'Friends as Enemies': A Sociological Analysis of the Relationship

among Touring Professional Golfers

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship among male touring professional golfers from a figurational sociological standpoint. The paper is based on 20 interviews from players with experience playing at various levels on the EPGA professional tours and a level 'above' that. The results indicate a workplace culture where many begin to adopt the attitudes and behaviors that encourage the development of networks of temporary 'we-group' alliances. The 'touring' aspects of professional golf means many players strive to forge these alliances to help reduce feelings of loneliness, isolation, and homesickness while away for long periods of time. Such stresses are intensified given the globalization of sport generally and the associated increases in labor market migration that has become commonplace. The urge to develop friendship networks constrains players to behave in a manner expected of them rather than in a way that reflects their actual emotions, such as maintaining a positive attitude during difficult times like spells of poor performances and time away from their families. The relationships among players on tour is, however, non-permanent and/or partially changeable. Players are 'friends', characterized by togetherness and camaraderie, while, at the same, showing evidence of tensions and conflict as they are ultimately in direct competition with each other for a share of the overall prize money.

Key words: professional golf, workplace relations, sport labor migration, figurational sociology, friendship networks

The life of a world-class professional golfer seems like a whirlwind of private planes, luxury hotel rooms and the chance to earn riches beyond even the wildest of dreams – all while playing the game we love. Not bad, eh? (Cutmore, 2014, para. 1).

This is how Chris Cutmore (2014, para. 1) writing for the Daily Mail (London) explains the life of a professional golfer. Similarly, Kyle Porter (2014, para. 4) reporting for CBS Sports suggests that "one of the best parts about being a pro golf or tennis athlete is that it forces you to get out, see different cultures, experience the world. Oh, and you're getting paid to do it". It would be difficult to argue against the notion that professional sport is considered a relatively glamorous occupation given the large rewards available, the international schedules and the celebrity lifestyles associated with high-profile sporting success. It is unsurprising that a career in elite level sport is considered an attractive proposition and many people fantasize about becoming a top-level sports performer. However, Roderick (2014) argues that very few people fully appreciate the reality of the working conditions of most athletes and thus overlook the personal struggles and challenges that characterize many of their lives. Indeed it appears the reality is such that many sports workers face careers that are not characterized by significant wealth, are relatively short-term in nature with a regular possibility of career failure and rejection (Carter, 2007; Frick, 2007; Kelly and Sugimoto, 2007; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001; Roderick, 2013, 2014; Wacquant, 2011). As Carter (2007: 374) suggests, the lived reality for many less well-known sportspeople is one that comes with "painful costs, difficult lessons and problematic rewards". Furthermore, professional sport can also place significant stress even on the most successful players' relationships with their partners and significant others (Ortiz, 2006; Roderick, 2012; Sanderson and Clavio, 2010). Indeed, such stresses are intensified given the globalization of sport and the associated increases in labor market migration that has become commonplace. The geographical mobility of sport careers regularly requires athletes to work in different

locations and can lead to varying degrees of cultural adjustment and dislocation (Maguire, 2011a; Roderick, 2013).

Despite the personal issues identified here, the views and experiences of professional sportspeople regarding the consequences of globalization is a largely neglected and under-explored area (Butler and Dzikus, 2015; Roderick, 2013; Webster, Lambert, and Beziudenhout, 2008). As Roderick (2013: 399) has suggested:

> To date there has been little discussion by social scientists of the possible latent consequences of such high levels of circulation from a sports work perspective. Globalization theorists have been preoccupied with examinations of routes and pathways, rather than the effects of such volumes of flows on the social selves of those embedded in this industry.

This paper, therefore, aims to use professional golf as a case study to offer a more adequate viewpoint on the 'realities' of life as a migrant in professional sport. Indeed extensive travel on a weekly basis remains a crucial aspect of any professional golfer's career. For example, more than half of the 2014 European Professional Golfers Association (EPGA) tour itinerary is staged outside of Europe (EPGA, 2014). The remaining events that are staged within Europe still require players to undertake significant travel. A male professional based in England, for example, would be obliged to travel overseas to play throughout the majority of the year. Only six events from 51 on the 2014 schedule were staged in England, Scotland, or Wales. Furthermore, two of these events – The BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth and The Open Championship at Royal Liverpool – were not open to EPGA tour players unless they were in the world's top 50 or qualified through specific events. The result is that male professional golfers are required to spend long periods of time away from their family and friends. While on tour, however, golfers do spend large periods of time with other players and

as such we examine these relationships in greater detail within this paper. As far as can be reasonably ascertained, there is no academic literature concerning the workplace experiences of male professional golfers, though Douglas and Carless (2006, 2008, 2009) have examined female golfers' careers from a psychological perspective. They focus on career transitions and mental health, however, they do not address their working lives generally or how increased travel schedules may impact on them. Furthermore, Crosset (1995) and Hundley and Billings (2010) draw useful conclusions on the culture of golf more generally by focusing on gender relations and the media respectively, while also highlighting that golf is a uniquely occupied terrain that remains significantly under-examined, offering a good opportunity for sociological investigation, providing further justification for this particular study. The central objective of this paper, therefore, is to analyze how male touring professional golfers adjust to life on tour by specifically examining their relationships with fellow golfers. In so doing, the aim is to more adequately assess the extent to which the work of touring professional golf affects players' relationships with significant others. We examine the global nature of touring professional golf as a case study from a figurational perspective. We will firstly analyze the existing literature on the development of friendships in relation to migration and work more generally, then we will present our methods and theoretical position, before a discussion of our results.

Friendship networks: A review of the literature

The central role of work and employment in the process of globalization cannot be underestimated. Carter (2007) notes that the transnational migration of labor, in particular, is an important aspect of the flow of capital around the world. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to review the literature pertaining to friendship relationships in the workplace generally, and in relation to the lives of highly skilled migrants more specifically. On

reviewing the wider migration literature it becomes clear that transnational employment requires workers not only to possess the skills, qualifications, and expertise that can cross borders, but also "the personal qualities and characteristics to take such movements in their stride" (Williams et al., 2013: 185). This is because migrants experience varying degrees of segregation and integration and thus they are required to adapt and adjust their behaviors to cope with such international movements (Devadason and Fenton, 2013). The effect of migration on the friendships of those involved is of specific importance to this study. The significance of what has been referred to as 'friendship networks' has been examined in sport labor research (Agergaard, 2008; Bale, 1991; Darby, Akindes and Kirwin, 2007; Elliot and Maguire, 2008; Maguire, 2011a, 2011b; Molnar and Maguire, 2008a; Roderick, 2006a; Stead and Maguire, 2000) and broader employment literature (Alberti, 2014; Antcliff et al., 2007; Conradson and Latham, 2005; Coulson, 2012; Hagan et al., 2011; Martiniello and Rea, 2014; Umny, 2014; Yeoh and Willis, 2005). Our intention now is to provide a brief overview of much of this literature.

Research on the working conditions of musicians offers a particularly useful comparison with work in professional sport, where short-term placements, low pay, and uncertainty are key features of both occupations (Umny, 2014; Roderick, 2006a). Umny (2014) argues that workplace conditions for jazz musicians means the vast majority are required to develop a close network of 'friends', who are also musicians, which they can draw on to help secure employment. Similarly, Coulson (2012) highlights the prevalence of 'community networks' between musicians as an important factor to the overall success of their work. Typically, such contacts are developed through attending performances or 'jam sessions' as an initial networking activity, which can later develop into 'scenes' between people brought together through common career aims (Coulson, 2012; Umny, 2014). These

types of arrangements lead to the development of loose networks of bands featuring overlapping personnel and staging shared performances where specific individuals could be called upon as and when required. Referred to as an 'economy of favors', these workers are often required to seek help from others to collaborate on projects, even where there are limited economic incentives to do so, for the future gains that such professional links may garner (Ursell, 2000). Coulson (2012) also highlights the importance of interaction among musicians beyond their actual working environment, where many would be required to engage in a variety of socializing activities in order to maintain or strengthen friendship networks.

Coulson (2012) focuses on what he perceives to be the progressive and positive components of collective working. However, Umny (2014) emphasizes individual conflicts and difficulties arise at the same time. Jazz performances, he argues, typically involve a number of improvised solos from band members while, simultaneously, the rest of the band collectively improvises an accompaniment. As such, Umny (2014: 575) argues that "performances embody both close group collaboration and intense individual showmanship". The result is that working conditions can give rise to a number of 'faux' friendships that mask individual rivalries. As such, for Umny (2014), there is a sense of community at the same time as individual rivalry amongst the professional musicians on the circuit he examined. Furthermore, he argues this type of working environment also gives rise to a number of friendship 'cliques', whereby certain performances are dominated by groups of friends, often developed from time previously spent at the same music college, for example (Umny, 2014). These tight knit workplace groups, once established, often do not admit others. Many of these findings corroborate with Martiniello and Rea (2014) whose research focused on the broader issues of migration and the workplace and the concept of 'migratory careers'. They argue that

friendship networks can enable collective working practices while, at the same time, can actually serve to constrain workers when such relationships are used to exert pressure on each other.

Research has highlighted how working migrants draw on their broader networks of contacts in order to facilitate their movements (Alberti, 2014; Hagan et al., 2011). Similarly, research in sport work has focused on friendship networks in terms of pathways, recruitment, and flows of athletic talent. For example, Roderick (2006a) argues that networks of friends in a professional football club prove useful for players as they develop ties with other 'insiders', some of whom may have extensive webs of contacts. Friendship networks are important within the existing club but are also used, in a similar way to other industries, as a means to pursue job opportunities at other clubs, informing a person of potential job opportunities, or recommending a potential employee via a third party (Roderick, 2006a). Similarly, Elliot and Maguire (2008: 158) point out that recruitment into, and career advancement in, professional sport can be facilitated through a series of "'friends-of-friends' networks and 'bridgehead' contacts". Friendship groups are used to share information about particular migratory destinations and/or potential employment opportunities, which are passed through informal channels of communication (Agergaard and Botelho, 2010; Elliot and Maguire, 2008). These friendship groups facilitate the flow of information between the potential employer and potential migrant employee. At the same time, this research highlights the unplanned nature of such movements and suggests that players generally have little control over selecting their place and country of work and had to rely more heavily on connections of agents, friends or club managers (Molnar and Maguire, 2008a).

Research on friendship networks is useful in indicating how links between athletes may affect the direction and flow of sport migration, and the unplanned nature of such developments, however, much of the work does not analyze in detail how athletes *experience* their relationships with people referred to as their 'friends'. When examining sport migration research more closely it becomes clear that communication issues are at the heart of migrants' experiences of friendship. Unsurprisingly, language in particular is a key factor that affects the patterns of friendship relationships between athletes given the wide variety of nationalities encountered (Agergaard and Botelho, 2010; Elliot and Maguire, 2008; Molnar and Maguire, 2011a; Ronkainen, Harrison and Ryba, 2014). More specifically, Agergaard (2008) argues that players sharing the same language and cultural background are more likely to develop friendships and integrate and settle into particular networks than those from different backgrounds. Indeed being part of such networks appears to be an important factor in individual well-being, which, he argues, relates more to migrants' ability to 'fit' into friendships groups than to the outcome of their actual sporting performances per-se (Agergaard, 2008). If sport migrants are not 'accepted' as part of a friendship group then a level of hostility can develop towards them (Falcous and Maguire, 2005). Agergaard (2008) argues that in such circumstances athletes' experiences of friendships can affect their social wellbeing. Many athletes often vastly underestimate the extent to which work-related travel can affect them in such a way. As such, many sports migrants placed considerable importance on maintaining regular contact with their 'real friends' in their 'home' countries through the daily use of social media (Agergaard and Ryba, 2014). It is important to recognize that the research presented here is mostly limited to migrants in team sports, however, it can also help to understand the friendship networks in sports with constant workplace circulation, such as golf, given the eclectic mix of nationalities players will meet when competing on such tours.

Roderick (2006a) analyzes friendship networks in professional football and argues that 'real friendships' do develop but mostly between players who have known each other over long periods of their career. However he also argues that developing real friendships, in the strictest sense of the term, is difficult for most footballers given the competitive labor market, constant competition for first-team places, and strong emphasis on individualism. Similarly, Magee and Sugden (2002) argue that the short-term nature of players' relationships actually fosters a distorted sense of friendship amongst them. More specifically, they argue that the career flexibility and mobility inherent in football, which is also a characteristic of many professional sports, undermines foundations of trust, and thus, potential friendship between players (Magee and Sugden, 2002). Magee (1998: 129) specifically referred to professional football as a "dog-eat-dog" way of life where many players "look after themselves". However, at the same time players are ultimately competing for the same team and thus are encouraged to 'get on' with other members of the team despite the fact they are often in direct competition with each other for places (Roderick, 2006a).

For some authors, conflicts between athletes in the same friendship networks leads individuals to engage in a process of 'impression management', whereby players put on a 'false front' when in the company of colleagues (Roderick, 2006a). Indeed these behaviors are particularly exhibited between colleagues with intense rivalries and a high degree of animosity regarding their individual workplace interests, however, they still need to get on in the work environment (Roderick, 2014). For Roderick (2006c), a common feature of this impression management is the 'banter' exchanged between players, whereby 'jokes' are couched in humorous and seemingly harmless terms, however, they tend to contain a more serious undertone – such as implying that an injured player is either lazy or soft. Research on interpersonal and relational communication proves particularly useful to analyze the 'double

edged' nature of this type of humor. For example, Motley (2008) argues that humor can serve a variety of positive functions in group situations, such as increased affinity, social attractiveness and a decrease in social distance, while, at the same time, can also be used to express disapproval of individuals, groups, or specific behaviors. As such humor can be used to improve relationships, however, it also has the potential to harm them too. It is this duality that is said to make communication in such group scenarios more difficult. That is, 'banter' has a greater chance of being taken the 'wrong' way particularly when engaged in by groups made up of people with more superficial relationships than with those that might be considered real 'friends' in the strictest sense (Motley, 2008). The result, Motley (2008) suggests, is that humor can impact on the development of group relationships and identities. Identities are not stable but rather people continually define, redefine, and negotiate their own and others' identities as they communicate with each other (Elias, 2001a). Humor, therefore, can be used as a function to make statements in regards to others and this impacts on identity formation, where other members of the group engaging with this 'banter' and laughing along can intensify these changes (Motley, 2008). The role of banter in friendship networks is a key feature of this paper in our attempt to analyze more specifically how touring professional golfers adjust to life on tour by examining their relationships with fellow golfers. Prior to this it is necessary to discuss the methods used to gather the primary data.

Methods

The primary data informing the discursive analysis was taken from a set of semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 male professional golfers aged between 22 and 56. Participants were recruited according to criteria that ensured a cross section of players representing all three tiers of the EPGA tour, in addition to a group of players who had operated 'above' this. In other words, the sample included a group of players whose world ranking meant they had a

greater ability to pick and choose events and played what arguably could be termed a 'world tour' consisting of a combination of EPGA, USPGA, and other tournaments sanctioned by various organizations worldwide. This elite band of players also had a significant amount of experience playing EPGA tour events at various stages of their careers. Players were selected, therefore, on their ability to provide an insight across the entire spectrum of touring professional golf. This 'purposive sampling' was, in many ways, a deliberate, non-random selection whereby participants were identified according to the likelihood that they would enable the researcher to explore the relevant research questions (Bryman, 2012). At the same time, however, the hard to reach nature of elite sportspeople meant that there was a limitation to the 'selection' of participants. In other words, the purposive sampling frame resulted in a sample that was, in one sense, also a convenience snowball sample insofar as it consisted of those golfers who responded to the interview requests. Although players were classified by a particular tour in order to provide a cross section of participants for interviewing purposes, the reality is such that each player had taken a unique and often complex route to their current position and virtually all had experience of playing on more than one tour. The majority of players, therefore, had experience of travelling extensively on various golf tours and thus could draw comparisons between the different tiers. A detailed account of each player's career trajectory and tours played is provided in Table 1. Interviews were conducted between April 2012 and July 2013. Interviews were recorded and participants were told that the process could be stopped at any time for any reason. Each interviewee was also given an assurance of confidentiality. As a result the pseudonyms 'golfer A, B, C etc.' were used for each player and identifiable detail such as exact years on respective tours has been removed.

[Please insert Table 1 here]

Interviews were used in order to attempt to "generate data which gives authentic insights into peoples' experiences" (Miller and Glassner, 2001: 126). Semi-structured interviews facilitated discussions in the golfers' own words, using their own frames of reference, and expressing their ideas and thoughts in their own way with a set of key interview questions designed to encourage players to discuss their views about the reality of work as a professional golfer. They focused on the ways and extent to which the nomadic lifestyle inherent in work in professional golf contoured their workplace experiences and highlighted the increasingly complex networks of relationships that accompany this (Green, 2000). In doing so, this also facilitated an examination of the ways in which participants made sense of what it means to be a professional golfer. Interviewees were asked questions that centered primarily on workplace experiences of their international labor migration and included themes such as: explanations for tournament schedule; international schedule and their golf performance; relationships with family and friends; pay and conditions; and comparisons between different golf tours. More specifically, a key aim of this research was to assess the effects of the global nature of golf on players' friendship networks and, as such, previous work on friendship networks in sport (see Elliot and Maguire, 2008; Magee and Sugden, 2002; Molnar and Maguire, 2008; Roderick, 2006a; Wacquant, 1998), was used to generate a number of questions. Examples of such questions include: "do you socialize when away on tour?", "who is it that you tend to socialize with on tour?", and "how would you explain the nature your relationship with other players on tour?" The questions attempted to elicit how players came to define their workplace conditions, and control and negotiate their social realities within the confines of the relatively 'closed' world of professional golf. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Common themes were identified and analyzed from a figurational sociological perspective. The Nvivo computer package was used to code interview transcripts and organize themes. Coding was carried out by the lead author

but there was continual debate with the co-author during this process, which helped to encourage a greater degree of detachment from the data (Perry, Thurston, and Green, 2004) and provided us with additional scrutiny in the development of codes (Mennell, 1992).

Figurational sociological concepts were used to sensitize the researcher − namely figurations, habitus, and we-group formation. A figurational approach aims to avoid absolutist, mono-causal, unidirectional explanations such as those often focused upon by the media, in particular, regarding the work place environment of professional sportspeople. Instead, focus is placed on the fluid and dynamic nature of relationships in which players are inescapably enmeshed. Elias (2001a) argued that particular layers of we-identity, such as family and friends, carry a special weight and an increased emotional charge that people crave for their physical and social wellbeing. However, these close knit groups are frequently being replaced by non-permanent and/or partially changeable relations between individuals, which, it is argued, are a structural feature of contemporary societies (Elias, 2001a). In other words, with lengthening chains of interdependency there is an increasing need to respond to the myriad people that individuals come into contact with – directly and indirectly – and, in so doing, this is a more central feature of present societies. By specifically referring to the notion of 'survival units' to explain the process where people move away from close family and friendship groups into new unfamiliar domains, Elias (2001a) argued that people are increasingly required to fend more for themselves and thus seek to form 'friendship' groups with other people to help with their 'survival'. From this viewpoint, the formation of friendship groups develops primarily from the need for individuals to seek to protect their own interests and survive in certain societies. This is referred to as 'we-group' formation, and we hope to demonstrate that this concept provides a sophisticated analytical tool for examining how golfers make sense of their relationships with other players while away on

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tour. The figurational concepts of 'we-groups' and 'survival units' have been developed to include 'loose collections of temporary alliances', which specifically aims to capture the temporary features of 'we-groups' forged between people for mutually beneficial reasons (Dunning, Murphy, and Williams, 1988).

Through the network of relationships individuals find themselves inevitably involved with, they develop, subconsciously and consciously, internalized constraints relating to behavior (Elias, 2001a). The concept of 'we-group' formation, therefore, also proves useful in helping our understanding of how people *behave* when in groups. From a figurational viewpoint, therefore, particular focus is paid to the balance between conscious and subconscious processes that lead to the development of typical we-group behaviors, that people hope will see them become accepted by certain others. More specifically, this viewpoint maintains a particular focus on the fluid and changing behavior among people in relationships, which is constantly in flux, rather than viewing their lives as static and unchanging (Elias, 2001b; Murphy, Williams, and Dunning, 1990). More specifically, Murphy et al. (1990) argue that the process of these types of group formation are relatively loose as individuals tend to form temporary ad hoc allegiances according to their needs in a particular time and place and they can quickly change from one situation to another.

The main themes that emerged from the analysis of our data included: we-group behaviors, we-groups in a home from home, moaners and the role of banter; changes in I-/we- balance between friends, acquaintances, and enemies; and conflicts and tensions among players. We will begin with an analysis of we-group friendship networks that develop on tour.

Development of we-group friendship networks

Touring professional golf is an occupation characterized by high levels of individualism and isolation, however, types of friendships among players do develop. These friendships are often forged out of a requirement for mutually beneficial needs, rather than through choice *per-se*. Virtually all interviewees in this study explained that they were constrained to develop friendship networks and enthusiastically championed their development. As Golfer D, a player with experience of a cross section of tours, explained, golfers should "try and get a group of people around you that can help you become what you need to be". Golfer D was not just referring to a support team, such as a coach, caddy or a manager, but also other players. Indeed most players outside of the very highest levels do not have a support team on tour and thus spend most of their time with other players. Similarly, Golfer F, a Challenge tour player for nine years, explained that to cope with life on tour players should "surround yourself with positive people ... pick guys who you admire and like and want to spend time with. And try to make friends with those guys because it definitely helps". Despite the fact that the composition of players on tour is outside the direct control of any single player, many of the golfers in this study attempted to exercise some control over the players with whom they would socialize. Indeed the loneliness many players experience while away on tour acts as a major driver to seek out and develop friendship networks. As Golfer H, an EPGA tour player for 13 years, explained, "you must be able to get on with people … if you are on your own it can be a lonely life". That our golfers seemed so keen to develop a core group of 'friends' in order to protect their own interests and aid 'survival' on tour dovetails with Elias's (2001a) observations regarding the development of friendship groups. Furthermore, players attempted, where possible, to socialize with other players that they perceived to be similar to themselves. As Golfer E, an EPGA tour player, highlighted, there was a felt need to socialize in groups he referred to as "like-minded people". He added

that to do this, players are required to "find out who liked the same things as you do, who liked the same foods, who wanted to go out for dinner at the same time as you did".

There were a variety of reasons given for why players sought to develop friendship networks, aside, perhaps, from the obvious. Engaging in socializing activities with other players, for example, was viewed as a necessary activity in order to help switch off from the game. When asked do you socialize while away on tour, Golfer S, a successful previous Ryder Cup player who has won events on tours worldwide over a period of more than 25 years, explained:

> Of course you have to because otherwise you will be by yourself all the time and that does not work. You have to balance your work, your life, and other normal social activities ... try to get out of the game. The main concern is to be too much in the game and thinking about the game all day and all night.

Golfer S is referring to the need to release from the day-to-day pressures of work in professional golf that characterizes life on tour. Similarly, Golfer K explained that "you can't go out there and just work, work, work. You have got to be able to chill out sometimes" and Golfer Q stressed that it is "important not to talk too much golf, you need a release from the game". There seems to be a need for an outlet and release from the game given the large amount of time spent touring in what was described by Golfer A, a 20 year EPGA tour veteran and former winner, as the "circus travelling round the world". The irony with this, of course, is that whilst away on tour the only way many golfers feel capable of achieving this release is by socializing with other players. So in fact 'golf' is rarely, if ever, off their agenda.

For some, friendship groups on tour helped to create an environment like home. For example, Golfer P, who was competing on Challenge tour for the first time, said it is important to "try and surround yourself with people who you want to be with. So it is more like when you are at home and more normal". This point is supported by a more experienced player, Golfer F, who explained that at events where he has been most successful:

One trend is being fun. And I don't mean late nights and I don't mean alcohol. I mean having dinner and laughing, [and] banter … the more that you travel like home the better. You need your home comforts.

It appears that the ability for a golfer to create an environment similar to that of home serves directly to underscore their self-esteem and heighten self-confidence, in large measure because the players in this study considered that it helped improve tournament performances. That is, for some players the greater their ability to reduce the grind of life on tour the better their performances in the actual tournaments themselves. Jacobsen (2003) refers to the concept of 'travelling parochialism', or 'home plus', in order to explain a scenario whereby large proportions of contemporary holidaymakers attempt to adopt a kind of furtherance of a home-like culture while abroad. So, while on holiday many English people seek a 'home plus' sunshine by gravitating to 'English' bars serving 'English' breakfasts, for example. In work on American basketball migrants, Butler and Dzikus (2015: 73) argue that players use online technology to watch American television programs and would "venture 20–30 min to get a meal" at an American style restaurant franchise in order to help them feel more at home. In a similar vein, it appears professional golfers often look to develop a 'home plus' scenario on tour by surrounding themselves by people with whom they feel more at home. However, given the global spread of the golf tours, and the myriad of places they now take in, this is more and more difficult to do – and for those that do not have the sufficient means on tour, it is almost impossible to do, making their working life even more lonely. Golfer B, a

Challenge tour player, a professional for eight years, compared his current situation to the main tour, where he said "you're trying to be", adding that "they get the sponsors and can take the family with them and they are playing for life changing money. Whereas we're playing just to get by".

In addition to the tournaments themselves, participants from this study identified that friendship networks helped them to cope with issues that arise when travelling between events. Golfer C, an experienced EPGA tour player with a 20 plus year career and one win, explained that players embarking on a career of a touring professional "must be aware of all the downfalls of travelling on your own". For example, some players said travelling companions helped relieve the logistics of travelling and many had a network of golfers with whom they could share rooms. Sharing rooms appeared to be more common for those who played in tiers lower than the EPGA tour and thus they tried to develop a group of players they could stay with to keep down the costs of pursuing a career in professional golf. In other words, a similar 'economy of favors' (Ursell, 2000: 813) seems to exist amongst professional golfers as it does amongst professional musicians. In golf, travelling companions also helped because, as Golfer P stated, "travelling on your own can be a bit boring and a bit lonely". Furthermore, in some cases players used travelling companions to help avoid the culture shock associated with particular venues on the global schedule. For example, Golfer I, a third tier EPD player, explained that for some tournaments he would "go with someone as if you're on your own it could well break you" and added "you don't know where you're going and if you've never been before it is a bit of a dodgy place at times ... there's pictures I can show you on my phone of some of the dodgy streets in India ... That's what you're dealing with". As well as India, Golfer I identified Morocco and South Africa, in particular, as places he considered the most extreme examples of experiencing different cultures during the tour

schedule, and as such they exacerbated the felt need to travel together. These issues are likely to have been exaggerated with the expansion of the tour schedule. The greater geographical diversity of the tour makes it increasingly difficult for players to set up a 'home from home' network to the best of their variously constrained ability. Given that professional golfers experience a greater degree of workplace dislocation when compared with many other sports, many of our participants placed increasing importance on actively seeking out and forming quite specific 'friendship' groups with other people in the touring fraternity, particularly fellow players. Therefore, as is demonstrated above, golfers discussed developing friendship networks for social reasons, whereby players would socialize together to help reduce feelings of loneliness, isolation, homesickness and for what may be termed logistical reasons where players would travel and room together to save money. As indicated above, 'we-group' formation of this type develops primarily out of the need for individuals to protect their own interests and survive in certain societies (Elias, 2001a). More specifically, when referring to survival units to explain the process where people move away from close family and friend groups into new unfamiliar domains, which often happens when people grow up and enter work, Elias (2001a: 120) states that people "leave behind close local protective groups ... and with it they lose their protective and control functions". The result is that people are increasingly required to fend for themselves more and develop we-groups with other people to help with this. Dunning et al. (1988) relate such developments to the notion of a 'loose collections of temporary alliances', which they used to capture the features of relationships forged between people in community we-groups for mutually beneficial reasons. For example, in their figurational research into football hooliganism they suggest that smaller friendship groups, bonded together by kinship and neighborhood ties, are replaced by larger groups who would temporarily unite in a match-day context for purposes of confronting rival fans (Dunning et al., 1988). In this respect, communities that tend to be fragmented join

together and facilitate a degree of cohesion in the face of real or perceived threats and mobilize the allegiance of those within the community (Dunning, Murphy, and Williams, 1986). Figurational sociologists pay particular focus to the changeable and non-permanent nature of relationships between people, which in this case indicates that, specifically during times of increased stress, people can assemble quickly and show loyalty towards the overall goals of the group. Similarly, for professional golfers on tour the loneliness and isolation frequently experienced means they have a tendency to develop allegiances in the event of these stresses. The development of we-groups in professional golf has a function for players' survival on the world tours. Players do, therefore, seek out and develop friendship groups in an effort to help cope with the prolonged spells away from home. This highlights the extent to which golfers are prepared to develop loose collections of temporary alliances for mutually beneficial reasons (Dunning et al., 1988; Elias, 2001b). Not only did interviewees actively seek out and develop 'friendships' with people whom they viewed as similar to themselves, participants also identified the types of people they would try to avoid, to which the focus is now turned.

We-group behaviors: Moaners and the role of banter

Results from this study indicate that some professional golfers are constrained to engage in a specific type of behavior that contributes to their acceptance within a particular we-group, which helps the development of we-group friendship networks. In addition to developing networks with players they perceived as being most similar to themselves, virtually all participants in this study stated that they avoided certain players on tour, commonly referred to as 'moaners'. As Golfer F rather bluntly put it, "surround yourself with positive people … Avoid the moaners, avoid the idiots … it definitely helps". Similarly Golfer Q explained "don't spend time with moaners, it will rub off on you". There was

general agreement that so called moaners were likely to make life on tour even more of a chore than it already was. This is further exacerbated by the fact that it is difficult to get away from the relatively small bubble of touring professional golf and thus it is reasonably difficult for some players to avoid moaners. While away on tour players engage in a coping mechanism where they outwardly project a positive attitude and seek out people who do the same. Indeed one of the most significant factors in being accepted in a particular we-group is being able to stay positive while on tour, especially in the face of the more difficult aspects of golfers' lives. Golfer L, a Challenge tour player, explained the perceived importance of travelling with people who project a positive image of themselves when times get tough, "it is very important who you travel with and travelling with guys who when they are playing bad don't get upset, who are happy, who forget about it [playing poor] and have a laugh … is very important". Feelings of loneliness and isolation on tour are exaggerated during periods of stress and poor play. Golfer R, a previous winner of a major championship, explained that playing professional golf:

> Can be the most wonderful life in the world but it can also be the most difficult. If you play poorly it is the loneliest game because it is really all up to you. It can just be a lonely game. It can be gut wrenching, furious at times. It can get to a point where you don't like who you are because you play poorly. Then when you play great golf or good golf and you're successful and can make a living and win championships, win majors even ... it's the most glorious thing and you're revered by everyone but there is a grand canyon of differences between each emotions.

The result, as the quote by Golfer L highlighted, is a tendency for many golfers to react to such feelings with humor, at least in relation to the image they project of themselves to others, as best they can. Similarly, Golfer O, a winner on more than one world tour, explained that "times on tour can get a bit shitty but you have just got to stay positive and try to have a

laugh with the lads". The normative behavior expressed in the development of we-groups is to demonstrate and prove to others that players have the right attitude and are not a moaner. The reality, it seems, is that often the same players who found it important to avoid moaners, when discussing the realities of their life as a professional golfer for this research actually would, if they outwardly commented how they really felt in the company of other players, also be classed as a moaner themselves. As such, it seems, that even many of the players interviewed for this paper who claimed to want to avoid moaners kept up something of a façade when they were on tour in order to help them get through the tough times. From a figurational perspective, people's self-perception, as both an individual and part of a friendship group, is linked to different parts of their psyche and changes from one scenario to another (Elias, 2001a). In other words, people's behavior also changes, where in certain scenarios it is socially acceptable to clearly distinguish themselves from others, however at other times there are limits in the way in which they feel they can do this. For example, not behaving in a particular way, such as failing to maintain a positive attitude on tour, would incur disapproval and often strong negative responses from other golfers, despite the fact that as the evidence here suggests, many golfers actually would harbor these negative feelings towards their own working circumstances.

The basic idea people have of themselves in relation to other people is a fundamental precondition of their ability to deal successfully with others and to communicate with them in the production of we-groups (Elias, 2001a). More specifically, the attitudes and behaviors of how to act, such as engaging in activities including banter, and how not to act, such as moaning about being on tour, facilitate the consolidation, and even deepening, of the normative codes of behavior for a particular we-group (Elias, 2001a). In some circumstances these normative codes of behavior that are associated with being accepted as part of a

particular we-group can be very strong and encourage people to do things that ordinarily they would not do (Elias, 2001a). For example, in this particular study some of the banter associated with life on tour often involved extreme personal insults between players, which, in Golfer O's, opinion, can be "very close to the bone". In other words, at times the 'friends' on tour do not actually behave in a 'friendly' way. Motley (2008) argued there is a 'duality' to humor in social relationships and banter can be used to strengthen group relationships, however, it also has the potential to harm them too, particularly amongst those not considered 'friends' in the strictest sense of the term. Similarly, Roderick (2006c: 86) argued that banter amongst professional soccer players is "commonplace and appears in many cases to be double-edged". In other words, despite being couched in humorous and seemingly harmless terms, jokes tend to contain a more serious meaning – such as implying that the injured player is either lazy or soft. Roderick (2006c) explains this scenario using Goffman's (1959) concept of 'front stage' and 'back stage'. In particular he argues that professional footballers are expected not to complain during times of stress but to laugh along with the banter that sometimes is directed at them (Roderick, 2006c). Furthermore, 'front stage' workplace humor may assist players in appearing to accept what they perceive as a fearful situation, whilst avoiding looking weak in front of team mates and maintaining a hard front, 'back stage', however, players may in fact be anxious (Roderick, 2003). Similarly, the engagement of professional golfers in extreme forms of banter can be viewed as a way of demonstrating they are in fact coping and not revealing any weaknesses to other players in terms of their 'front stage' persona, at least. Many of the participants in this study perhaps did not as readily reflect that they were engaged in such a 'front stage' performance, when the reality was that, 'back stage' they were struggling to cope with certain aspects of being on tour as well. As Elias (2001a: 93) explains in relation to how people act in we-group formation, it "may throw the strangeness of our own image of ourselves and man [sic] into sharper relief if we see it

retrospectively". People's behavior is not developed from a purely objective viewpoint with clear reasoning, but rather a person's self-image is viewed "simultaneously in the mirror of self-consciousness in relation to other people" (Elias, 2001a: 99). From a figurational standpoint, this type of behavior, which is viewed as universal, is where people do not explicitly think about how they behave or how they are viewed but still act in a particular, socially accepted, manner (Elias, 2001a). The accepted modes of behavior in professional golf are viewed as the result of conscious and subconscious, behaviors enmeshed within the golfing figuration. It is also important to stress that there is always a balance between conscious and subconscious behaviors in the development of we-groups (Elias, 2001a). Thus, the result is that professional golfers seem to develop typical behaviors that they hope will see them become accepted by certain others.

From a figurational perspective it is also important to recognize that an individual's behavior is a result of the interdependent relationships between players, amongst others, at a variety of different *levels* in the golfing hierarchy, including observations they make of behaviors among golfers who, at first glance, appear not to have much in common with one another. For example, interviewees in this study specifically identified the attitudes of other players who play at different, higher levels to themselves. As Golfer F, who has played the majority of his career at Challenge tour level and below, said of a former United States Professional Golfers Association (USPGA) tour player who lost his tour card and was therefore required to play in a qualifying event for the US Open, "[he] pitched up with all the guys like me and the other guys out the trunk of their car and qualified. These guys aren't moaning about where they are ... They don't care. This is where I am today and I have to go qualify from here". The key point here is that there is also a perception that more experienced and successful players learn to deal with the vagaries of tour life and project an image of

coping when times get tough, which in this specific example required the player in question to drop down and play in less prestigious events. This appears to further develop and consolidate the types of behaviors that are accepted on tour, particularly in reference to lower ranked players who seemingly 'observe' the behavior of higher, and previously higher, ranked players with whom they would not ordinarily have much day-to-day connection. Accordingly, they reflect upon their own outwardly projected behavior. The next section examines the changing balance between 'friends', 'acquaintances', and 'enemies'.

Changes in I-/we- balance: Friends, acquaintances, and enemies

It is important to recognize that 'friendships' between players are not simple and straightforward relationships but are problematic. The players interviewed here identified many problems associated with navigating relationships with other players on tour. As we have seen, the majority of golfers, for mutually beneficial reasons, are faced with the issue of demonstrating togetherness with others and displaying the attributes of fitting in with particular we-groups, despite the fact they may have little in common. Elias (2001a) argues that these types of changeable relations are a key feature of all human relations in contemporary society, where there is an increasing need to respond to the myriad people that individuals come into contact with. Furthermore, this has almost certainly been exacerbated with the increasing lengthening of interdependency chains among people, such as those characteristic of the nomadic lives of professional golfers. The increasing global movements of the players and the regular separation from family and loved ones that this entails is a particular feature of the golfers working lives, and this has contributed to their changeable relations with fellow golfers, with whom, for many, they only have a rather superficial relationship.

Virtually all interviewees made a distinction between 'real friends' and what were termed 'acquaintances' or 'work colleagues'. For example, Golfer N, a previous winner on the EPGA tour, stated that: "you do not have too many close friends but lots of 'chums'". Similarly Golfer P neatly explains the difference between friends and acquaintances:

> I wouldn't say I had many friends. I know a lot of them now and they are all good guys and you see them in the hotel at night and maybe have dinner with them and play practice rounds with them but I wouldn't say they were my friends.

Interviewees sought to define their relationship with other players by suggesting they were 'friendly' without necessarily being 'friends' and were 'social' without necessarily 'socializing'. In this study other players on tour tended to be considered outside their close-knit group of 'real' friends. This suggests that professional golfers are not friends' *per-se,* but they are friends of convenience to enable them cope better with the rigors of being lonely and away from home. Indeed these 'friendships' might not be regarded as 'real' because in many ways, such as on the golf course itself during the actual tournament, they are also enemies, so to speak. This starkly contradicts the media stereotype that these professional golfers are on tour having fun with their 'mates', when in fact many of these friendships are developed knowing that they are largely superficial.

Many players were more comfortable in an environment with their 'real' friends at home than they were with other players on tour. In other words, despite the popular conception that professional golfers are out on tour and having fun, the reality is such that the way the golfers feel about their 'acquaintances' on tour is no different from how many people feel about their colleagues in work more generally. Despite appearances, some aspects of the nature of relationships in professional golf are similar to regular jobs. As Golfer K, an EPGA tour player for a period spanning 12 years in total, explained "you've got your mates at home

who you would do anything with and relax with straight away … [when on tour] you're at work basically". This quote once more serves to juxtapose the populist notions of 'lads on tour', 'holiday' or 'dream jobs' that have been linked with the occupation of professional golf. Furthermore, there is evidence that some players' partners had the impression that golfers are living a great life on tour having fun in the company of their friends. This scenario was described by Golfer O, who said:

> I know guys who have had phone calls ... when I was in their company just getting grief, getting loads of grief ... the wife is at home with the kids ... If we were working in a coal mine in Austria or somewhere and ring back in tears saying how much we miss the family then it wouldn't be so bad. But we play golf, and we go out and have dinner, stay in nice hotels ... You can see how it can be construed.

However the reality, it appears, is that if it was not for the fact they were professional golfers then players would probably not choose to be friends with each other. Or, as Umny (2014) puts it, they have developed 'faux friendships'. Golfer L, for example, said:

> You have your friends on tour but if it wasn't for golf they would not be your friends would they? They are like your acquaintances, you socialize with them because you are doing the same thing. Your actual real friends you just don't see.

Similarly, when asked to describe his relationship with other players, Golfer P explained:

> You sort of get on because you have got to get on. I mean you're stuck out there mainly with 100 guys, you might be able to go on the phone to your girlfriend for an hour, but apart from that you've got to get on with them. They are mostly good guys, but not really guys I would spend time with at home.

Golfer P draws particular attention to the dislocation experienced by being so far away from home. Rather than being glamorous, the travelling lifestyle of professional golf makes him feel trapped, and thus dislocated, effectively stranded miles from home. It is unlikely he

would feel this way if he was not playing tournaments the world over but instead was much closer to home more often. The result, it appears, is that players are forced to get on with other players, even if, largely, at a superficial level. The more successful players in this sample, who have earned vast sums of money from professional golf, are, of course, better able to travel with their family, which can help reduce these feelings of loneliness. However, such travel arrangements are not always possible and even top players experienced similar stresses at various stages of their careers. For example, Golfer T, an EPGA tour major winner and former world number one, clearly stated that "the hardest part of tour life is being away from the family". This sentiment is reiterated by Golfer S, a multiple winner worldwide, who said that because of his golf, "I miss my wife, my kids, my parents. I don't see them enough. And that's what is difficult about that". These quotes also serve to juxtapose the viewpoints of some lower ranked players provided earlier, who believed the lives of successful golfers had no such concerns, however, the reality, it appears, is that many top players are subject to various stresses too.

'Friends as enemies': Conflicts and tensions on tour

The networks of relationships that players develop over time can be seen simultaneously as both 'friends' and 'enemies'. The non-permanent and/or partially changeable relations that characterize the emotional ties between people in the golfers' own particular we-groups can often take a "love-hate form" (Elias, 2001a: 219). The rivalries and conflicts between players stem from the fact they are competing against each other for the opportunity to earn the majority of the prize money and potentially qualify for higher tours. The efforts to earn increased prize money and/or ranking points in golf, which can help with the physical and social security many players on tour crave, require professionals to compete

against the very people who represent part of their friendship we-groups. There is a constant switching of roles between being a 'friend' and an 'enemy' from one scenario to another.

The rewards available to professional golfers are in short supply, which leads to the development of a number of internal conflicts between players who, on one hand are required to coexist on tour for mutually beneficial reasons, however, they are also in direct competition with each other on a weekly basis. In many ways, they are more directly involved in conflict with one another, due to the individual focus of competition in golf, than would be the case in football. With such a self-centered focus, the word 'selfish' featured heavily in the responses for the majority of golfers interviewed. Virtually all participants championed the importance of developing friendship we-networks while, at the same time, maintaining an approach narrowly focused on their personal aims. Interviewees were asked what characteristics are required for a successful life on tour. To this end Golfer M replied:

> You are there to work and number one priority has to be your golf … you have to … realize the only person who wants you to do well out there is yourself … [and you] have to do what is best for your golf, no one else's.

Similarly, Golfer L outlined what he perceived to be the personal characteristics required for a successful career on tour:

> I think it [golf] is a very selfish sport and a very individual sport … Very selfish, yeah very selfish. Be in it for yourself. Don't really care what anybody thinks [or] what anybody else does … You've got to be very disciplined and not led astray or anything … find what works for you and do your own thing, don't be a sheep or anything. Don't get led astray by anybody else, don't do what other people do, do your own thing.

It is perhaps unsurprising that players placed a high importance on being selfish given that for many the tour was a means by which they were aiming to provide financial support for themselves and their families. Furthermore, this prioritization was often at the expense of other players on tour, some of whom they would travel with on a weekly basis and thus formed a central part of their friendship we-group on tour. Perhaps the clearest examples of players prioritizing their own needs, which consequently led to internal conflicts, occurred when preparing for a tournament. During the tournament itself there are rules that prohibit offering advice to other players, however, outside of competition there is evidence of players asking for technical guidance from fellow professionals. However, the participants in this study were unlikely to engage in behavior that may give others a competitive advantage over them. This sentiment was clearly articulated by Golfer D, who has a reputation for being good at putting:

> Guys come up to me and they want a lesson on putting … what advantage to me is me giving you a lesson on putting? To make you a better player? They all want to know how I putt well … but I'm not going to give them everything, it's not in my interest to. They're not going to pay me for the lesson. If I said, right, give me a percentage of your winnings this week but they're never going to do that … at the end of the day I'm not going to give away my advantage, just not a chance.

It is clear from this quote that players are not prepared to share information even with so-called 'friends' on tour. Indeed they are, in effect, both friends and enemies at the same time. Similarly, Golfer E explained that during practice rounds in the week running up to the commencement of a tournament players are required to make decisions that may cause friction with others. During practice rounds golfers generally play in groups of two, three, and four, which is referred to as a 'two ball', 'three ball', and 'four ball' respectively. Golfer E explained that he preferred to play in a two ball because "four balls often turned into a

competition", which would take his focus away from preparation, whereas "[a two ball]

would allow more time to practice and work out what needed to be done [for the forthcoming

tournament]". However, Golfer E's preference for playing in a two ball often led to conflict

with other players if they attempted to join the practice group. He continued:

> You could travel with a group of players and they wanted to come and play with you.
>
> If they saw your name down in a two ball they would want to join up. But I had to say
>
> to them "look I want to play just in a two ball" for whatever reasons ... This would irk
>
> some people but ultimately I was there to work.

The examples presented here highlight the types of conflicts that can exist between players

who ordinarily are part of the same friendship 'we-group' network. This is further illustration

that friendships between players are borne out of convenience, rather than the 'real thing', so

to speak. Conflict and tensions among players on tour were also evident when individuals

discussed periods of time when they were not performing as well as they would expect or

hope. This is clearly articulated by Golfer B, a Challenge tour player, who draws a

comparison between playing top amateur events and the transition to becoming a professional

when he first competed on tour eight years previously. He stated that as an amateur you could

be:

> One of the top guys … You turn up at [amateur] events and everybody looks at you
>
> … whereas you turn professional and nobody cares really … everybody is trying as
>
> hard as they can … to be honest nobody cares about anybody else in the pro game …
>
> You just get on with it … You'd be silly to think that people are going to wish you
>
> well done and so on.

Furthermore, players would avoid confiding in other players at all costs. Emotional support

was something of a closed shop and the general consensus was if players were struggling on

and/or off the course then generally their colleagues would be happy they were having a hard

time. Referring to talking to other players about tough times as a professional, Golfer D explained that "one thing is no one's going to care. The majority of people that you tell your woes, half of them will be happy and the other half don't care". Similarly, Golfer F stated that when playing poorly players should offer "no excuses because no one's interested. No one cares about you. No one is interested, nobody cares". The result is that players tended to keep their personal problems to themselves, particularly within the golfing fraternity, in order not to give others an advantage and to also guard against being viewed as a moaner. Such attitudes can also serve to increase and reinforce the perceived levels of loneliness that particular players may harbor. From a figurational standpoint, feelings of loneliness can be exacerbated even when people are surrounded by many others, but when many of these other people have no real positive feelings towards each other (Elias, 2001b). Professional golfers are surrounded by many other people on tour but it appears few, if any, have any real meaningful feelings for each other.

Conclusion

The central objective of this paper was to analyze how male touring professional golfers adjust to life on tour by specifically examining their relationships with fellow golfers. In doing so we have highlighted a workplace culture whereby players begin to adopt, both consciously and subconsciously, the mannerisms, attitudes and behaviors that foster the development of networks of temporary we-group alliances. The touring nature of professional golf, which is increasingly global, constrains golfers to approach their daily lives in a particular way even if they do not always recognize such constraints. The urge to develop friendship networks, and help to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, constrains players to behave in a manner that is expected of them rather than in a way that reflects their actual emotions. Furthermore, there are considerable pressures on players to maintain a

positive attitude, and avoid moaners, even in the face of poor performances and long periods of time away from their friends and families. The relationships between players in 'friendship' groups are not viewed as straightforward and free from problems, but rather closer examination revealed that players are both friends and enemies at the same time. A complex relationship exists where the terms 'friends' and 'enemies' should not be viewed as two separate entities but rather both sides of the same coin. In other words, the relationships between players in friendship networks were characterized by bonds of togetherness and camaraderie with particular we-groups while, at the same time, showing evidence of tensions and conflict between the same players as they are ultimately in direct competition with each other for a share of the overall prize money and prestige that comes from finishing higher up the leaderboard.

The development of we-group friendships among professional golfers, who often have little in common with each other and are regularly in direct competition, should not be viewed as something out of the ordinary and can be explained by drawing on the layers of habitus that influence the formation of we-group friendships (Elias, 2001a). From a figurational viewpoint, a social formation of this type is "both hard and tough, but also flexible and far from immutable. It is, in fact, always in flux" (Elias, 2001a: 209). In short, results from this study indicate an interdependent relationship between players on tour where, on the one hand, players are constrained to coexist with each other on a daily basis for mutually beneficial reasons, however, on the other hand, they are in direct competition with each other for the same prize money and ranking points. At first glance, such apparently paradoxical we-statements, where players show allegiance to a particular group, directly alongside conflict and tension I-statements, where players only concern themselves with their own individual priorities, might appear static in nature. However, this should be viewed as a

process that changes from one context to another (Elias, 2001a). Professional golfers develop the normative codes of behavior expected to be part of a social group while, at the same time, focus on their individual self and compete against each other. This, according to Elias (2001a), is a key part of contemporary society where people's behavior is constantly in flux in large measure because of the lengthening interdependency chains that have been brought about by increasing global processes. For example, from an early age people are expected to have a fairly high degree of self-control and personal independence. Elias (2001a: 144) refers to a scenario, which has been indicated in this study in professional sport, where an individual:

> Is accustomed to competing with others; he [sic] learns early on, when something earns him applause and causes him pride, that is desirable, that is desirable to distinguish oneself from others by personal qualities, efforts and achievements; and he learns to find satisfaction in success of this kind.

But, at the same time, how people behave in such societies leads to limits on the manner in which one can distinguish themselves. In such scenarios one person is not expected to stand out from others and to do so would be to incur disapproval (Elias, 2001a). Most people, therefore, tend to make efforts to conform and to avoid moaning. Striking the right balance between individualism and conformity is always difficult and this is something professional golfers must learn to manage, and thus make adjustments during their life on tour. As we have seen, in one form or another, an attempt to strike this balance brings about numerous tensions and difficulties. These tensions are bound up by the peculiar norms of behavior within the particular social group, such as fallouts between golfers on tour. The traits of a group identity are, therefore, viewed as a "layer of the social habitus built very deeply and firmly into the personality structure of the individual" (Elias, 2001a: 209). At the same time, it is important to highlight that, from a figurational perspective, such levels are not

conceptualized as a crude segmental–nonsegmental dichotomy (Elias, 2001a). Rather, it is various degrees of alliances ranging from tightly knit friendship groups, which do exist in golf, through to fluid, open and impersonal forms of bonding. These layers of friendship groups can overlap and interact with others in a variety of complex ways and exhibit a wide spectrum of 'we-' and 'I-' group feelings and bonds correspondingly (Dunning, 1999).

There is a perception that professional sport in general, and in this specific case golf, is somewhat different to 'regular' occupations. Professional golfers are often thought to live dglamorous lifestyles whereby players travel the world having fun with their friends. Indeed, professional sport is considered by many as a relatively prestigious occupation. This paper offers the antithesis to some of these common sense assumptions and, in doing so, aims to provide a more adequate viewpoint on the 'realities' of life in professional sport. The glamorous portrayal of life on tour sometimes presented by the media is actually far from the 'truth', where many players are often terribly lonely and are involved in somewhat superficial relationships characterized by considerable tensions. Players could, of course, leave the tour and take up different occupations, however, such was their deeply rooted involvement in the sport, and the fact that many felt that a big break (or the next tournament win) was just around the corner, that many professionals felt it difficult to disengage from the game, given the large rewards that are also on offer for the most successful. Thus, whilst many of our participants realized they could make a career out of golf, or by becoming a'pro' within a local club, they continued to put up with the drudgery that can be life on tour for what they perceived to be the potential long term benefits. By highlighting how professional golfers make sense of their everyday lives this research can also help shed light on the relationship between workers in a variety of highly skilled occupations with similar non-settler transient migratory patterns. For example, tennis players, European track and field athletics, Grand

Prix circuit drivers, skiers, and cyclists undertake events at different locations, often in different countries and continents, from one week to the next, and thus have similar transitory migratory patterns to the golfers presented in this paper (Maguire, 2011a; Roderick, 2013). Despite the contributions that this research could make to understanding the lives of professional athletes in the aforementioned sports, studies specifically conducted on these workplaces would, naturally, provide an excellent avenue for future research in its own right and build on this particular study. Furthermore, there are a number of other potential avenues for future research. For example, future projects could examine the lives of others who are enmeshed in the professional golfers' figuration. This may include player caddies, many of whom will have an identical travel itinerary to the golfers but generally work for a basic wage and a small percentage of any prize money won by the player. It is likely, therefore, that caddies are even more prone to the negative aspects of life on tour but with only a fraction of the supposed benefits.

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Table 1:*Participant career trajectories*

Participant	Trajectory to tour
Golfer A	Played on EPGA tour for a period spanning 20 years in total. For 16 of those years had full playing rights and won one event. In the intervening four years had full playing rights on Challenge tour and won one event.
Golfer B	Played four years with full playing rights on Challenge tour followed by four years with full playing rights on EuroPro tour. Has also played some EPGA tour events.
Golfer C	Played on EPGA tour for a period of over 20 years. For 18 of those years had full playing rights and won one event. Following this played on Seniors tour for six years. Has also played some Challenge tour events.
Golfer D	Played some events on EPGA tour spanning three years before earning full playing rights on Seniors tour for the following three years. Has also played some Challenge tour and EuroPro tour events.
Golfer E	Played on EPGA tour for a period spanning 11 years in total. For nine of those years had full playing rights. Has also played some Challenge tour events and had one win.
Golfer F	Played on Challenge tour for a period spanning nine years in total. For three of those years had full playing rights and for the other six years played on EuroPro tour.
Golfer G	Played on Challenge tour for a period spanning four years. For two of those years had full playing rights and for the other two played on EuroPro tour and had two wins.
Golfer H	Had full playing rights on EPGA tour for a period of 13 years.
Golfer I	Played one year on EuroPro tour followed by one year on EPD tour.
Golfer J	Had full playing rights on EPGA tour for five years. Has also played some Challenge tour events.
Golfer K	Played on EPGA tour for a period spanning 12 years in total. For eight of those years had full playing rights and for the remaining four played on Challenge tour.
Golfer L	Played for four years on EuroPro tour followed by one year on Challenge tour.
Golfer M	Played for two years on EPD tour.
Golfer N	Played on EPGA tour for a period of 19 years in total. For 11 of those years had full playing rights and won one event.
Golfer O	Played for five years on EPGA tour and won one event.
Golfer P	Played on Challenge tour for one year and some local events.

Golfer Q	Played on the EuroPro tour for eight years and has experience playing events on Challenge tour, US Hooters tour, Asian tour, and various local satellite tours.
Golfer R	Played a 'world tour' consisting of a combination of EPGA, USPGA, and other tournaments sanctioned by various worldwide organisations. Golfer R played EPGA tour events for a period spanning 21 seasons and won 17 events worldwide, one of these a Major Championship. Golfer R spent a number of weeks in the top 10 of the Official World Golf Rankings.
Golfer S	Played a 'world tour' consisting of a combination of EPGA, USPGA, and other tournaments sanctioned by various worldwide organisations. Golfer S played EPGA events tour over a period of more than 25 years and won six main tour events.
Golfer T	Played a 'world tour' consisting of a combination of EPGA, USPGA, and other tournaments sanctioned by various worldwide organisations. Golfer T played EPGA tour events for a period spanning 18 seasons in total and won 19 events worldwide, one of these was a Major Championship. Golfer T was a former number one in the Official World Golf Rankings.