presentations or information sessions, but none went so far as to construct an internal system like that of the Career Enhancement or Core Development Programs. Participants 05 and 13 detailed the retirement-related assistance that was afforded by their respective teams, and attributed the absence of any related system, in part, to athletic identity maintenance:

> We've provided them with pamphlets, or articles, about the trappings of post-sport life, whether it's the high divorce rate, or the high bankruptcy rate. . . . But do we have a global plan for post-playing career work for our players, generally speaking, I would say

no. And I would say probably, to a certain extent, that's by design, because we want our players focused on the present. In order to have them perform at the highest level, we want them 100% focused on what they need to do today, and I think our view - I'm going to speak for myself - is that, to a certain extent, it's counterproductive to have them already thinking about retirement, and what they're going to do next. . . . I will be honest, I don't … (sighs; pauses) I don't sense that we go out of our way, or that we systematically look out for all of our players post-career; it is more on an (individual) basis, when it comes up. And usually it comes up from a player, or a player's agent, but I don't know - maybe we should, I don't know - but I don't believe that we actually have a plan where we're looking out for all of our players, and how they're going to do, life-wise, once they're done with sport. (Participant 05, the Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team)

We have no specific plan in that [(i.e., life after professional hockey)]. And again … (pauses) it's going to sound cold, but we are their employers, and they're getting employed to play hockey. We have no … (pauses) I'm trying to think of a word, without being harsh... We have no obligation to find a job, a vocation, or direction for them after hockey, because they are getting paid to play hockey. It's the job in front of them. If you're working anywhere else, they're not going to prepare you, or start training you, or giving you direction, for another job. (laughs lightly) In no occupation does someone prepare you for the next job that you're going to lead. I could have a player here, and he says, 'Ah, I quit,' and I've trained him for his next job; that's not the way it works. But we try to help out, with direction - I've had a lot of players come up to me, sit down with me, and ask me for my opinion on where they sit in pro hockey, and, 'What do you think

if I went and did this, or did that?' or, if it's trying to get back into hockey, whether it's coaching or stuff, we give direction that way, but true preparedness, and setting up programs, that's where the Players' Association and the Career Enhancement Program steps in. (Participant 13, the General Manager of an American Hockey League team)

Thus, there existed a disinclination to construct broad-based identity development programs that were couched in the singular notion/motive of athletic career retirement preparation.

This disinclination was not, however, absolute, nor did it necessarily extend to programs that were or might be involved in alternate and/or dual identity regulation. Participant 08, the Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team, for example, communicated some openness to the provision of a team-based, transition-related intervention:

> Yeah. I don't believe in that thing, that it [(i.e., retirement preparation)] would distract from their play. That makes no sense. Not planning for your retirement when you're working, that doesn't make sense. If you don't start planning early, and understand that there's something out there that is too much of a change (pause)… I don't agree with that at all. If the players wanted it, and the agents wanted it, and if we didn't get backlash from the agents, that we're stepping on their turf, that they want it to be there, [then we would do it] (interviewee did not complete the thought, but the inference was clear).

Participant 13, who all but derided the notion of an internal intervention, was similarly supportive of organizational members 'looking ahead' (see p. 110 of this work), and added:

> I do that stuff [(i.e., communicate the value of personal development)] all the time. 'Get off the video games.' (laughs lightly) You know? 'What are you guys doing today?' 'Get off the video games. You go home, and sit, and play video games. Did you ever think about taking an online course?' . . . You can get a lot of work done on the bus. Stay out of

> the card games, or off the video games. But it takes some dedication. And guys have done it. I like hearing the stories, especially about the university players who went back, and finished their degrees. Some guys come out early, and don't bother to go back. I always hear guys, 'I'm five credits short,' and I'm like, 'Why wouldn't you just go back, and get it? Go in the summer. You're getting paid enough. Go back in the summer, and do it. Or take some courses online.'

Given the conveyed sentiments, there may yet exist a possibility for team-led initiatives, couched in alternate and/or dual identity development/regulation, to emerge. Nevertheless, at the time of data collection, there existed no such initiative, system, or program.

Systemic Insulation. Beyond the identity insulation that was engendered by individual organizations, there also existed systemic reinforcements, and/or barriers to change, particularly in the form of collectively bargained arrangements. One such reinforcement was the product of two collective bargaining agreements (in 2005 and 2012), and (perhaps ironically, association-desired) provisions that, in short, decreased the threshold for unrestricted free agency (i.e., the ability for an individual to sign with any team they choose) in the National Hockey League from 31 to 25 years of age (National Hockey League, n.d.; National Hockey League and National Hockey League Players' Association, 2013). As a result, personnel were offered earlier access to richer contracts; the demand for inexpensive, young talent, under a salary cap system, increased; and as Participant 13 observed, a shorter and more intensified performance scheme emerged:

> You look at the National Hockey League, it is a tremendously fast league, but it's younger and younger every year. It's amazing. At the start of the season last year, something like thirty percent of the league was in their first or second year. That's amazing. . . . And I think the time frame, and the window, for players to make it is

getting shorter. Players are getting through their first entry level contract, and then they're not getting a second contract. They really have to develop fast, and show what they have within the first couple of years of their contract, because after year three some guys aren't getting their contracts renewed. . . . Teams want their players to develop now. There's no four or five-year plan; it's a one-, two-year plan now, with management, to get their players there [(i.e., to the National Hockey League)]. They're not looking at four or five years. . . . It's a part of their collective bargaining agreement, where guys become free agents faster - much, much faster - coming out of their entry level contracts. At age twenty-five a lot of them free agents. Just the way the collective bargaining agreement is set up, that window is shortened, and that forces teams to hopefully speed up development, and see if they can play in the NHL. But it is a part of … (pauses) The preparation of players, and the development of players, before they even turn pro - the expectations are that much higher, and it speeds up the expectations of when they can make it, because a lot of them are more prepared coming in to pro hockey. Years ago, guys came to pro hockey, and learned about nutrition, how to work out, be a better skater, and they got better coaching. The coaching at the atom level, the peewee level, is a hundred times better than it was ten years ago. The coaching is that much better. The development [is that much better]. The specific skills - At our practice facility, there are teams that are seven- and eight-years old, and they're doing off-ice [workouts]. I don't even know if we did a full off-ice program when I played all my pro (both the interviewee and interviewer laugh lightly). The development of players increases the speed of guys getting to the NHL. They're already developed getting there.

As a by-product of the intensified development scheme, there existed, and continues to exist, the potential for alternate/dual identity development and regulation to suffer. Participant 01, a manager with the Professional Hockey Players' Association, for example, explained that the average age at which members contacted the Career Enhancement Program, with regard to participation, was "around 25," when "they know [(i.e., have learned)] how to be a professional hockey player [(i.e., "know where the gaps are time-wise, where they can go ahead and study")]." If, however, contracts were not renewed, at or before this age, given the terms of collectively bargained agreements, ties and regulation between associations and members may be severed, and opportunities for broad-based development and athletic career retirement preparation could concomitantly diminish.

The potential for further exacerbation of alternate and/or dual identity regulation also arose as a result of collective bargaining agreements that were struck between the American Hockey League and Professional Hockey Players' Association. Of particular issue in this regard was the institution of a rule, where none existed before, in which no more than five "veteran players" (i.e., those with more than 260 professional games of experience) could dress for a team in a game. The institution of the rule, as Starkey (2016) intimated, coincided with the decreasing age of unrestricted free agency in the National Hockey League, and the heightened demand for inexpensive, young talent that followed:

> The AHL has changed dramatically in recent years, putting a lot more emphasis on its relationship with the NHL and relying on an infusion of youth. The league decided its strength lay in showcasing hockey's future stars and top draft picks, and not in providing a platform for players who were depth players in NHL systems. (p. 229)

In not providing this platform, and effectively decreasing the average length of domestic careers, ties and regulation between associations and personnel, advantageous to broad-based development and athletic career retirement preparation, could, again, be diminished.

Also problematic to this regulation, but beneficial to athletic identity insulation, were the collectively bargained schedules of the National and American Hockey Leagues. The schedules, composed, respectively, of 82 and either 68 or 76 regular season games, called upon personnel to work and travel, extensively, over the course of approximately 180 to 190 days. Respites in- and off-season aside, the condensed schedule of the National Hockey League, and, to a lesser extent, its minor professional equivalent, combined with restrictions on member access/communication, constrained alternate and dual identity regulation (e.g., “In [a single visit, and] 15 minutes, or something like that, you don’t really have a lot of time [to communicate to members the components of the program];” “[After games], You had such limited time. . . . You’d hope that they’d [(i.e., program participants)] want to talk to you;” Participant 02, a manager with the Professional Hockey Players’ Association), and hindered the provision and undertaking of community- and education-related projects (e.g., hospital visits, Participant 07, an Assistant General Manager of a National Hockey League team; trade schooling, Participant 02).

Finally, and in addition to the means aforementioned, insulation arose as a result of the international composition of the field’s workforce. According to statistics from QuantHockey (n.d.a, n.d.c), in the 2016-17 seasons of the American and National Hockey Leagues (those which were considered for in the study’s document review), 84.7 and 73% of players, respectively, were of either Canadian or American (i.e., domestic) descent. The remaining members of the workforce, from countries such as Sweden, Russia, Czech Republic, and Finland (among a dozen or so others), generally shared, with their North American counterparts, an

earnestness to perform the identity of an athlete, but not, due to language, cultural, and physical barriers, a readiness to partake in alternate development opportunities. As Participant 02 plainly remarked, with regard to the work of the Professional Hockey Players' Association's Career Enhancement Program, "We didn't do very much with European guys. . . . I never had any of those guys. They did not ask for that stuff [(i.e., program assistance/intervention)]." To the credit of the National Hockey League and National Hockey League Players' Association, the Core Development Program introduced three, education-related initiatives for its Swedish membership (Core Development Program, n.d.). Nevertheless, and opportunities for the accumulation of intercultural competence and language skills aside, there existed, when compared with the construction and reconstruction of athletic selves, greater difficulties with alternate and dual identity regulation.

Adding to the pervasive quality of the athletic identity and its regulation within the field, then, were practices and conditions that limited the intercession of an alternative. Regulation, as such, was subject not simply to individual constructions and responses, but also to external organizations and collective forces. In these ways, the identity was protected against resistance and attempts at change.

Summary and Interpretation of Results

More broadly, an analysis of the collected data revealed that regulation in the North American field of men's professional ice hockey entailed the construction and maintenance of a bipartite athletic identity; a largely self-directed, non-sporting alternative; and a nascent merger between the two. The regulatory means that engendered these identities corresponded, in many respects, to examples from Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) initial typology: managers prescribed a particular vocabulary of motives; espoused a set of desirable values and

characteristics; helped develop context-specific knowledge and skills; and defined, for individuals, both their context and social position. With regard to the athletic identity, in particular, regulation, undertaken primarily by teams, involved each of the aforementioned means, and resulted in a construction that was defined by the motives of performance excellence and community enrichment/beneficence, and encompassed two corresponding sets of values/characteristics and knowledge/skills. As something of a response or counterpoint to this construction, organizations, namely the Professional Hockey Players' Association, supported the development of an identity that was separate from that which was largely tied to sporting participation. The alternate identity, less well-defined and more self-directed than its athletic equivalent, rested upon the interrelated motives of personal excellence and transition preparation, and encompassed a limited set of related values/characteristics and knowledge/skills. Finally, the office of the National Hockey League, and its counterpart, the National Hockey League Players' Association, embraced the notion of a dual identity, and set out to construct as much. The identity, nascent in nature, and like that which the Professional Hockey Players' Association hoped to construct, was founded upon the presumption that personal and performance excellence were inherently linked, and that each advanced the pursuit of the other. Accordingly, the nascent identity was defined by the motives of personal and performance excellence, and the related ends of career development and transition preparation. The regulation observed within the North American field of men's professional ice hockey, as such, and in more respects than not, reflected the various discursive means that Alvesson and Willmott (2002) initially hypothesized and put forth.

Unlike the work of Alvesson and Willmott (2002), however, the undertaken analysis pointed to regulation that entailed, or was supported by, multiple sets of rudimentary practices

(see Table 1). In some instances, these practices readily conformed to the pair's (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) discursive conceptualization: most notably, managers, either directly or through various media (e.g., clothing, wall adornments), explicitly communicated a specific vocabulary of motives; and explicated a desirable, if not requisite, set of values and characteristics. In other instances, the constitutive elements of an identity were conveyed through subtler, non-discursive means: for example, managers limited employment to those who could best embody sets of values/characteristics and skills/knowledge; monitored, evaluated, and enforced a continued adherence thereto; and employed personnel to model 'appropriate' behaviour to others (cf. Gotsi et al., 2010). The results, as such, reflected those of other works that traced identity regulation and work to non-discursive measures (e.g., Alvesson et al., 2008; Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Creed, DeJordy, & Lok, 2010; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997); and the position of Langley et al. (2012), who noted that selves "may not only be crafted from a variety of resources and materials including discourses and storytelling but also embodied in practices, material arrangements, and group interactions" (p. 141).

Moreover, and in the vein of Langley et al. (2012), the undertaken examination illustrated the difficulties and/or limitations that may arise with group identity work (Schwalbe & Mason-Schrock, 1996; Snow & McAdam, 2000). Although cast here as a form of identity regulation, the work of the Professional Hockey and National Hockey League Players' Associations may be construed as resistance or group identity projects. Given, however, that both parties operate at the behest of their respective memberships, and that these same personnel are subject to the regulation of employers, association offices, lacking complete autonomy, may be limited in their potential to recast identities. Such perhaps represents among the most compelling facets of

identity regulation within unionized and/or professional sporting environments: that regulation may necessitate intra- and inter-organizational endeavours.

In matching the work of Alvesson and Willmott (2002) with the holistic and ecological tenets of extant transition-based conceptualizations (Schlossberg, 1981, 1984; Schlossberg et al., 1995; Stambulova et al., 2007; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, 2001; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004), the provided explication, into the regulatory efforts of organizations and managers within the North American field of men's professional ice hockey, also offered a richer understanding of identity construction and salience. In particular, and as previously noted, the results revealed that organizations and managers regulated an eminent athletic identity, one that could continue to complicate the process of athletic career cessation. As Alvesson and Willmott (2002) articulated, "ideological and disciplinary forms of power operate through (a) the supply/restriction of availability of discourses, (b) the frequency or intensity of their presence, and (c) the specific linking of discourse and subjectivity (O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001)" (p. 628). In the context of the examined field, control and regulation, as evidenced by the supply of one discourse or support for one motive (performance excellence), the restriction/limitation of others (beneficence and personal excellence), the frequency and intensity of each (as represented by the number and utility of undergirding practices), and the internalization of related facets (e.g., values, characteristics, skills, knowledge), favoured the production of an athletic identity. Given that the quality of the sport career cessation process is predicated upon the salience of this identity (e.g., Park et al., 2013), it can be inferred that complications resulting from athletic career retirement, and the subsequent transition experience, were likely to occur.

Identity salience did not, however, represent the sole means by which regulation was, and could continue to be, problematic. Rather, regulation could and did engender complications due

to something of a failing, in that the motive that underlay the construction, and rendered "actions (or non-actions) more or less reasonable and legitimate" (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 628), centred not on a means, or individual, per se, but on an end, winning. The identity, as such, and in effect, discounted its possessor. As a result, dehumanization, and an exasperation of the transition process, brought on by organizational disassociation, from those incapable of fulfilling the athletic identity, could and did follow.

In addition, it may be possible to surmise that complications resulting from retirement may also arise from the constitutive elements of the athletic identity itself. Some elements of the identity, such as the traits of industriousness, selflessness, and uprightness, may be beneficial to the transition process, and transferable to future occupational endeavours. Others, however, may merely undermine future prospects. Emblematic of the latter possibility, in particular, was the value/characteristic of competitiveness: if internalized, as much may cause some, in a broader context, to intently pursue one form of development (e.g., performance excellence) at the expense of another (e.g. personal excellence), and at a rate others may not match. In a similar vein, with the values/characteristics of selflessness and toughness, individuals may come to place the interests of others or an organization above their own, and compromise their personal well-being. With much of the knowledge, and many of the skills, associated with the identity being narrow and technical in nature, those who hold as much, and personify an ideal of the construct, may limit themselves in the transition process, and perpetuate the predicament of a challenged retirement: by searching for and clinging to available and moderated avenues of performance (e.g., as a manager, coach, or scout), and, in turn, inducing like acts from future generations.

Accordingly, the results of the undertaken examination affirmed that the quality of adjustment to athletic career retirement was subject to the substance and regulation of multiple

identities (e.g., Park et al., 2013). Moreover, and by bridging theoretical domains, the study revealed how identities may be constructed and re-constructed by managers and organizations in pre-transition environments. By devising the study so, and illuminating as much, it may be possible to more easily engage organizational theorists and managers alike, and, as a result, derive and implement practical implications. Toward a practical end, in particular, and in an effort to avoid any further exacerbation of extant transition-related difficulties, it is suggested that managers challenge current regulation practices, and/or employ as much in novel manners. In these ways, broader identities, conducive to the process of athletic career retirement, and long-term individual well-being, may be developed.

Management Implications

For such development to occur, however, the athletic identity that pervades the field will need to be recast: no longer may performance excellence take outsized import over its personal counterpart, and the notion of beneficence/community enrichment; instead, the three must reflect greater equivalence. Casting the identity so will better ensure individual health and well-being, positive relations between organizations and communities, and, counterintuitively, the achievement of high-level athletic outcomes. Toward these ends, managers may, as aforementioned, challenge extant regulation practices, and/or employ as much in novel manners.

As an example of the latter, teams may take on personal development as a defining motive (cf. Pink et al., 2015), and enable the construction of broader identities by devoting internal resources and managers to related initiatives. As evidenced by the work of one organization, there exists a precedence for an enabling endeavour of this sort: in 2015, following the arrests of three organization members (in separate incidents over the course of a single calendar year), the Los Angeles Kings, of the National Hockey League, introduced a platform of "Conduct Awareness Training Initiatives," and hired a Director of Player Assistance (Rosen, 2015, para. 1). At the time, the then General Manager of the team, Dean Lombardi, remarked:

> These programs are now part of the development process for all of our players. No longer can we solely focus on their growth and education as just hockey players; we need to give them the tools to thrive as people, too. These programs will extend to their family lives and empower them with strategies to best manage their positive development off the ice. (Rosen, 2015, para. 21)

More than a year into the program's existence, Lombardi added, "It's great to give a speech, and you can have an impact, but the reality is that's going to wear off. This [(i.e., the initiative)] is no

different than coming to the rink and training every day" (Los Angeles Kings, 2016). The implications of the remarks were clear: for members of the organization to achieve both personal and performance excellence, an integrated and sustained effort would be needed; short of as much (and consistent with the argument of Miller and Kerr, 2002, "that performance excellence is attained only through optimal personal development," p. 141), neither would be realized. Accordingly, teams may mount sustained efforts, and coordinate as much with extant initiatives (i.e., the Career Enhancement, Core Development, and Breakaway Programs), to serve drafted and signed personnel across the entire spans of careers.

As either part of, or separate from, any such effort, teams may also develop the identity components of beneficence and community enrichment. In particular, and in the vein of the Core Development Program's (n.d.) offerings, teams may empower personnel, and enhance members' charitable/community endeavours, by providing a related, management-based education (e.g., in networking, incorporation, compliance, and basic accounting). Working with the Core Development Program, as well as internal departments, teams may transform personnel from passive (e.g., see p. 150 of this work, "it's not us setting that [(i.e., outreach)] up, it's always the team," Participant 12, an American Hockey League Veteran) to active community members, and provide individuals with knowledge and skills that will allow for identity performance and philanthropy to continue long after athletic career retirement.

In conjunction with these efforts, the American and National Hockey Leagues, in partnership with their respective players' associations, may negotiate shorter and systematized season schedules. In the American Hockey League, for example, the season schedules of 24 teams may be shortened from 76 to 68 games, to match those of seven western American clubs. Likewise, the National Hockey League may shorten its schedule (e.g., from 82 to 64 games, or in

such a manner as to construct a 'home and away' series between each of its 32 teams). Both, moreover, may venture to consistently schedule games on certain days of the week (i.e., introduce a more stable routine, as is done in collegiate leagues). Although drastic in nature, changes to the schedules would be beneficial for personnel, teams, and the sport alike: organization members would be afforded more time to engage in alternate pursuits, devise broader identities, and involve themselves in community endeavours; clubs could construct closer bonds with local residents and fans, and engender a form of support that transcended athletic performance; and leagues, providing employees longer periods for rest, recuperation, and training, could supply more earnest displays of abilities. As evidenced by the following refrain, credence in the latter notion, in particular, previously existed within the field:

> I would support a reduction in the number of regular season games . . . . We play too many games now. . . . I've been asked for 30 years now, what one thing could the NHL do to make the hockey better, and I've always said the same thing, play fewer games. (Brian Burke, long-time National Hockey League and team executive; Marchese, 2018)

Given the immediate financial ramifications of a shortened schedule, however, team owners and personnel would undoubtedly balk at a change (e.g., Marchese, 2018; Oklobzija, 2016). Nevertheless, it is from such change, as aforementioned, that many a benefit may be derived.

Short of any such change, and/or concerted effort, more modest measures, that would undergird broad-based identity development, may be undertaken. As an example, team managers may embolden personal development through overt communications of support, and the provision of information sessions on extant initiatives (i.e., the Career Enhancement, Core Development, and Breakaway Programs). To ensure that team managers are informed of and on these initiatives (see p. 130 of this work), league, association, and program leaders may conduct

presentations at semi-annual executive and board of governors' meetings, and/or engage in informal discussions throughout the season (in the vein of the National Hockey League's Visiting Player Program; see p. 125 of this work).

In addition to direct forms of communication, leagues, associations, and teams may signal support for personal development by publishing works on non-athletic endeavours and accomplishments. Much like the 'More than an Athlete' campaign of professional basketball player, social activist, and philanthropist LeBron James (e.g., Schwartz, 2018), organizations may spotlight how individuals involve themselves in activities outside of sport: leagues and players' associations may, for example, dedicate a month to higher and/or continued education, and publish works on members' academic pursuits and accomplishments (e.g., Lomon, 2017b, on Boston Bruins [NHL] defenseman Torey Krug); and the National Hockey League Alumni Association may produce features on the diverse and successful paths of retired personnel. With a dearth of similar works on official forums (e.g., of the nearly 1100 articles that were examined as part of the case study, only five included information on personal development outside of sport), athletes are left to be construed as that and little else. Thus, to change public perception, and reinforce broad-based identity development, organizations may signal that alternate self-conceptions, of sound nature, can and do exist.

To further reinforce such development, organizations may also recognize a wider range of non-sporting achievements, and/or modify presentations of extant honours: league offices and players' associations may celebrate such achievements as post-secondary degree completion; do away with weekly and monthly performance awards; and/or use any number of available platforms to celebrate the accomplishments of alumni. With regard to the latter, in particular, the presentation of the "Keith Magnuson Man of the Year" award, a title that the National Hockey

League Alumni Association bestows upon one or more of its members who have "applied the intangibles of perseverance, commitment and teamwork . . . into a successful post-career transition" (National Hockey League Alumni Association, n.d., para. 3), may be moved from a private gala to the annual National Hockey League awards celebration (cf. the annual Hockey Hall of Fame induction and gala ceremonies). In this way, and those aforementioned, non-sporting accomplishments may be highlighted, and the value of broad-based identity development may garner greater awareness.

Also of import to the regulation of a broad-based and/or reformed identity will be the work of the Career Enhancement, Core Development, and Breakaway Programs. The programs, which currently operate in relative isolation, and without significant communication between one another, must be open to changing tacks, and sharing information on best practices, ongoing endeavours, new initiatives, and collaborative opportunities. Without further cooperation, each initiative may be less than efficacious, and/or do a disservice to prospective users: as an example, the Career Enhancement Program authorized a study, on the intersection between personal and performance excellence, that was of the sort that the managers of the Core Development Program sought (see pp. 128-129, Participant 09); in addition, each organization offered services that the others did not (the Career Enhancement Program, for example, collaborated with the Canadian-based Fire and Emergency Services Training Institute, to provide a related certification course, and was exploring the potential to offer like opportunities with an American trade association; the Core Development Program, alternatively, offered education on community engagement and philanthropy, and liaised with academic institutions abroad), but that might, all the same, be of interest to eligible participants. Given such shortcomings, and the overlapping

missions of the programs, it would seemingly behoove managers to explore where each may be able to assist another.

Likewise, managers ought to continue to explore the potential for novel provisions. To extend the existent array thereof, managers may, for example, work with one another to develop any number of available initiatives (see previous paragraph), and/or with teams to identify organizations or corporate sponsors who may supply career counselling (e.g., in a fashion similar to that of the Finnish SM-liiga; SM-liiga Alumni, n.d.). With regard to the latter, Ogilvie and Howe (1982) examined the inner workings of a like project that arose within professional football, and detailed how as much was beneficial to teams, sponsors, and personnel alike:

> In an effort to generate increased team morale and stronger identification, as well as to help the athletes to acknowledge the reality concerning the temporary nature of their football playing careers, [the] management [of the San Francisco 49ers] was introduced to a concept that would not only provide career counselling for the athlete but would also contribute substantially to the team and the organization. With the help and cooperation of the team president, Lou Spadia, the S. F. 49er Career Planning Committee was formed. This service was offered to any contracted player who wished to prepare for a career beyond his playing days or wished to develop skills that he could use to supplement his football salary. . . . [Seven of the most prominent business leaders in San Francisco] were asked if they would enjoy performing the role of career counsellor to these elite performers. Their role would be that of sharing a dialogue with the individual with respect to his education, special aptitudes and his particular goals, both for off-season . . . and long-range employment. . . . The members of the business community proved to be diligent and reliable. In every case they followed through both in offering their valuable

> counsel and in providing instructions that could lead to further training or employment. The personal contact with the professional athletes caused them to develop a strong, more positive relationship with the team. . . . Every player that used the planning committee made a commitment to an off-season training program or job. Some were encouraged to return to their university and finish their degrees. (p. 182)

In addition to such a committee, or initiative, programs may extend their extant array of provisions by better attending to the personal development of foreign association members.

Without further attendance, foreign personnel will continue, in effect (due to language and/or cultural barriers; see p. 137 of this work, Participant 02), to subsidize services for others. To rectify this predicament, managers may forge working relationships with foreign academic institutions (as the Core Development Program has done in Sweden), and service providers; and assist association members with language acquisition (e.g., by supplying computer software, through an in-kind sponsorship agreement). Moreover, and as part of a broader recruitment strategy, managers may attempt, with the assistance of foreign leagues and governing associations, to promote program services to alumni who are continuing their careers overseas (where schedules more readily permit for non-sporting pursuits). In these ways, the Career Enhancement, Core Development, and Breakaway Programs may better fulfill not only the needs and interests of eligible participants, but also internal mandates.

Toward these ends, and as aforementioned, program managers may also engage in added recruitment tactics. More specifically, and in addition to outreach overseas, managers may actively scout and market to those who have previously displayed academic or beneficent inclinations (e.g., respectively, attendees of post-secondary institutions, with or without completed degrees; and nominees of team- or league-based service awards); and invite

participation from eligible participants' spouses or significant others (including available groups and associations; e.g., the Pittsburgh Penguins Wives Association, the St. Louis Blues Better Halves). The former may advance an already nascent identity and/or endeavour, and the latter may afford managers an added and influential channel for regulation.

Finally, and to stave off any number of deleterious repercussions, minor hockey organizations and associations ought to adopt a holistic, life-span perspective to athlete development (Wylleman et al., 2004). As part of adopting such a perspective, sport associations would need to reform extant development plans, so as to address and encourage psychological, psychosocial, and academic growth (Hockey Canada's Long Term Player Development Plan, for example, affords little to no consideration on the intersection between personal and performance excellence; Hockey Canada, 2013); urge coaches to adhere to as much; confront the increasing pervasiveness of 'off-season' (i.e., Spring/Summer) training and performance programs (which seemingly conflict with available guidelines; Hockey Canada, 2013); and educate young athletes and their parents on the realities of professional sport (see Campbell and Parcels, 2013). As Gregg Sutch (2014), an alumnus of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL; for players aged 16-21) wrote, impassionedly, following the suicide of his former teammate, Terry Trafford:

> It's pretty clear hockey needs a serious overhaul: The face of major junior needs major reform; the way we view hockey players needs to change; hockey players need to change the way we see ourselves. . . . How we treat hockey players must also change. . . . There's not enough emphasis on helping the players grow as decent individuals as opposed to how much emphasis is put on the win column. . . . So instead of trying to sell to these kids and their parents on a fast track to the NHL by joining the league, let's start growing these kids as human beings. Let's develop them into well-rounded men [sic] who are

prepared for the future . . . . Parents, you need to let your kids play the game for fun. . . . Let him [sic] take his [sic] life course and be the support system he [sic] needs for that journey. As players, we also need to take it upon ourselves to grow. I get it - you're living the dream, no school, just play hockey, and not a worry on your mind. Wait till you're done hockey or hockey is taken away from you, and you've done nothing for yourself. It's like hitting a wall. Do something for yourself to prevent this from happening. . . . Players, if there's one thing I want you to all take away from this it’s to change the way you view yourself, and for the way everyone else views you. Don't let hockey define you, let hockey be the game you love to play. Let hockey be your enjoyment and your getaway. Don't let hockey be your life. Don't ever let one single thing, whatever it may be, be your life. My biggest wish is for the junior leagues to start developing these kids as individuals and not just as hockey players. We are humans at the end of the day, and when you treat us as pawns, when we are only 16-20 years old, we don't know how to handle it. It starts early, so parents, let your kids play the game for fun, and let them chase their dreams. (paras. 2, 10-12, 14, 16-17, 22-24)

Accordingly, for individual health and well-being to be ensured, families and institutions alike must adopt a holistic, life-span perspective to development, and perceive sport as a mere means to a much greater end.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Practical implications notwithstanding, the work was subject to multiple limitations. For one, the work was informed by a single conceptualization, from which the intersection between organizations and preparation for athletic career retirement could not, perhaps, be fully ascertained. Moreover, shortcomings in design precluded participation from two populations, the full exploitation of the adopted conceptualization, and, ultimately, a complete investigation. Given such limitations and shortcomings, as well as the content of the collected data, several directions for future research may be proposed.

As aforementioned, the work was informed by a single conceptualization, that of identity regulation (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Although instructive to the undertaken study, the conceptualization could not, in effect, as previously intimated, elucidate the full scope of the examined field's regulation: missing would be many of the specific means and media that organizations employed (see Table 1). The categorizations of these means and media, ultimately, shared commonalities with Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) conceptualization of institutional work. Given as much, as well as the natures of similar investigations (e.g., Hickey & Kelly, 2005, 2008; Jones & Denison, 2017; McGillivray et al., 2005), scholars ought to explore, vis-à-vis regulation, or apart, how Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) institutional work, Schein's (1990, 2010; as cited in Pink et al., 2015) levels of organisational culture, or other conceptualizations, may apply to the study of athletic identity and career cessation.

Perceived limitations in the adopted conceptualization aside, the undertaken study employed only portions of Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) work. Notably, the interview guides that were utilized as part of the undertaken study focused only on three of nine possible forms of regulation (relating to motives, morals and values, knowledge and skills). Without further exploration, an explication of other regulatory tactics (e.g., "hierarchical location," in the

construction of intraorganizational ranks, an interorganizational affiliates) could not be provided. Accordingly, researchers would do well to consider for the full range of Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) overview.

In a similar vein, and due, in part, to the elite status of the research population, the undertaken examination could not fully ascertain the internalized nature and salience of the regulated identities (e.g., "I feel like a common misconception about professional sports is people think that the teams have complete control over whatever you do, but it's really not the case," Participant 14, an American Hockey League 'Development Player'). The efficacy of the field's regulation, as such, may be limited. Researchers of identity regulation and athletic career cessation, as such, ought to attend, where possible, to the targets of regulation.

Shortcomings in participant recruitment and the sample of the study also extended beyond the athlete population to include that of player agents. Although not included as part of the undertaken examination, agents were found to have discouraged participation in the Career Enhancement Program (Participant 02), interfered in the provision of team services (Participant 08), and supported a continued adherence to an athletic identity (Participant 12). Player agents, as such, may provide services beneficial to personal development, or they may, as previously intimated, serve their own interests before those of others, reinforce the strict pursuit of performance excellence (i.e., the maintenance of an athletic identity), and compound the difficulties that are associated with athletic career retirement. As the undertaken work failed to clarify the indeterminant role of agents, researchers may set out to explore how this group engages in identity regulation, and affects the process of sport career cessation.

Data collected as part of the undertaken work also pointed to a number of potential avenues for research. Two of the three interviews with player personnel, for example, explored

the perceived import that managers of major junior hockey organizations placed on education. Perhaps not surprisingly, the responses of the pair suggested that there existed some variance. Given such variance, allegations of scholastic fraud (e.g., Westhead, 2018), and a perceived lack of concern for personal development (e.g., Sutch, 2014), researchers ought to explore how managers in minor hockey regulate identities, and facilitate, or impede, the growth of youth.

A similarly common topic of discussion, amongst those who were involved with either the Career Enhancement or Core Development Programs, was the intersection between personal and performance excellence. In particular, managers pointed to ongoing and completed research to hypothesize and argue that the former benefited the latter (see p. 115 of this work, Participants 01 and 04; and pp. 128-129, Participant 09). Beyond anecdotal evidence, however, there exists scant research to support the claim that personal development facilitates performance excellence (a notable exception, from the Australian Sports Commission, 2003, was cited by Hickey and Kelly, 2008). Accordingly, researchers ought to examine how participation in non-sporting endeavours, and/or organization-sponsored development programs, affects (perceptions of) athletic performance.

Likewise, researchers may investigate how program participation affects the process of athletic career cessation. In the vein of Lavallee's (2005) investigation into a life development intervention for male professional soccer players, researchers may employ a longitudinal design to measure the efficacy of the Career Enhancement, Core Development, and Breakaway Programs. Although the results thereof may be of little utility to affirming any potential correlation between personal and performance excellence, they may, vis-à-vis the process of athletic career cessation, reaffirm the value of pre-retirement planning and program participation.

Finally, to inform managers with regard to service provision, and aid association leaders in advance of collective negotiations, researchers may review how, if at all, shortening career lengths and intensified development schemes have affected program participant demographics. In constructing a longitudinal profile of program participants, managers may be able to ascertain if collectively bargained arrangements have disenfranchised or restricted association members from access to valuable resources. Should as much be found, appropriations and/or free agency arrangements may subsequently be renegotiated.

Conclusion

The process of ascending to the most elite levels of sport may often engender a strict adherence to an athletic identity. Such adherence, although beneficial to the achievement of performance excellence, may, adversely, elicit identity foreclosure (i.e., role commitment void of sufficient self-exploration; Danish et al., 1993), or selective optimization (i.e., "a process in which athletes give exclusive attention to their sport at the expense of all other interests," Petitpas, 2002, p. 257). As a consequence, individuals, failing to invest in multiple activities or interests, and maintaining a salient athletic identity at the time of athletic career retirement, may encounter transition difficulties and/or lengthy periods of adjustment (e.g., Park et al., 2013).

The undertaken examination, informed by the work of Alvesson and Willmott (2002), found, within the North American field of men's professional ice hockey, that organizations and managers regulated an identity that held the potential to engender just such difficulties. More broadly, an analysis of interview and textual data revealed that regulation entailed the construction and maintenance of a bipartite athletic identity (defined by performance excellence and beneficence); a largely self-directed, non-sporting alternative; and a nascent merger between the two. Consistent with Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) conceptualization, each of the identities was defined by multiple motives, sets of values and characteristics, and bodies of knowledge and skill. However, as evidenced by the relative numbers and natures of organizational practices that undergirded each of the constructions, it was apparent that the athletic identity was that which held prominence within the field. Given as much, it can be expected, short of any significant reformation, that some portion of athletes therein will continue to experience identity disruption and/or transition difficulties upon engaging in the process of athletic career cessation.

To limit the deleterious nature, and occurrence, of these difficulties, managers may continue to challenge extant regulation practices, and/or employ as much in novel manners. In these ways, broader identities, conducive to the process of athletic career retirement, and the long-term well-being of individuals, may be developed. As Thomas and Ermler (1988) argued,

> Separating oneself from the athletic life to assume nonsport responsibilities requires a new set of skills: . . . . it necessitates critical thinking, decision making, some degree of independence, social interaction skills, and enough self-understanding to be self-sufficient. . . . Knowing that many athletes become absorbed in their cloistered athletic world at an early age and remain in it through the formative years when these life skills are developed in their peer group, one must look to the athletic establishment (including parents) to develop the skills that will permit a successful transition and retirement from sport. (p. 148)

Accordingly, the hockey establishment may adopt a holistic, life-span perspective to development, and facilitate growth toward an end grander than that of performance excellence. In particular, extant systems and practices may be employed toward not only the achievement of athletic superiority, but also individual self-actualization. Although not yet fully realized, such remains among the greatest possibilities of sport.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide - League/Association Representatives

Please describe for me the primary responsibilities of the league/association office.

What role does the league/association office play in the development of its (playing) members?

What characteristics/values, if any, would the league/association like for its members to possess?

How, if at all, do you and/or your staff attempt to ensure that members of the league/association develop and/or hold these characteristics/values?

What skills, if any, would the league/association like for its members to possess?

How, if at all, do you and/or your staff attempt to ensure that members of the league/association develop and/or hold these skills?

To what ends are the described characteristics, values, and skills important?

Does the league office work with the players' association to develop individuals? If so, how?

Does the league office/association work with teams to develop individuals? If so, how?

Does the league/association prepare individuals for life after professional hockey? If so, how?

Appendix B

Interview Guide - Program Representatives

How did the program come to exist?

What services are provided by the program?

What are the intended goals of the program?

How do you (and/or your staff) attempt to engage players?

What characteristics/values, if any, would you like members of the association/league to possess?

How, if at all, do you (and/or your staff) attempt to ensure that members of the league/association develop and/or hold these characteristics/values?

What skills, if any, would you like members of the association/league to possess?

How, if at all, do you (and/or your staff) attempt to ensure that members of the league/association develop and/or hold these skills?

Do you (and/or your staff) work with the league to develop individuals? If so, how?

Do you (and/or your staff) work with teams to develop individuals? If so, how?

What has worked to benefit member development and/or retirement preparation? And hindered?

What may still be done to further member development and/or retirement preparation?

Appendix C

Interview Guide - Team Representatives

Please describe for me an individual, or the sort of individual, that epitomizes your organization.

How do you and/or the organization attempt to develop just such an individual?

What characteristics/values, if any, would you like members of the organization to possess?

How, if at all, do you and/or your staff attempt to ensure that members develop and/or hold these characteristics/values?

What skills, if any, would you like members of the organization to possess?

How, if at all, do you and/or your staff attempt to ensure that members develop and/or hold these skills?

To what ends are the described characteristics, values, and skills important?

Do the leagues or players' associations affect the team's development of individuals? If so, how?

Does the team work to prepare individuals for life after professional hockey? If so, how?

Appendix D

Interview Guide - Player Representatives

Prior to becoming a professional athlete, what role did hockey play in your life?

How did your experiences in junior hockey shape who you were or are?

What role does the sport play in your life today?

What does it mean to be a professional hockey player?

(What does the life of a professional hockey player entail?)

Based on your experiences, what characteristics/values, if any, do managers most emphasize?

How, in your experience, have these characteristics/values been emphasized?

Based on your experiences, what skills, if any, do managers most emphasize?

How, in your experience, have these skills been emphasized?

How, if at all, has your team shaped who you are?

How, if at all, has the league/players' association shaped who you are?

How, if at all, does the role of a professional hockey player speak to who you are?

Have you prepared for life after professional hockey? If so, how?

(Please describe for me your transition to life after professional hockey/post-playing life.)

(Who, if anyone from the hockey community, played a role in your transition to a life after professional hockey/post-playing life? How so?)

Table 1

A Typology of Practices that Undergird Identity Regulation

Practice	Description
Auditing	Fostering identity performance/adherence through scouting, monitoring, evaluation, and/or enforcement
Communicating	Fostering identity performance/adherence through the explicit conveyance of characteristics or means
Enabling	Fostering identity performance/adherence through the provision of supporting resources/opportunities
Modeling	Fostering identity performance/adherence through the use of an exemplar
Rewarding	Fostering identity performance/adherence through the use of an award or reward
Routinizing	Fostering identity performance/adherence through day-to-day routines
Signalling	Fostering identity performance/adherence through public acknowledgement
Disrupting	Challenging and/or altering identity performance/adherence
Insulating	Shielding identity performance/adherence from disruption and/or change