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Opportunity, Constraint, and Capital in Canadian Ice Hockey

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Graduate Program in Sociology

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Abstract

The study explored the potential social benefits and motivations of participation in sport beyond those that pertain solely to healthy active living. Using organized youth ice hockey in Canada, the study also examined how cultural context can be a factor in the facilitation of such benefit, as well as the ways the game can reflect and reproduce inequalities in society more generally. A framework based on Pierre Bourdieu's assertions on social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital, was used to analyze data from ten semi-structured interviews with men who are former youth hockey players. The interview data revealed that through hockey – as a heteronormative institution – boys and men forge rich and extensive social networks, as well as acquire the linguistic skills, attitudes, and dispositions that help them to bond in a private and exclusive manner. Furthermore, their participation in an activity increasingly limited to the middle-to-upper class allows them to be socialized among this demographic, thus making economic capital – through job opportunities, for example – highly extractable from their social and cultural capital. To a certain extent, participants also derived a sense of connectedness to a Canadian national identity due to their participation in an activity that proliferates in their national context. Nevertheless, the study identifies a number of opportunities and constraints that create disparities in participation, and as such, the allocation of benefits. Since these inequalities in sport may help to reproduce inequalities in society at large, the study closes with recommendations for policy, programs, and future research.

Keywords

Hockey, Canada, Masculinities, Social Capital, Cultural Capital, Symbolic Capital, Economic Capital, Bourdieu, Sociology of Sport, Constraint, Canadian Culture

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Andrew English, Author

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview and Objectives

'The Canadian Dream' for many youth is to someday lace up their skates, don the sweater of their favorite National Hockey League (NHL) team, and take that first running stride onto the ice in front of thousands of fans in the arena seats, and the millions more gathered around their television sets. Unfortunately, however, this dream is a distant reality in most cases, given that tens of thousands of other Canadian youth are all vying for the same seven hundred or so roster spots in a league limited to thirty-one teams. Furthermore, the considerable investments made by other countries in developing hockey talent has led to a gradual reduction of Canada's long-standing stronghold of the game, producing scores of foreign players that render the professional dream further out of reach for Canadian youth (Watson, 2016). Suffice to say, the goal of one day making it to the NHL is a battle against tremendous odds; in fact, Hockey Canada makes it clear on their website that in 2003, only one in four thousand Canadian kids went on to 'Live the Dream' and play at least four hundred games in the sport's most elite league (Kalchman, 2003). In spite of these facts, the parents and guardians of over five hundred thousand Canadian boys enroll their sons in youth hockey programs – a large number of whom that, at some point, have conceivably fantasized that these same boys will eventually 'Play in the Big Leagues.' The achievement of stardom, multi-million dollar salaries, flights on charter jets, dinners out, and regular stays at luxury hotels certainly seem like appealing perks of the profession, but are the draws of playing in 'The Show' truly all the sport has to offer?

While the benefits of participation in sports such as hockey are often framed in terms of their value as a healthy active-living behavior, organized sports are perceived to have social benefits beyond physical fitness in itself (Shores, Becker, Williams, & Cooper, 2015; Kitchen & Chowhan, 2016). The present study seeks to explore the more common benefits of youth's participation in organized competitive ice hockey. Applying a framework centred on Pierre Bourdieu's assertions on 'Capital,' the study is particularly interested in the formation of social networks, a sense of national identity, the adoption of styles and dispositions, and the potential economic capital that can be attained through amateur and professional hockey (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). In Canada in particular, where hockey has been formally entrenched in law as the country's Winter pastime, and is widely celebrated in national culture, these potential social benefits of participation may be especially pronounced ("National Sports of Canada Act," 1994; Watson, 2016). The research seeks to answer the following question: In what ways do Canadian boys benefit and make meaning out of their participation?

The research at hand focused specifically on the Canadian context, exploring the ways youth hockey has facilitated the accumulation of social benefit and personal well-being for young Canadian men who have participated in organized competition. The research entailed conducting ten semi-structured interviews with participants who formerly played minor hockey in leagues across Southwestern Ontario. Participants were asked questions pertaining to their experiences in youth hockey, the benefits they believe they accrued from their involvement, the opportunities they enjoyed, and the constraints they faced. Following data collection, data was coded according to themes corresponding to Bourdieu's capital framework, as well as a couple of additional themes that emerged during the course of the interview process.

Codification allowed an analysis of perceived benefits interviewees relayed, whether or not these benefits were thought to stimulate advantage, and how players thought they were inhibited or supported in attaining the full range of benefits the sport may offer.

1.2 Rationale

While the study will help to shed further light on the social and cultural importance placed on hockey in Canada, its rationale primarily derives from its potential to draw awareness to the way sport may be undertaken by individuals as a facilitator of favorable outcomes. In addition, parents, coaches, program leaders, and policymakers can draw upon the discussions offered by former players in order to increase opportunities and minimize the various constraints present in minor hockey.

One of the main barriers to more widespread participation in hockey is the slow progress in welcoming women's participation in the game. This research in no way intends to overlook the nearly eighty thousand girls who participate in organized ice hockey, the growth of professional women's hockey leagues such as the Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWHL), or the meaning and benefit sport holds and provides to many women. However, a number of factors influenced the decision to focus the study on boys' ice hockey.

First, the large majority of hockey players in Canada are male. Data from Hockey Canada indicate that in 2012, 86% of the 624,148 hockey players under the age of 18 were boys, while only 14% (86,807) were girls (CBC News, 2013). Thus, girls and women have a sizably smaller 'pool' to draw from in forming social capital based on hockey experiences they share with other women, who - richness of friendships aside - are vastly smaller in absolute numbers than the

number of men who may share hockey experiences.

Second, the NHL is – historically – a male-only league. It is therefore exclusively men who are granted the opportunity to feature in what is considered the gold-standard of competitive hockey, and therefore men who presumably confer the highest status and financial opportunity associated with pursuing hockey dreams. On a related note, mass media help to reinforce the traditional emphasis on men's sports by paying massive sums of money to feed public demand for coverage of the historically-dominant men's professional leagues (Theberge, 1995). The traditional proliferation of men's sports has made it such that women's professional leagues have been unable to attract similar levels of viewership, which in turn prevents them from obtaining major television partnerships for prime-time broadcasts and corporate sponsorship that could be crucial for attaining wider recognition and box office success (Theberge, 1995).

Third, gender norms arguably impose on men in ways such that participation in sports is expected of them, and the costs of non-participation can be comparatively greater than those for women (Courtenay, 2000). The differences in the stakes associated with men's and women's participation suggests that their respective interests, motivations, and benefits may also be quite different. It is foreseeable that research into the ways hockey benefits women may help in fostering their involvement in the game, however, the relative scale of men's sports, their cultural preoccupation, and the importance placed on athletics in the masculine experience are all factors that inform the application of the study's framework. It is therefore more prudent, in this research, to examine boys' minor hockey as a facilitator of social benefit.

In spite of its focus on men's experiences, the study is nevertheless of social importance in that participation in athletics helps to provide skills, knowledge, and resources that are

potentially conducive to improving one's standard of living (Ashbourne & Andres, 2015). The ultimate 'end-game' for numerous parents and children, of course, is to gain the abilities necessary to someday feature in the glamorized NHL (Gillis 2013; Mirtle, 2017; Traikos, 2015). For the majority of players, who do not obtain these grand opportunities, however, hockey may serve as an appealing extra-curricular engagement to gain access to universities and positions in the labor market, to help individuals establish wider friend groups, improve health statuses, and identify with a notable aspect of Canadian culture. Among the main contributions of the study is its ability to provide a greater understanding of what participants view as the benefits of hockey, as well as their motivations for playing, which undoubtedly go beyond one's aspiration to 'go professional.' Uncovering the wider range of benefits that can be derived from hockey may help further contribute to our understandings of the positive effects of participation in sport.

Sports receive considerable attention in media and everyday journalism, and health and sport science literature have explored the benefits of sports in relation to healthy human development. Social science literature concerning sport has emerged gradually, and delved into explorations of class-, ethnicity-, and gender-based inequalities, however, little has been done to specifically examine the sport of hockey – the expenses, whiteness, and maleness of which limit participation, fueling perceptions that it is 'for the rich' despite the fact it is boasted as Canada's favorite pastime (MacGregor, 2012; Mirtle, 2017). In Canadian society, hockey is portrayed as intrinsically connected to Canadian culture; professional players are national celebrities, important games are massive spectacles, and the sport carries media and commercial appeal. The 'peddling' of hockey in Canada has produced a national obsession and

an elaborate amateur system, wherein youth are socialized according to customs and traditions of the game and – for that matter – the society that embraces it (Nixon, 1974). However, the overrepresentation of white Nordic male players in hockey, as well as our national game's tendency to reinforce masculine ideals, are in opposition to the agenda of the Canadian constitution, which mandates multiculturalism and equality of opportunity irrespective of identifiable status ("Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," 1982). Members of the hockey community themselves acknowledge that the game in fact requires greater inroads to equality; as such, a primary theoretical justification for the study is a challenge to the assumption that the tiered nature of sports is purely meritocratic, and that the benefits of sports - hockey in particular - are equitably enjoyed.

2. Literature Review

While sociologists have studied the benefits of sport, an investigation into the benefits associated with hockey in Canadian society is largely unprecedented, and required an extensive examination of literature in order to contextualize the research topic. A number of questions needed to be addressed prior to proceeding with the study at hand: what sort of analyses are sports sociologists engaging in, and in what ways could they expand their analyses? What is the significance of sport in society and culture - more specifically, hockey in Canada? How might sport and hockey produce personal benefit? How straightforward or complex might this relationship be? In what ways could hockey be non-conducive to the accumulation of personal benefit? Finally, in what ways can individuals be inhibited from the full extent of participation - and thus the full range of capital that can be accrued - in hockey? Answering these questions entailed an assessment of literature from the social sciences, the health and behavioural sciences, and sports journalism concerning both the amateur and professional levels of hockey.

2.1 Sports in Academia and Society

2.1.1 Sociology of Sport

Sports sociology has emerged gradually – albeit slowly – as an area of social science research. Dave Zirin, an American political sportswriter, claims that the sociological analysis of sport has been rejected by both the academic community, as well as the sports community itself (Zirin, 2008). This close-mindedness is especially unsettling given some of the patterns and very real issues that plague contemporary sports, including the gender and ethnic composition

of sports leagues and teams, life- or career-ending injuries, performance enhancing drugs, the exploitation of athletes, various forms of abuse, and fan behavior – to list just a handful of examples. Zirin moreover states that sports reporters and analysts have compromised their insights, instead providing viewers with meaningless commentary as opposed to rich, in-depth analysis (Zirin, 2008). In other words, play-by-play, predictions, and in-game statistics do little or nothing to impart the more profound themes surrounding sports, such as team cohesion, activism, collective enthusiasm, commodification, and overcoming adversity. In spite of the sometimes ‘scornful reception’ of the sociology of sport in general, sports are nevertheless an important facet of culture, and an inquiry into sports may lend important insights into the human and social experience (Zirin, 2008).

Sports sociology has garnered criticism for its preoccupation with micro-level elements, and its resulting ignorance to the macro-level structures that encompass the world of sports (Eckstein, Moss & Delaney, 2010). Eckstein, Moss, and Delaney’s central assertion in stating that sports observers and sociologists *seldom* draw connections between micro-level action and larger-scale societal issues is in fact only partially justified, however. Many observers have in fact sympathized and identified with the actions of individual players in the 2016-17 NFL national anthem protests that sought to raise awareness against racial injustice and police brutality against African Americans in the United States (Johnk, 2017). Furthermore, consider the widely hailed solidarity demonstrated by individual members of the basketball ‘fraternity’ that demanded the ousting of Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling in the wake of disparaging remarks regarding African-Americans – a group the members of which ironically comprised the majority of his basketball team (Branch, 2014). While these instances have not

received considerable attention by sports sociologists, they are nevertheless instances in which the greater sports community has linked individual actors to larger structural issues. In recent years in particular, social issues and questions of morality have transcended the boundaries between the playing surface and the world at large; athletes are no longer encouraged to 'stick to sports.' There are in fact signs that the world of sports – one formerly bound by tradition – is becoming increasingly receptive to the positions put forth by sociologists, and observers increasingly expect athletes and organizations to use their platform to be leaders in communicating important values. This trend is perhaps one that warrants research attention by sociologists with an interest in sports.

Only a handful of sports sociologists have studied the significance of the game of hockey in its Canadian context; this void, coupled with the claim that sport sociology demands a linking of the micro with the macro, justifies a discussion of how hockey – at both the amateur and professional level – provides individuals with benefits that may be conducive to social advantage. The current study aims to address such gaps and criticisms by studying individual athletes and their relationships with social structures, exploring the ways the institutional arrangements of sport and culture grant them benefit. Importantly, the study looks at the importance of hockey to amateur players personally, which, in a sense, answer Zirin's challenge to sociologists; to break from the 'academic ghetto' in reaching both scholars, as well as audiences beyond academics (Zirin, 2008). Sports sociology – given its popular subject matter – may carry a certain appeal to the non-academic community, and may help prompt players, spectators or laypersons to undergo processes of critical evaluation when engaged in sports.

2.1.2 Sports in Culture

The public popularity and cultural magnitude of events such as the Summer and Winter Olympic games and other international competitions including the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) 'World Cup' are merely two examples demonstrating that sport is a near-universal socio-cultural institution that grows exponentially with the forces of globalization and the proliferation of mass media. In North America, the 'big four' sports leagues – the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball League (NBA), and NHL – are featured with immense prominence. Player contracts, player personalities, and team rivalries are highly publicized aspects that command the attention of the mass media (Matson, 2008). The impact of sports on economic and social life has implications for the community; individuals are encouraged to participate in sport in order to convey their connection to civic society, and initiatives have been taken on by both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to encourage participation in athletics (Smith, 1996; Vandermeerschen, Vos & Scheerder, 2016).

Data from Statistics Canada suggest the aforementioned trends in globalization and media proliferation have reshaped patterns of sports involvement within Canada's national boundaries, with hockey - once the most played sport in Canada – now falling slightly behind soccer in boys' participation (Statistics Canada, 2014). Nevertheless, Canadian institutions – especially mass media, politics, and the commercial sector – maintain a passionate and profound bond with the game of hockey, and the sport is considered by many to be of historical relevance to a Canadian national identity (Robidoux, 2002; Allain, 2016; Allain, 2011; Vincent & Crossman, 2015).

An understanding of how meanings of hockey are constructed in Canadian culture helps provide greater understanding of how various perceived advantages may be gained through participation in the sport. Canadians' affinity for hockey was borne from a preference for a unique pastime or cultural activity that would help to foster a national identity distinct from that of American neighbours to the South and the British parent overseas (Watson, 2014). Hockey, played on a rugged northern terrain, bore a symbolic connection to the Canadian land, and would eventually become a popular cultural activity (Watson, 2017). The use of hockey as a marker of Canadian identity would come to a head in the Cold War era, when an effort to foster diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union was attempted through an eight-game hockey exhibition series (Watson, 2017). The series, in fact, came to represent a cultural and ideological battle in which 'Team Canada' was highly motivated to defend its prized superiority in ice hockey against the Soviet 'Red Army' team that had dominated the Olympic Games for a number of years in the absence of Canadian professionals (Watson, 2017; Robidoux, 2002; Allain, 2016; Vincent & Crossman, 2015). Taken aback by the immense skill of the Soviet team in an embarrassing string of games on Canadian soil, the Canadians played a subsequent four games in Moscow, where they physically bullied the Soviets on the ice while accusing them of unsportsmanlike conduct off of it (Allain, 2016). In coming back to win the 1972 'Summit Series,' Canadians 'mythologized' the event, using the diplomatic contest to reaffirm conceptions of themselves as feisty, strong and powerful, yet distinctly civil in contrast to the 'bombastic' United States to the South and the 'dishonest' Soviets in the East (Allain, 2011; Allain 2016). The sensationalism of large victories such as the Summit Series has lent

subsequent appeal to international competitions, regular season play, commemorative outdoor games, and the 'Stanley Cup Playoffs.'

Today, commercial advertisements, popular culture personalities, state-sponsored texts, and Hockey Canada – the governing body for the country's sophisticated and world-renowned youth development system – have continued to draw on the sentimental appeal of the game, and have stimulated a national obsession that glorifies it as a source of national pride. In essence, the game of hockey holds a massive appeal for a considerably large number of Canadians. Howard L. Nixon II goes as far to make the bold suggestion that being male in Canada almost necessitates some involvement in hockey, which alludes to one's being a hockey player as conformance to Canadian hegemonic masculinity (Nixon, 1974; Allain, 2011).

2.1.3 Sports & Hegemonic Masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been traditionally used to refer to systems and practices that reinforce men's dominant social position relative to women, however, the concept also proves useful when examining how sport influences gender (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; English, 2017). While hegemonic masculinity does indeed legitimate women's inferiority to men, a more expansive conception may recognize it as a cultural mechanism by which men distinguish themselves from subordinate masculinities *as well as* women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity does not necessarily constitute a statistical norm, however, it is normative nonetheless, given that it serves as an idealized frame of reference in relation to which men are conditioned to position themselves (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Sports are arguably among the most pervasive channels that

promote hegemonic masculinity, as they provide men with a stage to exert themselves over other men and women through submission and dominance in physical competition (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; English, 2017). It should be further noted that hegemonic masculinity may manifest itself in different ways across various temporal and spatial contexts; Canadian hegemony in particular emphasizes a form of masculinity that affirms the cultural authority of male, predominantly white hockey players (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Allain 2011). As such, conforming to this idealized masculinity through participation in the traditional national pastime arguably grants players with the devices to gain advantage in Canadian society.

A vast body of literature has discussed how mainstream sports function to reinforce traditional gender expectations, and how “stereotypical conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity have been reproduced and contested within the realm of sport” (Milner & Braddock, 2016, p.79). Scholars have documented the presence of a traditional Canadian masculinity in hockey circles, wherein women and men of *alternative* masculinities may be subject to marginalization or even outright exclusion from the sport (Allain 2011; English, 2017). On the one hand, women who play the grueling game of hockey can be said to fly in the face of traditional gender norms that idealize them as docile and risk-averse beings (Courtenay, 2000; DiCarlo, 2016). Women’s hockey leagues do not permit body contact, which means that the absence of much of the ‘tough, aggressive’ and masculine dimension of the sport and its attractiveness to some spectators results in much less publicity and popularity (Sekeris, 2012; DiCarlo, 2016). In addition to marginalization in sports, moreover, research also suggests that women may be implicated by sporting practices and the proliferation of male sports in society more generally. In a study that utilized ‘Kaufman’s Triangle of Violence’ to assess the attitudes of

elite male athletes regarding male-female relationships, Peters (1999) revealed that elite male athletes, broadly-speaking, held attitudes that increase their risk of the commission of sexual assault against women in romantic relationships. The sample of the study, interestingly, is comprised of 47 Jr. A Ontario Hockey Association (Peters, 1999). On the other hand, the dominance of traditional masculinity in hockey is further evidenced by the fact that alternate masculinities continue to be suppressed; the NHL is the sole 'Big Four' North American sports league not to have an openly homosexual player in either the past or the present, and questions remain as to how long it will take before the league breaks this ground in the future (Courtenay, 2000; Hine, 2016). Lingering public stigmatization against women and men who demonstrate gender fluidity and men with homosexual preferences may generate concerns among these individuals that participation in sports may have negating or opposite effects to the potential benefits posed to heterosexual males.

Research generally supports the notion that regular physical activity and engagement in sports throughout one's life provides foundations for emotional and physical health in young adults (Shores, Becker, Williams & Cooper, 2015). However, the predominantly masculine sphere of sports – where physical competition is used to help shape one's sense of masculinity – may in fact lead to injury and negative health outcomes (Courtenay, 2000). Despite the health benefits associated with sports and physical activity, a growing body of research is examining the negative health implications associated with sport – physical and emotional injury resulting from too much frequency and intensity, as well as concussions in contact sports, have attracted attention for the damaging effects they have on one's well-being (Shores, Becker, Williams & Cooper, 2015; Marar, McIlvain, Fields & Comstock, 2012). Men tend to define their identities

against health promoting behaviors and beliefs – viewing attributes such as health consciousness and preoccupation with health care as inherently feminine traits – and often do so by asserting themselves against alternate masculinities and other men, such as in contact sports (Courtenay, 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; English, 2017). The implication of forging these masculine ‘identities’ is the suggestion that they may play a significant role in men’s health disadvantage relative to women, having higher rates of mortality in comparison (Courtenay, 2000). Given the potential for severe injury, it is inferable that sports are likely not undertaken solely as a positive health behavior, but also for purposes of gender socialization, identity formation and the pursuit of personal goals (Courtenay, 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; English, 2017). It can be similarly inferred that youth who pursue hockey do not merely seek physical activity, but seek an extra-curricular engagement that poses a handful of other indirect social benefits.

2.2 Benefits of Sport

2.2.1 Capital

Research has found that sports involvement is associated with a number of favorable psychosocial traits. Students who engage in school-organized sports have, on average, higher grade point averages - even when accounting for self-selection biases in motivations to participate - and students who play an organized sport have been found to be more successful in coping with stressors and anxieties (Van Boekel, Bulut, Stanke, Palma Zamora, Jang Kang, & Nickodem, 2016; Dolenc, 2015). In addition, sports participation is positively associated with assertiveness, self-control, positive affect, and well-being (Findlay & Coplan, 2008). Children

who were involved in sports also reported higher levels of self-esteem in terms of both physical ability, physical appearance, and peer associations than non-participants (Findlay & Coplan, 2008). Parents consider sports to bolster their children's competitive and networking skills, and general involvement in extracurricular activities is associated with personal benefits such as higher academic achievement, improved non-cognitive skills, greater life satisfaction and well-being, better career prospects, and lower instances of school dropout, thus constituting a mechanism that can be used for obtaining an advantageous edge in society (Ashbourne & Andres, 2015).

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of capital will be used as a framework to explore and understand the benefits – perceived and/or tangible – accumulated through Canadian youths' participation in ice hockey. Bourdieu's insights bear relevance on the pursuit of sport beyond a mere health behavior. Particularly interested in the ways 'habitus' can be drawn on to reproduce society's stratification order, Bourdieu's theories are useful in understanding how one's navigation of various 'fields' could facilitate the accumulation of useful skills and strategies (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). On the one hand, habitus is a cognitive framework through which people orient themselves to the social world and the structures it encompasses (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). It is formed partially by one's relationship to social structures, but is also partially innate insofar as it is hereditary and generationally-transmitted within the family (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus, moreover, is the internalization of a number of objective positions in the class structure, including one's age, their gender, their ethnicity and their social class, and it is externalized through a person's practices, the moral principles through which they guide

themselves, and their subjective sense of destiny (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The field, on the other hand, can be likened to a “type of competitive marketplace, in which various kinds of capital are employed and deployed” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014, p.522). It is where networks exist and agents – occupying positions in these networks – interact with one another as a means of reaffirming their position among relations that are important to them (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Sport, for example, could be considered a field that one could be drawn to through their habitus, and where one can invest capital, and earn a number of returns on this investment (Eckstein, Moss & Delaney, 2010; Skinner, Zakus & Cowell, 2008).

In general terms, capital is constituted by a number of personal ‘profits’ that may be internally embodied or outwardly objectified, and is accumulated over a long-term period (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu discussed four subtypes of capital, each of which could be drawn upon in order to bolster one’s advantage in a society that appears to be naturally unequal (Bourdieu, 1986).

Economic capital is perhaps the most easily identifiable form of capital, as it is generally indicated by one’s overall financial stability or material wealth (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital, taking the objective form of money, or institutionalized forms such as ownership rights, can be easily and immediately liquidated or transferred (Bourdieu, 1986). Furthermore, economic capital can be extracted from, as well as channeled into the other three types of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). *Symbolic capital*, for example, stems from one’s honor and prestige; qualities that, in an occupational context, might command greater material compensation for persons possessing this form of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Conversely, having a high degree of economic capital may foreseeably lend an individual authority, credibility, or esteem in the eyes

of others. Symbolic capital is embodied in the extent to which is one is recognizable, and may be objectified by way of a title, such as 'Doctor,' 'Senator,' or 'Major' (Bourdieu, 1986).

The volume and the capital of the collectivity of members in one's interpersonal network help to comprise an individual's *social capital* (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital is often framed in terms of membership in an enduring group, which acts as a resource pool that one can draw both material and immaterial support from (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu suggests resource exchange is the essence of group solidarity, even if the resources derived from the group are not consciously sought; individuals must continually dedicate themselves to their network, and as such, participate in rites of institution that create meaningful relationships that can be materialized into tangible and intangible benefit (Bourdieu, 1986). In other words, the accumulation of social capital is not a naturally-occurring process, and demands a certain effort on the part of the individual (Bourdieu, 1986). Research applications of the concept have focused on the mobilization of personal connections into resources, and on social integration in relationships of varying significance (O'Rand, 2006). These empirical studies have operationalized social capital resources in several ways, including economic opportunity, health care and personal support, information sharing, and relationships of mutual trust and obligation (O'Rand, 2006).

Lastly, *cultural capital* is embodied by one's inherent and acquired knowledge, as well as proficient demonstration of institutionalized cultural forms preferred by those members of society whose ideals comprise the hegemony (Bourdieu, 1986). The accumulation of cultural capital is the result of a long process of both conscious and subconscious personal investment, or of calculated mastery and assimilation (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is often

conceptualized in empirical works in terms of linguistic styles, aesthetic tastes, and interactional behaviors (O'Rand, 2006). While cultural capital is embodied in attitudes and practices, it can be objectified through media such as fine art and styles of dress, and institutionalized through means such as educational qualifications, as these socially valued practices and objects are taught and rewarded in the education system (Bourdieu, 1986; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). Existing research pertaining to sports and hockey suggest that these four forms of capital identified by Bourdieu may be readily obtainable through participation in the sport.

2.2.2 Economic Capital

For those youth who excel at minor hockey, economic capital can be reaped directly from professional opportunities and university scholarships that may present themselves. Professional contracts in the NHL - the highest-level 'pro' hockey league in North America – started at \$575,000 per annum (USD) for the 2016-2017 season, and research has shown that throughout the 1900s, masses of Canadian hockey players were recruited to American schools to star on their hockey teams (NHL & NHLPA, 2013; Holman, 2007). In fact, Canadian 'ringers' – highly skilled players intended to elevate the team – had come to dominate the American university hockey ranks to such a great extent that their presence became a threat to the pride of the United States' prized collegiate sports circuit (Holman, 2007). The so-called 'Canadian Hockey Player Problem' would eventually lead to restrictions limiting the recruitment of Canadian players in favor of greater hockey development stateside (Holman, 2007). Nevertheless, in the 2016-17 season, Canadians still accounted for 28% of the total number of players in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Men's Division 1 Tier, and 37.7%

of players in the Women's Division 1 Tier (O'Rourke, 2017). The potential acquisition of university scholarships means that even for those who do not reach the professional ranks in North America or Europe, the sport may provide them with access to education, and indirect access to jobs through the increased labor market appeal that accompanies higher educational credentialing.

Moreover, in writing about 'How Canadian Hockey is Becoming a Game for the Rich,' James Mirtle describes the exorbitant financial commitments parents are making to their children's hockey (Mirtle, 2017). Hockey writers are marveling at the emergence of 'hockey academies,' institutions that charge tens of thousands of dollars to enmesh hockey into the formal educational curriculum (Gillis, 2013; Mirtle, 2017). The burgeoning business of hockey development has also given rise to private facilities and special training camps; while such businesses are occasionally criticized for 'pricing [less privileged] players' out of contention for professional 'scouting,' they nevertheless create work opportunities for former players with marketable skills in hockey (Mirtle, 2017). The economic capital that can be derived from hockey is therefore not limited to the few who successfully live out their 'dream' to play in the NHL, but can also be used to create opportunity in the conventional labor market.

2.2.3 Symbolic Capital

The symbolic capital – marked by the authority of recognition in society – that can be derived from hockey involves the embodiment of a glamorized Canadian masculinity, a prestige that is bestowed upon hockey players in a society that sensationalizes the game and its traditions (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014; Nixon, 1974; Robidoux, 2002). For example, the status of

Sidney Crosby, perhaps the world's greatest hockey player and one of Canada's greatest exports, epitomize the construction of an idealized Canadian masculinity (Allain, 2011). Crosby has come to symbolize greatness in one of Canada's favorite traditions, drawing comparisons to Wayne Gretzky - dubbed 'The Great One' - and having a media following starting at the age of thirteen (Allain, 2011). In his career, he has gone on to win championships on every major stage in the major-junior and professional hockey circuits, in addition to two Olympic Gold Medals – the most prized jewel on the international stage (Stewart, 2017). Furthermore, he has collected every major individual award in the NHL, and outside of pro hockey, has been named to the Order of Nova Scotia – his home province – and in 2007 and 2009 was honored as Canada's 'Athlete of the Year' (Stewart, 2017). The latter win preceded his 'Golden Goal' in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics – a feat witnessed by two thirds of Canadians, and an undoubtedly enviable dream moment for many Canadian children (Allain, 2011; Zelkovich, 2010). Crosby's brand name status is also linked to his disposition off the ice; his humility, drive, and determination have made him the icon of a Canadian ethic (Allain, 2016). Canadian hockey icons – such as Crosby – represent some of the country's most widely hailed public figures. Their reverence stems not only from their competence in a sport that demands the combined elements of toughness, speed, concentration, and skill, but also from the attitudes and values of hard work and humility that they impart to their television or spectator audience (Nixon, 1974).

Anthony D. Smith posited that one's sense of belongingness to a nation and its in-group is enhanced when people possess feelings of common descent and similar destinies – feelings that persist across generations (Smith, 1991). In *The Game of Our Lives*, author Peter Gzowski

eloquently described the glorification of hockey players, and the sentimentality that underlies participation in Canada's national pastime:

"All that separated us from our true heroes was that they were better at something we had all done. They belonged to us, as no other kind of hero could, at once more celebrated and approachable because of what we shared. They were of us, playing the game of our lives" (Gzowski, 1981).

Loosely applying Smith's concept of a 'shared destiny,' the common experience of partaking in the generations-old cultural tradition of hockey in Canada may help to foster a sense of connectedness to Canadian cultural figures and, by extension, a sense of connectedness to the civic society in which these figures are revered.

Although amateur players are typically not granted 'the authority of recognition,' nor are they honored or iconized in society, their participation in Canada's celebrated winter pastime may create subjective feelings of honor and prestige, or perhaps gain the admiration of their peers and others. Research has consistently found that for boys in particular, athletic ability is an important predictor of popularity and social status within peer groups (Buchanan, Blankenbaker, & Cotton, 1976; Chase & Dummer, 1992; Chase & Machida, 2011). While earlier research found athletic ability to be the most important criterion in gauging popularity, and that boys who are athletes are generally more popular than academic boys, subsequent research has found that 'getting good grades' has surpassed athletics in terms of its salience as a status determinant (Buchanan, Blankenbaker, & Cotton, 1976; Chase & Machida, 2011). Conversely, the importance of athletics as a determinant of popularity for girls was insignificant, falling behind appearance and academic ability (Buchanan, Blankenbaker, &

Cotton, 1976; Chase & Dummer, 1992; Chase & Machida, 2011). Don Gillmor explains how bearing the mark of a hockey player is symbolically important to Canadian boys and their families:

“There are parents and players who want to play AAA and there are people who feed off them They want to be in AAA because it is better than Double-A and the world is hierarchical. The kids wear their team jackets proudly and obsessively; the parents mention it in casual conversation. It is an achievement ...” (Gillmor, 2013).

Both children and parents recognize hockey as a status indicator and are self-satisfied, or vicariously satisfied, respectively, based on the prestige associated with the logo emblazoned on team uniforms and attire. Team emblems and insignia are outward signifiers of not just participation, but also proficiency in Canada’s cultural obsession, and render the bearer identifiable as an agent of national identity.

2.2.4 Social Capital

Children develop social capital through the accumulation of a social network and group engagements that can be materialized into personal resources and relationships of mutual benefit (Bourdieu, 1986; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). Research supports the notion that social capital is a valuable resource for children, as it provides them with relationships of trust and mutual obligation, channels for information sharing, and the imposition of norms and sanctions (Leung, Kier, Fung, Fung, & Sproule, 2011). While trust and norms are indeed salient aspects of social capital, informational channels are an especially valuable resource, given that individuals with closer ties and wider networks are able to draw a higher volume knowledge and support

(Leung et al., 2011). Overall, social capital can be an important predictor of happiness, and happiness itself can be associated with health, education, wealth, extroversion, optimism, marriage, job morale, and a wide range of intelligence, among other things (Leung et al., 2011).

Sports provide children with social capital by creating an opportunity to associate with their peers in an extra-curricular context, offering them avenues to create personal bonds with others and to establish friend groups among their peers. Participation in organized sports is positively associated with the acquisition of social skills, one's number of peer contacts, and quality of peer experiences (Findlay & Coplan, 2008). Research has shown that the youth sport environment is one that provides social support, security, and self-esteem to children; it is suggested that these outcomes are attributable to specific interpersonal experiences in the sport context, such as being given a particular task or position on a team, the honing of skills and passions that are shared with other participants, and the pursuit of a collective goal (Findlay & Coplan, 2008). Richard Bailey claims that "sports participation provides a focus for social activity, an opportunity to make friends, develop networks and reduce social isolation," and thus facilitates social capital (Bailey, 2005). Bailey's research further supports the claim that sport contributes to the process of social inclusion by creating an environment where individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds are brought together in shared activities with a perceived value, thus creating a sense of belongingness and extending social networks and civic cohesion (Bailey, 2005). Much of the literature pertaining to social capital concerns individuals' level of engagement in civic society; youth who have partaken in sports have been shown to be more involved in their communities as adults, lending their own contributions to society in exchange for the benefits of social inclusion (Perks, 2007; Hoye, Nicholson, & Brown, 2015).

Furthermore, membership in sports organizations appears to increase one's generalized trust, in addition to arousing political interest and involvement (Brown, Hoye, & Nicholson, 2014; Seippel, 2006). Interestingly, level of activity in community organizations appears to intensify when individuals have a greater number of engagements in such relations (Seippel, 2006). In other words, social capital appears to self-perpetuate, as well as help to acquire other forms of capital; individuals with extensive and profitable social networks can exploit these networks as a means furthering social connectedness and thereby multiplying benefit.

In Canada, slightly more than fifty percent of children aged five to fourteen years of age participate in an organized sport, at an average rate of 2.6 times per week (Canada, 2014). Hockey participation has declined in recent years, but remains the second most popular sport among Canadian youth next to soccer; the Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), for example, is the world's largest amateur hockey league, with over 40,000 annual registrants (Canada, 2014; "The Official Site of the Greater Toronto Hockey League," n.d.). The elaborate organization of boys' minor hockey leagues in Canada allows players to become acquainted with other children who have common interests, potentially allowing for richer friendships that are different in nature than those in a conventional classroom or playground setting.

2.2.5 Cultural Capital

One's embodiment of cultural capital is constituted by their "dispositions of the mind and body" that are accumulated through a long process of deliberate personal investment as well as the undeliberate absorption of tastes, attitudes, ideas and, habits (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu cites the role of schools and universities in imposing many of the dominant cultural

forms, and viewed the cultural capital that can be accrued from education as a mechanism by which class divisions are reproduced (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The reproduction of the class structure through education is attributable to a process Bourdieu refers to as ‘symbolic violence’ – oppression imposed on an individual with their own complicity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Through symbolic violence, the rest of the population are willed to adopt the language, meanings, and symbolic systems of the powerful and educated, who institute the cultural norms deemed favorable (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this way, education legitimizes learned differences in cultural capital as a means to “impose the principle of hierarchization most favorable to” persons possessing a habitus – or of a class background – that places higher value on education (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014, p.523).

Like education, sport may constitute a field in which people “employ strategies ... to improve their positioning” (Ritzer & Stepnisky, p.522). The cultural capital associated with participation in hockey in Canada is closely linked to the symbolic importance that is placed on the sport, but is more expressly concerned with forms of style, language, taste, disposition, and grace (Skinner, Zakus & Cowell, 2008). Don Cherry, for example, who hosts the ‘Coach’s Corner’ segment of the nationally-renowned *Hockey Night in Canada* program continually communicates to his audience that hockey players are culturally ‘ahead of the curve’ in terms of embodied and objectified cultural forms (Allain, 2011). He articulates that

“hockey players (good ol’ Canadian boys) are to be humble and well-dressed men off the ice ... [and] should be polite and unassuming, especially in their dealings with the public ... Without any sense of irony, [however], Cherry sings the praises of tough Canadian

hockey players who are willing to fight and pay a physical toll for their sport” (Allain, 2011, p.9).

The NHL’s sponsorship of community hockey in Canada has engaged young boys and men in work-like activity where they become ‘professionalized’ and taught to embrace victory over values such as fair play, sportsmanship, and having fun (Nixon, 1974). Youth players are socialized according to the discourses and dispositions that pervade the predominantly white, middle-class and masculine game of hockey, which can be said to reinforce the power and privilege of Western-European males in a patriarchal society (Courtenay, 2000). An investigation into hockey commentary by media personnel revealed how hockey can play a role in encouraging and reproducing dominant modes of image and conduct (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). First, commentators frequently drew attention to the physical superiority of hockey players, whose bodies were praised for their size, strength, physicality, and durability (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). Second, commentators positioned hockey players as intellectually superior, using words such as ‘sharp’ and ‘bright’ to allude to their intelligence (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). Of particular emphasis was the capacity to use the mind over the body, and maintain composure, focus, patience, and a calm demeanor while engaged in high-paced and physical action (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). Third, hockey players were often characterized as morally superior; they were repeatedly described as ‘good guys’ due to their unselfishness in gameplay, the dedication exemplified by playing through injury, and the sacrifice they make to play hockey (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). Many stories were also told of players and their fathers, and other family anecdotes were used to convey an image of them as upstanding siblings, husbands, and fathers in their own rite (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012).

Arguably, such privileging of those fortunate to partake and excel in hockey may arguably give rise to negative social implications for those who are excluded from it, as it leaves them at a relative disadvantage in acquiring the hegemonic qualities that may aid in their mobility up the Canadian social hierarchy.

2.3 Hockey and Capital: An Imperfect Relationship

While it is expected that participation in sports - particularly hockey in a Canadian context - is likely to produce a range of benefits, it would be naive and misguided to assume that a perfect positive relationship exists between sports involvement and the accumulation of capital. In fact, there have been instances where participation in sports has imposed significant hardship and negative experiences in the lives of players. Hockey is not devoid of such situations that may in fact be counterproductive to the accumulation of capital and social benefit, and it is important to acknowledge the complexity of the relationship between hockey and capital by discussing examples of a number of hockey- and sport- issues that are gaining increasing attention.

The risk of injury and the impact of debilitation on the body is one negative aspect of contact sport that has sparked a significant level of concern in both the academic community as well as the sports community. Hockey is said to be among the highest-paced and most physically aggressive sports, where the incidence of injury is comparatively higher than most sports due to a plethora of factors including rapid pace, a hard and slick surface, unforgiving boards, and hazards such as sticks, goal posts, skate blades, and other players layered in large and solid protective equipment (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005; Pauelsen, Nyberg, & Tegner, 2016). At the

American collegiate level, it is perhaps surprising that stick infractions result in a fairly small proportion of total injuries, while it is perhaps unsurprising that the most common causes of injury are blunt trauma (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005). While injury rates and patterns vary across skill levels and regional contexts, medial collateral ligament (MCL) sprains, high ankle sprains, fatigue, and overuse were also listed as common causes of injury in university hockey (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005). Collisions with the boards or an opposing player caused more than 50% of injuries, with concussions being the most common type of injury sustained (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005). Concussions in fact comprised nearly one-quarter of all in-game injuries sustained (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005).

An interesting pattern that has been observed by researchers is the higher incidence of injuries in gameplay as opposed to practice, which was attributed to the aggressive nature of the sport of hockey in an expressly competitive context (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005). At the collegiate level, game injuries were over six times more common than practice injuries, with the former having an injury rate of 13.8 incidents per athletic exposure, and the latter having an injury rate of 2.2 incidents per athletic exposure (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005). The role of body checking in hockey likely plays a significant role in the game's higher incidence of injury, particularly in games (Filk, Lyman, & Marx, 2005; Emery, Goulet, Hagel, Benson, Nettel-Aguirre, Mcallister, Hamilton, Meeuwisse, 2014). In the Canadian minor league ranks, researchers found a threefold increase in risk of injuries, as well as severity of injuries, in league games where body-checking was permitted compared to those in which body-checking was not permitted (Emery et. al, 2014). No significant differences existed with regard to practice-related injuries between body-checking and non-body-checking leagues (Emery et. al, 2014).

The greatest disparities in rates for a given injury type between these leagues were found among concussions and fractures (Emery et. al, 2014). Contact sports have come under increasing scrutiny due to the relatively high number of brain injuries that occur in competition; in fact, at the non-professional level, among high school sports, hockey's concussion rate ranks second behind only American football (Marar, McIlvain, Fields, & Comstock, 2012). An increase in concussion rates over a 29-year period in the Swedish Hockey League marks a shift in injury patterns and the increased severity of brain-injuries (Pauelsen, Nyberg, & Tegner, 2016). Moreover, of all players who had a concussion, 41% sustained more than one, suggesting that a single instance may increase the likelihood of subsequent concussion injury (Pauelsen, Nyberg, & Tegner, 2016). These findings are particularly troubling due to the potential implications of injury for physical and mental functioning.

The Todd Bertuzzi assault on Steve Moore incident was an infamously malicious attack on an unsuspecting opponent, causing three fractured vertebrae, facial cuts, and a concussion that resulted in the end of Moore's hockey career (Maki, 2017). Moore, who achieved capital from hockey through a Harvard education and a brief career in the NHL, remains debilitated thirteen years following the incident (Maki, 2017). Moore's lawyer has stated the adverse effects that Moore's sporting injury will have on the remainder of his life:

"we have the top neurosurgeons in the world on this case and we have reached a point where we can say Steve's brain injury is permanent ... Unfortunately, [he's] not dealing with the loss of his NHL career, he has to deal with the serious damage to his post-NHL career as a result of brain injury" (Maki, 2017).

The Moore injury is an extreme demonstration of how a mechanism used to gain capital may

also put one at risk of its loss. Unlike Moore, furthermore, the vast majority of both aspiring and professional hockey players forego education to pursue their dream. This may be a contributing factor to some professional players' well-documented difficulties in finding opportunities in the conventional labor market post-retirement from hockey (Andrijiw, 2010).

Youth organized sports may also be conducive to the infliction of emotional or psychological harm in addition to physical harm. Hartill claims that while sex crimes are difficult to quantify due to underreporting, the institution of youth sports is a site that helps to facilitate the sexual abuse of boys due to a number of factors enmeshed in the social and situational dynamics of minor athletics (Hartill, 2009). First, youth sports are organized by adults for children, which implies control and socialization under an adult agent, thus creating a power relationship wherein children seek to appease adults (Hartill, 2009). Second, sports are a site, particularly for boys and men, where gender is constantly explored, questioned, and defended, and boys negotiating their gender in sport may be especially vulnerable to victimization (Hartill, 2009). Third, adult perpetrators are afforded the ability to seek out and prey on victims due to the normalization of intimate and prolonged contact, which is a part of the 'focused support' inherent to the coaching process (Hartill, 2009). Finally, participation in sports involves visiting locations such as arenas, locker rooms, away tournaments, and social excursions, where activities and behaviors are protected by a code of silence (Hartill, 2009). Perhaps the most notable counterexample to the accumulation of capital in hockey is the case of former NHL star Theo Fleury, who was routinely sexually abused throughout his minor hockey career (Fleury & McLellan-Day, 2009). By the time Fleury had achieved stardom in the NHL, his substance abuse problems and gambling habits stemming from his abuse had placed him on the radar of the

League's Substance Abuse program (Fleury & McLellan-Day, 2009). Fleury claimed that despite failing thirteen tests while playing for the New York Rangers, the league repeatedly refrained from sanctioning his behavior, on the pretense that he was the league's leading scorer (Fleury & McLellan-Day, 2009). Fleury's allegation against the proper functioning of the league's substance abuse program, as well as his history of victimization at the hands of his minor hockey coach, raises questions about the exploitation of athletes at both the professional and amateur levels. Since retirement, Fleury has undergone financial hardship, relapse, and family dissolution (Fleury & McLellan-Day, 2009).

The family is another domain that can be profoundly affected by children's hockey and parental pressure. Former pro player Patrick O'Sullivan - now retired - claims that his love for the game was eventually lost at the hands of repeated physical abuse by his father (O'Sullivan, n.d.). The abuse continued into his adolescent years, and escalated to a point where his father was issued a restraining order against Patrick, and banned from attending his team's home arena after physically dragging him off of a team bus (O'Sullivan, n.d.). While pressure to perform in hockey was often the catalyst for the abuse, O'Sullivan described the ice rink as his safe space, which suggests that nevertheless, it offered him some form of positive outlet (O'Sullivan, n.d.). Family strain resulting from hockey does not always result from maltreatment, and is in fact sometimes a byproduct of over-investment. Ken Campbell, a senior writer at 'The Hockey News' and co-author of 'Selling the Dream' recounts a story of a family from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania who lived on a sailboat in the Toronto suburb of Port Credit so that their son could play in the premier 'Greater Toronto Hockey League' (Gillis, 2013). Both parents quit their jobs in order to make the move, and although their child did indeed play three seasons of junior

hockey, they have since separated (Gillis, 2013). Campbell notes: “I don’t know whether this experience had anything to do with [the separation], but [both parents] are back in the U.S. trying to rebuild their lives” (Gillis, 2013).

These examples suggest that hockey should not be construed as having a perfect positive relationship with the accumulation of capital, with heightened levels of participation maximizing social benefit. At the same time that it is unreasonable to presume that sports inevitably help individuals to accrue capital and social benefits, however, it would be a faulty generalization to say that sports are inherently detrimental to physical and social well-being. The benefits, opportunities, and constraints faced by athletes are likely highly variable, and outcomes and experiences may be influenced by personal and situational factors, as well as broader social forces.

2.4 Inequalities in Hockey

Sociological inquiry into inequality that is perpetuated through the accumulation of capital often overlooks the contribution of sports. More specifically, scholars who have studied Bourdesian capital as it pertains to sport have expressed concern at the fact that sports are becoming increasingly used as a means to accomplish greater personal and social goals, and claim there is an important obligation to ensure that all young people are provided with the opportunity to benefit from participation (Vandermeerschen, Vos & Scheerder, 2016). Despite these sentiments and the number of initiatives that have sought to address inequality in sport, hockey remains a sport that is marked by class-, ethnicity- and gender-based barriers to participation that closely parallel those observable in society as a whole. In other words, the

barriers operate in both overt *and* systemic ways to allocate greater opportunity to certain groups and individuals.

The costs associated with hockey are perhaps the aspect of the sport that *most* distinguishes it from others. While socioeconomic status and participation in sports are generally associated, a study conducted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) approximates that in organized youth ice hockey, the annual amount spent by the average Canadian hockey family is \$1500 CAD, with equipment alone costing an approximate \$740 (CBC News, 2013). At the top-tiers of the minor hockey ranks, it is estimated that the cost to enroll one child on a AAA team may range from \$8000 to \$15,000 (CBC News, 2013). Further costs may be incurred for travel, summer leagues, and supplemental training and development through private facilities and hockey schools. In an article by the *National Post* detailing how 'Raising the Next Great Hockey Star Comes with a Heavy Price Tag,' the father of NHL star Matt Duchene estimates his son's hockey cost him an annual \$22,000 to cover expenses such as tournament fees, out-of-season leagues, personal trainers, and stickhandling development lessons (Traikos, 2015). Given the exorbitant investment demands associated with hockey, the greatest opportunity is granted to the players whose guardians possess the most financial capacity, leaving many with immense talent barred from development in the sport, and from reaping its associated benefits.

In addition to cost, racial- and ethnic-related constraints may impact players in ways that inhibit minority groups from reaping the full range of hockey's benefits, or in ways that deter individuals from participation in the game. Whether they are deterred or withheld from growth in hockey, very few visible minorities have played at the NHL level throughout its history. A

'Racial Report Card' ranks the NBA, NFL, and MLB with a letter grade according to their compositional proportions of non-White players relative to society as a whole, but the NHL is not included in the report card because as of yet, there have been no major studies conducted on race in professional hockey (Anderson, 1996). In addition, there is no official data available on the number of racialized persons playing hockey at the elite level; data is limited to the mere observation that hockey is overwhelmingly white. User-generated lists available on the World Wide Web indicate that only 82 black players, 20 players of Asian origin, and 12 players of Middle-Eastern origin have played in the league, which now boasts 31 teams, each with 23 players on its roster – approximately 700 players in a given season ("List of Black NHL Players," 2017; "Complete List of Asian Players ...," n.d.; Edwards, n.d.). Though Hockey Canada does not keep race-based statistics, an investigative report into racism in youth hockey revealed that in the GTHL, the use of racial slurs to attack the growing presence of minorities in the sport has increased tenfold (Craig, 2009; Cribb & Kalchman, 2009). Several former black hockey professionals share recollections of racial discrimination and taunting at various levels of hockey; perpetrators included fans, opposing players, coaches, and even team owners (Harris & Jenkinson, 2006). These same players express their disappointment at the shortage of black role models in hockey, and the difficulty former black players have had compared to former white players in channeling hockey contacts into media opportunities, front office jobs, and other positions of authority (Harris & Jenkinson, 2006). Youth hockey organizations often market themselves as welcoming to racial and ethnic minorities, giving themselves an illusion of inclusiveness, however, racism in hockey – like society more generally - is a historical problem that remains persistent. The issue of racism remains a significant barrier preventing individuals

from participation in merited opportunities and the sense of belongingness said to be drawn from the sport.

As previously discussed, hockey is a sport that Canadians have used to construct a national identity for themselves in opposition to the national identities of other countries, namely, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other Northern European countries such as Russia (Watson, 2016). While players from Nordic regions have enjoyed greater opportunity in Canadian hockey in recent years, hockey continues to alienate members of certain ethnic and racialized groups by discrediting their character and capability in the sport (Watson, 2016). Lorenz and Murray discuss the policing of 'blackness' in the NBA through the imposition of a dress code that penalizes stars for dressing in urban, hip-hop styles and embracing hip hop culture (2014). Refuting that the dress code is an effort to monitor and control black athletes, the league claimed that the measure was put in place as a means of upholding standards of professionalism (Lorenz & Murray, 2014). Interestingly, despite their vastly different racial composition, the NBA and the NHL make similar efforts to suppress their black athletes, who are often framed as intimidating, threatening, or toxic in the general sports discourse. Ray Emery, a black goaltender for the Ottawa Senators, drew wide criticism in hockey circles not only for his style of dress, but also his interest in rap music, off-ice antics, and his interest in tattoos, cars, and controversial black athletes such as Mike Tyson, and was often cast as a bad influence on his white teammates (Lorenz & Murray, 2014). While Emery's behaviors, dispositions or interests are seldom framed expressly in terms of race, there is nevertheless a racial undertone that is ever-present in these criticisms (Lorenz & Murray, 2014). This undertone is insinuated with reference to 'attitudes' and 'styles' that are unfavorable to white

moral entrepreneurs in hockey. In an analysis of the ways in which hockey commentary helps to reinforce the cultural superiority of whiteness, moreover, Poniatowski and Whiteside explain that the heavy emphasis on family in hockey media helps to fuel the implication that a certain type of 'hockey lineage' exists (2012). Anyone outside of the hockey bloodline is regarded as alien to the game and is forever barred from fully 'assimilating' (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). The narrative surrounding the NHL's P.K. Subban – the “first fully black superstar in the history of [the] league” – further demonstrates how black players can stand out in a negative light in the league due to their racial and ethnic status and be subject to close scrutiny (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, 2017). Journalist Michael Farber explains: “[hockey] is a risk-averse sport. It is a sport that doesn't like to *color outside the lines*. P.K. – this larger-than-life, mouthy, showy player – was not showing the respect and deference that [people] around the league thought that he should” (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, 2017). Fellow player John Scott exemplifies this sentiment, stating “I don't like him. I think on the ice, he's a piece of garbage. Perceived as like a hot-shot. This guy thinks he's better than everybody” (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, 2017). The behavior and character of hockey players from racial minority groups are often conveyed by the hockey community as deviations from the moral customs of the game. These customs are invisibly but implicitly tied to whiteness, thus acting as barriers for the full inclusion of racialized individuals.

As previously mentioned, ice hockey at both the minor and professional levels is comprised of mostly boys, with girls being vastly outnumbered and having significantly fewer opportunities for growth and development in the sport. Hockey Canada reports over six hundred thousand male registrants versus approximately eighty-six thousand female registrants

(CBC News, 2013). Girls who wish to play hockey, moreover, are often forced to play in boys' leagues, or, where available, play in girls-only leagues that have difficulty competing with boys' leagues for community support and ice time (DiCarlo, 2016; Stevens & Adams, 2013). DiCarlo discusses how girls who participate in boys sports leagues are in a precarious position when negotiating gender binaries; participation in itself opposes traditional constructions of femininity, however, notions of women's fragility among male teammates and coaches often bars women from the full extent of participation - especially as it relates to physical contact (2016). Most girls playing in boys' leagues in fact view themselves as aggressive and frame themselves as tomboys - using this non-feminine identifier as a means of reaffirming their belongingness in the domain of men's sports (DiCarlo, 2016). Stevens and Adams conducted a case study on the development of a girls-only hockey league in Riverside, Ontario, detailing the barriers faced in the league's growth and quest for legitimacy (Stevens & Adams, 2013). Girls' participation within the boys' association became problematic due to resistance on the part of boys' parents and coaches, which resulted in a lack of ice time and an unfair allocation of financial resources for girls (Stevens & Adams, 2013). Parents of individual girls with a collective frustration campaigned for the development of a girls-only league within the community association, however, being forced to contend with the boys' league further disadvantaged female players, who were granted with less frequent and less favorable ice times, and who were not adequately represented on the association's executive board (Stevens & Adams, 2013). Ultimately, a girls-only association was formed that operated completely independently of the boys' league, consistent with the Ontario Women's Hockey Association's (OWHA) separatist philosophy (Stevens & Adams, 2013). The OWHA actively encourages the segregation of boys'

and girls' hockey, basing its own principles on a skill and personal development ethos as opposed to the high-performance and professional-oriented ethos that guides boys' hockey (Stevens & Adams, 2013). On the one hand, the organization of boys' hockey is significantly more sophisticated and extensive than that of girls' hockey, and development opportunities are undoubtedly greater in both quantity and quality (Theberge, 2003). Girls hockey, on the other hand, concentrates its pride on the skill and finesse-related aspects of the game, in blatant opposition to the 'gratuitous violence' that is commonplace in the men's game (Theberge, 2003). The rules prohibiting the use of body contact in women's hockey are perhaps the most significant differentiator from constructions of men's hockey, which create a perception among hockey traditionalists that the women's game is merely a modified version of the men's game (Theberge, 2003). While many women feel that the emphasis on speed and skill renders the women's version of the sport superior to that of the men's, many nevertheless wish to play under the same regulations as men because those are the agreed-upon rules of 'real hockey' (Theberge, 2003).

Professional women's hockey has struggled to attain the public recognition and media attention that professional men's hockey - namely the NHL - has, despite the fact that at the elite level, Canada's women's teams have had great success (Theberge, 1995). Save for international competition in the Olympics, women's hockey is seldom featured in the news or on television (Berkman, 2017). Only recently, in what was widely considered an iconic moment for women's sports, did the 'Team U.S.A.' women's hockey team successfully boycott an upcoming World Championship in protest for equal compensation to that received by the men's national team (Berkman, 2017). The agreement included travel and insurance coverage, the

sharing of prize money, a year-round training stipend provided monthly, and higher performance bonuses; prior to the agreement, players relied on hockey as a full-time occupation though it produced barely enough income to satisfy basic needs (Berkman, 2017). U.S.A. Hockey claimed in their counter argument that it is not an employer, and cited the lack of financial support for the members of the men's national team as justification for their initially firm reluctance to accede to the boycott demands (Berkman, 2017). In spite of this fact, members of the men's team all made multimillion-dollar salaries while playing in the NHL, a luxury not attainable for members of the women's team (Berkman, 2017). Although the NHL has historically been a men's-only league, it should be noted that women have not been outrightly barred from featuring in it; in fact, the NHL is the first professional men's sport league in which a women - Manon Rheume of the Tampa Bay Lightning - was signed to a professional contract (Theberge, 1995). While this feat is generally celebrated in hockey, Theberge views Rheume's situation as one of considerable irony, as her success is often framed in reference to men's hockey, rather than being seen as a significant achievement that draws awareness to women's hockey (Manon, 1995). Furthermore, while her achievement marked an important milestone in women's sport, her playing time was limited to one exhibition game (Theberge, 1995). While there has indeed been progress in the growth of women's hockey in the past couple of decades, the 'lion's share' of capital that can be attained from hockey is set aside for men, who enjoy considerably greater opportunities in the sport due to its close connection with Canadian hegemonic masculinity.

In light of these aforementioned inequalities, minor hockey program leaders, interested persons, and organizations such as Hockey Canada have grown concerned about the many

barriers to participation and enjoyment in organized hockey. Accordingly, a number of parties have taken initiative to involve more kids with hockey - not only for the purpose of maintaining Canada's edge in the international hockey community, but also for the purpose of fostering a passion for the game and thus obtaining its associated capital (The Canadian Press, 2013). Spearheaded by NHL legend and Hockey Hall-of-Famer Mark Messier, and sponsored by Bauer Hockey and Canadian Tire, 'The First Shift' program is one such initiative that has garnered positive attention on the merits of its objectives and strategies ("The First Shift," n.d.; Grande, 2015; The Canadian Press, 2013). 'The First Shift' originated in October 2012 as an initiative to involve more children in hockey in spite of growing costs, injury concerns, and deterrents from play (Grande, 2015). The program targets families that are 'new to hockey,' and also provides access to boys and girls that may lack the privilege or will to play the game due to costs, time constraints, non-exposure, or discrimination ("The First Shift," n.d.; Grande, 2015). The goal of the program is to provide an affordable means for instilling a passion for hockey, with 'fun' and 'safety' being core values ("The First Shift," n.d.). At a cost of \$199, children aged six to ten are fitted with full equipment provided by Bauer Hockey, and participate in weekly one-hour sessions that teach skating skills, puck handling, passing and shooting, in addition to games and activities that help to enrich the experience ("The First Shift," n.d.). The program hopes to develop one million new hockey players by the year 2022, and encourage continuation in hockey through affiliate transition programs ("The First Shift," n.d.). 'The First Shift' program marks a significant first step in helping to involve young Canadians in hockey, but its focus on the grassroots level may undermine its desire to facilitate continuation. Local minor hockey programs that are affiliated through transition programs may not possess the resources to

continue equipping kids as they grow physically, nor does the program provide subsidization for the higher costs of playing on a team in a competitive league. In order to foster growth in Canadian hockey, and maintain dominance on the international hockey stage, such initiatives should invest similar resources into creating opportunities for graduates of grassroots programs who have solidified an interest in hockey. Nevertheless, 'The First Shift' and other related programs provide opportunities for a wider variety of youth to experience the virtues of the game of hockey. Although the alleviation of inequalities in hockey demands further action, hockey's commitment to creating a positive experience is apparent in the NHL's recently announced 'Declaration of Principles,' which seeks to promote respect and stimulate character development among both professional and amateur players ("This is Hockey," n.d.).

2.5 Summarizing the Literature

Sports sociology is emerging gradually but slowly, largely because it has not been well received by academics and the sports community. Sports sociologists have garnered criticism for their fixation on the micro-level, however, there are signs that both athletes and observers are beginning to tie sports to macro-level issues. The cultural importance placed on hockey in Canadian society has been studied by few sports sociologists, and perhaps warrants further attention due to the benefits it presents to individual actors who participate in the sport.

The appeal of sports is nearly universal. In North America in particular, sports command considerable media attention and publicity, and children are encouraged to participate in sport by both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Hockey in Canada - though recently falling behind soccer in boys' participation - is one such sport with immense cultural

significance in the nation. In fact, hockey was largely developed as a unique cultural activity that helped to distinguish Canada from most other Western nations, and Canadians have drawn upon hockey legends and legacies as a source of national pride (Watson, 2017). The cultural significance of hockey in Canada suggests that it is intrinsically connected to a Canadian national identity.

Nixon (1976) goes as far to suggest that being male in Canada almost necessitates some experience with hockey, which further alludes to its significance as part of the Canadian cultural hegemony (Nixon 1976; Connel & Messerschmidt 2005; English 2017). Hegemonic masculinity is a cultural mechanism by which men distinguish themselves, and sport is one of the primary sponsors of this mechanism (Connel & Messerschmidt 2005; English, 2017). Hegemonic masculinity varies by context; in Canada, participation in hockey can be said to mark conformity to the hegemonic ideal that Canadian men grow up to be kind-hearted, but tough-as-nails hockey players, in turn lending privilege to these boys (Connel & Messerschmidt 2005; English, 2017; Allain, 2011). Women, and men of alternate masculinities, are often marginalized in hockey because of the ways sport reinforces stereotypical notions of gender performances (Courtenay, 2000). For men more generally, contact sports provide a way to demonstrate gender that appears to be consistent with the way masculine identities are formed; that is, in opposition to health promoting beliefs and behaviors intrinsically tied to femininity (English, 2017; Courtenay, 2000). The willingness to engage in contact sport in spite of the risks of injury in these sports strongly suggest that sport is not undertaken merely as a healthy active living behavior, and may present an array of other perceived benefits.

There are a number of psychosocial benefits associated with sports participation,

however, this study seeks to uncover further benefits that more expressly involve individual's relationships to social structures. The study's framework is borrowed from Bourdieu's theories on capital; sport, a field that one could be drawn to through one's habitus, may be used to foster economic, symbolic, social, and cultural capital.

First, *economic capital* could be reaped directly through professional opportunities, or indirectly through opportunities for education that may help one to foster labor market success. Economic capital can also foreseeably be drawn from having marketable skills in hockey due to the burgeoning business of youth development. Second, *symbolic capital* is accumulated in the form of one's possession of honor and prestige. Professional hockey players in Canada are highly revered figures, as demonstrated in the case of Sidney Crosby. Canadians identify with these figures due to their shared experiences with hockey, and arguably derive a sense of connection to the national identity due to having a commonality with cultural heroes. Even youth players benefit from this authority of recognition; athletic ability and sports involvement are considered important status determinants for youth, and in Canada, the prestige associated with proficiency in the national game is actively sought by a large number of boys (Buchanan, Blankenbaker, & Cotton, 1976; Chase & Machida, 2011; Gillmor, 2013). *Social capital*, thirdly, is accumulated by the extensiveness and richness of one's social networks, as well as the extent to which these networks can help one acquire personal resources and further capital. Research shows that sport provides a ripe environment for the acquisition of social capital, as it helps to one to acquire peer contacts, a sense of belongingness, information, trust, and a sense of community engagement. The elaborate organization of the Canadian minor hockey system presents an arena to acquire such benefits. Finally, *cultural capital* is both

acquired and inherited, and involves one's familiarity with cultural forms instituted by the dominant classes. Boys who play hockey in Canada are socialized according to the customs of the game, of which hockey media provide a glimpse; players are encouraged to be well-dressed men with humble dispositions, strong bodies, intellect, and moral superiority. While players are willed to demonstrate these qualities, such demonstrations align with the hegemonic ideal, and as such, their embodiment and objectification may help to create privilege.

In spite of these benefits, the literature cautions against the assumption that participation in sports invariably produces capital. Hockey is a sport that poses a high risk for injury, which may impair physical and mental functioning. Furthermore, emotional injury may be inflicted due to the sport environment's conduciveness to the sexual abuse of boys, as well as the potential for family strain due to the immense pressures to succeed. Furthermore, certain individuals may be inhibited from reaping the full range of benefits that hockey has to offer. Girls, for example, participate in significantly fewer numbers than boys and are limited in their opportunities for development. Racialized persons, moreover, may be subject to surveillance, prejudice, and discrimination. Coupled with these axes of inequality, the cost constraints of participating in hockey are exorbitant, and the game is increasingly drawing negative attention for phasing out players from low-income families. Community organizations and hockey associations themselves have made efforts to alleviate these inequalities, such that the accumulation of capital associated with hockey is available to a wider range of persons.

3. Methodology

The current chapter will provide an explanation of the methodological approach carried out in the research undertaking. The chapter begins by framing the study as an exploratory initiative that is paradigmatically-oriented towards the critical school. Following the framing of the research, a number of ethical considerations needed to be taken into account prior to proceeding to the data collection phase. The data collection subsection discusses the setting of participant parameters, the development of an interview guide, and the execution of the interviews. The chapter will close with a discussion of the analytical framework to be used in drawing conclusions; specifically, it discusses the use of thematic coding, and sets conceptual and operational definitions for themes sought in the interviews. The careful construction of the research design was crucial for providing the means to conduct the most thorough possible analysis, which would allow for patterns to be identified and generalizations to be drawn on the ways men accumulate capital from earlier participation in organized youth ice hockey.

3.1 Framing the Research

This thesis employed a semi-structured interviewing strategy as a means of drawing experiential and – mostly – non-numerical data pertaining to the benefits, opportunities, and constraints that present themselves to former minor hockey players. Qualitative research adheres to an interpretive tradition, which asserts that social science research should not only *observe* human action, but also *explain* human action (Nagy Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2003). As such, it welcomes vivid descriptions of social life in its socially constructed form by allowing

study participants to contribute to the research (Nagy Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2003). Encouraging these insights is particularly important in a study that seeks to identify links between hockey and the accumulation of capital, and their inclusion will perhaps provide guiding knowledge to sports sociologists who wish to assess these potential relationships in a more quantitative fashion.

While the benefits of general sports participation have been studied by several scholars, few researchers have specifically examined the way a given sport may facilitate the accumulation of benefits in unique ways. Since this study narrows in on ice hockey in Canada as its object of study – the specific benefits of which have not been thoroughly explored – it may be considered as a form of exploratory research. Exploratory research is defined as a strand of qualitative research that utilizes a focused data collection approach in order to ‘discover’ and make generalizations about a largely unknown or unrecognized aspect of social life (Stebbins, 2008). While it is often implied that the researcher is mostly unknowing and blind to the subject they are exploring, it is important to note that in this particular study, the researcher is an insider to the population under scrutiny (Stebbins, 2008; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). More specifically, as a former youth hockey player at the competitive level, the researcher is a ‘peripheral member researcher,’ or an individual associated with the population who does not partake in the group’s activities (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the co-investigator’s insider status automatically undermines the exploratory potential of the research; by remaining cognizant of personal biases and experiences, the researcher would abandon his preconceptions and exercise openness and flexibility so that they may remain neutral, without inflicting undue influence on the study (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

This may be achieved through a cultural- and self- review in order to filter out commonsense understandings and personal biases (Miller & Crabtree, 1999). The exploratory potential of the research ultimately lies in its ability to uncover the ways youth within a given cultural context may benefit from playing that culture's preferred sport.

The research paradigm the study most closely aligns with is the critical school of thought. Critical theorists adopt the historical realist ontological position that perceptions of reality are formed in relation to institutions mistakenly viewed as fixed and natural (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemologically, this requires the researcher to engage in a sort of transactional inquiry, mediating between their own values and those of their subject (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, methodologically, research adhering to the critical school necessitates a dialogue between the *inquirer* and the *inquired*, which allows knowledge to be obtained through a process of dialectical exchange (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this exchange, misapprehension and ignorance gradually develops into informed consciousness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ultimately, the aim of critical theory is gaining understanding for the purposes of empowerment and emancipation, which is achieved through critiquing and transforming social structures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The study adheres to the critical school as it utilizes exchanges – or interviews – to inquire about the ways men confer power and status through the benefits provided by the institution of sport, and how these benefits may help them to navigate structures or reassert their positions in social hierarchies.

3.2 Ethics

Prior to commencing the collection of data, a number of ethical considerations were required. A research protocol was submitted to Western University's Non-Medical Research Ethics Boards (NMREB) through the 'Romeo' portal to ensure study procedures complied with institutional guidelines.

First, the study did not involve any foreseeable risks or harms that could cause participants distress. Informants' participation remained confidential so that their perceptions, opinions, and attestations were unidentifiable and anonymous. Anonymity and confidentiality were further granted through the use of a pseudonym either chosen by the participant or assigned by the co-investigator if not provided by the former. Furthermore, names of neighborhoods, schools, teammates, teams, coaches, and other identifiable connections were left with parenthetical placeholders. While some questions may have involved sensitive or controversial subject matters, interviewees were granted the right to skip questions, rescind responses, or withdraw from the study if they wished. Additionally, the researcher attended interviews prepared with contact information for counselling services in the event of psychological distress, and the study was regarded as minimally imposing.

Second, the recruitment process proposed to the NMREB involved blending convenience and referral sampling techniques – purposive approaches endorsed by Miller and Crabtree due to their capacity to maximize the richness of interview data focused on a narrow subject (Miller & Crabtree, 1999). The convenience aspect of the sampling strategy involved the researcher – himself a former youth hockey player – approaching his personal contacts with relations in hockey. These contacts included friends, former teammates, family members, and

work and school colleagues. These ‘first-degree connections’ were initially provided with broad details of the study, and were later provided with a recruitment poster (Appendix A) to be shared with their aforementioned relations – contacts that could be deemed ‘second-degree connections’ to the researcher. This sharing of the study information constituted the incorporation of a referral technique into the recruitment process. Interested second-degree connections who were referred to the study then contacted the researcher on their own volition. Once contact was made between the prospective interviewee and the researcher, telephone and e-mail contact information was exchanged in order to arrange times, locations, and/or mediums of that given participant’s eventual interview. Participation would be secured upon meeting or connecting with the respondent for the interview either at their preferred location or via video call, whereupon they were provided with a letter of information pertaining to the study (Appendices B & C). This document detailed study procedures, objectives, the rights of participants, and protections such as confidentiality, in addition to stating no risks, harms, direct benefits, or conflicts of interest. The letter of information provided interviewees with the means to give informed consent to their participation – expressed verbally in video interviews (Appendix B), and signed for in in-person interviews (Appendix C) – in addition to contact information for both the researcher and faculty supervisor in the event that they have any follow-up requests.

The final ethical consideration involved the storage, protection, and retention of interviewee information and interview data following the completion of interviews. All data was stored electronically; any digital data were stored onto a personal storage device belonging to the researcher – which were encrypted via password protection – and any paper data were

scanned onto the co-investigator's personal computer. After paper documents were scanned, they were stored onto the encrypted storage device, and subsequently shredded following digital conversion. Hard copy data were seldom in transit, save for times when it was immediately transported between interview sites, the researcher's home, and his office in Western University's Social Sciences Centre. The personal storage device was also kept either in the home, in the office, or on the person of the researcher, and made accessible solely to the faculty supervisor. Data records with identifiable information will be kept for seven years in accordance with university policy. Following this seven-year period, data will be erased from the device on which they were stored and retained. The NMREB provided a letter to the research team stating their satisfaction with the study, its procedures, and its ethical measures, thus allowing the study to proceed to the data collection phase.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process involved setting participant parameters, determining salient questions to pose in interviews, choosing an appropriate setting or medium, and conducting the semi-structured interviews.

3.3.1 Participants

Participants in the study were former hockey players above eighteen years of age – adults who may speak to the ways earlier participation in youth hockey has provided them with certain advantages later in life. The study recruited men across Southwestern Ontario who played at any level of organized hockey in their childhood or adolescence. Ideally, these men would fall between the 1980 and 1999 birth years. The purpose of these age parameters was to

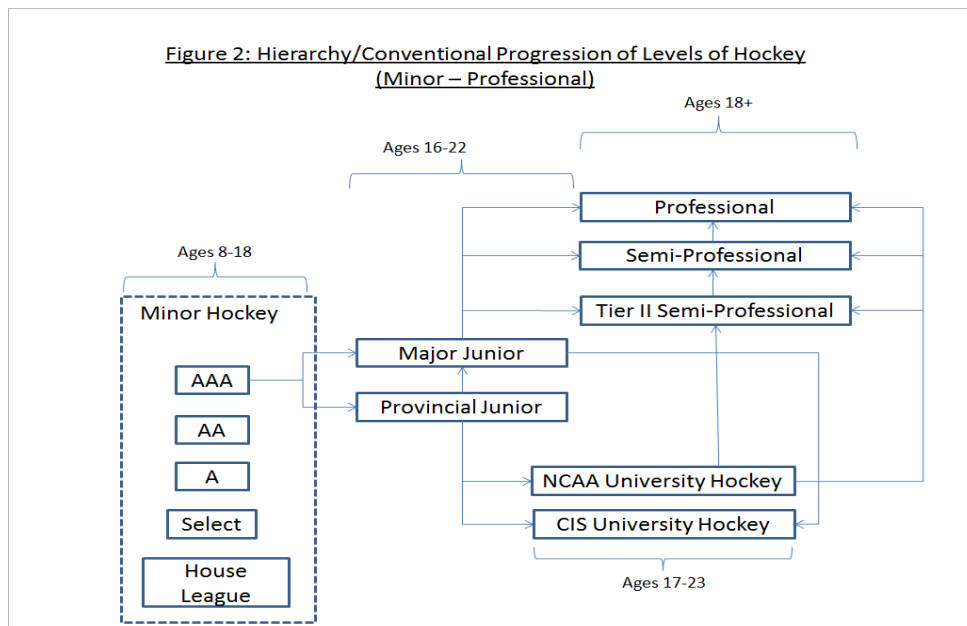
ensure that participants were not too far removed from the contemporary youth hockey structure and experience; it is likely that the benefits experienced by players between the ages of 18 to 38 remain applicable to current youth hockey players. Moreover, the rather uniform white, middle-class, and male composition of the hockey community was reflected in the sample. In all, ten participants were recruited, ranging from ages twenty to twenty-five and in levels played from house league to Junior A – as indicated in ‘Figure 1’ below.

Figure 1: Participants (by Pseudonym)

PARTICIPANT	LVL	Y. O. B	STILL PLAY	STARTED
Barsouth	Jr.A/Draft	1990	NO	AGE3
Conway	Jr. A	1999	COMP	AGE8
Frost	A	1993	REC	AGE9
Hanson	Jr.B/Draft	1995	COMP	AGE3
Bombay	A	1992	REC	AGE10.5
LeRoy	AAA	1992	REC	AGE6
Enkelberner	AAA	1992	REC	AGE5.5
Ogilthorpe	AA	1992	NO	AGE5.5
Bareman	Select	1992	REC	AGE4.5
Dunlop	Jr.A/Draft	1992	REC	AGE3.5

More specifically, the average age of the participants was twenty-four years, and the average age at which participants began playing was approximately six years old. In the dissemination of the results, participants are identified by pseudonym – also listed in Figure 1 – in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms were fictionalized last names, many of which were inspired by the names of characters in hockey movies such as ‘Slap Shot’ or ‘The Mighty Ducks’ franchise. Others were provided by participants or adapted from hockey slang terminology. The use of last names from popular culture and hockey slang provided somewhat of an air of authenticity, as the study participants often referred to their fellow hockey players by nickname or last name.

Nine of the ten participants played competitive ‘rep’ level hockey growing up, meaning they played either A, AA, or AAA. Figure 2 is a flowchart that aids in visualizing the hierarchy of levels and the conventional paths of progression through these levels.



The sample included one player who played at the select level, and at some point in their lives, every player had played at the house league level. Furthermore, two players played at the A level, another played at the AA level, and six played AAA – the highest level of minor hockey – at some point in their lives. Four of the AAA players went on to play Provincial Junior A, three of the four of which were drafted to the Ontario Hockey League in the Major Junior circuit. Players may be drafted to Major Junior and try out for Provincial Junior hockey teams at the age of sixteen, and play at these levels until the age of twenty-one before they must proceed to the college, semi-professional, or professional loops. When a player is ‘drafted,’ it means their ‘rights’ are held by a particular team. They then attend a training camp to compete with other draftees and signees for roster spots. In the event they do not make their Major Junior team, they often return to minor hockey AAA or play Provincial Junior. The Provincial Junior circuit is

somewhat tiered, in that a team’s belonging to the Junior A, B, or C loop depends on the size of the locality where a team is based. A team from a larger city may play in the Junior ‘A’ circuit, while mid- to smaller-sized towns would play in the Junior ‘B’ and ‘C’ circuits, respectively; often times, it is the teams from the larger cities that have more money and more talent to draw from, elevating the level of competition at the Junior A level.

The majority of these participants played their youth hockey in the Greater Toronto Area, though one played North of the city, another played in the Niagara region, and another played in the London region. To help understand how players are grouped by age in their youth, Figure 3 below tables the various age groups of minor hockey with their corresponding age in years.

Figure 3: Age Groups		
Minor Hockey Age Groups		
Juvenile	NA	18+
Midget	Major	17-18
	Minor	16-17
Bantam	Major	15-16
	Minor	14-15
Peewee	Major	13-14
	Minor	12 13
Atom	Major	11 12
	Minor	10 11
Novice	Major	9 10
	Minor	8 9

The circuit in which a given player plays during their minor career is contingent on their age group and their level; for example, if one were to play AAA from the ages of 12 to 13, they would be said to play ‘Minor Peewee AAA.’ Similarly, if a player were to play at the ‘Select’ level from the ages of fifteen to sixteen, they would be said to play ‘Bantam Select.’

3.3.2 Interview Guide/Interviews

Preparing for the interviews necessitated the construction of an interview guide to be used as a means of structuring the conversation with the respondent (Appendix D). This question guide was submitted to the NMREB in order to verify that questions complied with the stated intentions and procedures of the research, as well as more general ethical guidelines. The interviews would begin with a series of questions intended to build something of a rapport in order to gain trust, facilitate communication and encourage self-disclosure (Miller & Crabtree, 1999). These questions were fairly broad and introductory, pertaining to interest in the sport through fandom or continued involvement, the age at which they began playing, and their motivations for doing so. The interview proceeded to a question section relating to one of the four forms of capital – economic, social, cultural, and symbolic – depending on whether the interviewee’s motivations for enrolling in the sport involved a hockey aspiration, interest through friends and peers, extra-curricular engagement, or cultural reasons, respectively. In the case of any other response, the interview would proceed to the ‘economic capital’ question section by default. Questions in the economic capital section pertained to the demands of pursuing the sport as a profession, as a source of income, for a college or university scholarship, or even working in hockey as a broad industry. It also examined how participation in hockey as an extra-curricular may be channeled into other labor market and educational opportunities. On a related note, the ‘social capital’ question section is concerned with gauging the richness and uniqueness of hockey-related friendships through trust and mutual obligation, the closeness – or *closed*-ness – of the hockey community, and how these relationships can be drawn upon and materialized into resources and opportunities. Next, the ‘cultural capital’

question section is particularly interested in the ways that hockey influences behaviors, dispositions, attitudes, styles, and tastes. Prior to wrapping up interviews, interviewees were asked about whether and, if so, how hockey may create feelings of connectedness to a Canadian national identity. In the conclusion, participants were asked to describe whatever constraints they may have been subject to, or whatever opportunities they may have enjoyed. In addition to these primary questions, a series of elaborative probes were posed as a means of expanding on responses where necessary (Miller & Crabtree, 1999).

Interviews were designed to be semi-structured, meaning that open-ended questions adhering to the aforementioned guide were posed as a means of eliciting the interviewee's unconstrained insight. In other words, interviewees were able to freely answer questions that followed a tentative and flexible structure. According to Miller and Crabtree, structured interviews suppress the respondent's voice and their insights, whereas a semi-structured interview is a partnership in which "meaning is constructed through interexchange and the co-creation of verbal viewpoints" (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p.185). The central aim of the semi-structured depth interview is to go beyond surface-level observation through detail, vividness, and the elicitation of stories (Miller & Crabtree, 1999). The approach is particularly conducive in a qualitative research undertaking involving homogenous groups and the generation of themes and narratives (Miller & Crabtree, 1999). As such, semi-structured depth interviewing is well-suited to this exploratory undertaking because it allows for a wide range of subject matter – anticipated and unanticipated – to emerge in the data collection process. Moreover, the insights and discussions offered by interviewees may help to identify further themes that may be of significance in the analytical stage of the study. The data collection strategy also adheres

to the dialogic and dialectical methodological principles associated with the critical school of thought (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Furthermore, interviews were conducted at a time and site chosen by the participant at their own convenience. In-person interviews were mostly conducted at the private residences of the interviewee or the researcher, but in some instances were conducted at more public locations such as university libraries or restaurants. Those who were not in close geographic proximity to the researcher at the time they were available for interviews were interviewed via video call over Apple's FaceTime or Microsoft's Skype web-calling mediums. The researcher conducted interviews from his apartment, while informants connected from their own homes, or in one case, their workplace. While there were no significant differences between in-person interviews and video interviews, the latter presented a unique challenge; capturing audio from a digital output rather than true acoustic sound compromised sound quality when re-playing for the purposes of transcription. This made responses more prone to distortion, and as a result, some of the responses provided by informants who opted for video chat were inaudible. Nevertheless, allowing interviewees to choose times and sites or mediums at their own convenience was seen as the most accommodating and least burdensome means of meeting informants, and also eliminated the need to reimburse participants for any expenses incurred for transportation, parking, fuel, lodging, and such. Interviews ranged in length from thirty-five minutes to one hundred minutes, approximately. Following the completion of ten interviews, the data had become saturated, repetitive and were not continuing to yield any novel and noteworthy information, rendering the total number of interviews conducted satisfactory (Miller & Crabtree, 1999).

3.4 Analytical Framework

Following data collection, interviews were transcribed onto a word processor so that data could be analyzed textually. Transcription was performed through the use of a software tool called 'InterviewScribe' that featured controls for speed, amplification, and sound quality. All text from the InterviewScribe files was copied and pasted into a single document in Microsoft word, and then divided into sections for each interview. Verbatim transcripts for each interview would eventually be revisited in the coding process, where they could be digitally marked-up and annotated.

Prior to engaging in the coding analysis, it was important to definitively determine the study's analytical framework, set its conceptual definitions, and operationalize these concepts – which could be likened to themes. The analysis entailed organizing portions of the interview into categories corresponding with Bourdieu's four forms of capital – to restate: economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. First, economic capital could be conceptually defined as the culmination of resources and opportunities that are both direct and indirect indicators of both potential or actual wealth or financial stability; this form was operationalized through indicators such as money, investable assets, education, or employment. Second, the conceptual definition set for social capital was as follows: the collection of relations in one's interpersonal network, and the extent to which that network can be drawn upon for opportunities, resources, and support. Social capital was operationalized through indicators that include extensiveness of friend groups, richness of friendships, profitability of social networks, trust, mutual obligation, and community engagement. Third, cultural capital was conceptually defined as the extent to

which one has adopted the stylistic and behavior ideals of the cultural hegemony, and their command over them through ownership, familiarity, or ease of deployment. Cultural capital was operationally defined through indicators such as skills, attitudes, dispositions, language, music, dress, purchases, interests, gender performances, and health and body consciousness. The final form of capital, symbolic capital, was defined as the totality of feelings and perceptions, or possession of honor, prestige, or popularity that accompanies participation in a cultural preoccupation. Symbolic capital was operationalized through indicators such as popularity, status, special privilege or advantage, or recognition. Conceptual and operational definitions were also set for opportunity and constraint; the former was constituted by privileges that may have allowed youth to succeed in hockey, while the latter was constituted by those factors that may have inhibited the full extent of one's participation *in* or enjoyment *of* the game. On the one hand, opportunity was operationalized through parental wealth, politics in one's favor, family support, family experience, camps, or perhaps even size, while on the other hand, constraint was operationalized through poverty, discrimination, bullying, parental pressure, external obligations, injury, or unfavorable politics. In essence, the framework involves operationalizing data from interviewee's responses by fitting it into the conceptual definitions described above.

This analytical process is known as thematic coding. Thematic coding can be described as a data analysis strategy that entails the 'segmentation' and 'categorization' of concepts as a means of uncovering descriptive patterns (Ayres, 2008). Portions of textual data are removed from their original situation, assigned labels, and grouped in a way such that similarly labeled portions may be grouped into conceptual categories and analyzed simultaneously (Ayres,

2008). After the concepts – or forms of capital as they relate to hockey – had been described, relationships between categories were inspected in order to complete the formulation of the synthesis (Ayres, 2008).

The analytical coding process was supplemented by a spreadsheet used to run basic counting and calculation processes. It is generally presumed that qualitative research is anti-numerical, and that moreover, qualitative researchers lack proficiency in mathematic abilities; these presumptions have led qualitative researchers to overlook the importance of counting – and even evade – counting in their work (Sandelowski, 2001). While the construction of meaning is primary to qualitative research, the use of numbers is an effective means of monitoring patterns of capital accumulation by age and level played, the perceived magnitude of accumulated capital, deviations from patterns, and frequencies of responses to questions (Sandelowski, 2001). Having the ability to observe these elements with greater clarity will provide useful numerical data that will be incorporated into the discussion.

4. Results

The current chapter relays participants' collective responses about the ways they believe they have benefitted from hockey, and the opportunities and constraints they may have experienced in their participation. The chapter begins by imparting interviewee's sentiments about the importance of hockey in the masculine Canadian experience, which provides context for the ways they perceived themselves to accrue human capital from their participation. More specifically, Bourdieu's capital framework mandated investigating the degree to which players reaped social, cultural, symbolic, and economic benefit. The chapter then goes on to explain how these forms are not mutually-exclusive, and in fact interact with one another and compliment one another in ways that produce and reproduce advantage and disadvantage in sport, and by extension of the benefits it produces, society. In addition to aspects of hockey that run counter to the acquisition of capital, these inequalities are discussed more thoroughly in the subsections pertaining to opportunity and constraint. The data extracted from the interview process were helpful in forming insights into the ways hockey benefits individuals - though some to a greater degree than others.

4.1 Locating Hockey in the Masculine-Canadian Experience

Prior to assessing the ways players accumulated capital from their participation in hockey, it was useful to get a sense of their feelings toward or the extent of their involvement in the sport. The following section provides a brief discussion of the following themes: hockey as a source of national identity, its perceived essence in the masculine Canadian experience,

the dream to make the NHL, and overall passion for the game. The interviewees relayed the significance of the game of hockey in Canadian society, which was important in contextualizing the ways young men perceive themselves as benefiting from playing the game.

First, interviewee sentiments pertaining to hockey being an important part of Canada's national identity appear to support the literature. Hockey was seen as an essential feature of Canadian identity, not only because of its symbolic connection to the harsh, cold Canadian land, but also because of Canada being historically recognized around the world as a hockey superpower. Frost described hockey as a 'driver of patriotism,' and a 'vehicle of nationhood,' and framed the importance of the game of hockey in terms of Canadian relish for an underdog status that stems from a sort of national inferiority complex relative to the United States. He cited dominance in international ice hockey competition as a primary source of national pride, explaining:

"That's one of the biggest ways us Canadians identify – through us being able to have one thing we know we're going to trump the US, or whoever else in. It gives us a sense of pride and identity. [Without hockey], I think it'd be like "well, what do we have then...?" Like, we're very well known for hockey... and wood... and lakes..."

Interviewees also perceived hockey to be a natural part of a Canadian upbringing; hockey headlines pervade Canadian media at the national and local levels; it is romanticized and sensationalized as perhaps the country's largest entertainment draw, and even those who have never played hockey are almost sure to be acquainted with people who are deeply passionate or involved in the sport. As Barsouth states, one 'cannot go very far' in Canada without being exposed to hockey in some way or another. As previously stated, and as supported by the

participants, the interconnection between hockey and Canada's national identity is important to understand in assessing the benefits that can be conferred to its players, as it is clearly a key constituent of the Canadian cultural hegemony. In other words, understanding the ways interviewees perceived hockey to be a part of Canadian culture helps to grasp the ways that players internalize the game and their participation in it.

As an important component of hegemony, hockey is viewed as a sort of rite of passage for Canadian boys, whereby they are socialized to become men who conform to heteronormative ideals on masculinity within the national context (Nixon, 1974; Alain, 2011). Hockey is a sport that normalizes acceptable violence and aggression, and the significance placed on the sport in Canadian society in turn privileges boys who use the sport to assert their dominant positions in society, particularly over weaker men and women (Courtenay, 2000; English, 2017). Participant LeRoy states that a certain level of 'grit' is required to play hockey, and Bombay corroborates this by mentioning how weaker players are ostracized and deterred from the game...

"There's a kind of, um, like, macho atmosphere at times, and it can be, like, um, that type of feeling. A lot of people play hockey so... Just depends on the type of people you're playing with ... [but] people that don't demonstrate those macho, or typical male characteristics, are usually, like, don't fit in as well ... Like, that's a big part of what goes on. The weaker players are usually made fun of, and there's- if there's a player who's - especially in contact hockey - not willing to be aggressive or take hits, it ties over into ... into toughness."

Such positioning is also implicit in the way Dunlop describes his own sense of masculinity that he obtained from hockey in contrast to the current social climate as 'pussified,' and claims that

hockey “hardened [him] at a young age not to be a little pussy.” Ogilthorpe similarly refers to the non-hockey community as ‘fucking losers’ worthy of shame, discrediting them as lesser for not being invested in Canadian hockey as players or fans. Through the communication of these sentiments, it became apparent that interviewees perceived hockey to be among the noteworthy mechanisms by which Canadian boys come to assert their toughness, their success, and their superiority or belongingness among other Canadian men, or in Canadian society.

The proliferation of hockey in Canadian culture has given rise to a sort of ‘Canadian dream.’ In fact, every interviewee in the study expressed that, at some point in their youth hockey careers, they played with a conscious desire to achieve this Canadian dream, and make it to the National Hockey League as a professional player. Dunlop articulated how being a pro hockey player appeals to Canadian youth:

“They’re definitely viewed as like, the elite, and idolized by the young ... It’s the goal of a young kid – is to be that guy. Like, you want to be the fancy, rich, NHL player. Who doesn’t, right? I’d say they’re definitely idolized by the youth, and then ... the lifestyle is idolized by guys in their early 20s and late teens ... Who doesn’t want to be paid a million dollars, fly around on a jet, and fuck a lot of cute chicks? Like... [laughs].”

Ignorant to the materialistic and demeaning motivations, Canadian boys come to understand hockey as a conferrer of status among other men, women, and in society more generally. The level of commitment required to realistically pursue this hockey dream, however, was described as a massive sacrifice of time, money, and the body, which, given the size of the competition pool, also requires a combination of dry-land training, dietary adjustments, luck, natural ability, and genetic blessing. In some cases, even parents became deeply invested in the

pursuit of hockey as a profession for their children, with three of the informants actively discussing their parents' expectations that they get drafted to major junior hockey. Dunlop's father, for example, had him preparing for the Major Junior draft from a young age:

"Oh, that's what it was... When I was 10 years old, it was "Okay. You're getting drafted when you're 16, time to prepare for that." Its just how my dad was. Its how I was brought up. And once you're drafted its like "Okay, now I need to play in the OHL and I want to play in the NHL." That's the dream no matter what, so I was always working towards that."

Further reinforcing conceptions of hockey as a natural part of a Canadian upbringing is the fact that the NHL is glorified as the greatest avenue by which young Canadian boys from small towns to big cities achieve stardom and success. Both parents and children become drawn to the allure of raising, or becoming, the next big hockey star.

The data found that, in most cases, as young boys and teens progress through minor hockey and become more cognizant of their relative skill level and the extensiveness of the competition pool, the dream subsides and players' involvement in hockey becomes more of a matter of passion. Bareman explains:

"I mean when you're a kid. When you start off in your community's minor hockey, you know, you dream of making a career off of it or something big. But I mean, as the years progress you kind of come to reality that you know [Laughs], you're not going to be there as a player and a person. But by that point you've already developed such a love for the game that, you know, you're going to play it regardless."

Informants described having an immense love for the game beginning at a young age, which superseded the pursuit of any end goal in hockey. Hanson claims that given his dedication to the game all throughout his childhood, he simply could not give it up; most players in fact adhered to this passion through fandom or continued involvement in recreational hockey, whether it be 'pick-up,' pond hockey, or men's league. "The dedication you get to it over the amount of years and time spent ... That's why they have the beer leagues," Hanson adds. Furthermore, the informants were unanimous in stating that both them and their parents would deem the family investment in hockey 'worth it,' due to sheer pleasure in playing, watching their children play, and watching how the sport helps to shape their boys into young men. Bareman shared the following sentiment:

Like, I mean, a lot of the things that hockey teaches you about are tangible. Like, you can't put a price on teaching your kid punctuality or commitment, participation, like... you know, being a good sport. Things like that that hockey - that team sports teach you. You can't put a price tag on that. For me, like I said, I didn't play highly competitive hockey, so it wasn't an absolute wallet buster, but yeah.

Dunlop adds:

"Yeah for sure because theres an intangible you can't really touch on. Just love for the game. As a parent, my mom and dad loved watching me play, and watching me get better, and watching me succeed, and watching me get drafted. Its all worth it to watch your kid become something, right? I mean, at that point you're not even really thinking about money, and if its worth it, because it always is. For me, the biggest thing is that

the lessons I've learned from hockey are - no joke - the core values of who I am now. Its the biggest part of me."

Higher-level rep players, as well as a lower-level select player stated that what one gets out of hockey is not necessarily contingent on skill or level played. Enkelberner shared the following sentiment:

Yeah I'd say. I don't think you need to play AAA hockey to get out of it what I did, but I think just doing the minor hockey thing and being a part of a team - I'd say what you get out of that is certainly worth the money and time that's put in, for sure.

This deep passion and appreciation that players seem to develop for the game of hockey provides insight as to how players come to view the sport as an important part of their life and identity, and perhaps why they lend it so much credit in shaping who they are as people.

4.2 Ice Hockey and the Acquisition of Capital

4.2.1 Social Capital

Social capital is comprised of the richness and extensiveness of one's interpersonal network, and was operationalized through indicators such as profitability, trust, mutual obligation, and community involvement. The study found that social capital was accrued with the greatest degree of significance due to the richness and extensiveness of networks and connections formed, and the extent to which these connections were profitable. In fact, the richness, extensiveness, and profitability of these networks were highly prevalent themes in the interviews. What was especially interesting from the data was how hockey facilitates a high degree of social capital through a number of mechanisms that are somewhat unique from other

sports; these include the physical dimension of hockey, the shared spaces it involves, and the formation of units based on on-ice chemistry – that is, the arrangement of players into forward lines, defensive pairings, or goaltending partnerships. These unique mechanisms – collectively a theme in their own rite – contribute to the surfacing of another theme; a hockey fraternity emerges, in that persons with a shared passion for the game forge connections with one another on the basis of shared experiences pertaining to that passion. A theme that was of more minor significance was community involvement, or the adoption of a community-oriented mindset. The current subsection will explain how rich and extensive social networks are formed through the aforementioned mechanisms, as well as community orientation, in greater detail.

The notion of a ‘hockey community’ was apparent through the number of connections informants claimed they forged, and the sense of closeness to other members of the hockey community, in addition to the relations of those other members. Growing up playing hockey, players become acquainted with approximately fifteen teammates on each team for which they play, and close bonds form on the basis of group cohesion. Informants discussed how relationships form not only between teammates, but between families; parents become close through time spent at the rink watching their children play from the stands, and going to away tournaments together; players come to be acquainted with the siblings, friends, and parents of their teammates. Ogilthorpe discussed this: “it’s a community that extends farther than the team. The community aspect is the parents, the siblings, the ... friendships from hockey. That’s the whole community aspect from it.” Moreover, these bonds are said to be lasting in the sense that – while they may not always involve continuous contact or communication – they are deeply rooted, and thus create intimate reminiscent moments. Informants also spoke of the

ways hockey is often used as a common ground that can aid in the formation of new friendships, even if they are formed outside of a hockey environment or context. Dunlop stated outright that “if we can talk hockey, we’re friends.” The majority of informants found hockey to be an effective conversation-starter, as it often allowed them to share personal anecdotes, identify mutual acquaintances, and identify points at which paths may have crossed.

Enkelberner discussed how this may be the case with even non-hockey players, as the game is often of cultural relevance in Canadian current events; playoffs, high-profile trades, arena deals, and scandals provide avenues for players to use their familiarity of the game as generic talking points. He explains:

If you’re conversing with someone totally outside of the rink or someone you’ve never played with or maybe they’ve never played before, you can always bring up... like right now - the Leafs are in the playoffs. You can bring that up with almost anyone. Even if they don’t watch you can talk about Maple Leafs Square downtown, or people wearing jerseys to work. Even if they aren’t a huge fan of the game you can still talk to them - maybe not directly about hockey - but yeah...

Since hockey forms the basis for so many of former players’ personal connections, they identify with the population of hockey players as a social group to which they actively and consciously seek to belong.

Within this community, the personal networks that minor hockey players built through their involvement in the game can be characterized by considerable richness and extensiveness – sentiments that were imparted unanimously by the interviewees. In fact, the word ‘family’ was used to describe the hockey team, or one’s hockey teammates, on 21 different occasions

throughout the ten interviews. A string of responses provided by Hanson provides a representative quote:

“Everyone’s your family. Everyone involved becomes your family when you’re younger. You see your other buddies’ parents. Its like, they’re looking over you and stuff ... Whatever team you’re on becomes your family ... Because you’re spending so much time with them, it literally becomes a family.

This sense of cohesion was said to be derived through elements such as collective goal-orientation, shared passion, time spent together due to the extent of the commitment, the sense of accountability to teammates and trust between them, and the mutual support they provide to one another. Players also experience the triumph of winning, the heartbreak of losing, and the emotion and adrenaline of playing a high-paced physical sport together. Bombay, for one, reminisced on chasing championships with the teammates who became his friends:

“In terms of camaradery and bonding, its like... I find that being on a team and competing towards a common goal - like a championship - its brings you closer than a lot of other non-competitive groups would. Just the competitive aspect and going through the ups and downs of being on a team, and the wins and losses, and a lot of the times you experience heartbreak right. You get so close, you’re fighting for so many years towards a championship. And you get so close and never get it. That definitely- going through that, it definitely helps you with future life experiences as well.”

A few of the informants described their hockey friends as some of the best they have, and a few others explained how playing hockey with school friends helped to strengthen pre-existing

bonds. When comparing school friends to hockey friends, about half of the interviewees described hockey friendships as different in nature – though not necessarily richer – than those formed in more conventional settings. A sense of belongingness to a community may further arise from the fact that networks appear to undergo a process of self-exponentiation, attributable to the fact that they grow continuously as players become familiar with parents, siblings, teammates' friends, friends' teammates, and coaches among others. Enkelberner explains:

“Everybody says the hockey world’s a small world, and that’s because you played with someone, and they know somebody who’s your neighbor who played with another kid, who’s got a brother 3 years older, and he played with his brother. Like everyone knows everyone in hockey and I definitely think there’s a community because of that. Especially in [the Greater Toronto Area] ... Growing up in Toronto, where there’s so many leagues that are here, I think that’s why its considered such a small world type thing, because everyone’s in such a small area and everyone plays hockey.”

It is interesting to note how perceptions of few degrees of separation between hockey players create a sort of blindness to privilege. On the one hand, the literature makes it abundantly clear that a large number of children are precluded from participation in hockey, however, on the other hand, in the worldview of the study participant, there is an insinuation that the game is universally enjoyed. The statement overlooks the absence of children of color, girls, men of alternate masculinities, and children from low-income families in the game, and helps to demonstrate the extent to which hockey may help to build and strengthen ties among white, middle-class boys.

Furthermore, one may play on several teams throughout their minor and junior hockey careers, multiplying the number of teammates that may introduce them to new connections. Dunlop described how, at the higher levels, networks have an international reach; connections go on to play in the NHL, professional leagues in Europe, college hockey in the United States, and in other parts of Canada...

"I have buddies that play in Europe, and I got a buddy, [player name] who plays in the NHL, I have friends I grew up playing with who are now just living in different parts of Canada, like BC. You know, coaches I've known that... I don't even know where some of them live. Anywhere around here. Its definitely far-reaching for sure."

The profoundness of these bonds formed in the hockey experience, as well as the vastness of the interrelating networks within the hockey community, create a wide and fairly dependable pool of social resources, upon which individuals can draw.

In Bourdesian terms, these networks may be deemed 'profitable,' so to speak, meaning they could be exploited for the purpose of personal advancement. All of the informants felt strongly that persons close to them within their hockey networks could provide them with opportunities for employment, with both Bareman and Enkelberner obtaining career-jobs through hockey connections. Conway and Ogilthorpe, furthermore, explained how they drew personal support from, or were introduced to romantic relations by hockey teammates. In the express sense of the word 'profit,' Dunlop – the founder of his own hockey apparel company – explained that he had monetized a relationship with a former teammate who now plays in the NHL, and acts as a brand ambassador by making social media posts that yield spikes in sales. Arguably, a large reason that underlies this monetary profitability within hockey networks is the

upper-to-middle class demographic that typifies hockey social circles. The great majority of players come from families where parents are professionals, own or hold influence in workplaces, and are thus likely to place value in, say, career-orientation and the merits of advanced education, for example. Players become socialized within these circles and adopt these values, and are well-positioned – through their affiliations – to capitalize on them in their pursuit of conventional success. Hanson explains:

“Yeah, cause like, you got coaches, coaches friends, fans, team alumni that are all successful. And they’re-, with jobs and things, they respect you. They understand the hard work you’ve put in. As a person, I feel like they’ll respect that you do the same thing. The workplace, with those people already being successful - cause like, hockey isn’t a cheap sport - you’ve usually got successful parents surrounding players, and their own business- it’s all successful people. (A: And you’re able to forge connections with those people?) Yeah.”

The capacity to draw financial benefit from friendship networks is an important indicator of social capital; the linkage between financial benefit and social capital will be revisited in the later subsection pertaining to economic capital and discussed more thoroughly in the subsection pertaining to interrelations between the four forms of capital.

A few informants disagreed with the proposition that hockey facilitates social capital in unique ways compared to other sports. Enkelberner, for example, shared the following:

“I’d say its similar. I don’t know if you’re comparing it to like, a basketball team, or a soccer team, or a lacrosse team, or something like that - I think they all sort of build similar skills and they aim to achieve sort of similar lessons I guess as you go along.

Something about hockey though that might differ - and I guess it depends on where you're playing and what level you're playing, but - the whole travel aspect of hockey ... which, I think the travel really helps team bonding and that kind of thing. But I think in other sports its probably comparable - I just can't speak to its personally because I [didn't] play too many other team sports growing up. ... Its [more or less] similar, [other sports], but there's probably some differences when you compare things like that."

Nevertheless, the majority of the participants made it directly or indirectly clear that hockey aids in the formation of strong personal networks through a number of mechanisms that are specific to the sport. The first mechanism is the physicality of the sport, and the onus and expectation among players to hit, fight, and stand up for their teammates, as well as the expectation that their teammates will do the same for them. Dunlop described this 'protectionism brotherhood:'

"It's the biggest part of it, for sure. It's like going to war, right? You're taking a bullet for someone you care about - it's the same thing in hockey. You're taking a punch, you're taking a hit, you're taking a puck for someone else... And it's a bond between the team too, right? You don't let anyone fuck with your team ... It's just a hockey mentality. You don't stand for that ... If someone's like, going after your best player, chirping your bench or whatever, what you do is what you get ..."

The second unique mechanism for the accumulation of social capital is the considerable time spent together in secure, shared spaces – most notably, the dressing room. Again, Dunlop articulated this colourfully:

“In a hockey locker room, it’s just like; you’re just at home more than any other place, because it’s like your safe zone, right? You know who’s going to be in there ... There’s no surprises, right? You know everyone, you’re all tight. And to be honest [laughs], once you’ve seen everyone’s dick, you’re all tight. If you’ve all seen each other’s hammers when you shower together, like, I don’t know any other sport that could bring you closer in a non-gay way than that. You’re just boys being fucking bros ... But there’s also a lot of emotion in the room – it’s the place where you get ready to play, it’s the place you come back when you’ve won or lost. It’s also the place where you get screamed at by the coaches, garbage cans are flying around. A lot of emotion happens in that room, right? And when a lot of emotion happens, it creates a bond between players, because you experience a lot of things together in one space.”

In both these mechanisms, a significant part of one’s ability to accrue social capital from hockey involves their ability to absorb, enact, and conform to the modes of hegemonic masculinity that gameplay and the locker room sponsor. Since not all boys would feel comfort or acceptance within such a context, those who do exhibit such attitudes may experience an enhanced sense of belongingness among peers they perceive to be more masculine, and among a group with which they actively seek to identify.

With a lesser extent of consensus, team chemistry was said, in some cases, to strengthen friendships. Broadly speaking, chemistry – the third of the aforementioned mechanisms – refers to mutual on-ice efficacy between players; when given players are said to have ‘chemistry’ with one another, it is implied that their being played together compliments the other. In hockey, players play on units – defensive ‘pairings,’ offensive ‘lines,’ and more

abstractly, goaltending 'partnerships' consisting of a 'starter' and a 'backup' – where bonds may form on the basis of role adoption, complimentary effectiveness, and shared success. For example, defensemen with opposite-handed shots may be effectively paired together, or certain forwards may be especially good at sensing one another's presence in the offensive zone. LeRoy explained how friendships could be enhanced by players' playing well together:

"You play with guys for a long time on a line, and you start to know where they are going to be. And it kind of sounds a little cliché or whatever, but, it does make a difference where if you see them in front of the net or something like that - and you play with them for a while - you know he's going to try and tip any shot that comes in. So instead of just putting a shot on net or trying something else, you know you can just take a shot at like, shin level, and he'll get a stick on it to deflect it, you know what I mean? So there are things that strengthen that bond and make you a better d-pairing or offensive pairing. But I would say that no matter what, having a better connection can't hurt your on-ice connection. It takes away a lot of the greed side. If you actually care for the person you're playing with, its not so much about "oh I'm passing it to them so they can score," its just "we scored." And that's huge for any team sport - the 'we concept' instead of the 'I.'"

Barsouth went a step further, and described how lines function and how comradery forms between line mates on the basis of not only chemistry, but also the aforementioned protectionism and physicality:

"The only thing I can compare it to is like offence and defence in football, like, maybe they're especially close to each other, but if you get playing with a couple line mates or

on a d-pairing - especially if you start playing a few games with those people - like, that is a whole other level. Its like a machine - each line is like a machine. You can't play better alone ... One of my favorite parts about hockey is just seeing ... who has your back if you get like, hit from behind or cheap-shotted; who jumps the boards, or what one of your line mates goes right after the guy."

Some interviewees felt that having a productive relationship on the ice enhanced their relationships with their line mates off the ice, largely because they could relish in their triumphs together. Bareman explains:

"Some of your best buddies are your hockey buddies - your line mates, guys you grew up with, guys you played with. Depending on how long you play with a team-, like, I played with the same core group for ... the latter part of a decade ... We still play on that same line right? ... I played soccer, I played baseball, and its like, maybe I'm biased, but its unmatched ... I mean, obviously you're going to be close with all your teammates, but like, the pal of mine that got me the job was a line mate of mine. Now that might just be fluke, but he's been a line mate of mine for seven, eight years ... I barely saw the guy for five, six years between ... minor hockey and getting this job, right? But you just pick up where you left off. You really do. It's like no time has passed whatsoever and you can kind of reminisce on the good times from minor hockey and stuff."

The concept of on-ice chemistry appears to be quite commonly understood in hockey circles, though interviewees did not uniformly see it as beneficial in enhancing off-ice friendships.

Conway, for one, saw it as insignificant in this regard; "Nah, its not really a big thing. I mean, I'm just as close with people who are on my line than with people who aren't on my line, so... Its

not too big.” The extent to which players form closer connections with their line-mates therefore varies, but nevertheless, team or line chemistry appears to be a mechanism by which players can share in success, and perhaps forge deeper connections on that basis.

Overall, the three mechanisms discussed function to enrich the bonds formed in hockey in unique ways, which may help to provide outsiders with an understanding of why players hold such strong perceptions of the friendships, networks and social capital they form.

The research provided mixed evidence that players became more involved in their communities due to their involvement in hockey – community involvement being a notable aspect of the Putnam school of social capital literature (Putnam, 2000). On the one hand, some informants spoke about how community spirit was instilled in them through teams and associations motivating them to participate in charitable or fundraising events that support and involve the community. In addition, we know from the literature that these values are instilled by the NHL’s promotion of its players’ philanthropy. The league in fact distributes an annual award for community service, in turn generating creative and unique initiatives for pressing community issues. Young persons who view these players as role models may in turn be inspired to engage in their own philanthropic or charitable initiatives. Bareman described his own community involvement as well as that of professional hockey players:

“Like for us, part of my hockey association, you know, you’d have food drives and you’d have fundraisers and charity events that you would attend. You know, as part of your association. So absolutely, I think that’s a huge part of the game. I mean you see professional teams ... being very involved in the community and I think that’s a huge aspect of the game ... To see like, you know, NHL players and NHL clubs are getting

involved in the community around them whether it be, you know, participation in hospital visits, community cleanups, or donating funds to like, a hospital, a children's hospital. Anything like that. I mean, I think its great and I think they were taught those values in minor hockey. Like, yeah. Its part-, its all part of giving back. I myself in the 13-14 years I played minor hockey was involved in many charitable events ... Fundraisers ... food drives ... Skate-A-Thons, all that sort of stuff. So I mean ... It comes with the territory."

On the other hand, however, some players spoke of how they were merely compelled into community engagement, and obliged less as a matter of civic duty than self interest with regard to ice time, or being able to raise funds for away tournaments, to cite examples. LeRoy explains:

"Well like, with the team, no matter what, we always had fundraising. So you would have like bottle drives - you would go out and collect people's liquor bottles ... then return them ... and then, you know, keep the money and use it for team tournaments, ice time, whatever ... But aside from that there would be like, bake sales and stuff like that. We would do barbecues for like, the tournaments - the local tournaments at the rinks. Outside of the rinks, we'd have barbecues going. So it kind of gets you also thinking about other things where its like, in that sense, we were doing charity work, but it was charity work for ourselves. So it kind of fosters a good idea of, you know, putting in extra time on some stuff you might not necessarily want to do at all, but you know there's a good reason."

Ogilthorpe's further elaborates:

“Yeah, but those were always because I had to, not because I wanted to. (A: Laughs).

And you did it as like a fun hour of shit. You didn’t think “Oh, I’m going to do this for charity.” [It was really] like, “we’re going to go stand outside of a fucking liquor store so we can go to a fucking tournament.”

In other words, community involvement appears to be a value that is imparted through hockey, but the extent to which the value is truly adopted varies. Much of the community-orientation that emanates from hockey seems to instead involve community cohesion. Dunlop and Barsouth both spoke to the ways a hometown team – particularly small-town Junior A teams, which are often the biggest local entertainment – bring communities together through meaningful collective identification related to competition with outside, rival towns. As Barsouth explained, “any community with hockey involved in the community – it’s important to them. And in Canada, that is every community.”

4.2.2 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital was conceptually defined as one’s repertoire of behaviors, styles, interests, and dispositions that are favored by the cultural hegemony, and was operationalized through indicators such as skills, attitudes, language, purchases, and interests. It became apparent that interviewees accrued a degree of cultural capital from hockey through emergence of the following themes: the adoption of skills and attitudes, styles of dress and standards of appearance, a paradoxical proficiency in both informal and formal conversation, and personal accountability through social control mechanisms. Though some of these benefits

were more generalizable to organized team sports as a whole, some aspects of cultural capital - namely, the use of language - could be deemed somewhat unique to hockey.

In the interviews, informants imparted strong feelings that hockey provided them with positive attitudes, favorable dispositional traits, and valuable life skills. Attitudes could be likened to value systems and perceptions of oneself, others, and society; dispositional traits could refer to behaviors, interests, and mannerisms; lastly, life skills are those qualities that empower individuals in navigating social institutions such as family, education, and work. With regard to attitudes and dispositions, three themes appeared to emerge: resilience, confidence, and humility. A number of informants spoke at length about how hockey – and all of the stresses, hardships, and adversities they faced in the game – instilled a sense of resilience, determination, and a ‘hate to lose’ over ‘love to win’ mentality. This sense of resilience was perceived as important to one’s maturation, their self-discipline, and “learning what it takes to make it.” A sort of ‘Protestant Ethic’ also appeared to emerge; informants communicated that they had developed a strong work ethic from hockey, and conveyed confidence that this type of dedication would lead to their success, and thus their happiness. The data leads the author to believe that the sense of confidence described should not be mistaken for arrogance, however; the interview data aligned with the literature, supporting the suggestion that players are socialized to be humble and selfless, and encouraged to demonstrate good manners and respect – despite the fact that respect, as it pertains to some groups, such as women, is not always put into practice. Humility, selflessness and politeness were apparent through multiple informants’ use of clichéd phraseology such as “you need to leave your ego at the door,” “carry yourself with class,” “respect your elders,” and “it’s not about you, it’s about the team.” In

terms of skills obtained, 'coachability' was viewed as particularly important, as a handful of participants spoke to the value of properly following instruction, receiving constructive criticism, listening comprehension, discipline, and the way coaches instill these qualities. Dunlop analogized playing for a coach to working for a superior, and Conway states that coaches helped him to gain a general respect and appreciation for other adult authority figures, such as his parents. The former went into detail:

"I think some of the most important lessons are learned from coaching. Here's the thing - you have two different coaches, a good coach, and a bad coach. And you have to be able to know how to deal with both of those - its a valuable lesson. Its almost like having a good boss and a bad boss if you want to think about it like that. ... I don't care how skilled you are, they want people who show respect. You respect your elders and those that want to make you better. At the end of the day, the coach isn't there to make you feel like shit, he's there to make you better. Whether you take it that way or not is up to you. So if a coach is going to say "you're a fucking piece of shit. You're terrible. The way you played tonight is unacceptable," you can either say "fuck you" ... and cry to your parents ..., or you can just understand that this guy wants what's best for you. He's going to tell you now what you need to do to be better, and either you take it with a grain of salt and use it to get better, or you be a little bitch about it. So it teaches you how to take information and use it effectively. Are you going to be better from this or worse from this? If you can't take criticism in hockey - good luck. ... And a lot of guys learn differently, but you need to be able to hear where you went wrong, why it happened, and how to get better from it. And if you can't, you're shit, and you're not going to get

anything from it. A lot of lessons to be learned from understanding how to take constructive criticism, rude comments, disappointment – that’s a big one too - letting your entire team down - which has happened to me multiple times. Like, playoffs, OT, turnover, guy scores and we lose the game.”

The latter explained more generally:

“I mean, discipline. Just really understanding what the coach says goes. I think that translates to other forms of life - you know, my parents. Whatever they say goes. My boss at work - whatever he says goes. (A: So like, respect for authority?) Exactly. “

Somewhat related to the acquisition of social capital, moreover, being a member of a hockey team was seen as an effective builder of social skills and teamwork ability, as playing the game involves a high degree of communication and cooperation, and also involves being patient with teammates both on and off the ice. Additional noteworthy skills that participants included in the interviews included goal-orientation, instinctiveness, accountability, punctuality, independence, and leadership, among others.

“It gives you this skill set. It gives you these things, and it’s funny, I was reading an article ... essentially saying that employers look for athletes because athletes have what I referred to earlier. They’ve got this confidence. They’ve got the respect thing down. They’ve just seen a lot and they’ve been through a lot with their team. And when you get into the workplace, you’re always working with a team - whether it’s small, big, boss, direct reports, whatever. So I definitely think playing hockey has given me that – from talking to other parents on the team, talking to coaches, talking to your teammates. Definitely something that helps with any job market when you’re looking for jobs, that

type of thing. Employers can usually see that you're pretty on top of things, so yeah, I would definitely say it helps ... Accountability – you can't just bail on things. When you're a part of a team, you can't just not show up, so I think that's applicable to everything - like, work- wise, family- wise, recreation-wise ... Confidence I think is huge – helps with every aspect of your life. But then just starting out at something and being pretty awful at it, and realizing 5 years later that you're 10 times better than you were 5 years earlier – it just gives you a bit of [gratification] with anything - whether it's sports, whether it's a new job, whether it's a new thing you started. When you played hockey growing up, you can easily remember back to when you could hardly stand up on your skates and now you're out there making stuff happen on the ice. I think it's relatable to everything in life. I would certainly say it helps and it translates to pretty much every aspect of life."

The extent to which the acquisition of these attitudes and skills is unique to hockey versus other sports is debatable; however, there was a full consensus among interviewees that they are conducive to personal success or upward social mobility. In whichever case, the fact that these skills and attitudes are cultivated in such a uniformly white, masculine, and middle-to-upper class context – and are viewed as highly transferrable to the traditional functioning of institutions such as family, work, and education – warrants a certain level of consideration for how the game helps to reinforce and reproduce cultural hegemony and the social stratification order.

There was little evidence to suggest that playing hockey influences tastes and styles in terms of casual dress; however, it nevertheless seemed to impart an understanding of the importance of appearance in a more formal context. Only three of the informants stated that

they made a conscious effort to wear outward signifiers that present themselves as hockey players, such as hockey apparel. Interestingly, in contrast, one player, Dunlop, expressed that being perceived by strangers or stereotyped as a 'hockey guy' is unflattering because he sees it as connoting a fast-living, self-indulged perception to other persons who may form preconceptions on these bases. He counters his perception of others' preconceptions through designs with slogans underscoring the previously-discussed attitudes that hockey manifestly endorses – such as 'playing to win,' having a good attitude and character, as well as an unrelenting work ethic. Although there are not enough data to explore this potential theme further, it is an interesting contrast to many of the themes found in the data and in the previous literature. While Dunlop was not necessarily an outlier in believing that certain persons may form negative judgments of him for being a hockey player, the inclusion of his sentiments in the dissemination of the results were important in shedding light on the fact that hockey players are not universally viewed favorably – even in Canada. Moreover, eight of the ten interviewees discussed how they were required to adhere to a formal dress code whereby they were expected to come dressed for games in suits or dress clothes. The intent behind this – a seemingly common team rule at several different levels – is primarily to stimulate the adoption of a serious and professional mindset, although it is also used as a means of ambassadorship for the organization, presenting a unified front and cultivating self-confidence. The "look good, feel good, play good" cliché, was uttered several times unsolicited by several different interviewees. Enkelberner provides further elaboration:

"Yeah so playing AAA, probably starting at like minor peewee or peewee all the way up to bantam or something, minor midget, I had to wear a shirt, tie, dress pants, dress

shoes to the games. I never minded that, I kind of liked it, but I think one of the reasons for that is to make the kid understand, "okay. It's time to play hockey. You're coming from school; you're coming from your friend's. Get ready, get changed, it's time to play a hockey a game." So I think it's a type of mindset that you go, you come to the rink with. And the fact that you get dressed up, you're looking good going into the rink, it just kind of helps put you in the right mindset and kind of separate you from the crowd in a sense. But yeah definitely something I had to do playing triple, and I didn't mind it. I thought it was a good idea."

Barsouth further discusses the types of feelings dressing up for games instills:

"I think because the end goal is to some day be a professional, they always say dress like a professional. And honestly, everyone just likes wearing a suit – I can't really remember anyone objecting to it ... I liked it. Why not show up looking good, ready for business? And when people see a 14-year-old wearing a suit, they're like, "damn, that must be a pretty important 14-year-old.""

While casual dress is certainly a signifier of identity, tastes, styles, and interest, it would be a stretch to claim that hockey apparel and athletic wear could be deemed 'refined tastes.' Nevertheless, minor hockey – more often at the higher levels – instills cultural capital by socializing children to look, and be, the part of a professional when engaged in their pursuits. Whether they be in hockey, or the role they expect – and are expected – to be in when they grow up and enter the labor market, children are conditioned to adhere to refined standards of appearance. In other words, the implementation of this dress code policy helps prepare children to embrace, strive for, and live up to the standards of the middle- and upper-class

domains. Aside from styles and tastes, hockey was also viewed as complimenting one's physical appearance; stereotypic conceptions of missing teeth and black eyes aside, just under half of the informants cited healthy living – more specifically, a 'work out' and keeping bodies 'in shape' – as a reason for continuing to play recreationally.

One of the more interesting ways youth players accrued cultural capital was through the language they become exposed and accustomed to, as well as proficient in using. The dialogue and rhetoric in hockey appears to benefit young men in a somewhat paradoxical fashion. On the one hand, player-to-player interactions in the locker room were often characterized as exchanges that would be regarded as disgusting and vulgar; jokes and anecdotes pertain to partying, toilet humor, sex, and the degradation of women. In addition, players use a hockey-specific slang that acts as a substitution for more common terminology. On the other hand, however, players discussed player-coach interactions as those where respect is demanded, and the importance of traditional institutions such as school and family is communicated. At least a couple of the interviewees cited a "family first, school second, hockey third" principle that was implemented by their coaches. Barsouth iterated how a good coach helps one not only grow as a hockey player, but also as a person, as the coach creates positive reinforcement in the ways one converses with other adults. Hanson, moreover, discussed the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) draft process, which entails meetings with scouts, coaches, managers, and other team personnel that are intended to gauge a players' character, thus requiring the character to make a favorable impression on adults. He explained how preparing for these meetings conditioned him to use confidence in conversation, as well as helped him to build a repertoire of vocabulary.

The previously-mentioned paradox arises from the fact that players seem to gain advantage from both the vulgar and the polite conversational forms depending on the social context they find themselves in. While the more repulsive language and rhetoric would likely be poorly received in any other realm of social acceptability, one must acknowledge that it helps men learn how to converse, behave, and belong among other men in a society shrouded by hegemonic masculinity. Arguably, discussing things such as sexual conquest, physical domination, chewing tobacco, consuming copious amounts of alcohol, and having the capacity to convey an intimate familiarity with sports helps men to interact *with* and gain respect *among* masculine peers. In other words, they are socialized to be aggressive and vulgar as a means of bonding in a private and exclusive manner. At the same time however, interactions with coaches, other adults, and the greater community teach players to present themselves as polite, conforming, and well-mannered individuals. This seems to align with a similar paradox observed by Allain (2011) in the literature; that players are socialized to be tough and aggressive on the ice, and switch on good-heartedness off the ice and in public settings.

A final interesting way that cultural capital may be indirectly accrued through hockey is in the social control mechanisms that hold players accountable for their character – namely, the acceptableness of violence in the sport, and the team concept. First, players are forced to ‘police themselves’ from crossing the line on the ice, and learn that there are consequences to their actions by having to answer for them in physical confrontation, whether that includes targeted body contact, stick infractions, or actual fighting. Dunlop explained:

“Its also the only sport where you allow fighting because its part of the game, and the reason fighting is part of the game is because you need to be held accountable for the

things that you've done on the ice. Its like a respect level too, right? Like, you crossed the line, now you're going to get punished for it, and that's-, there's no sport that does that. Like, there's no fights allowed in-, well, anything. There's no fights allowed in any sport."

Second, off the ice, the team is used as a social control mechanism in that sporting the team logo renders the wearer an ambassador of the organization. Enkelberner explains how, off the ice, the team concept is used to effect acceptable standards of conduct in public:

So I always remember like, when we were younger, and kids were buzzing around the rinks or whatever, and they're wearing their tracksuits and stuff with the team logo on it, it was always, always, always repeated: "you're not just representing yourself, you're representing the team, you're representing the organization. That comes back on the coach. You're representing your parents." So you realize you can't act like and idiot. And they basically say its because you're wearing that logo, but really, its just like, you can't act like an idiot in public, is basically what it comes down to. So they use the team as sort of the reason for it, which allows people to understand it easier and it makes a bigger impact. As far as acting in a social setting or a public setting, playing hockey growing up, you learn that really early on. And I think thats one thing that separates competitive hockey a little bit from house league hockey, is the fact that you're spending so much time together and you're at the rink that much more often. That is conveyed a little bit more often I think with a competitive rep team - just how to behave and how to represent yourself in a public setting.

Bareman also discussed the team as a social control mechanism:

"So you're in the spotlight. You have to portray the best version of you to help your team,

right? ... I mean, to refine that even more - you're a player of a certain team, and you have a certain commitment to uphold, and a certain obligation. You can't be an absolute piece of shit wearing the ... crest on your chest. Causing a ruckus, being an idiot. That's another thing the teams is. You know, it keeps you in check. It keeps you in check for sure."

Players are also taught to be accepting of the hierarchy and allocation of roles that exists on teams, and are socialized to be complacent in adopting and performing these roles. Barsouth, for example, explained the relationship between players and coaches, and how this type of superior-subordinate relationship applies outside of hockey...

Definitely when you're with your coach, because one thing most hockey coaches do, is they demand respect, and it creates a lot of positive reinforcement in the way you treat other adults. A good coach helps you talk to anyone. Maybe you wouldn't know how to talk to an adult if they were always yelling at you, but because you've had your coach do it, you're able to understand ... It makes you feel - for me, for sure, responsible. You know, it makes you feel like you can't just get away with anything. There's consequences. It makes you feel responsible for your actions, and it has a direct relationship to life in general. For sure.

Enkelberner adds:

I think having a coach and being coached is very valuable, especially when you're younger because typically your coach is going to be some sort of expert in that field in one way or another, or at least more knowledgeable about it than you are. And when you're being coached, it [forces] you to listen. Listening is huge ... The best coaches I ever

had were the ones who were hard on you, and wouldn't just let you continue what you were doing if that's not what they were trying to get out of you.

Players believed that conforming to the norms imposed in hockey helped them to understand and encouraged them to adhere to the social norms in place outside of hockey, in the community or in society at large. Their perception was that - even if aspects such as acceptable violence are not directly relatable or applicable to real life – they were conditioned to become aware of how their actions are received, and the implications of these receptions. In spite of the negative discourses conveyed and internalized in the locker room, players nevertheless appeared cognizant of what *does* and *doesn't* constitute socially acceptable behavior, as suggested in the following statement by Ogilthorpe: “Its all fun and games because you're one of the boys ... Just do shit that's [obviously] not socially acceptable but [feels so in the context of your being among a] hockey team.” In later responses, he also suggested that players are understanding of greater social norms – even if this understanding is not always put into practice:

“Um, in that regard, like pretty rude. Like, to be honest, really degrading towards women. And I feel like a lot of it is just kind 'put on' to like, make people laugh, or stuff like that, because if everyone had those genuine beliefs, I think society would be really fucked up. (A: Yeah absolutely). And I think, for the most part, people understand that its exaggerated, but obviously you get people who aren't exaggerating at all and are just fucking fucked, so... Its part of like, joking material, its not like serious. I think its just a vulgar, dry humour kind of. (A: Okay). Its like purely boys talk and you're always talking in slang and weird terms that lots of people who don't play hockey don't even understand.

Conway remarked: “I learned what’s right and wrong from hockey.” The extent to which these boys come to exemplify these social standards of conduct is contestable and likely quite variant, however, it is apparent that they perceive themselves to have a firm understanding of the normative climate of whatever context they find themselves in, and therefore act to blend in accordingly.

4.2.3 Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is defined here as the pride, recognition, and feelings associated with participation and proficiency in Canada’s national sport. This form was operationalized through popularity, status, or special privilege attributed to being a hockey player. Informants described the popularity of the NHL players, which lent insight into the ways that even amateur hockey players may derive a certain status from proficiency in the national pastime. This afforded them popularity, special privilege, and a sense of connectedness to a Canadian national identity, which were, in essence, the themes that arose in the data relating to symbolic capital. The data suggested that the symbolic capital that could be accrued from hockey was concentrated among the more proficient players, though players in general described having feelings of pride and confidence from their participation.

The data suggested that the symbolic capital that can be acquired from hockey is closely tied with the cultural fixation on the game in Canada; accordingly, youth derive a sense of national identity due to their holding the status of a hockey player. In other words, playing hockey in Canada appeared to instill a sense of ‘Canadian-ness.’ Hanson discussed how there

are certain feelings of sentimentality that accompany sharing a passion with one's cultural heroes, and partaking in something that Canada is internationally renowned for...

Just like, you get so proud of being Canadian because all those, like, guys you watched and you're Canadian and they represent Canada. And just trying to make that stage - represent Canada, represent something that we're good at. Its something that's given us a name for ourselves - I think that goes through you for sure as a person.

Enkelberner also expressed this thought:

Its cool to say you play the same sport that all these people you look up to - like the Gretzkys; best to ever play the game, grew up in Canada. Its just cool to be able to say you played hockey like all these super cool, famous, popular people. Its cool in that aspect I'd say.

Conway, a Junior A player, claims these feelings are amplified by one's knowing they are among the better players in Canada's national game; "Its nice to know that you're one of the better players in a sport that's so big in Canada. (A: Yup). You definitely like ... I think everybody would love that. He moreover discussed how growing up, his family would watch only soccer and hockey on television – the former for the sole reason that it was a 'Greek thing' viewed as culturally customary in his family's heritage, and the latter for the reason it was a sort of 'Canadian thing...'

"TV growing up, it was either soccer or hockey. And it was only soccer because like, we're Greek and soccer's kind of a Greek thing. But in terms of like, Canada, all my friends' houses, and same with mine - most of the time with mine - it was always just hockey."

Frost, who grew up with a Syrian father and a German-Canadian mother, explained that having a mixed ethnic background took away from his sense of Canadian identity; hockey, he claims, was a primary device that he used to connect with peers and forge his sense of nativity to Canada. Both he and Barsouth in fact articulated that had they not played, they felt they would have missed out on an essential part of the Canadian experience. Bombay and Bareman, as did Watson (2017) in the literature, framed the sense of national identity they derived from hockey in terms of its embrace of Canada's physical landscape, and romanticized reminiscent moments of playing in the cold Winters that have come to characterize Canada. The data therefore supports the literature by attesting to the perceived connection between hockey and our Northern environment, but goes a step further in revealing that Canadians derive feelings of connectedness to our land through participation. Furthermore, in our current cultural mosaic, hockey has been institutionalized as an activity that acts as a common thread, or a passion that unites the population, and agents of the game appear to relish in their being 'true' Canadians. The game is generationally transmitted as a rite of passage in the masculine Canadian experience, and is mythologized in the country's history, in turn creating feelings among players that they are carrying forward, honoring, or belong to a sacred national tradition.

As alluded to in the above paragraph, the idolization of professional hockey players lends insights into how hockey creates feelings of pride in the national context, and how youth view themselves as hockey players in Canadian society. Interviewees were unanimous in sharing their views on the status of hockey professionals in the country; not only were they viewed as the highest-status athletes, they were also described as 'celebrities' and 'national

icons.¹ Their superiority in a highly-valued pastime participated in by so many renders them respectfully enviable – they are the figures who young men want to be. Conway explains:

“Well, I know hockey’s the biggest sport in Canada, so, I mean, growing up, you look up to them. They’re pros. They know that they have to act like pros because they have kids like us, you know, looking at them and wanting to be like them one day. So its definitely a high status. They hold a high status in a lot of communities.”

Barsouth adds:

“Oh I think the hockey pros in Canada are viewed as like-, they’re celebrities right. They’re who everybody wants to be, you respect who they are. Everyone envies them, but in a good way, because you don’t become an NHL player without putting in some hard ass work. They’re definitely idolized, that’s for sure.”

Professional hockey players therefore comprise a sort of 'cultural elite' in Canada; in the absence of a dominating entertainment industry, political spectacle, and a sizeable spread of cosmopolitan cities, the National Hockey League is perhaps the most glamorous – and most realistic-seeming – stage for Canadian boys to perform on, and achieve stardom and success. Hockey is viewed as a 'ticket to ride,' and those that have made it to the apex of the journey are bestowed with high honor, particularly among boys and men. "There's a reason they call it 'The Show,'" Frost explains. "It's the big time," he added.

To a certain degree, the idolization of the hockey pros lends itself to the recognition and popularity of amateur players, though this may be more limited to those youth players who have excelled to the higher ranks of competitive hockey (Allain, 2011; Gillmor, 2013). Dunlop,

for example, discussed how playing on one of the top-ranked AAA teams in the country brought considerable celebrity to the boys on the team...

"You'd walk around and people would be, "Yo! He's on the [team name]!" Our team was so good that like, anyone everywhere knew who we were. So it was like, a very... you know, it'd make you feel pretty proud and confident in yourself."

Barsouth, as the former captain of a Junior A team, explained how he was embraced by the community at large, with fans wanting to initiate conversations with him in passing. He in fact stated that at the amateur level, players may be viewed with close-to-equal esteem as the hockey professionals. Hanson believed this to be the case in a school context, stating "a lot of people look up to you; they know you're a big hockey player." Perceived advantages present themselves, as a couple of interviewees mentioned how women were drawn to them because they played hockey, and how schoolteachers with an interest in hockey would treat them favorably and grant them special concessions in the classroom. The more personal benefits, or symbolic capital, are an increase in confidence and a sense of immense pride in being hockey players.

4.2.4 Economic Capital

Economic capital, by definition, is probably the most straightforward form of capital – conceptually defined by material wealth and financial stability – however, its acquisition through hockey was perhaps the least straightforward of the four forms assessed in the framework. Intuitively, one might expect that only professional players would reap economic capital, however, the interview process revealed that amateur and non-amateur players may

accrue monetary benefit in both direct and indirect ways, though many of the opportunities for financial compensation were indirect. These may include scholarship opportunities and financial aid for postsecondary education.

Among the interviewees in this study, direct financial gain for non-professionals appeared to be most common among Junior A players, despite the illegality of the practice per Hockey Canada guidelines. In fact, three of the four interviewees who played at the Junior level were aware of teammates and players on other teams being paid to play hockey, and all three also claimed that payment was a substantial enough incentive to continue playing hockey at ages where other peers were entering postsecondary education or the labor market. Conway explains:

“Um, for me personally, no. I don’t have an experience with that, but I knew. And I still know it’s happening. Not necessarily the right thing to do, but its definitely being done under the table ... That’s a reason why a lot of [my friends] have continued to play, is because they’ll continue to get some money at some point playing for a team, and someone’s going to give them some pay every month or something. It definitely is a factor.”

Barsouth himself was paid to star on a small-town junior team, and felt that his income – and other perks – constituted a 'decent [enough] living' to forego school and employment through to his early twenties.

Well, it depends on the team, the player, their relationship, and also just the timing. I know guys playing Junior A now and its a lot more tight. You can’t pay the players like they did. I mean, it was so much. Like, (inaudible) my line, in my last two years - I was

making a decent living playing Junior A ... My team was definitely breaking some rules in that regard, but our owners were very wealthy. They weren't looking for an investment. They weren't looking to gain any money from having a team, they were just looking to win a championship, and were willing to go get the best players ... I got paid cash, right? I would make anywhere from like \$400 to \$600 a week. And I also had a billet who paid for all my food and everything was paid for. My phone was free. I was paid more so than most players playing Junior A. Especially if you think of the OHL being a higher level, and these guys are only making like 50 bucks a week ... Yeah, it definitely [provided an incentive to continue playing] because at that time, ... I don't know if I would have been able to live away from home - because I played two hours away from home - I don't know if I would have been able to live away from home without that financial reward, kind of thing. And also, because I did use some of that money to help my mom and shit. If I didn't make that money I probably would have felt more obligated to stay at home and help out that way.

While such compensation does provide benefit and an incentive to continue pursuing hockey, opportunities to earn direct financial reward through hockey – whether at the professional, semi-professional, or junior levels – are limited to the few hockey players that are most proficient.

Players may also pursue hockey as a means of gaining – or helping to gain – entry to postsecondary institutions through scholarships or financial credit. Several of the interviewees discussed the prospect of playing college or university hockey, and thought there was considerable opportunity to do so. Conway, Barsouth, and Ogilthorpe viewed Junior A as the

most conducive route to landing scholarship opportunities, and the former two actively pursued spots on Division 1 teams in the United States collegiate system. They saw this route as most prestigious, and even preferable to players who excel in academics as well as hockey – particularly if one does not make it to the professional ranks from the NCAA...

“Yeah, like, I was kind of screwed over in that regard, but the opportunity was more than there ... When you’re playing Junior A, there’s opportunities for a player to make a higher league if they’re good in Junior A, but there’s still a good chance of getting a full scholarship if you’re standing out But on the other hand, if you’re somebody who has good grades, and you’re somebody who’s good enough to play Major Junior, you could probably get a scholarship guaranteed ... Its the route I wanted to go. That was my end goal, just barriers got in the way. But in my experience, people playing Major Junior, there’s a lot of regret not playing Junior A and getting a scholarship because... Now there’s enough money in Major Junior to get financial aid for university, but getting [an NCAA Division 1] scholarship is like a once in a lifetime opportunity ... Playing Junior A and going the NCAA route would be more prestigious than if you played Major Junior and you’re not really going forward.”

Ogilthorpe noted, however, that youth are generally not steered towards college hockey so much as they are fed into Hockey Canada's own major junior system, which includes the OHL, the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL), or the Western Hockey League (WHL). He claims that youth are not adequately informed of the opportunities that exist to play hockey at school, the benefits of doing so, or the preparation required in pursuing these opportunities...

Honestly ... yes, BUT nobody knows how to go about it, and there's not a lot of people pushing people-, pushing kids in that direction, and getting the proper exposure that's required. So, I think its possible - very possible - but I think its needs to be-, that needs to be discussed early in life. And its like, you need to be doing things differently if that's a goal that you have, or something you want to work towards. Because its completely different. I know how to do it now, but I'm too fucking old to do it ... You have to get exposure right? You have to go to university camps, you have to contact coaches, you have to do all this shit. You have to write your SATs. You have to do all the stuff that not a lot of people do. But I think there's a lot of opportunity for it. You just have to look in the right places.

Hanson and Dunlop more actively pursued the OHL, for which they would have been eligible to earn financial credit towards their education. While not direct payment, hockey scholarships and financial credit for playing major junior gain players entry into postsecondary institutions where they may acquire the educational training and qualifications that in turn boost their competitive standing in the conventional labor market. Again, however, such opportunity is generally limited to those players with a certain degree of proficiency, and thus not available to the vast majority of players.

The data suggest that, for most players, the majority of opportunities to reap financial capital through prior involvement in hockey exist in the conventional labor market. Most of the interviewees described obtaining skills and qualities from hockey they perceived to be highly valued in the labor market – namely, those that pertain to teamwork, work ethic, goal-orientation, leadership, and accountability. They viewed their athletic backgrounds as providing

them with a significant advantage, and Ogilthorpe himself was hired to a large company on the express basis of his involvement in high-level hockey, as well as varsity rugby at university.

Interviewees were also confident they could contact their hockey connections to help them obtain jobs by referral, or in organizations to which they are connected or work for. Bareman obtained what he viewed as a career-job in a bank through a hockey connection, and Enkelberner claimed that every job he has held has stemmed from a hockey connection.

Barsouth, furthermore, summarizes how skills and networks in hockey are useful in obtaining opportunities in work and business:

"The real avenues, the real opportunities [that come with playing hockey aren't actually in hockey]. It's not so much hockey opportunities that are created, but like, the networks are huge. Like, I've got jobs, and when I had my own business, had customers from my hockey network. You know, hired guys from my hockey networks. Accepted to university ... You can be a bit of a below entry-level applicant but get in through your extra-curriculars like hockey."

Here, one may observe how the accumulation of social and cultural capital – specifically, through rich and extensive social networks, and the adoption of a middle-class ethic – indirectly help to stimulate the accumulation of material wealth and financial stability. In other words, individuals may draw on their relations, life skills, and dispositional characteristics as a means of profiting in the true sense of the word. It should be noted again that while team sports in general may provide such opportunities, the rather uniform demographic composition of ice hockey may render them more attainable than sports that are more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse.

Economic capital can also be accrued through involvement in hockey as a sort of broad industry, and opportunities exist to build a career on the periphery of actual gameplay. Interviewees cited jobs in arenas, jobs with teams, media and broadcast, and the hockey business as appealing employment possibilities; Bombay felt having knowledge and passion for the game would be advantageous in obtaining such prospective jobs. Enkelberner, who now works with a company that designs and manufactures skate sharpening and profiling machines, formerly worked for an OHL team, and prior to that, worked in a hockey-focused retail store. Dunlop not only owns his own hockey apparel company, but is also regularly employed at a specialty gym for young hockey players seeking sports-specific training. He claims the reason he was hired was because of his experience in high-level hockey, and his familiarity with the conditioning regimens that are best-suited to the sport. It is apparent that playing hockey, and maintaining passion and interest for the game may prompt players to stay involved in ways that align with other interests or educational training. For example, LeRoy, a former player currently enrolled in law school, expressed an interest in becoming a player agent – negotiating, structuring, and enforcing contracts on behalf of aspiring and established players. While such opportunities or prospects do not necessarily correlate to skill or level played, it is likely that higher-level players have had more exposure to the game, and thus a wider range of experiences. In theory, however, even non-hockey players may find themselves in hockey-related careers they perhaps never envisioned, as there appears to be a sizeable enough hockey market in Canada to sustain a hockey industry.

4.2.5 Interconnections Between the Four Forms of Capital

Bourdieu, in the development of his capital framework, made the assertion that the accumulation and investment of one form of capital is important in the accumulation of the other three forms. As such, it is worth examining how social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital function together in reciprocal relationships that confer benefits to individuals as they navigate social structures.

In the previous subsection, it became apparent that the accruelement of economic capital through general employment opportunities – extended through hockey – are aided by the possession of pre-existing social and cultural capital. As discussed, players form wide friendship groups with other players with whom they forge deep bonds, becoming acquainted, by extension with the close personal relations of those persons – including parents, siblings, and friends, as examples. Most of these parties that one encounters through their hockey network belong to the middle-to-upper-class, and are thus more likely to have the authority, autonomy, or influence to offer labor market opportunities. What is more, hockey is a sort of arena of socialization, wherein players are groomed to acquire and embrace the qualities, linguistic skills, attitudes, and behaviors favored by the hegemony. Enkelberner goes as far as to say that in Canada, one's being a hockey player almost implies they have been 'vetted' - that is, they are generalized as having good character, as well as persons that may attest to that character. Economic capital may also be tied to symbolic capital among professional players, in that it is the symbolic importance placed on hockey in Canada that generates a sustainable hockey industry. Additionally, the lavish success achieved by the pros may contribute to their popularity and idolization as public figures.

In addition to the ways cultural capital compliments the accumulation of economic capital, it may also be interlinked with symbolic and social capital. First, cultural capital and social capital are complementary in the sense that players may use linguistic cues to signify themselves to other hockey players. They engage in hockey-related banter and ribbing, and use a slang that appears to belong solely to a hockey subculture. In addition to being able to use hockey jargon as a means of communicating and forging friendships with other men and boys, players become accustomed to conversing with adults who belong to a middle-to-upper-class social group, and thus learn its customs of speech, behavior, dress, and worldview. Second, the cultural favourability of these modes is reinforced through the symbolic capital of professional hockey players, who exemplify a standard of emulation for younger players aspiring to one day become hockey role models themselves, thus reproducing Canadian hegemonic masculinity.

The ways in which social and symbolic capital function with one another are perhaps much more straightforward than the ways they interact with the other two forms. Simply put, as has been established in both the literature review and the data collection process, hockey is popular in Canada; by extension, proficiency as a hockey player confers respect, status, and popularity among peers. Hockey players may draw on this symbolic capital to expand friendship and social networks to include people who view them with honor, esteem, and admiration.

While the four forms of human capital include their own specific advantages, it is the way that they operate in concert with one another that enhances individuals' overall ability to navigate social structures such as education, peer groups, and the workplace. Individuals can gain opportunities to obtain economic capital through their friendship networks and cultural repertoire; their linguistic skills and modes of identification help them to make new social

connections. Lastly, the symbolic importance placed on hockey grants them a certain status or privilege, which instils confidence within and esteem among others. The collective or combined benefits presented by these interconnections of capital are perhaps what render the parental investment of each respondent 'worth it' – shaping their boys into socially-connected, young men who are admired and well-prepared for middle-class conceptions of success, and perceptions of good-character.

4.2.6 Counters to Capital

The literature cautioned against making the assumption that participation in hockey invariably leads to personal benefit, and the interview data seemed to corroborate the fact that hockey *may* impose on individuals in negative ways. In particular, implications to the family, mental and emotional wellness, school, and health were four themes that arose in discussions of counters to capital. Counters to capital could be described as events where hockey could come to encroach on people in ways that perhaps run in opposition to the accumulation of capital.

First, in one case, parental pressure created a degree of friction in the interviewee's relationship to his father. Ogilthorpe explains how his dad, though supportive, very much pushed him in hockey:

"They were always really supportive but I always felt highly judged and criticized by my dad in hockey games. And that was almost a negative experience... That was definitely a negative in the whole experience. I would say overall, like, yeah. I know he meant well with it, and he always wanted the best and always wanted to give me feedback, it just

never seemed that way at the time. So, I guess the support was there, but it was just kind of ... I don't know. Not taken well ... It was more of like, a pressure to play good so I wouldn't get chewed out at the end of the game. So I wouldn't disappoint them ... They expect you to go out and play the same every game, and it's just not realistic. Their expectations were unrealistic and my dad didn't play hockey, so he only compared to like, TV, or other players ... It wasn't a [pressure to earn a] return on investment of their money, it was more on their time."

While family strain did not appear to be a common implication of participation in hockey, nor was it always the case for interviewees to express feelings of parental pressure, it is foreseeable that a compromised parent-child relationship may affect youth in other areas of life.

In particular, youth who feel unable to reach parents' lofty expectations – or earn a return on their own personal investment – may experience feelings of inadequacy, which may in turn undermine their mental and emotional well-being. In fact, Ogilthorpe also spoke about the stress and anxiety he experiences when watching hockey, and how it elicits feelings of regret, resentment, insufficiency, and betrayal that he experienced as a hockey player...

"I was like "okay," trying to make the push for it – to play AAA – but that's kind of when I started to lose interest at the same time because of the politics. And like, I got fucked around a little bit so it kind of ruined it for me. (A: Yeah). It wasn't like I wasn't like, good enough I don't think. It was just the luck of the draw in that particular year. And I guess I was always really intimidated too - to try and play AAA ... I would have ... tried to play Junior rather than just going and playing [lower-tier team] ... I don't actually watch hockey anymore, just cause it gives me fucking anxiety. I get stressed out when I think

about all the shit ... Seeing people you know playing, and... it's just shit like that. Like, just thinking about all those times, and thinking about what I could have done differently, and possible outcomes, and all this shit. It kind of... yeah..."

Hanson did not specifically cite mental and emotional distress, nor did he specifically cite family strain, but alluded to how he was mentally impacted by feelings of failure in a pursuit he was so deeply invested in:

"Yeah, there was a lot of pressure all the way through, and just ... Going through the different levels, going through the draft year, going through playing at a level right before pro, and then not making it, and having to step your way back down was like, really tough."

When pressed about whether he felt pressured to earn a return on his family's investment, he replied:

"Yeah you do, because there's always the joke that they put in all the money when you're growing up and you've got to make it pro and pay them back. That was always... [Hanson gets choked up, recording pauses]... You always want to pay them back."

Barsouth and Ogilthorpe, moreover, claimed they became embittered by the politics in hockey to the point that they consciously avoided watching, playing, or discussing hockey for a number of years after their careers. In spite of this potential to invoke negative feelings, however, it is perhaps not possible to generalize the extent to which different individuals may be affected by pressure and failure, how they will cope with mental or emotional unease, and the degree to which it lessens or inhibits their human capital in other regards.

Those who were more involved in hockey growing up described the huge time sacrifice it entailed, and how, as a result of time spent attending to hockey obligations, their participation came to infringe on other areas of life – particularly, school. Both Hanson and Barsouth explained how pursuing major junior and junior hockey forced them to set education aside until their playing careers had run their course. They both felt as though they were behind in their lives because they had not attended a postsecondary institution until their early twenties, when many of their peers had begun to graduate and were embarking on careers. While Conway continues to play at university, he discussed how hockey came to affect him in high school:

“Because it’s so time-consuming, its hard to juggle hockey with school ... Having to do your homework at like, 11:00PM at night because you ... had to rush from Toronto to Mississauga for a practice. Then you don’t get home until 9, then you eat dinner, then you’re tired. You want to chill for a bit, but then you have to do homework at like 11:00 or 12:00.”

Since the higher levels of hockey involve such a considerable demand of time, individuals may feel as though they need to make compromises in other areas of life.

Players also discussed the ‘toll on the body’ hockey inflicts, though they more often framed their experiences with injury as barriers in escalating the competitive ranks of hockey rather than as negative implications that could affect them for the duration of their lives. Players cited ailments such as concussions and broken ankles, and Dunlop – who claims to have had five surgeries from hockey-related injuries – suffered a torn hip flexor that could cause him discomfort for the duration of his life. He himself attempted to conceal injuries – opting to treat

the injury with pain relief cream as opposed to surgery – and continued to train aggressively before his body could withstand such physical exertion, partly in an effort to reduce the label of being ‘injury-prone’ as he carried forward in hockey. Often times, players seemed to downplay injuries, ‘play through’ injuries, or cheat rehabilitation regimens. They expressed feelings of pressure to return early from injury because they knew they had a limited time frame to achieve their dream. Hanson articulated this near-sighted sense of sacrifice with the following: “What’s more important - health or playing sports? Cause hockey takes over you. You can’t choose your body over hockey, because your body basically is hockey.”

These instances and examples of ‘counter capital’ seemed to be few in number, and in all cases, were discussed secondarily to the benefits players perceived themselves to have reaped from hockey. It is interesting to note, however, that these potential inhibitors of capital appear more likely to occur at the upper echelons of hockey, where, ironically, the data has shown many of the benefits to be concentrated. Although this was a theme or pattern that emerged in the study, it is unlikely that the data obtained reached a sufficient point of saturation to draw conclusions about counters to personal capital. Nevertheless, it is apparent that over-investing one’s body, mind, and finances in hockey may pose adverse effects to their overall well-being.

4.3 Inequalities in Hockey

4.3.1 Inputs of Capital; Cost-Constraints and Politics

Vandermeerschen, Vos and Scheerder (2016) state that as a mechanism that can be used to confer advantage in society, it is important to create ‘level playing fields’ in creating

greater access to sports among less privileged children. Hockey is a sport that appears to require considerable 'inputs' of pre-established capital in order to participate, and thus derive the 'outputs' of capital or 'returns on investment' that the sport may offer. In addition, children may face barriers in hockey that may inhibit or prevent the growth of human capital. The most significant themes that were relayed by the interviewees in their discussions on constraints pertained to the costs and politics of hockey, as well as race- and sex-based discrimination. Given these constraints, it is the more privileged youth belonging to wealthier and more socially-connected families who appear to gain the most from hockey while the less-privileged youth are limited from reaping its benefits, thus helping to reproduce the stratification order and Canadian cultural hegemony.

Cost appeared to be the most significant constraint identified by the interviewees. Though only a small handful of them actually faced cost constraints *themselves*, all of the interviewees detailed the amount of money spent on participation in minor hockey throughout the years. Registration, ice rental, tournaments, travel expenses, and the replacement of frequently outgrown equipment are among the inherent costs in hockey that render the game largely out of reach to low-income families – particularly those with multiple children. LeRoy believed that without having parents with the capacity to finance participation, it is impossible for youth to play, or continue, in organized ice hockey – much unlike other sports that often times only require shoes, a ball, and a field, court or gymnasium. Barsouth, however, challenged this belief; when it came to a point that continuation in hockey became unaffordable to his family, he began working for his grandfather in order to fund his own participation. Nevertheless, he could not afford to play AAA until his draft year, and invested in

playing at this level for the sole purpose of being drafted to the OHL. He moreover explained how many of his hockey peers had the luxury of playing hockey twelve months per year versus his eight months, as he could never afford to play in off-season camps or summer leagues. Dunlop and Conway both recalled knowing immensely talented players who were financially unable to play AAA, and though Conway claims to have known players who were supported or granted concessions by coaches and clubs, he stated that a lot of youth who love the game – who don't necessarily play at the top tiers – are priced out of hockey altogether. Frost, for example, claimed that cost withheld him from higher competition. He also explained that, because his parents could not regularly afford new equipment, he felt disadvantaged, prone to injury, and stigmatized among his higher-classed teammates...

“My parents weren't able to get me new equipment. I bought used equipment ever since I started playing hockey, and it was embarrassing to go to the stores and see everybody, seeing their parents get them all new shit up and down every fucking year. It's frustrating. Makes you feel like “oh, I'll never be as good as them because they have all this,” and that's real to you. I remember I had this white fucking ‘Cooper’ Helmet, and everybody had these new ‘Bauer-,’ [expensive] hockey helmets.”

A response provided by Ogilthorpe in his own interview lends understanding as to why feelings of stigmatization may have seemed to be a reality to Frost...

“My parents weren't going out and buying me the next nice new fucking twig on the market or anything like that, but I always had good equipment. Like, I wasn't rocking a fucking ‘JOFA’ bucket or anything ... Didn't have the fucking blimp helmet.”

Time and transportation are further constraints that can perhaps be grouped under ‘cost;’ Frost mentioned how his parents did not have the occupational autonomy to take him to all of his hockey engagements, and Barsouth often needed to rely on rides from friends and teammates. In fact, Enkelberner cited owning a vehicle as critically important to families with children who play hockey. Thus, for children to be able to obtain all of the benefits that hockey may confer to them, their families must make a considerable investment of economic capital, which precludes a large number of children from participating and thriving in the sport. This may help to explain declines in rates of participation, and may furthermore raise questions regarding the extent to which hockey – a game limited to a small subset of the population – is our national sport in practice as opposed to merely in cultural discourse. It can be argued that hockey reflects the class structure and also helps to reproduce it; the children of the wealthy are more likely to succeed and therefore reap human capital from the sport, while children from low-income families are limited from even participating. Interviewees suggested sponsorship programs, government subsidization, and greater availability of second-hand or rental equipment as potential solutions worthy of consideration should Canada wish to maintain hockey’s place in culture.

The degree to which one’s family possesses economic capital, though perhaps less so than their social-connectedness, may also come to constrain youth progressing through minor hockey, as several of the interviewees expressed frustration with what are termed ‘the politics’ of hockey. These could be described as undercurrents of money, influence, or network connections that often come to limit or revoke their children’s opportunities in hockey. The presence and role of politics appeared to increase at higher skill levels and where more money

is involved; however, they seemed to be largely predicated on social capital. As fewer roster spots become available as kids progress up the competitive ranks in hockey, players perceived closed agreements and network affiliations to often times be factors that determined who makes – and doesn't make – the team, how much ice time players receive, and by extension, where they may end up next in their career or life trajectories. Dunlop described hockey as a cutthroat business where promises are often made but seldom kept. Both he and Ogilthorpe shared their experiences of being promised roster spots on elite teams, only to be passed over in tryouts for other players who were committed to, and relegated to lower levels. While it would be naïve to overlook the role of skill or money in these regards, politics appeared to be fuelled by internal affiliations and conflicts, as well as external interests. Conway explained in general terms how parents take the game too seriously when kids are young, and that a lot of kids quit hockey because of incessant “trash-talking and drama behind the scenes.”

Enkelberner, a goaltender, explained how his goalie partner's father would pester the coach to start his own son, and Dunlop explained how parents are often times coaches, or often times befriend coaches, resulting in the picking of favorites and the inequitable allocation of opportunity. In his case, this led to an acrimonious relationship between his father and his coach, and culminated in his being cut from the team. Two other informants similarly described politics as people 'getting too involved' with the team, and the lives and careers of others.

Barsouth, for one, stated the following:

Politically though... holy fuck. Where do I begin? I don't want to get too deep into it, but just on a broad analysis of it – just simply, people getting too involved with other people's hockey. In the sense that, they kind of have a say in what goes on in a player's

future. So, first of all, I was screwed over with scholarships. I had five good offers, but they restricted me from skating with those teams because they wanted to keep me for their team. That really constrained my future, just because they were selfish, right? And you know, I'm over it now, but it really constrained me in life. You know, I didn't have other things planned out because I thought, you know, a hockey scholarship was a sure thing. I thought maybe from there playing pro was maybe a thing. I felt it really wasn't my choice that it wasn't. And I'm not alone in that – I know lots of people in different situations, but essentially, it's someone else deciding their situation or their involvement... Looking back on it now, it wasn't maybe just so much the people that were looking out for themselves, it was maybe also a lack of people looking out for me, right? Like parenting. And then, its pretty easy to get taken advantage of if you don't have an authority figure on your side in the game, because there are parts of the game that are beautiful, and there are parts of the game that aren't... even if they are few and far between.

It is apparent that children from families with a less financial capacity or social-connectedness - in other words, economic and social capital - who participate in hockey may be limited in the game in absolute terms, as well as relative terms when compared to more-privileged children, who are better-positioned to thrive in hockey and thus reap its benefits to a greater degree. The costs and 'politics' of hockey function to allocate differential opportunity on the basis of pre-established capital. The implications are that hockey replicates and helps to reinforce the privilege and deprivation experienced by different class groups in society.

4.3.2 Other Constraints – Race/Ethnicity and Sex/Gender

It is apparent that racialized persons may experience constraint in hockey – most often in the form of verbal assault. While only one of the interviewees could be described as an identifiable racial minority, there appeared to be overwhelming consensus among the interviewees that hockey is a predominantly white sport with few visible minorities. Hanson exaggerated this fact, but articulates the lack of racial diversity by stating that minorities in hockey are ‘one in a million.’ In spite of their recognition of the disproportional whiteness of the game, interviewees were divided in terms of attributing reasons to this pattern. A couple of the interviewees became defensive when asked about racism in hockey, claiming that hockey people love the game, and by extension, have respect for anyone involved in it. Enkelberner had the following to say:

“Yeah when I hear the term fraternity, I think of exclusive sort of. For some reason that connotation comes to my mind. Fraternity, its like, exclusive - if you’re not a part of the fraternity then you don’t belong here. And I think that couldn’t be further from the truth with the hockey community. You go to school, and somebody doesn’t play hockey, its not like you’re gonna not talk to them. Its not like you don’t socialize or don’t become friends with people who don’t play hockey - that couldn’t be further from the truth. Hockey players are known for being pretty social people, pretty good at talking to people, pretty friendly people. So I wouldn’t say its a fraternity because that implies in my opinion that hockey players stick together and don’t give a shit at all. Thats not the case at all with any hockey player - a community is the best way to describe it the way I see it.”

One of these interviewees believed cost was a more significant deterrent for minorities in hockey than racial discrimination. This conception differed markedly from those who were more transparent and forthcoming about racism in the game, and stated outright that ethnic minorities would be taunted for their difference in a game comprised of people belonging to such a uniform group. LeRoy, Conway, and Barsouth all recalled witnessing the use of racial slurs directed at teammates; Conway and Barsouth felt this was more typical in game-play settings with opposing teams, with Barsouth stating the following:

“There was a black guy on our team and he got chirped – a lot. ... I know its probably changed a lot in the last few years, but ... if any other team had a player on it that stood out ... a lot of the time ... you find a way to get under people’s skin. Like, as close as teammates are, your opposition, you’re never close with them. I’ve never seen a sport where you hate your opponent as much as hockey.”

More neutral perceptions of racism in hockey suggested that perhaps racism does exist in hockey, though it is not purposeful; Dunlop, for example, analogized the tall African-American basketball player stereotype to hockey gatekeepers’ apparent but subconscious preference for rugged but mild-mannered Canadian boys. Some of the rhetoric used by informants supported this belief; one of the more defensive or apologist-minded informants stated: “you see a black person on the ice and its not weird anymore.” Another interviewee’s marveled insistence that his black teammate at the AAA level was “not whitewashed,” moreover, provides insight as to how, generally, black hockey players are compelled to conform to white middle-class standards of conduct and disposition. While joking about the adversarial nature of opposing hockey teams and how a dinner between two clubs would likely result in the flipping of dining room tables,

Barsouth quipped that it would likely be each team's black player responsible – indicating a prejudicial perception of their aggression, and implying tokenism for their place in hockey. It was interesting that all of the interviewees mentioned only African-Americans when responding to questions on racism and racial discrimination in hockey; their being by-far the most-represented racialized group apart from Whites may attest to just how poorly other racialized groups are represented. The data suggest this may be a result of hockey's self-denial of and ignorance to the experiences of racialized players, the difficulty of policing more overt racism, or the subconscious dismissal of ethnic players. Increasing the number of racialized persons in management, coaching, scouting, and outreach, and continuing the endorsement of ethnic diversity at the professional level may help to facilitate a trickle-down effect whereby a safer and more welcoming environment is created for racialized youth who wish to play, and grow, from hockey.

The final constraint to be discussed pertains to sex and gender; specifically, interviewees were asked about their experiences playing with sexual minorities, and whether or not these individuals are welcomed in the game. Four of the ten interviewees stated outright that homosexuality would be a very complex issue in hockey, with its tolerance and its effect on the locker room dynamic being the primary explanations cited for this sentiment. Barsouth explains that hockey, as welcoming as it purports to be, has an 'old-school' or traditionalist mentality; players of alternate masculinities – namely homosexual men and transgendered persons – would be teased in the best of cases, and in the worst of cases, be driven to leave teams, he insists. Ogilthorpe, for example, stated his open-mindedness using rhetoric that suggests his being otherwise...

“Like, I don’t give a shit what they have between their legs man. If they’re a good hockey player... I mean, I think it’s weird as fuck, and it would be hard to like... What do you do? (Long pause). I think everyone’s welcome, I think the issue would be ‘What change room do you change in?’ That would be the biggest issue there is. Which team do you play for? Do you play for the boys’ league or the girls’ league? Those are more of the issues. It’s not like you can’t play hockey because you got your dick cut off, or got your dick flipped inside out, like... But I do think there would definitely be some hard boundaries, and that would definitely be something very complex.”

Moreover, in settings where teammates bond with one another due in part to masculine rhetoric and, ironically, as mentioned by a couple of the interviewees, constant exposure to one another’s phallic parts, qualities such as shyness, introversion, and non-masculinity are met with suspicion. The fact that none of the interviewees reported playing with a sexual minority is perhaps attributable to these explanations of the complexity of homosexuality in hockey. As previously discussed, hockey is a device and arena, by which and wherein boys and men position themselves over femininities and alternative masculinities; its abstract connection to symbolic capital as a source of Canadian masculine pride and recognition leaves women and men perceived as less-masculine to those men who play the game and vie to assert their dominance. In other words, hockey has become a sort of heteronormative institution in Canadian society. While girls’ hockey leagues have emerged as an alternate channel for women’s participation, far less progress has been made for sexual minorities. It could also be argued that the deep-seeded nature of gender- and sex-based constraints bar women and men

of alternative masculinities from reaping hockey-related benefits to an even greater degree than race- and ethnicity-based constraints.

It is clear that not all youth are granted with equal access to hockey as a facilitator of monetary, social, dispositional, and symbolic benefit, and that inequalities in hockey may reflect and help reinforce inequalities in the stratification order. Specifically, boys from middle- to upper-class families are best-positioned to receive returns on investment from their inputs of capital, while children from poorer and less-connected families, racialized children, and children who deviate from traditional gender norms are marginalized. While the hockey community may not expressly endorse such marginalization, and in cases, actively attempts to counter it, the fact remains that many of these constraints have come to be embedded within the structure and fabric of the sport.

4.3.3 Opportunity

While some individuals faced limitations in certain aspects of their youth hockey experiences – or were able to relay limitations faced by teammates and others – others were provided with considerable opportunity to thrive in hockey. Themes arising that pertained to opportunities described by the participants included various forms of parental support, including financial and moral support, or the sharing of skills, and wisdom gained through hockey lineage. These opportunities can be said to involve the habitus, and investments of parents' economic and cultural capital.

When asked about what kinds of opportunities helped throughout their minor hockey careers, informants most often spoke about the money their parents spent on equipment and

instruction outside of team budgets and registration fees. Conway, for example, explained how, growing up, he always had the best sticks, skates and gloves, and Enkelberner explained how his parents were supporting of his wanting to play goaltender despite its likely being the most expensive position. He added that his father would pay for special one-on-one sessions and clinics that cost over \$100 per hour of instruction. A handful of the other interviewees also attended hockey schools where they were able to further develop their skills. Both Conway and Hanson's parents invested in enhancing their stock for the OHL draft by placing their kids in all-star and prospect camps and tournaments intended to gain increased scouting exposure. Barsouth, who excelled in hockey without such opportunities, summarized the role parents play in providing their children with advantage:

"Honestly, it's simple. Like, if your parents are willing to commit to you and your parents have the funds to put you in good leagues and summer hockey and training and stuff like that, their role is more than yours as a player yourself. A lot of players are naturally gifted, and the only things they have to do to get better is the summer hockey and the dry-land training, so the parents are huge in terms of the financial commitments..."

Thus, it is the children from families with the greatest financial capacity who are best-prepared to succeed in hockey and position themselves to earn high returns on their capital investments.

Players also spoke to a variety of advantages that were collectively indicative of the ways hockey lineage – or multi-generational participation in hockey – in the family could provide advantage. Dunlop and Hanson both spoke of their fathers as avid hockey fans; the former explains how he and his father have maintained a lifelong ritual of watching each Toronto Maple Leafs game together, where he would absorb wisdom and passion for the game.

Furthermore, however, he reminisced on childhood memories of his father helping him to develop his skills by running drills on an outdoor rink he had built in the backyard. Youth often become drawn to hockey through their habitus and the cultural interests they acquire in the family. In Canada, where hockey confers an array of benefits that create advantage in navigating the stratification order, it may act as a means by which fathers immerse their sons in a generational rite of passage that helps to reproduce success by white middle-class standards. When passion and proficiency are learned in the family, youth may be better prepared to thrive in hockey and exploit it as a facilitator of human capital.

In essence, habitus and inputs of capital may be important factors in the acquisition of further capital. Pre-existing cultural interests and economic capital specifically may act as a stimulus for enjoying and developing in hockey. Interestingly, however, some informants downplayed the extent to which their opportunities and their privilege contributed to their success in hockey, and framed this success in terms of personal or family agency rather than freedom from constraint.

5. Discussion

The study sought to explore the social benefits of participation in organized youth ice hockey in Canada by applying Pierre Bourdieu's capital framework. Specifically, the framework explored the accumulation of social networks, the adoption of styles and dispositions, the feelings of honor or prestige that accompany participation in a national pastime, and potential economic capital that can be accrued. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with former youth hockey players who are now adults, and could speak to experiences in youth hockey, the opportunities they enjoyed, and the constraints they faced. Following data collection, data were coded and analyzed according to themes derived from Bourdieu's framework. The current section will begin with a summary of the findings, and will interpret these findings within the context of the existing literature and Bourdesian capital theory. Next, some important strengths and weaknesses in the research are identified before proceeding to a discussion of future policy, program, and research initiatives.

5.1 Summarizing and Interpreting the Results

The literature discussed the significance of hockey in Canadian culture and its prominence on the international stage, and the data revealed that youth hockey players very much identify with hockey, the NHL, and 'Team Canada.' Interviewees saw themselves as being agents of the country's cultural preoccupation, and participating in a natural rite of passage wherein boys play hockey. Interviewee responses suggested that a large part of what appeared to fuel players' lifelong passion was the early belief that they will someday belong among their NHL

heroes, and be celebrated Canadian icons themselves. This romanticized view fostered an admiration for and appreciation of the game that endured even after players grasped the reality of the distance of the NHL; the data showed that, after all, players play 'just to play' - to relish and share in the experience they all fantasized about as young boys.

There is another dimension at play, however; hockey also constitutes an arena of socialization in hegemonic masculinity and Canadians' predominant conception of manhood. The literature explains how the competitive nature of sports are particularly conducive to the shaping of masculine identities (English, 2017). As the interviews revealed, through gameplay, hockey conditions boys to be tough, mean, and aggressive; through the locker room, they internalize the acceptability of asserting their dominance over women and men perceived as weaker. Moreover, the literature discusses how masculinities may vary across temporal and spatial contexts (Courtenay, 2000); through the cultural endorsement of hockey and the hockey community in Canada, boys are largely encouraged to replicate their models. Moreover, their white and middle-to-upper-class statuses help to reproduce the hegemonic masculinity in Canadian society. Though not all boys play hockey, it nevertheless serves as a frame of reference for Canadian boys as it constitutes a sort of cultural masculine ideal (Connel & Messerschmidt, 2005; Nixon, 1976).

In a sense, then, hockey is a sort of 'field.' Bourdieu claimed that the field is a type of competitive marketplace where agents position themselves among a network of important relations, whom in this case are other boys in the perceived masculine order (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). People may become drawn to a field - in this case, hockey - through their habitus, which is inherited through the family as well as acquired through

positions in social structures (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Most players described being motivated to play through their parents' desire to involve them in an extra-curricular activity, or hockey specifically, which indicates the importance of the habitus in carrying forward a hockey lineage. This is where families invest and children accumulate various forms of capital as a means of reaffirming already privileged positions in Canadian society. The forms identified as most significant by Bourdieu - and utilized in the framework of the research at hand - include social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu also explained how the investment in one of these forms could earn the individual a return on this investment in terms of the other three forms (Bourdieu, 1986).

Social capital appeared to be the most significant form of capital that was accrued by the informants in the study. Players spoke of enduring, and multiplying friendship networks they formed, and the richness of their relationships with not only their teammates, but also members of their teammates' social networks. Interviewees saw the interconnections of these networks as constituting a 'hockey community.' Social capital related to economic capital in that these friendship networks and the greater hockey community could be drawn upon to gain indirect personal profits such as job opportunities. Moreover, players felt they could draw upon both their cultural capital and symbolic capital - their dispositions, outward identifiers, popularity, and confidence - to reap further social capital. These could include new hockey or non-hockey friends, or even romantic relations, which create further channels for information sharing, support, trust and a sense of mutual obligation, which were important indicators of social capital identified in the literature. It could be argued that hockey fostered a small-to-moderate degree of community involvement among the participants, however, it appeared

that the sport was more conducive to social capital pertaining to personal profit rather than civic involvement. The literature finds that sports are generally conducive to the accumulation of social capital, however, the responses of interviewees made it apparent that the physical dimension, the shared space of the locker room, and role adoption are somewhat unique aspects of hockey that may enhance friendships and accordingly facilitate a higher degree of social capital than other sports (Findlay & Coplan, 2008; Bailey, 2005). This gives rise to a main theme in the study; in essence, the modes of hegemonic masculinity that boys come to familiarize themselves with through their participation in hockey are useful in fraternizing with one another in an exclusive fashion.

The accumulation of social capital can be said to involve a certain effort on the part of the individual, which implies that, in addition to mere resource exchange, they must adopt the cultural customs of the network of relations in the field (Bourdieu, 1986). This is the case irrespective of whether they consciously seek to belong among that group (Bourdieu, 1986). As such, players undergo processes of calculated investment that help them to master cultural forms and assimilate within the middle-to-upper-class circles that typify the hockey community (Bourdieu, 1986). In this sense, they either deliberately or inadvertently accumulate cultural capital as they learn to fraternize with masculine peers in the hockey community, respect coaches as authority figures, and act to middle-class standards of conduct and appearance when among the public at large. First, players learned to adopt linguistic styles and behaviors that are conducive to hegemonic masculinity, thus enabling them to be accepted among other men who conform to traditional masculine ideals. Again, here we observe the interplay of cultural and social capital.

Second, cultural capital could interconnect with economic capital in that coaches seemed to instil professional or work-oriented attitudes and skills. Players seemed to embrace and take pride in their possessing these skills, which they also understood as being important in producing personal success by middle-class standards. Accordingly, on a third point, players become wise to the ways they must carry themselves in the public, and become proficient in conveying themselves as well-mannered and well-dressed in spite of their - at times - obscene masculine behavior and rhetoric. While Allain (2011) makes this observation in the literature, she does not draw attention to the ways these contradictory modes of behaviour confer different personal advantages in different contexts. It should also be noted that hockey organizations and teams use the team concept – such as being a bearer of a team crest – as a self-regulatory social control measure to compel players to conform to rules and regulations that are in effect, as well as more general social norms. While the accumulation of cultural capital as it pertains to skills, attitudes, linguistic styles, and appearance may not necessarily be specific to hockey when compared to other sports, nor does the game contain any unique mechanisms that imparts these qualities, the predominantly middle-to-upper-class demographic that characterizes hockey should be considered when gauging the ways hockey facilitates cultural capital. Next to social capital, cultural capital appeared to be the form that hockey players accrued to the greatest extent.

Symbolic capital was described by Bourdieu as the possession of honor and prestige, as well as the authority of recognition in society (Bourdieu, 1986). Canada's cultural fixation on hockey is important in understanding the ways symbolic capital is formed, as well as the ways this form of capital is linked to the other forms. Specifically, interviewees described NHL players

as heroes, celebrities, and national icons. Following in their footsteps as hockey players, interviewees described the admiration they had for their idols, and derived a sense of connectedness to a Canadian national identity from emulating them. Similar to the pros, some of the informants described being afforded popularity and special privilege due to their being proficient hockey players; much in the way that they paid respect to their role models, their peers and other relations often times cast admiration and praise upon them. This translated into a subjective sense of pride and confidence. The literature described athletic ability as generally being a significant predictor of popularity among youth (Buchanan, Blankenbaker, & Cotton, 1976); nevertheless, hockey in Canada appears to produce symbolic capital by virtue of its firm entrenchment in the fabric of national culture. The data showed that individuals derive status and recognition from being *hockey players* specifically more so than they derive status and recognition from being *athletes* in general. This renders hockey unique compared to other sports in the symbolic capital it produces.

Finally, economic capital was defined by Bourdieu as financial stability and material wealth (Bourdieu, 1986). This form could be reaped directly through professional salaries, allowances at the Major Junior level, and 'under-the-table' payments at the Provincial Junior level. Moreover, players could earn scholarships or financial credit towards their post-secondary education by playing in Provincial Junior and Major Junior, respectively. This provides them with the opportunity to receive educational training as a means of enhancing their labour market appeal, thus providing them with the tools to reap further economic capital. Indirectly, players described obtaining economic capital from jobs through hockey connections, and having opportunities to work in a broad hockey industry. Additionally, children may earn

opportunities in the general labor market by way of their cultural capital; their behaviors, dispositions, attitudes, life skills, interests, appearances, and linguistic skills were viewed as highly valuable in the workplace by the interviewees. Thus, through networks, skills, and a handful of other qualities, economic capital is highly extractable from social and cultural capital. While salaries, payment, scholarships and financial credit are limited to the few most proficient players, the ability to forge connections and develop professional skills and dispositions is universal to all participants. Therefore, while direct economic capital is not commonly available to all players - as are social and cultural capital - its indirect forms, such as labor market opportunities, remain more readily available to the general population of players than symbolic capital, which, for the most part, is allocated to those with a relatively high degree of skill.

As mentioned, these four forms of capital interrelate to confer advantage upon the individual as they navigate social structures - particularly, the labor market and the class structure. Individuals who formerly played youth hockey in Canada may cultivate this advantage by virtue of social networks, in which they learn the styles of the middle-class and the masculine hegemony. In addition to general feelings of connectedness or belongingness to Canadian society and culture, hockey players may also achieve status and economic success. Clearly, there is a considerable degree of human capital and potential social advantage that accompanies playing youth hockey in Canada. In spite of this fact, however, participation in hockey and the accumulation of capital are not perfectly related to one another: the interview data partially supported the literature on the negative implications of hockey - specifically as it pertained to physical and emotional injury. Two of the interviewees described suffering grueling injuries that could have lingering effects on their physical ability and overall health

status. Interestingly, interviewees often framed these injuries as more of a detriment to their progression through hockey than as a detriment to well-being. Many players explained how they aggravated injuries trying to 'play through' previous ones, or incurred new injuries by cheating training programs and returning to gameplay before being full healthy. Here, one may observe the undercurrents of hegemonic masculinity at work; Canadian boys who play the game consciously or subconsciously use hockey to shape their sense of masculine identity or gain social advantage, often flying in the face of their health and well-being in doing so. This aligns with Courtenay's position that men often times define themselves against beliefs and behaviors that promote health (2000).

Secondary foci of this study were the inequalities surrounding the game of hockey, including cost-, politics-, race-, and gender- based constraint. Only two of the interviewees could speak personally to the massive financial commitments participation in hockey placed on their families, which mirrors the overwhelming middle-to-upper class composition of the sport at the organized and competitive level. Among an array of others, equipment costs and registration fees were among the most commonly mentioned financial burdens associated with hockey. Less a matter of socioeconomic status, and perhaps more a matter of interpersonal associations, the politics in hockey were also said to be a constraining factor in one's development. Similar to their attestation to cost constraints, none of the participants could speak first-hand about experiences with racism as all are white – save for one ethnic minority who is light-skinned. Participants varied in the degree to which they recognized racism in hockey, or their witnessing and knowledge of it. Regardless of whether overt racial bullying remains present in youth hockey, few racialized persons hold positions of authority in the sport.

White gatekeepers, moreover, may hold conscious or subconscious stereotypes about players of different racial/ethnic statuses, as well as hold implicit biases in favour of White-Canadian players who have historically filled team rosters and populated the hockey community (Lorenz & Murray, 2014). The interviews indicated that men of alternative masculinities and sexual minorities are not so much overlooked as much as they are altogether invisible or absent from hockey. Rhetoric in several of the responses provided an indication as to why such individuals may not be accepted or feel comfortable in a setting that shapes, and is shaped by, hegemonic masculinity. Players purported to be welcoming of people of alternate sexual orientations and sexualities, but were not wise to the fact that the masculine domain of hockey serves as a major deterrent to such persons' participation, or a participant's willingness to identify as a sexual minority. The implication of these various inequalities is that not all individuals have the same access to the various forms of capital hockey provides, on the basis of position in the social structure and their capacity to invest resources. The disparities in these capacities mean that not all children can confer the previously identified social benefits of sport to the same degree; it is boys from white, middle-to-upper class families that have the most opportunity to *thrive in* sports, and by extension, the most opportunity to *thrive from* sports. In this sense, privilege becomes generationally reproduced. In identifying opportunities that helped them to have success in hockey, none of the interviewees expressly mentioned structural positions, such as their belonging to a middle-class family. Nevertheless, they listed a number of specific opportunities that are by-products of such factors - such as having the financial means to enrol in private instruction sessions. Interestingly, players downplayed the extent to which these opportunities and their privilege provided them with an edge over other players, and often

framed their relative success in terms of personal agency. Despite their cognizance of the various constraints potentially faced by other players, and their acknowledgement that they had the fortune to partake in supplemental training, many of the interviewees saw themselves as being more dedicated to the game of hockey, and harder-working than their peers. The general belief appeared to be that regardless of varying levels of opportunity and constraint faced by different players, any one player could succeed in hockey if they worked hard enough. Ignorance to privilege was also notably apparent in the widespread belief among interviewees that hockey is played by the majority of people.

In essence, the research finds that hockey - as a sort of field in Canadian cultural fabric - is a device that can be used by mostly middle-to-upper-class boys in strengthening their social networks, their normative behavioural and dispositional qualities, their status and sense of belongingness to Canadian society, and their actual wealth or economic potential. Furthermore, the accumulation of one of these various forms of personal benefit are mutually efficacious in the accumulation of the other three forms. By allowing them to profit in such ways, families that immerse their children into hockey are either consciously or subconsciously providing their children with advantages in their preparation for adult life - particularly, the middle-to-upper-class professional domain that, for the most part, their families belong to.

5.2 Strengths and Limitations

A primary strength of the study was its ability to contribute to existing literature on capital and the sociology of sport through its focus on former youth hockey players in Canada and the ways they draw personal benefit from their participation in this specific activity. The

findings may contribute to research on gender and culture, more generally. The study illustrates the ways boys internalize hegemonic masculinity through participation in sport, as well as underscores the ways cultural context may aid in the formation of various forms of capital.

A second major strength of the research was the richness of the data that enabled these observations on culture and gender to be drawn. The responses provided by interviewees were seen as open, honest, and transparent, which lent credibility and authenticity to the data, and credible insight into the ways hockey players interact with one another. Coupled with guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, the interviewer's 'insider status' allowed for candid and uncensored responses from informants that may not have been as forthcoming with an 'outsider'. As a former hockey player, the interviewer fostered a level of trust and open communication that encouraged interviewees to present their true selves and disclose subject matter they may have been uncomfortable sharing with a researcher who does not understand their subculture. This may also have been attributable to the sampling technique used, as study participants were second-degree connections to the researcher - in other words, friends of friends whom may have had a pre-existing trust on the basis of mutual friendship.

This last point, while a strength, also posed somewhat of a limitation. Drawing from people connected to the co-investigator's own personal network created a degree of uniformity in the study sample. As such, many of the players that were recruited played hockey at a similar tier at the rep-competitive levels, largely omitting the experiences of lower-level house league players. Nevertheless, all of the participants had some experience at the house league level at some point in their lives - even if that was at a relatively young age. Furthermore, while the sample was more or less reflective of the composition of the hockey community

demographically - mostly white, middle-to-upper-class men in their late teens to late twenties - it may have been useful to gain a larger degree of diversity in the sample as a means of speaking to a broader range of experiences.

5.3 Future Directions

As an exploratory study, the research presented several prospects for future research. The research design and the analytical framework could be used to conduct similar studies that assesses the ways individuals derive capital through sport. For example, it may be worth exploring how participation in different sports in a given cultural context may facilitate the accumulation of capital. Might baseball players in the Dominican Republic, football players in the United Kingdom, or street-basketball players in the American ghettos accumulate social capital in the way that hockey-playing boys in Canada do? Exploring this may allow researchers to further speak to the ways culture interacts with the social structure, and the ways children can benefit by participation in a given sport within a given cultural context. It may be interesting to understand the ways other sports may or may not involve hegemonic masculinity, and how individuals may benefit even if they do not achieve the professional ranks.

This particular study, moreover, looked solely at the ways boys accrued capital through hockey; it may provide valuable insight to explore how girls may or may not accrue capital through their own participation. The value of such a study would lie in its ability to further speak to the ways gender norms function in sport and society; unlike the ways boys confer benefit from conforming to traditional masculinity, girls may experience different consequences from their participation in hockey - a sport which may constitute a deviation

from traditional notions of femininity. Researchers with a more general interest in gender, moreover, might find such rich and transparent interview data useful in drawing their own conclusions on masculinities.

Programs such as Canadian Tire's 'The First Shift' - which seeks to assist 'new-to-hockey' families through affordable access and safe play - are promising first steps in ensuring that hockey is made more widely available to Canadian youth as a whole ("The First Shift," n.d.). However, transportation and a lack of financial means for continuity - despite the implementation of a 'Transition Program' - may remain persistent family-level issues that would prove difficult for the program to address in practical and logistical terms. Nevertheless, Canadian Tire is one of a handful of corporations that are active in providing sports grants to Canadian youth through their 'Jumpstart' program ("Jumpstart," n.d.). The program allows individual families - in addition to community-level organizations - to apply for funding to assist in enrolling their children in sports, such that their children's independent needs are met ("Jumpstart," n.d.). Hockey is among one of the many sports covered by the program, which generally caters to families living below the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) ("Jumpstart," n.d.).

This social responsibility initiative by a company that reaps profits from the hockey market raises the question as to what extent the Canadian and Ontario governments should play a role in ensuring their youth have access to sport as a means of healthy development, social opportunities, and personal well-being - especially as such avid promoters of hockey. While both the Federal government and the Provincial government of Ontario do in fact distribute grants, these are provided primarily to community-level organizations as opposed to individual families with tailored needs ("Other Funding Programs," 2017). In only a small

number of cases, highly proficient athletes may be sponsored to compete in national and international competition, however, in hockey, such proficiency cannot cultivate without considerable prior investment, often times starting quite early in a child's life (Government of Canada 2017). Although this question remains difficult given that costs for hockey are in the tens of thousands of dollars per player at the higher levels and age groups, the implementation of government grants and subsidies for sports are a policy recommendation that perhaps warrants discussion.

5.4 Conclusion

The research goals of the study were to explore the ways sport - particularly, organized ice hockey in Canada - may be undertaken as a means of conferring advantage in society, as well as the ways the game may manifest inequalities through the different opportunities and constraints that exist for players. The use of Pierre Bourdieu's human capital framework proved useful in exploring how children may reap social, cultural, symbolic, and economic profit through their participation in hockey, as well as the factors that may create disparities in the allocation of these benefits. Data were obtained through ten semi-structured interviews with former youth players, and were coded using the thematic method. Ultimately, these participants communicated that the value they placed in hockey went well beyond the degree to which they saw it as a health behavior; they credited the sport with their growth and maturation into men, and with providing them with the potential to thrive in Canadian society. While the vast majority of men will never star in the NHL, hockey leaves them well-prepared to make the 'Big Leagues' in other domains of life.

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Appendices**Appendix A – Recruitment Poster****PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH ON YOUTH ICE HOCKEY**

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study on the potential benefits of participation in youth ice hockey. Participants must be former minor hockey players, born in the years 1980 to 1999.

If you are interested and agree to participate you would be asked to participate in one sixty to ninety-minute interview session about your experiences in youth hockey. You will be asked about the benefits of your participation, as well as opportunities you may have had and constraints you may have faced during your time as a player.

There will be no compensation for your participation in the study.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study,

Appendix B – Letter of Information and Consent Form (Verbal)**Letter of Information and Consent**

Project Title: Opportunity, Constraint, and Capital in Canadian Ice Hockey

1. Invitation to Participate

You have been invited to participate in a research that seeks to explore various benefits of participation in amateur ice hockey in Canada.

2. Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways youth may benefit from participation in ice hockey in a Canadian context. In addition to economic benefits, the study is particularly interested in the formation of friend groups and social networks, a sense of connectivity to Canadian national identity, and the adoption of behaviors and dispositions that appear to be culturally favorable. By drawing from the subjective insights of former youth hockey players, this research aims to uncover what perceived benefits the sport provides for children as they mature, as well as some of the opportunities they gain and the constraints they face. The study hopes to reach policymakers and program leaders in order to facilitate the creation of more widespread and equitable youth leagues, alternate channels of participation, and subsidization initiatives.

3. How long will you be in this study?

You will be asked to participate in one interview that will last sixty to ninety minutes.

4. What are the study procedures?

Should you be a willing participant, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. In other words, the interviewer will ask you questions about your experiences in hockey, and try to elicit elaborative prompts where necessary. Please note that interviews are subject to audio-recording, and that willingness to be recorded is required for your participation in the study.

Questions that will be asked pertain to one's level of involvement in youth ice hockey, the reasons for playing, the advantages and benefits it has provided, and the obstacles one faces during their participation. Interviews will be conducted at a location preferred by you, offered by way of video chat that would allow for interpersonal communication across different locales. Should you opt to be interviewed via video chat, you will be asked to provide verbal consent during the interview with the co-investigator.

5. What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?

There are no anticipated risks and harms of participation in the study, and measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

6. What are the benefits of participating in this study?

While the study offers no immediate benefits or tangible incentives, it provides an opportunity to lend insights to policymakers and program leaders in minor hockey circles. The research may help program leaders to develop a higher degree of opportunity for a wider variety of youth hockey players.

7. Can participants choose to leave the study?

You may withdraw from the study at any time by choosing to no longer participate in an interview, or if the interview has been completed, you may e-mail the co-investigator and request that all information collected about you be discarded. You will receive confirmation upon action.

8. How will participants' information be kept confidential?

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to investigator and co-investigator of the study. Paper data will be handled by the co-investigator and stored in their office at the university. These stored notes or documentation will be typed or scanned onto a computer, and paper copies will be subsequently shredded. All electronic data, including digital reproductions of

paper data, will be stored on a private and secure external hard drive belonging to the co-investigator. These data will be made accessible to both the co-investigator and the principal investigator. Data records with identifiable information will be kept for seven years in accordance with Western University policy. After seven years, electronic data will be deleted from the hard drive on which it is stored.

Participants are further encouraged to select a pseudonym to maintain their confidentiality – otherwise, the researcher will select one on their behalf. Pseudonyms will be used to accompany quotes in the thesis so that the person providing the quote can maintain their confidentiality by remaining unidentifiable.

If data collected during the project is required to be communicated to law enforcement, the co-investigator has an obligation to do so.

Lastly, please note that representatives of 'The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board' may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

9. Are participants compensated to be in this study?

There is no monetary or tangible compensation for this study.

10. What are the rights of participants?

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you do not waive any legal rights by providing your verbal consent. You may exercise your own discretion or right to privacy by refusing to answer individual questions, relinquishing answers to questions, or to withdrawing from the study at any time. Withdrawal may be initiated by simply choosing not to participate in an interview. If the interview has been completed, withdrawal may be initiated by e-mailing the co-investigator and stating a desire for your data to be removed from the research.

Moreover, you will be kept informed of any new information obtained during the study that might affect your continued participation.

11. Whom do participants contact for questions?

If you require any further information regarding this research project or your

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.



Verbal Consent Form

Project Title: Opportunity, Constraint, and Capital in Canadian Ice Hockey

Do you confirm that you have read the Letter of Information [or the Letter of Information has been read to you] and have had all questions answered to your satisfaction?

YES NO

Do you agree to participate in this research?

YES NO

Do you consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research?

YES NO

.....
Person obtaining consent

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C – Letter of Information and Consent Form (Written)**Letter of Information and Consent**

Project Title: Opportunity, Constraint, and Capital in Canadian Ice Hockey

1. Invitation to Participate

You have been invited to participate in a research that seeks to explore various benefits of participation in amateur ice hockey in Canada.

2. Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways youth may benefit from participation in ice hockey in a Canadian context. In addition to economic benefits, the study is particularly interested in the formation of friend groups and social networks, a sense of connectivity to Canadian national identity, and the adoption of behaviors and dispositions that appear to be culturally favorable. By drawing from the subjective insights of former youth hockey players, this research aims to uncover what perceived benefits the sport provides for children as they mature, as well as some of the opportunities they gain and the constraints they face. The study hopes to reach policymakers and program leaders in order to facilitate the creation of more widespread and equitable youth leagues, alternate channels of participation, and subsidization initiatives.

3. How long will you be in this study?

You will be asked to participate in one interview that will last sixty to ninety minutes.

4. What are the study procedures?

Should you be a willing participant, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. In other words, the interviewer will ask you questions about your experiences in hockey, and try to elicit elaborative prompts where necessary. Please note that interviews are subject to audio-recording, and that willingness to be recorded is required for your participation in the study.

Questions that will be asked pertain to one's level of involvement in youth ice hockey, the reasons for playing, the advantages and benefits it has provided, and the obstacles one faces during their participation. Interviews will be conducted at a location preferred by you, offered face-to-face in a public setting. For face-to-face interviews, you will be asked to provide written consent during the interview with the co-investigator.

5. What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?

There are no anticipated risks and harms of participation in the study, and measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

6. What are the benefits of participating in this study?

While the study offers no immediate benefits or tangible incentives, it provides an opportunity to lend insights to policymakers and program leaders in minor hockey circles. The research may help program leaders to develop a higher degree of opportunity for a wider variety of youth hockey players.

7. Can participants choose to leave the study?

You may withdraw from the study at any time by choosing to no longer participate in an interview, or if the interview has been completed, you may e-mail the co-investigator and request that all information collected about you be discarded. You will receive confirmation upon action.

8. How will participants' information be kept confidential?

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to investigator and co-investigator of the study. Paper data will be handled by the co-investigator and stored in their office at the university. These stored notes or documentation will be typed or scanned onto a computer, and paper copies will be subsequently shredded. All electronic data, including digital reproductions of paper data, will be stored on a private and secure external hard drive belonging

to the co-investigator. These data will be made accessible to both the co-investigator and the principal investigator. Data records with identifiable information will be kept for seven years in accordance with Western University policy. After seven years, electronic data will be deleted from the hard drive on which it is stored.

Participants are further encouraged to select a pseudonym to maintain their confidentiality – otherwise, the researcher will select one on their behalf. Pseudonyms will be used to accompany quotes in the thesis so that the person providing the quote can maintain their confidentiality by remaining unidentifiable.

If data collected during the project is required to be communicated to law enforcement, the co-investigator has an obligation to do so.

Lastly, please note that representatives of 'The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board' may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

9. Are participants compensated to be in this study?

There is no monetary or tangible compensation for this study.

10. What are the rights of participants?

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you do not waive any legal rights by signing this consent form. You may exercise your own discretion or right to privacy by refusing to answer individual questions, relinquishing answers to questions, or to withdrawing from the study at any time. Withdrawal may be initiated by simply choosing not to participate in an interview. If the interview has been completed, withdrawal may be initiated by e-mailing the co-investigator and stating a desire for your data to be removed from the research.

Moreover, you will be kept informed of any new information obtained during the study that might affect your continued participation.

11. Whom do participants contact for questions?

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.



Written Consent Form

Project Title: Opportunity, Constraint, and Capital in Canadian Ice Hockey

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research: YES NO

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

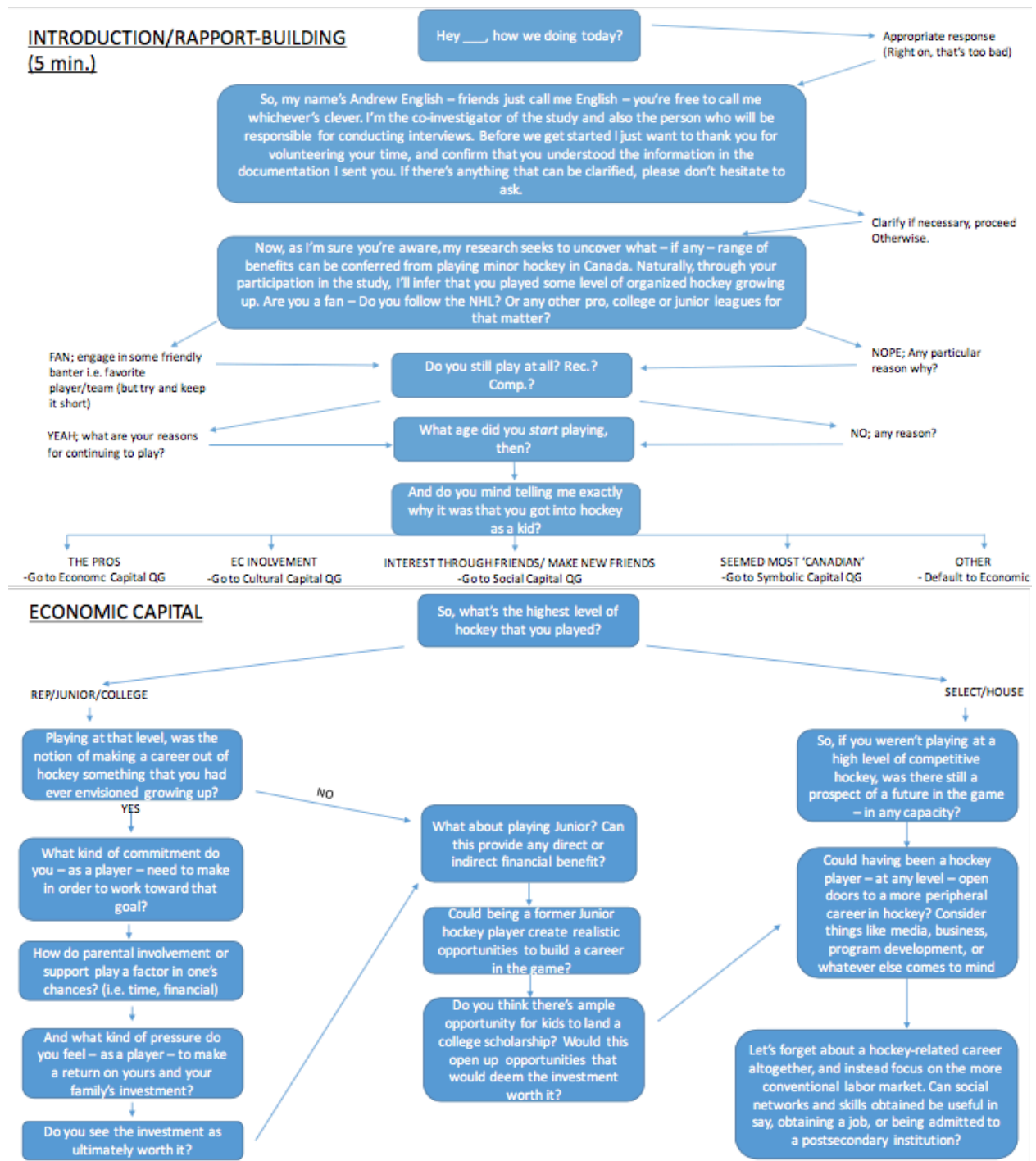
Person obtaining consent

Name (Print): _____

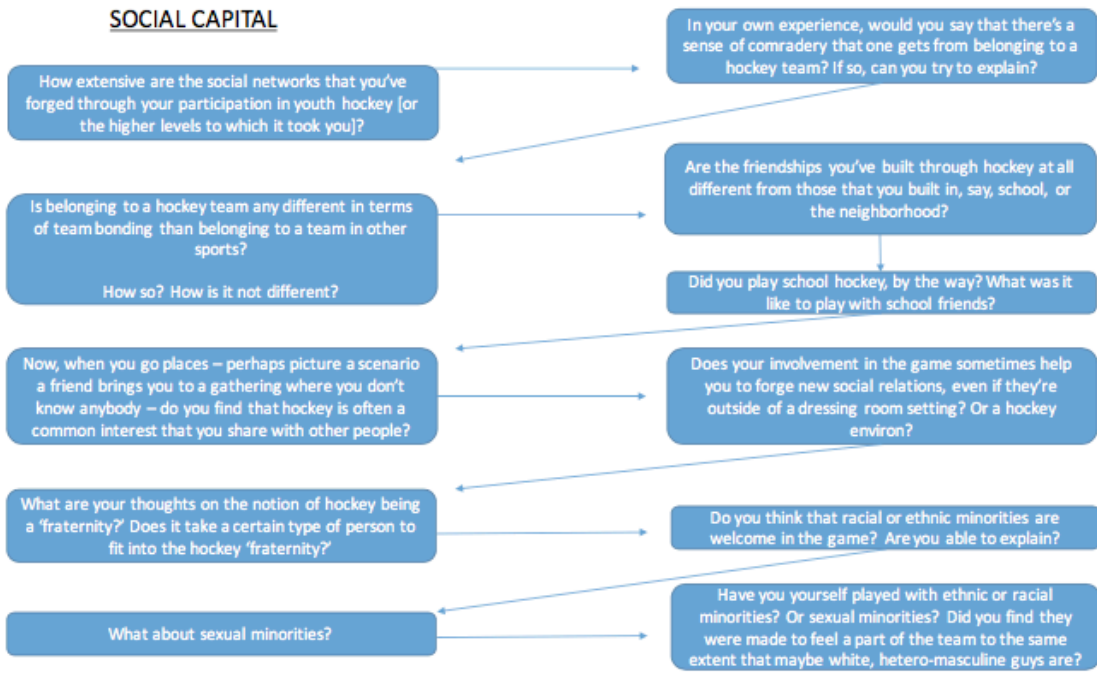
Signature: _____

Date: _____

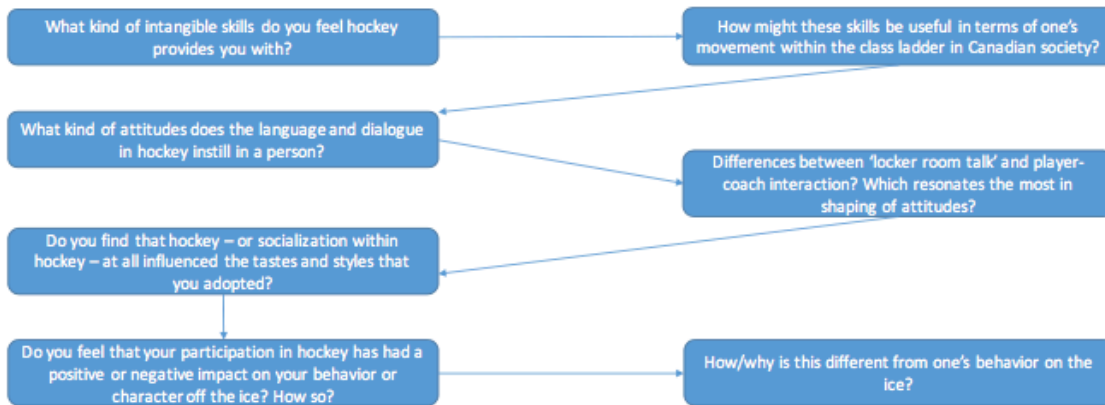
Appendix D – Interview Guide



SOCIAL CAPITAL



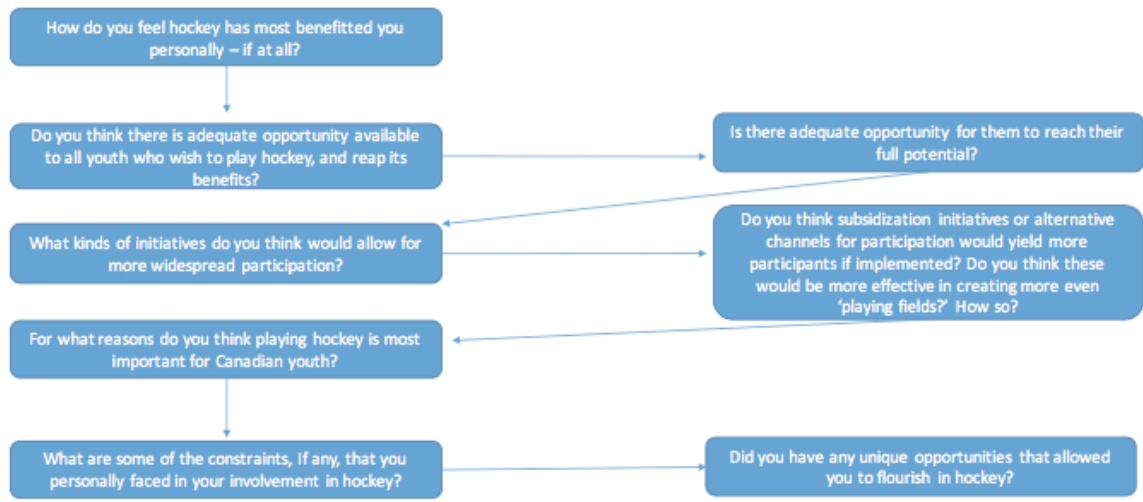
CULTURAL CAPITAL



SYMBOLIC CAPITAL



CONCLUSION



Curriculum Vitae

ANDREW ENGLISH

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Bachelor of Arts (Honors Specialization in Criminology)

Western University, London, Ontario, Canada

Degree Conferred October 2016

- Dean's Honor List (2015, 2016, Summer/Part-Time)
- Module Courses: Introduction to Criminology, Philosophy of Law, Introduction to Law, Administration of Criminal Justice, Sociology of Deviance, Youth in Conflict with the Law, Criminological Theory and Research, Sociology of Terrorism, Serial Killers, Sociological Theory (Classical & Contemporary)
- Elective Courses: Introduction to Film Studies, Computer Science Multimedia, Introduction to Business, Introductory Marketing, Business Law, Space Exploration
- GPA: 3.7

Master of Arts (Sociology)

Degree Expected December 2018

Western University, London, Ontario, Canada

- Relevant Courses: Classical Sociological Theory, Health Inequalities, Quantitative Research, Criminological Theory and Research, Qualitative Research, Life Course
- GPA: 3.7

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Co-Investigator; 'Opportunity, Constraint, and Capital in Canadian Ice Hockey'

Publication Expected December 2018

Western University, London, Ontario, Canada

- Explored the ways Canadian men accumulate benefits from their participation in organized ice hockey in their childhood, as well as disparities in the allocation of these benefits.
- Wrote a comprehensive study proposal, completed ethics application, designed interview guide, drafted recruitment literature, recruited participants, conducted/transcribed interviews, conducted analysis, drafted dissertation, defended thesis.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Remote Educator Moderator

OneClass – EasyKe

August 2018 - Present

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

- Arts & Humanities 'Subject Q&A,' Essay Writing assistance, and real-time tutoring for international students
- Quality Control, Customer Service, Tutor Support

Assistant Retail Manager

AIM Drug Mart

April 2017 – September 2018

London, Ontario, Canada

- Initially fulfilled point-of-sale duties, monitored product expiries, completed returns and re-orders from suppliers. Responsibilities eventually expanded to include patient deliveries, web design, intra-company e-mail setup, flier design and sales initiatives, patient outreach initiatives, and creating staff meeting presentations.

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Western University, Department of Sociology

September 2016 – April 2018

London, Ontario, Canada

- Formed weekly lesson plans and stimulated tutorial discussion for an Introductory Sociology course. Additional responsibilities entailed exam proctoring, grading, and student consultations.
- Nominated for departmental 'TA of the Year Award' in 2017 and 2018

Associate

Investors Group Wealth Management

May 2015 – September 2016

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

- Responsibilities include data entry for personal financial plans, overseeing client outreach and consultant team-building initiatives, administrative tasks, social media profile management, recruitment, and tax return filing.
- Received recognition for helping the consultant for whom I worked in his achievement of 'Platinum Status' for consultants

Assembly, Shipping & Receiving

BEX Engineering Ltd.

February 2011 – September 2014

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

- Assembled nozzles and nozzle parts
- Fulfilled lead-hand duties in absence of Assembly Department supervisor.
- As a shipper and receiver, responsibilities included signing off on deliveries and relaying items to purchasing, sending regular skid-loads to company warehouses in Germany and the US, filling out customs forms, sending domestic shipments, and coordinating such shipments with suppliers and couriers.
- Multiple promotions while being markedly the youngest employee at the company

Bus Person

Alice Fazooli's Italian Bar & Grill

August 2008 – September 2011

Oakville, Ontario, Canada

- Clearing and setting tables, arranging dining room for parties and events, stocking bar, general maintenance, greeting and interacting with patrons, helping run food for servers

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Boys and Girls Club of London

October 2015 – November 2016

London, Ontario, Canada

- Gymnasium volunteer, preparing meals for children, Race for Kids, setting up 50th anniversary event, Seniors' Transit

Carmel Heights Convent & Seniors Residence

July 2015 – October 2015

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

- Gardening, landscaping, garbage pickup, occasional kitchen duties

Salvation Army Thrift Store

February 2011 – March 2011

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

- Receiving and organizing donations, cleaning and shelving in the thrift store retail section, reorganizing display areas

Sherwood Forrest Residents Association

2003 – 2010

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

- Helped set up for annual neighbourhood fun fair, as well as annual neighbourhood Earth Day cleanups from 2003-2008. Helped with weekly shoveling, flooding, and maintenance duties in Winter seasons from 2005-2010.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND ACADEMIC HONORS

- Dean's Honor List, 2015, 2016, Summer/Part-Time 2016
- Western Scholarship of Distinction, 2011

CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

- Workplace Safety Training, 2015, 2018
- TCPS 2 Certification for Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2017
- Comprehensive WHMIS Certification, 2016
- Standard First Aid & CPR/AED, 2007
- Bronze Cross, 2006