brought to you by



at Cheltenham and Gloucester

UNIVERSITY OF

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following unpublished document:

Allen-Collinson, Jacquelyn and Hockey, John C (2015) Identity challenges and identity work: sporting embodiment and disrupted identity, Working the Interactionist Tradition: Contributions, Legacies and Prospects. In: 6th European Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction Conference, 29-31 July 2015, Salford, Manchester. (Unpublished)

EPrint URI: http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/3479

Disclaimer

The University of Gloucestershire has obtained warranties from all depositors as to their title in the material deposited and as to their right to deposit such material.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation or warranties of commercial utility, title, or fitness for a particular purpose or any other warranty, express or implied in respect of any material deposited.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation that the use of the materials will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark or other property or proprietary rights.

The University of Gloucestershire accepts no liability for any infringement of intellectual property rights in any material deposited but will remove such material from public view pending investigation in the event of an allegation of any such infringement.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280682760

Allen-Collinson, J. & Hockey, J. (2015) Identity challenges and identity work: sporting embodiment and disrupted identity, Working the Interactionist Tradition: Contributions, Lega...

Conference Paper · July 2015

READS

15

2 authors:



Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson
University of Lincoln

134 PUBLICATIONS 1,125 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



John Hockey

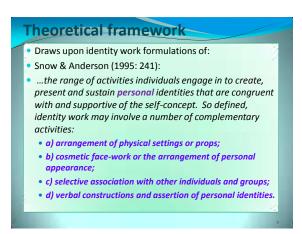
University of Gloucestershire

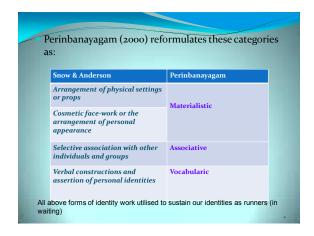
58 PUBLICATIONS **909** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

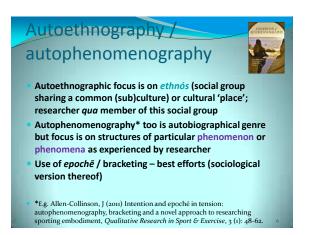












Materialistic identification

- During extended period of injury & rehabilitation, physical settings used
- E.g. adherence to same geographical routes (primarily local parkland) for rehab walking & other exercises previously training runs
- Practically / functionally, walking/exercising on softer, grassy surfaces helped protect knee joints from impact of road or pavement walking.
- Symbolically, continuing to tread some of our favoured running routes represented commitment:
- to training 'space' -geographical & temporal to 'restitution narrative' (Arthur Frank) - re full running fitness



- Another materialistic identification combines props & arrangement of personal appearance via use of objects: running kit. Not only did we retain the discipline of walking our training routes, but also continued to wear our running gear continuity of self:
- We've made a joint decision today: rather than undertaking the rehab in our usual street clothes, we are going to walk around the park in our training gear. At least we'll look like runners - to ourselves as much as to anyone else. Feel a bit ambivalent, however, as it's somewhat poignant pulling on the training gear when it's all too apparent we are not running! (Log 2)
- Also, Silver (1996) on role of transitional objects giving coherence to incoherent & unsettled periods

Personal appearance - via bodywork:

I noticed today that it's 4 months since we have run. What's interesting is that neither of us has put on any extra weight, so whilst at the moment we can't run or even jog, we still look like distance runners. That helps because I can still see myself in the mirror and not someone else. I feel that would be even more difficult if I couldn't see my proper self.

I know I can't run at the moment, I know I'm totally unfit for running, but it looks as if I am still running. That's comforting because objectively I know when I start running again the experience will not be as hard as if I were carrying surplus poundage. More importantly, I feel I am still here. I can see my running self. So because I still look like I can run, the possibility is I will eventually. (Log 2)

Associative identification

A I R

Via materialistic identification (trainers, Gore-Tex® | A | jackets, tracksters, etc) also recognisable by fellow runners – materialistic-associative identification nexus:

- As the self is dressed, it is simultaneously addressed, for, whenever we clothe ourselves, we dress 'toward' or address some audience whose validating responses are essential to the establishment of our self (Stone, 1977: 101-102)
- Whilst audience responses not *essential* to our establishment/maintenance of self, re-affirmed our claim to runner identities:
- Brief but cheering encounter with 'Dave the Rave' this morning...As he came charging up in his usual style, he nodded and called out to J.: "New Nike Pegs?" "Aye," responded J.: "I might not be able to run, but at least I look like a runner!". "You're on the way back" was the rejoinder. It lifted our spirits. (Log 2)

Small forms of 'civil attention' (c.f. Goffman, 1966) welcome acknowledgement from other subcultural insider members

- Significant at time as our previous clubs were geographically distant no social support from close running friends
- Nevertheless, 'selective association' (Snow & Anderson, 1995) with running friends around the UK, via telephone, e-mail, text, etc.
- Appreciated their encouragement, empathy & practical advice
- Most valued element their continuing perception of us as distance runners; (re)validation of our distancerunner social identities

Vocabularic identification

Snow & Anderson's 'verbal constructions and assertion of personal identities' – aka *identity talk*

We embraced identity of *real* runner via:

'verbal and expressive confirmation of one's acceptance of and attachment to the social identity ...' (Snow & Anderson, 1995, p. 245)

Also 'associational distancing' (p. 241) contrasting ourselves vocabularically with less committed, 'fairweather runners', or 'joggers':

• Come on now, Collinson, dig in there! When the going gets tough, the tough ... Don't moan and groan. You don't want to be an old ... out-of-condition jogger, do you now?! (Log 1)

Another form of identity talk - enlivened tedium of rehabilitation - narratives of happier running past.

Esp. narratives of endurance & perseverance in face of difficulty (see also Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2015):

• Today we have been struggling with the repeat 5 minute 'shuttle runs', trying to keep our running form, which is difficult because of lack of fitness, and monitoring our knees intently, as they begin to complain when our form goes due to that lack. In between repeats we have been reminiscing about other struggles, like when I decided to try to reduce my asthma medication and eventually managed to come off it completely - even for running - much to my delight. "God, there were times when I thought you were going to pass out with the effort," says J, "but you always kept going, no matter how tough it got. I reckon you would pass 'P' Company (UK parachute forces selection test)!" (Log 2)

Summary

- Identity work utilised during 2-yr injury & rehabilitation period to sustain runner identities, via (intertwined):
 - Materialistic use of physical settings:
 - Associative association with other runners
 - Vocabularic identity talk
- Retained personal running identities (meanings we attributed to self)
- Maintained social identities as runners in eyes of fellow-runners
- Re more generalised other social identities as runners not validated
- No fundamental contestation, however, as personal identities so strong
- Plus self-concept balance between idealised image as serious runner and 'imputed social identities' (Snow & Anderson, 1995, p. 240) that significant others attributed, not dissonant

