Cardiff University School of Social Sciences

‘Five for Fighting’: The Culture and Practice of Legitimised Violence in Professional Ice Hockey

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DECLARATION

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award.

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Summary

This research investigates the phenomenon of violence through the lens of legitimised violence in ice hockey. The study locates ice hockey violence among the boundaries of criminality, where it is managed, organised and regulated outside of the criminal justice system. Here, violence is organised through an accepted code of conduct, widely understood and acknowledged by players, spectators and regulators. Violence is organised through the culture of hockey, situated in the spectacle of entertainment, the audience often displaying a carnivalesque thirst for violence. In sport, the criminological boundaries of violence are not set and enforced by criminal justice agencies; rather they are constructed, managed and mediated through the culture of the sport and an accepted code of behaviour.

Reflecting on an extended ethnography of the culture of professional hockey, this thesis considers the ever-changing cultural climate of sanctioned violence in the sport. Through ethnographic observation and extensive visually-elicited interviews; cultural and social identity, motives of violent behaviour, and situated meanings of hockey players are uncovered in a manner that has historically not been prioritised within criminological research of this area. The process of legitimisation of this physical violence is formed and shaped not only by players engaging in the sport, but by cultural factors that exist beyond the confines of the rink. Informed by broad structural themes such as power, masculinity and finance; shared interactions on the ice are a small part of the wider accepted justifications for otherwise illegal acts of violence.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my father Peter William Brock (1935-2014), a prolific collector of knowledge, who always sought to remind me that:

> *"There must be a beginning of any great matter, but the continuing to the end until it be thoroughly finished yields the true glory"*
>
> Sir Francis Drake.

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my children have been a continual support and encouragement to me. I hope that by completing this thesis I have reminded them of the need to work hard, to keep trying even when things are difficult and the importance of the support of family and friends. Issy, I would not have been able to continue were it not for your constant encouragement and unwavering belief in me. Theo, you were a constant reminder to get things done so that we can go off and explore. Without the encouragement of the three of you I would have struggled more with the often conflicting demands of study and family life, thank you all for your patience.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Context

"The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too."
(Michael Bakunin, 1974:58).

There is an explosion of noise as Bandit pushes both his hands onto the shoulders of Price. The two players nod in affirmation to each other and ceremoniously shake both their wrists simultaneously, dropping their sticks and padded gloves to the floor. Almost like a mirror image they reach up to undo their chin straps while skating to centre ice, retaining eye contact the whole time. They drop their helmets to the floor and the introduction to 'Enter Sandman' by Metallica comes over the PA system. Several thousand voices shout and cheer, some shouting profanities or insults, but many shouting positive encouragement to the player of their choice as a rhythm of clapping and feet stomping brings the mood to a crescendo. It is not only the players on the ice who are involved in this act, the crowd becomes part of the act creating a carnivalesque arena, each person engaged in some way in the celebration of a violent dispute emerging on the ice.

The two players are taking miniscule steps on their skates, their fists raised to their faces as they bob left and right facing up to each other. Other players on the ice draw back, occasionally swiping with their sticks at the stray gloves in order to maintain a

free zone around the combatants. This continues for more than 10 seconds as the players size each other up, then Bandit leans in, his substantial frame reaching over 6'8" on skates, reaching over to Price and catching him off guard with a left handed punch to the side of his head, Price reaches in and at over 6" shorter tries to uppercut Bandit's jaw, but Bandit is prepared for this and blocks the punch, grabbing hold of Price's right arm, his favoured fighting side and holding his arm down to prevent further attack. Using the additional support of his opponents body Bandit weighs in with punch after punch to the face of a clearly startled Price. There is red mist in the air as one of the punches opens up a gash over Price's eye. Blood is not only obscuring Price's vision but is also now beginning to spray to the floor with every hit Bandit makes. At the sign of blood the referee and linesman begin to signal to the players that they will stop the fight, but Price shakes his head, no. The players continue to wrestle, both now holding on to swathes of jersey material preventing each other from getting an arm free, it is Price who manages to release his left arm first and throws a wide punch towards Bandit while Bandit simultaneously releases his other sleeve. The momentum of throwing the punch topples Price off his feet and he begins to cycle his feet desperately trying to get purchase on the ice. While Bandit takes advantage of the situation and forces him to the ground, a large chunk of the front of his jersey held in his left hand holding Price's head away from the ice, while Bandit's right hand is drawn back at the elbow, fist clenched in an act of dominance but no longer fighting. The remaining players on the ice and on the bench tap their sticks on the ice as a sign of respect. The linesman skate in, take hold of a player each and skate them over to their respective penalty boxes. Bandit skates in with his arms aloft at the crowd who are all cheering his name, he looks over at Price who is being removed from the box and skated over to the locker room to receive medical

attention and shouts "*Good fight buddy, good fight*". The fans are enjoying the injury to the opposition, some are chanting "*You-Got-Battered*" while others are applauding the player off the ice as a sign of respect. Bandit takes a seat in the sin bin, turning around to wave at some little kids who are behind the plexi glass of the sin bin giving him thumbs up signs, he raises his fists at them grinning an almost toothless grin (the sign of years spent as a hockey player) while they pose with their fists raised and slap the glass at him. He turns to the off-ice officials in the time-keepers box to his left and says "*Good fight eh*!" before squirting some water on his face. His team mates skate over to the box with his equipment while the rink maintenance staff walk onto the ice with a spade and a bucket. They use the spade to take the surface layer of the ice off where it is stained red from the blood, dumping it into the bucket and smoothing over the surface with their training shoes. During the lull between the fight and the recommencement of the game Bandit looks down at his knuckles, massaging the back of his hand and winces in pain. Any sign of discomfort is fleeting as he is soon back on his feet standing in the sin bin and watching the game.

The above example is an illustration of the culture of legitimate violence within the ice hockey arena – a sphere in which the transgressor holds the power, in direct challenge to the dominant order of society. Presdee argues that carnival is 'a domain in which the pleasure of playing at the boundaries is most clearly provided for' (2000:32). The ice hockey arena becomes the site of carnival, with social actors ready to transgress and perform. In his study of *Rabelais,* Bakhtin argues that 'carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because the very idea embraces all the people' (1984:7). Michael Holquist makes the point clear in his prologue to Bakhtin's (1984) work. In

expanding Presdee's work on 'carnival' the ice hockey arena illustrates "irrational, senseless, offensive behaviour – the carnival sanctions enjoyable behaviour that in the ordered world we would often accept as criminal" (2000:39).

This is not an unusual event, but is highly familiar behaviour repeated every weekend in arenas all over the UK and also in the USA and Canada. There is nothing about this incident that is considered unusual by those who watch professional ice hockey[1] matches, the actions play out similarly whether the game is in the Newcastle, Montreal or Los Angeles. This is a recognisable part of professional ice hockey. Not only do the players know how to act, but the entertainment staff know how to respond with lighting and music, and the fans know what to expect and what constitutes a fair fight, a good fight or unsatisfying fight. While highly irregular in other contexts, even in other sports, but in the world of ice hockey this is a regular night, a hockey night.

Ice hockey is unusual in the manner that it permits forms of violence and pugilism both within the rules, and beyond the rules, within the culture of the game. There are no other circumstances within the UK where a bare knuckle fist fight would occur in full public view without drawing the attention of the police or authorities. The bare-knuckle fist-fight has gradually retreated from the legitimate sphere through increased regulation of boxing and other contact sports, and by establishing stringent rules and lengthy punishments to those that engage in this kind of behaviour. However, in a hockey rink in the UK, a crowd composed of families, retirees, school children and even young babies will gather and watch a game in which serious fist-

[1] The term ice hockey is a British saying. In the United States and Canada as well as most European and Russian countries it is simply referred to as hockey. What the British call hockey, is termed 'field hockey' in North America. For the purpose of this thesis the term hockey is to be understood as being ice hockey.

fights (and other forms of serious violence) are frequent and tolerated occurrences. Hockey is a game where the purpose is to score goals on the opponent's net and score more goals than the opposition in order to win. Nowhere in the purpose of the game is there a proviso for allowing interruptions for bare knuckle fist fights, no points are awarded for successfully injuring an opponent, or taking them out of the game. Yet this kind of fighting occurs in the majority of games in many professional hockey leagues.

Violence in hockey is not the uncontrolled violence of an alcohol-fuelled street fight; neither does the fight constitute pre-meditated assault on an unsuspecting victim. The fist-fight in hockey is illegal according to game rules, yet is an implicitly condoned act that is accepted by the players, the spectators, the team owners and the referees as being 'just part of the game'. An action that is not abhorrent to the majority of players and supporters, it is "socially-acquired normative conduct" (Smith, 1975). In order to make sense of this behaviour we need to consider the socially constructed nature of the event.

To understand this event we need to consider not only the sport of hockey itself, but wider considerations of violence, sport, masculinity, performance, team work, spectators, audience, working cultures, deviance, rule-breaking, emotions and culture. While one could analyse the microsociology of the minute details of the fight, the rules of engagement in dropping the gloves and skating to centre ice, there is more that is involved here. We can cast our net wider to develop an understanding of the culture that both legitimises and encourages this behaviour in the game, the culture that the players both construct and are constructed by.

This thesis, while it is an ethnography of the working culture of hockey players, is about violence, about particular users of violence, providing a lens through which to view violence and the individuals and groups who use it. I do not consider myself a sports ethnographer - but rather a socio-cultural-criminologist who is interested in how people frame their violent behaviour outside of the criminocentric definitions of crime and law that dominate research of this type. This thesis thus looks at both the bigger picture of human action, interaction and behaviour in a violent context; and also the narrower image of how one group of individuals rationalise, excuse and legitimise their behaviour within the context of sanctioned violence in ice hockey, the '*verstehen*[2]' context of social action.

For many criminologists and sociologists of deviance it is important to understand crime and violence as innate, to view violence outside of the criminocentric gaze (Ferrell *et al,* 2008; Hayward *et al*, 2004). Violence is not an unusual act in any culture; to varying extents, violence, aggression and physical force are something that every social actor both undertakes and is in receipt of. If violence is something that we all do, we therefore have to understand it in terms of the culture that mediates, views and constructs an analysis of it.

> Once we step away from the legal and moral imperatives that have shaped research on violence, we are confronted with the diverse and sometimes complex motivations that shade the variegated practice of violence in social life.
> (Jackman 2002:400)

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[2] 'verstehen', meaning 'to understand' is associated with Weber's desire for deep understanding and stands in opposition to quantitative positivist social science research.

Violence can thus take many forms and while a typology of violence in the sport will be presented in Chapter Five, it is important to clarify from the outset the use of the term. Violence can be a range of things, from threatening words to homicide, and for some, including structural harms relating to power inequalities in the form of industrial accidents, injury, and social harms. As Jackman (2002) states, not all acts of violence are inherently criminal, or are judged to be so, it is therefore important to broaden the discussion of violence, away from a narrow criminocentric definition to include a broad range of actions and behaviours. Using the lens of sanctioned - or at least to some extent legitimised - violence, such as that demonstrated in hockey, we can uncover not only an account of how hockey players use violence themselves but also understand how individuals construct a definition of acceptable violence, criminality, deviance, normality, motive and identity.

Ethnographic Gaze

While the methods chapter will give a structured account of how I gained access to the research field, it is worth explanation from the outset. This research stems from not only a season-long ethnography of one particular professional hockey team, where the privileged access I was granted was essential for the understanding of the culture, but these observations also come from the 18 years I have spent as an observer of hockey, initially as a fan and then eventually as a writer for a local hockey team and an international sporting publication. This access has never been taken for granted and I am hugely thankful to every one of the players, team officials, referees, owners and spectators that have assisted me in understanding the sport, gaining access to several clubs over the years and supporting my interest in the study of violence in this context.

As Chapter Three will demonstrate there is a paucity of research into hockey specifically. With rare exceptions, all academic study has occurred in North America and used large NHL data sets and statistical tests to establish the cause of violence in the game, the extent of violence, and which factors encourage violent acts. While this provides a useful numerical account of violence, there is a clash here with my epistemological position. Given that all action, including violence, is socially constructed, there is a limit to the understanding that we may gain from the analysis of large quantitative data sets. In order to understand the ways that people view violence, how they use violence, how it is defined, understood and reasoned, we need to fully understand the culture in which violence is constructed.

There is no doubt that, being without precise definition, violence has many variances in how it is performed, defined, used and understood. It is not simply that each group has a different definition, understanding and way of constructing different violent acts; but that every individual person has numerous definitions, understandings and constructions of what behaviour constitutes violence, varying greatly according to the context within which the violence occurs and is viewed. It follows then, that in order to begin to understand the violent behaviour exhibited in this game and the ways in which people justify, construct, rationalise and neutralise this, we need to understand the culture of those that both view and use that behaviour. The access that I obtained to a professional Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL) team gave me the opportunity to observe, communicate with, and be among the team for an entire hockey season. I already had extensive experience of hockey, having previously undertaken research in my earlier two MSc dissertations (2009, 2010) and having worked for hockey clubs as a writer, I thus entered the field with an understanding of the culture within which I would be submerged. This thesis,

while based primarily on an intensive period of ethnographic observation, also draws upon the accumulated knowledge, contact, access and information that I had gained as a hockey spectator, an off-ice official, a writer and finally as a researcher.

Hockey Violence

Hockey is often perceived as being "perhaps the most vicious sport for participants" (Yaegar 1979:22). The oft repeated phrase in hockey "If you can't beat them in the alley, you can't beat them on the ice" (Levin 2006) signifies the central role of physicality and aggression within the sport. Professional hockey players tend to be aware of their responsibility for physicality on the ice beyond that required for the simple scoring of a goal. Unlike many depictions of other types of violence, players are also able to utilise a degree of discretion in when to 'behave' and when to engage in violent acts beyond that allowed in the rule book (Colburn 1986; Bernstein 2006). Fighting in hockey is "tacitly permitted" (Colburn 1986) by the relatively short penalty of five minutes in the penalty box (or sin bin)[3]. The lack of legal interest in this behaviour and the tendency for players, officials and leagues to allow the continuation of this element of the game is interesting as it is unique within the sport of hockey. It is of note though that the fist fight is an incredibly rare occurrence in many European and Russian countries where hockey is incredibly popular. Here, as in the Olympic and World Championship games, whilst there remains a high level of physicality in the form of body contact, checking and physical dominance, the fist fight is not permitted. The punishment for fighting varies between these leagues, but

[3] The penalty box, or 'sin bin' is a relatively small box to the side of the ice with a doorway onto the ice surface. It contains a bench and space for no more than two or three players at a time. When given a penalty, players must move to the sin bin until the required time is spent, upon which they may return to the ice with a clean sheet, their punishment being 'spent'.

often stretches to a ban of several games, effectively policing the fist fight out of the game, as teams find other ways of dealing with the aggression that emerges from the sport. The game of hockey in the UK follows a similar rule book to that of the professional leagues in North America where physicality generally and fighting specifically are accepted (although punished by time spent in the sin bin). There are many reasons for the decision by UK leagues to follow the North American pattern which will be discussed in the following chapters. It is worth noting though, that as many as 55% of players in this league are 'import' players from North America.

Previous Pilot Research

In part-fulfilment of my two MSc degrees in criminology and social science research methods, research was undertaken regarding violence in the EIHL. It is important to outline these from the outset as, while they constitute separate research topics to the current thesis, they form pilot studies to the current investigation, building a picture of UK hockey that, as will be examined in Chapter Three has largely been missing in social research.

In "Embracing the Goon: The Legitimisation of Violence in the UK's Elite Ice Hockey League" (2009) I undertook a broad qualitative investigation into violence in the EIHL. Over the course of qualitative interviews with several hockey players, referees, team owners, coaches and off-ice officials, I was able to provide an overview of the accounts of a broad range of 'agents' of hockey violence. In this dissertation, I presented an image of a culture in which each of the varied agents involved held a similar understanding of the nature of violence in the sport and who

each used similar terms in explaining 'The Code[4]' of violence. In doing so, this established that the culture of the sport involves not only those who play the game, but those who are involved in the policing of the sport and those who own the teams, market the sport, and make decisions on legality and punishment issues.

Integral to the understanding of this issue was the role the spectators play in the endorsement of violence, their awareness of the reasons behind the violent behaviour and their opinions on the level of violence that should be present in the sport. To this end, I completed my second MSc dissertation, (Social Science Research Methods), a mixed methods analysis of spectators endorsement of violence "Red Mist and Civilisation: Spectators perceptions of violence in the UK's EIHL" (2010). This research incorporated a large scale online survey of EIHL hockey fans and in-depth qualitative focus groups that used visual data to elicit responses and ascertain levels of understanding among spectators. The online survey of 1,327 hockey spectators showed that fans provided justifications for violence in the sport, and that these were often couched in similar terms to those used by others involved in the sport that had been uncovered in the 2009 dissertation with team owners, referees, players and coaches. 82% of survey respondents felt that violence increased in the sport due to the desire of spectators to witness an altercation. 76% of respondents thought it was acceptable to deliberately target a broader audience to the sport using images of fighting or violence, with 90% believing that even the more violent aspects of the sport, including fist-fights were suitable for a family audience. Focus groups, using visual elicitation techniques confirmed that spectators had a pragmatic ideology legitimising violence in the sport for the dual aims of dealing with the expected

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[4] 'The Code' is the name given to the unwritten rules of violence in hockey. It is a term understood by players, spectators and the media and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

aggression in the game and for the economic benefit of enticing a crowd who would be less likely to attend a game which featured lower levels of violence and fighting.

These two studies provide a broad understanding of a range of attitudes towards violence in the league. The analysis of that research allowed for the development of research themes that would expand on this knowledge. In particular, I was keen to establish from the outset a greater understanding of the culture of the sport from the players' perspectives and to obtain retrospective accounts of motive for individual acts in an attempt to discover if the seemingly all-encompassing acceptance of the code of violence could withstand the scrutiny of intensive observation and elicitation. Despite being informed by the previous pilot research, this thesis is unique as it provides an ethnographic perspective of the culture and violence in the sport, beyond an interview account. Throughout this thesis it will be demonstrated that ethnographic methods allowed for a rich detailed understanding of the culture which was able to provide a unique viewpoint of the situation, beyond the mediated accounts of players in interview.

Research Questions and Themes

From a constructionist perspective using an ethnographic focus I was keen from the outset to not place too narrow a limitation on this research and as such I avoided the development of limited research questions; rather, aiming to ground my findings in the data that I 'lived'. A further account of this process is found in Chapter Four of this thesis. Despite my previous research, a lifelong appreciation of hockey and an academic understanding of criminology and violence, I was keen to allow research questions to emerge from the data, rather than restrict the fieldwork. Broad research themes and focuses were developed which allowed questions and themes to emerge both during my fieldwork, but also, as I analysed and wrote up the research.

The initial research focus was broadly based on the following research aims:

- To describe and analyse key dimensions of the occupational culture(s) of professional hockey players
- To explore the sources and social processes by which such cultures emerge and are sustained
- To elicit retrospective accounts of motives for violent behaviour and justifications for its use.
- To examine the relationship of cultural traits with players behaviour on and off ice

That said, at any point in the research my fieldnotes and research diary were full of questions, and rather than a strict scientific approach whereby I gradually provided answers to these questions, I believe that at the end of the research and after writing up this thesis I am now left with many new questions that initially did not appear to be of interest and would provide interesting future research projects. After my first week in the field, my notebook looked like a long list of questions: Why do players use violence? What motivates individual acts of violence? Why do individuals choose not to partake in this violence? Why do particular players assign themselves the role of fighter or enforcer for the team and take responsibility for fist fighting? What purposes do players believe violence serves? Why do players risk their bodies in this way? What do players gain from the level of violence in the game? Do players enjoy the violence? What effect does the sanctioned violence have on the players' bodies? What motivates the players to use their bodies in these ways? How are players socialised into the culture of the sport? What does an understanding of violence in this context give in terms of understanding other types of violence or deviant acts? Combining many of these questions, this thesis questions the culture

of the sport, the acceptance of violent behaviour, the ways in which the violence is understood, legitimised or explained. In doing so, it examines the taken for granted assumption that there are concrete answers to the research questions and in doing so allows an analysis of the complexities of cultural life and of social actors.

Chapter Two of this thesis provides a loose theoretical frame upon which the data can be analysed. Rather, than provide a hypothesis, this scaffold has emerged in a grounded manner through the process of designing, conducting, analysing and writing up this research. Chapter Three provides an overview of empirical literature in this area and that of other areas which have emerged as being integral to the understanding of this subject area. Chapter Four gives an account of the methods used in conducting the research, the epistemological stance of the thesis and makes a claim that in order to understand the nature and culture of legitimised violence, in-depth qualitative ethnographic research is a fruitful way in which to investigate the phenomena.

In the first of three specific findings chapters, Chapter Five provides an overview of the culture of professional hockey, along with an account of the extent and nature of legitimised violence within this context. Chapter Six is dedicated to what hockey players refer to as 'The Code' a list of unwritten rules which both explain and excuse violent acts on the ice. These excuses are divided into two parts, those that are rationalised or neutralised on the basis of the function of a certain level of violence in the sport; and those that excuse violence as being integral to the continued financial success of this minority sport in the UK, in terms of drawing a crowd and enticing a fan base. Chapter Seven focuses on the 'foreground' of the violent culture, pointing to some of the limitations of the player provided neutralisations of 'The Code' and arguing that there is an important element that the player's accounts ignore, that of

excitement, emotion and the edgework involved in ‘skating’ close to the edge of the boundaries of deviance.

Chapter Eight forms the final discussion, drawing together the themes discussed in the previous three chapters and engaging in greater detail with both empirical and theoretical literature in order to build an understanding of this unique lens through which legitimate violence may be examined.

Chapter Two

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Introduction – Finding an academic discipline

Ethnographic research takes an interpretive approach which allows theory to emerge from the data during and after fieldwork. The conceptual scaffold presented in this chapter was thus developed throughout the process of the data collection and emerged through the continued analysis of the data and the development of themes and structure. As Atkinson and Young (2008) state, there are no less than 26 theories that can explain ice hockey violence, from biological and psychological determinism, learning theories and ideas of rational choice, with theories being highly dependent upon methodology chosen and the focus of the research. In such an under-researched area there are any number of theoretical understandings that could be presented in a thesis from the data that was collected and behaviour that was observed. The selection of three broad theoretical concepts allows numerous themes and ideas to develop over time and through the process of writing and presenting the data. The eventual theoretical framework that is presented in this chapter is derived from the ongoing analysis and representation of the data, while some concepts were clear from the outset of the research; others were only explored after leaving the field and becoming familiar with the data. By allowing the data to inform the construction of theory over time, one allows a firm theoretical framework to emerge grounded in both data and analysis.

The analysis of the data draws on three distinct bodies of work, enabling us to understand from multi-disciplinary viewpoints the complex nature of the culture of professional ice hockey and its tolerance and encouragement of violent behaviour. The distinction between sociological and criminological theories can potentially limit the scope of research that is carried out. From the outset, I was keen to draw on multi-disciplinary literature, acknowledging that social action and cultural behaviour are not discipline specific. As explained in Chapter One, rather than this research forming a theory of play, of organised sport, or of criminal violence; the thesis is a multi-layered perspective of culture that informs the ways in which the game is performed and in turn how the game itself informs culture. This ethnography is of a violent culture, viewed through the lens of professional hockey, of teams, of play and of interaction, rather than being an ethnography of sport itself. The concepts relied upon in this chapter draw from a range of sociological and criminological theories without drawing an artificial distinction between the two disciplines. As Ray contends "violence is not a criminocentric concept – it is inherently subjective. It is bound up in cultural understanding, legitimisation or distanciation" (2011:4) therefore to limit the discussion of violence to criminocentric definitions is to ignore the plethora of social behaviour that occurs outside of this sphere.

As such, this chapter explores three wide-ranging bodies of work, each of which deploys a different approach to developing theoretical understanding of violent behaviour. First, I draw upon the work of a number of interaction theorists, specifically Erving Goffman (1959) and Randall Collins (2008). Second, a broader overview of the sociology of deviance, culture and subculture such as that given by Becker (1963), Sykes and Matza (1957), Matza (1964) and their critics. Third, the particular conceptual contribution of work that considers itself 'cultural criminology'

is considered (for example, the large body of work of Ferrell, Hayward, Young, Presdee, and Lyng). By detailing these three areas individually I will not only introduce their effectiveness in making sense of the research data, but also explain their limitations in providing the only explanation needed to understand the culture of violence legitimisation in hockey. Each of these will be introduced in turn before a final consideration of the combined theoretical foundation is discussed.

The practicalities of research are such that during a period of ethnography and the process of writing up and presenting findings, theories and concepts emerge, are modified and extended. The presentation of these themes here acknowledges that this chapter was written after the completion of the fieldwork and as such, refers to the concepts that proved to be most useful in understanding the data.

Part One: Erving Goffman, Randall Collins and Interactionist Micro-Sociology

Erving Goffman

Many of the works of Erving Goffman, specifically his book The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life (1959) and his essays on the Interaction Ritual (1967) are useful in understanding how individuals perform roles and interact with one another in specific ways in order to create order and give meaning to their lives.

Culture, Consensus, Performance and Dramaturgy

In order to understand hockey we need to take full account of the fact that it is performative and involves a range of actors, not only those who are playing the game. There is an audience and there are similarities between the sport and that of other occupational cultures and subcultures as well as other sports. The concept of

consensus is integral to culture and specifically to the culture of an occupation or group of people who have the same aims and goals. Goffman argues that this consensus may simply be a veneer, presented to the outside world:

> …this veneer of consensus, is facilitated by each participant concealing his own wants behind statements which assert values to which everyone present feels obliged to give lip service….Each participant is allowed to establish the tentative official rule regarding matters which are vital to him but not immediately important to others e.g. the rationalisations and justifications by which he accounts for his past activity….A kind of interactional modus vivendi.
> (Goffman 1959:20-21).

Professional hockey, like many sports that comprise a team of players and an opposition speaks to the importance of Goffman's insight into the concept of group consensus. A consensus in a group or subculture is necessary in terms of the group's belief in their justifications of behaviour that has been carried out. Goffman argues that groups often tell and re-tell stories which affirm their goals, discourses and beliefs and renounce others that do not fit in with the aims of the whole, acting as almost a 'consensus lip-service' (1959:21). To Goffman, as to other theorists such as Chicago School's Robert Park, when individuals form part of a group, they perform a role to that group and another role alongside that group to others:

> …it is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role…It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves.
> (Park 1950:249).

Goffman thus argues that individuals engage in performances in every circumstance and that they are capable of giving a variety of different performances in different situations as individuals. Furthermore, that these performances can join with others of like mind or of like occupational goal to create a team of people involved in giving a performance. Along with the analogy of performance comes the concept of front and back stage regions. Front stage being where the performance is conducted and the backstage being an area where performers can take off the mask and feel free to be themselves. This will be further discussed in the methods chapter that follows.

Professional ice hockey is inherently dramaturgical. Placing Goffman's dramaturgical thesis in context, he explains that an establishment can be viewed in five ways: *Technically*, as an efficient system; *politically*, in terms of the social controls; *structurally*, considering status divisions and social groupings; *culturally*, in terms of moral values; and *dramaturgically*, as a performance. In terms of the focus of this research, it is clear that while the project remains cultural is focus, the dramaturgical thesis has much to offer the understanding of that culture. The two perspectives:

> …intersect most clearly in regard to the maintenance of moral standards. The cultural values of an establishment will determine in detail how the participants are to deal about many matters and at the same time establish a framework of appearances that must be maintained, whether or not there is a feeling behind the appearances.
> (Goffman 1959:234).

Goffman's thesis of dramaturgy is most useful in explaining the various front and backstage areas of the team that was the focus of this study. However, it is the

cultural values that legitimise, allow and encourage violent behaviour that informs the primary focus of this thesis. It is here that it is useful to consider other theoretical perspectives that may strengthen the analysis of the research findings.

Teams

Goffman defines a team as “a set of individuals whose intimate cooperation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained.” (1959:108). While it might not seem like a giant leap to use Goffman’s team analogy to explain the relationships between the team in my research, his analogy goes far beyond that of a single sports team. Through his discourse one can consider any person a performer (whether or not they are performing for an audience) and any grouping a team (whether or not they are producing team work in a recognised form). For Goffman, while these terms might be described in a dramaturgical context, or even a sporting context, the ramifications go far beyond people involved in those industries.

An analogy of a team is constituted of individuals who come together to provide a performance that is dependent on others roles in that performance, for a common goal. It is important, that even when considering a team as a whole, there are individual members within it that have the power to disrupt the team and performance and therefore are dependent on one another to behave appropriately, keeping up the mask of the performance. However, teammates do not have to maintain their roles in front of one another; they have a “privilege of familiarity – which may constitute a kind of intimacy without warmth” (1959:88). This combines to create solidarity within the team. Goffman states that team members are guarded and careful of who is allowed access to the backstage of their performing lives. This is particularly the case within the space of an ice rink and detailed attention has been

given to this in the methods chapter which follows. As a researcher, if I am to uncover the backstage of the team's performance, then I must pay attention to how I am received as a researcher; whether I, as an observer, can be considered to be part of the team, or whether I simply constitute an audience whom cannot be allowed to see the backstage behaviour. This is a point that will receive further attention in Chapter Four.

Impression Management

It is not only hockey players, but all individuals who are negotiated in the control of the impression that others have of them. Of course, being in the public eye as professional sportsmen, it is likely that management of one's self is in the minds of those performing hockey. Essential to Goffman's dramaturgical picture is the concept that individuals and teams will go to lengths to protect the impression that they perform. This impression management also serves to preserve the back stage from others. This can be particularly important in the case of potential deviant or damaging behaviour to the individual or the team. An individual may deliberately underplay or conceal behaviour or motives that do not underline the ideal image that he presents to his audience. Goffman finds that the reason for this is twofold, serving both to give the impression that the role they perform for their audience is their only role, and also that the performance is especially played out to that specific audience because they are important. As he states: "there is hardly a legitimate everyday vocation or relationship whose performers do not engage in concealed practices which are incompatible with fostered impressions." (1959:71).

The backstage region is one of relative in-group privacy and therefore it is essential to keep this hidden from outsiders. In short, it is the presence of a backstage area that preserves the impression of actors and the breach of this area that can undermine

performance. Access to this backstage area gives a privileged insight into the rehearsal of the foreground, the concept of performance and the varying spaces of social life:

> The backstage language consists of reciprocal first-naming, cooperative decision making, profanity, open sexual remarks, elaborate griping, smoking, rough informal dress, 'sloppy' sitting and standing posture, use of a dialect or substandard speech, mumbling and shouting, playful aggressively and 'kidding'. Inconsiderateness for the other in minor but potentially symbolic acts, minor physical self-involvements such as humming, whistling, chewing, nobbling, belching and flatulence.
> (Goffman 1959:142).

Of course, this backstage behaviour would be inappropriate in the performance of the role in the front stage. Therefore a team will depend upon each other to protect the integrity of their front stage role; a team must keep its own secrets. Goffman details five types of secrets that need to be kept: dark; strategic; inside; entrusted; and free secrets, but maintains that "Information control involves more than keeping secrets" (1959:143). In fact impression management is based on the defensive practices of loyalty, discipline and circumspection and the protective practice of etiquette on the part of the audience. Etiquette goes beyond manners at the time, but includes wilful ignorance of particular behaviour and respect for the performers back stage. As a researcher this is integral to my acceptance by the team. In order to build a strong relationship of trust and honesty it is important that I am able to blend into the background and unknowingly study backstage behaviour without drawing attention to it[5].

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[5] A reflexive discussion of the ways in which I carried this out will follow in more detail in the Chapter Four.

An accepted discrepant role

Goffman discusses three potential roles for those gaining access to the backstage area: An informer – someone who pretends to the performers that he is a member of their team is allowed backstage and then acquires destructive information and then openly or secretly sells out the show to the audience. Sometimes called a spy; A shill – who acts as though he is a member of the audience but in fact is in league with the performers; and finally a 'non-person'. This was the role that I intended to present in the interaction. I am neither a performer nor an audience and I make only claims of what I am, a researcher (1959:15).

Of crucial importance to cultural development, the same kind of language is often developed by colleagues regardless of their background. While a team may maintain a front for audiences, they do not need to keep that same front among one another. Solidarity and relaxation can be established in a backstage area where performers no longer feel the need to perform the role that their occupation requires in the front stage. Of potential interest are the ways in which a stranger, or a member of another team may be allowed membership of their group with an acceptance of shared behaviour (1959:159). As an overt researcher intending to develop the role of a 'non-person' it is essential to admit my objectives from the beginning to allow performers to do the same.

Randall Collins and the micro-sociology of violence

Randall Collins (2008) develops Goffman's micro-sociology specifically in the context of violent encounters. In doing so, his thesis is that it is neither the culture of violence, nor the individual violent person that is the focus, but rather the violent

situations themselves. Arguing that the majority of potentially violent situations never amount to violent conduct, it is vital to study the minute detail of interaction in order to understand violent conduct. Critical of the assumption of cultural explanations of violence that discussions of violence lead to violent behaviour, he holds a similar critique to cultural studies as Waddington (1999) on police canteens which holds that backstage occupational behaviour may not adequately represent the culture that is displayed in the foreground of the commission of work. As Collins states:

> ...instead of defining the macho culture as a culture of violence, it is more accurate, and more revealing, to think of it as a culture of boasting and making claims about violence. The culture of machismo, of the tough guys, the action scene is mainly the activity of staffing an impression of violence, rather than the violence itself.
> (Collins 2008:329)

Collins uses the terms griping, whining, arguing, quarrelling, boasting and blustering (2008:342-7) as a hierarchy of emotions and behaviour as being just as analytically interesting as the actual violence that may eventually be conducted. He argues that simply studying the eventual violence itself would be to lose the importance of interaction between individuals as a point of study. In considering male violence in particular, it is important to locate the role of masculinity and performativity in conflict. Collins provides a useful insight into the micro-interaction during violent contexts that may be of use when studying individual violent interactions in the research field. He argues, that far from being an over-riding cultural norm, decisions of what constitutes a 'fair fight' are communicated between those engaged in a violent situation in a myriad of ways.

> The fight of course breaks normal interactional entertainment but a fair fight hedged round by rituals and limitations simultaneously imposes another level on which both sides are strongly entrained, strongly intersubjective. It is an overtly two-level interaction; the ritualism of the fair fight imposes an overriding level of solidarity within which the antagonism is contained and dropped to a second level of attention. It is this structure that overcomes tension/fear and allows a fight to proceed, indeed to proceed with enthusiasm. (Collins 2008:198-199).

Utilising Goffman's concept of performance when discussing the audience of a violent situation, Collins states that fighters are aware of their performance to those observing, keen to establish an encouraging support from those on the edges. Here, the interaction and limitations of violence in the situation are as much the responsibility of the audience who shows approval or disapproval for particular behaviour (2008:201). This may specifically be of importance when, such as in sporting contexts, the presence of an audience is integral to the commission of a fight.

Occupational Socialisation and an honour code

The idea of a cultural code of behaviour or one of honour has been influential in Collins's work, as in many other studies of masculinity, teams and violence. This 'cultural ideology' (2008:229) may also be seen as functional to the group in terms of security, cohesion and solidarity. It could be said to constitute a 'code of the street' (Anderson 1999) which is the Goffmanian staged performance of a self, containing a front of civility and accommodation, with a backstage of violence legitimisation. This honour code is hugely important as demonstrated in talk between those involved in group membership. Further, talk of honour codes and situational contingencies tests membership to the group and a shared collective identity (2008:351). This concept has been built upon by other interactionists, such

as Atkinson and Housley who detail the cultural code as being a "coping strategy" (2003:11). This is of particular importance when studying the world of occupational interaction[6] where situated learning plays an important part of occupational socialisation. Matza (1964) argues that the code is never written, except by sociologists, and is accomplished through "mutual inference" of hints, comments, activities, gestures and sentiments. Cohen (1955:59-62) discusses how the code is 'cued' through inference and mutual dependence in groups.

The morality of sporting and celebratory violence

One of Collins's most useful analyses is that of violence in a sporting or celebratory context, which he considers as "an act of collective enjoyment and thus widely legitimated" (2008: 242). He considers violence in this context to be separate and artificial, contrasting with the Durkheimian idea of the violence of solidarity and shared experiences. Collins draws on the work of Norbert Elias and the concept of a 'moral holiday':

> A moral holiday comprises a free zone in time and space, an occasion and a place where the feeling prevails that every day restraints are off; individuals feel protected by the crowd and are encouraged in normally forbidden acts. Often there is an atmosphere of celebration or at least exhilaration; it is a heady feeling of entering the special reality, separate and extraordinary, where there is little thought for the future and no concern for being called into account.
> (Collins 2008:243)

Borrowing the idea of a temporary break, or 'holiday' from the Eliasian (1969) concept of a '*civilising break*', allowing individuals to enjoy periods of unrestrained

[6] This will be discussed further in Chapter Three when attention is given to specific empirical research on occupational cultures such as policing, bouncers and other team sports.

behaviour that generally contradicts the wider process of civilisation. The "atavistic" gladiatorialism (Pappas *et* al 2004; Gruneau and Whitson 1993) of hockey where violence is contained in the arena of the ice rink, but absent elsewhere can be understood in Elias's terms. In terms of its applicability to sport, Dunning (1999) has continued to build on the work of Elias, setting out sports violence in a sphere separate from normal social life. In a society wherein "open displays of aggression, or indeed spontaneous emotion of any kind, are increasingly forbidden by force of law or by social prudence" (Garland 1990:219), violence is removed from the public social environment and placed in separate environments of state control or in sporting events.

The Eliasian concept of 'civilisation' has clear applications for hockey and other sports that contain a mimetic battle or pugilism. The civilising process has involved a "dampening of Angriffslust", a reduction in the "lust for attacking" (Murphy *et al,* 2000), however as Elias suggests, human beings still retain a desire for forms of excitement including for battle and competition. Elias, conscious of the catharsis of taking part in violent sports and observing this behaviour has been built on through his work with Dunning. We live in a 'civilised' environment where behaviour and emotion is controlled in everyday life; therefore the 'mimetic' function of observing a mock battle within the relative safety and detachment of an arena is appealing to many. Elias states: "the feelings aroused in the imaginary situation of a human leisure activity are the siblings of those aroused in real-life situations" (Elias and Dunning, 1986:42). Sport is an "inverted panopticon" where spectators who are often monitored closely both at work and in public life are able to reverse the gaze towards players who become to them "epistemological bobo-dolls upon which the fans can punch away their frustration" (Fiske 1991:11-20). This theory provides an

image of a mimetic battle, occurring outside the control of the supporters but in their full view, in which the controlled release of emotions is permitted. It bears some similarities with what Jack Katz (1988) calls the "moral-emotional dynamics of deviance" whereby participants obtain "sneaky thrills" from the shameful emotions gained by participating in criminality. This is a concept that has been built upon by cultural criminologists later in this chapter.

This mimetic struggle differs from the unexpected spontaneous violence of the past, as such it is a form of "socially constructed mimetic violence" (Ward Jr 2002:464) and is held to be particularly significant for males (Maguire 1991:478), who, as Dunning explains, have been deprived of the right to use violence against females. This may lead to concerns they are being emasculated and increase the appeal of certain occupations and certain sports that entitle them to show power and physical prowess, a "masculinity-validating experience" (Dunning 1999:229).

The works of Goffman, Collins and other interactionists thus have much to offer the study of occupational groups who perform violence and who engage with an audience. The focus of this work is the minute interaction of individuals and thus it could be said to pay little attention to the wider cultural and subcultural processes by which identity and behaviour are developed. The work of Erving Goffman and more recently of Randall Collins offer a great deal to the study of violence in terms of their insight into the microsociology of violent interaction. However, these concepts on their own would not be able to allow for an understanding of the culture that surrounds these interactions, or the ways in which individuals account for their behaviour and rationalise their actions. Collins intentionally downplays any understanding of macrosociology in order to focus on the interaction ritual (Ray 2011). As Brent and Kraska (2013:364) state: "…it is tempting to fixate only on the

physical exchange of these violent events" ignoring a broader symbolic exchange. In order to understand these concepts, further perspectives may be useful and the following section seeks to address this by providing some wider theorisation of the process of meaning-making among groups.

Part Two: Culture, Deviance and Subculture

If one is to understand both the patterns and the particularities of hockey, as in all occupations, one needs to uncover the shared understandings that emerge within those groups. Geertz explains the complexities of cultural groups well:

> The concept of culture I espouse…is essentially a semiotic one. Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.
> (Geertz, 1973:5)

Thus, interpretivism is essential to the study of cultural interaction in this research field, not simply from the outset in terms of research design and the empathetic collecting of data, but, importantly, also in the analysis of research findings. In order to analyse Weber and Geertz's '*webs of significance*', it is important to gain access to the culture and participate in the cultural reality of those who you seek to understand it. As highlighted in Chapter One, essential to this process if the concept of *Verstehen*, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four alongside the discussion of research methods.

It would be neglectful to focus on the culture of the sport and not consider those who form the culture. The focus on how individuals engage with others is a key premise

of symbolic interactionism; how they define their social world and their view of themselves within that world. Further, in terms of criminological study, it is the perspective of individuals in society that determines which behaviour is seen as normal and which as deviant (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1995). The three premises of Symbolic Interactionism as introduced by Herbert Blumer (1969) are: firstly, that people act on the basis of the meanings that things have for them; secondly, that meaning grows from interaction with others, especially intimate others and thirdly that this meaning is continually modified by a process of interpretation.

Applying this to the concept of deviance, Howard Becker's (1963) concept of a labelling requires two essential components: firstly, an audience - who determine deviance and are integral to labelling (Goode, 2001:114); and secondly - labelling and stigma. The audience labels particular acts and individuals as deviant. Becker argues that deviance is not simply the infraction of a rule or law, rather, it is a label attached to an act by a particular group or audience. In this view, those participating in violent acts on the ice in a manner consistent with that accepted by the subculture of the sport, would not be considered deviant, even though their behaviour in another context (for example in the street, or the bar) would be considered deviant and unacceptable.

A key concept in theories of deviance is the acceptance of a deviant label (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967). Lemert's distinction between primary and secondary deviance, the latter drawing on Durkheim's 1958 concept of 'wanted' deviance, acknowledges the role of wider society in classifying particular acts as deviant and actors as deviant. Although hockey players may not consider themselves to be secondary deviants, according to Lemert's principles, they will still invoke corrective punishment by the regulatory authorities for their actions. As, even when "wanted

rule violations are relatively controlled, predictable and rationalized, they are not seen as being emblematic of a pathological, cultural or structural condition – yet, neither are they viewed as fully socially acceptable". (Atkinson & Young: 2008). This concept was developed through the work of Sutherland (1947), Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967), Fine and Kleinman (1979), and Akers (1977) who contend that violence can be perceived as favourable and avoid feelings of deviance and guilt when conducted in an environment which is conducive to its use (Winlow, 2001).

Subculture

There is a long tradition of research within criminology and the sociology of deviance on subcultures as a way to understand or explain deviant or criminal behaviour (Downes and Rock, 2003; Kitsuse, 1962). This body of research highlighted the development of distinct subcultures and further explained criminal offending as partly a result of incompatible demands of structure and culture (Downes and Rock 2003:145). In Cohen's study on delinquent boys the subculture that formed, focused on non-utilitarianism, hedonism, versatility, autonomy, negativism and malice, as a collective way of attempting to 'resolve' the structural problems faced by disadvantaged groups (Cohen 1955). The early subcultural theories of Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960) were not without their critics however, notably for their focus on young men and the attention they paid to deviance as a 'solution' to inequalities in society, which ignored large swathes of others who did not seek out membership of a deviant subculture. Criticism was also aimed at the dominance of subcultures, as opposed to other structural objects, in encouraging the formation of deviant behaviour. To focus purely on hockey players as a subculture in the terms used by these subcultural theorists could lead to a similar criticism. While subcultural theory clearly broadens the micro-focus on

interactionists discussed in section one of this chapter, it does not provide a complete account of the cultural behaviour it seeks to explain due to its tendency to eliminate an understanding of the culture beyond the group that it is observing.

These subcultural analyses have not been confined to studies of 'offending populations', for a major tradition in policing research has examined the emergence of distinctive occupational subcultures within the police (Skolnick, 1966) and bouncers in the night time economy (Hobbs *et al,* 2003, Winlow *et al* 2001). These subcultural analyses of policing have some parallels with earlier work, given that 'cop culture' is often linked to deviant police behaviours such as rule-breaking, racial discrimination, sexism and excessive force (Reiner, 2000)[7]. Further, similarities may be drawn with professional hockey violence in that hockey is an occupation for these players, not just a sport. Moreover, it is a sport of traditions with a long history of shared stories, as detailed above, and models of good and bad conduct. Like policing, it is reasonable to assume that socialisation into the occupation of hockey player occurs on many levels, as Reiner (2000:85) points out "people create their own cultures, but not under conditions of their own choosing".

The popularity of the sociology of deviance in the 1960s led to many scholars seeking to look beyond the individual group under empirical investigation and seek to provide a broader understanding of rules and processes that occur in all subcultural groupings. Famously, structural theorists Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) made the following pertinent points: firstly, subcultural values will be acquired by learning; secondly, often a member of a subculture will not see their behaviour as deviant and

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[7] A more detailed discussion of empirical research on police culture and other masculine occupations follows in Chapter Three

will therefore feel no guilt or responsibility for their actions; thirdly, cases of extreme violence are a product of the active support and encouragement of a subcultural value system; fourthly, violence is often a response to a perceived challenge; and finally, social institutions (including sporting teams, schools and training institutions) contribute to the development and persistence of a subculture.

It is important to consider how individuals learn the values of a culture or subculture, that is, in what ways they are socialised to the norms of the group. Lance and Ross (2000:193) rest socialisation upon the dual processes of reinforcement and modelling. They found that social learning is developed through direct instruction with rewards for good behaviour and punishment for incorrect behaviour. This takes place by repetitive construction of relationships between certain circumstances and expected behaviour and through the emulation of role models. Based on the concept of social learning introduced by Bandura (1973), Lance and Ross's concepts rest on the individual as an active learner of behaviour by observing others actions and rewards. Similar to the concept of "differential association" put forward by Sutherland (1947), individuals will observe the behaviour and societal response to those "who are similar, who are rewarded for their actions, and who hold a revered social status" (Atkinson & Young, 2008:30-31). For hockey players, aspiring to success in their occupation, it is reasonable to consider these perspectives (Robidoux, 2001)[8].

Subcultural explanations of deviance have been subject to a number of criticisms; a key one being that they are deterministic and over-predict deviance and offending. On this view, subcultural theories exaggerate the commitment of population groups

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[8] A more detailed analysis of this work is presented in Chapter Three.

to particular sets of subcultural values, and over-state the relationship between apparent cultural traits and actual behaviour (Matza 1964). Partly in response to such criticisms, Sykes and Matza (1957) (drawing on the work of both Sutherland and Cressey, 1955) and Matza (1964) argued that groups can shift in and out of deviance, using '*techniques of neutralisation*' to deal with any cultural values that may work against involvement in deviant behaviour. These 'learned excuses' (1964:667-670) serve to temporarily excuse violations in certain circumstances can take five distinct forms. Firstly, *denial of responsibility*, which negates personal accountability by stating that the behaviour is outside of the control of the actor. Second, d*enial of injury*, which calls into question the existence of an injured party or situation. Thirdly, *denial of victim*, corresponds with the second point above and while accepting of an injury, does not accept that there is a victim of that injury, justifications of this point can include concepts of retaliation and retribution. Fourth, *condemnation of the condemners*, in which the right to judge a person is not attributed to whom is undertaking that judgement due to reasons such as their own deviance and hypocrisy. This deflection onto those in power to condemn an action can lead to the repression of the original act. Finally, *appeal to higher loyalties* where the individual may feel that they need to commit a deviant act despite acknowledging its unacceptance or illegality due to a more important responsibility.

These five justifications or neutralisations are all ways in which those who commit deviant offences legitimise their behaviour. Recently, much of their work has been revised to form an understanding of supposed 'victimless' crimes such as white-collar crime. Klenowski (2012) discusses three new neutralisations common in those who commit corporate crime: Firstly, the *defence of necessity* (Minor 1981), in which the criminal behaviour is seen as being integral to survival; Second, the *claim*

of normality where individuals justify their behaviour as something which every person is doing and finally, the *claim of entitlement* (Coleman 1994) which supersedes any codes of behaviour that may otherwise exist. These new neutralisations provided by Klenowski may well be of use in explaining other types of deviance, such as that involved in the commission of sport. These 'neutralisations' will be introduced and discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

The perspective of 'neutralisation' as propounded by Matza is a stark contrast to sociological positivist explanations of violence, detailed earlier. He focuses on the free will of an individual, rather than the determinism of a positivist explanation. He views the deviant as a normal human being, who happens to associate with a different culture – a "criminogenic milieu" (1964:20). The key difference between the subcultural views here and those of Cohen (1955) is the idea that criminals are no different from other people and that they are agents of their own decisions. For Matza, the concept of 'will' is essential in the commission of a deviant act, the deviant being a 'positive delinquent' rather than a powerless member of a controlling subculture. Key to our understanding of how actors may verbalise these neutralisations is the concept that cultural ideologies present these excuses to the group, before they are applied to particular situations by the individual actor:

> Each trusted person does not invent a new rationalization for his violation of trust, but instead applies to his own situation the verbalization that has been made available to him by virtue of his having come into contact with a culture in which such verbalizations are present.
> (Cressey, 1953:137)

Muir and Seitz's 2004 work on rugby subcultures demonstrates good use of subcultural, neutralisation and social learning theories, detailing that "The rugby subculture itself provides the individual with a secondary or reference group, which, in turn, reinforces his behaviour with either rewards or some type of sanction" (2004:312); they further argue that it is the ritualistic behaviour of subcultural groups that is of sociological importance. The behaviour of the group in this manner serves to:

> …maintain group cohesiveness, a sense of commonality, and a focus and ideology or object much more significant than the individual (Collins and Makowsky 1989). Deviance, or the manner and style in which deviance is performed has its own importance in maintaining group cohesiveness.
> (Muir & Seitz, 2004:308)

For Muir and Seitz then, the deviance of a subcultural group is an important element, rather than a by-product, in maintaining the cultural reasoning.

Of subcultural theories and their contribution to the study of the study of deviance:

> …there were real gains…not least establishing the proposition that the most apparently senseless and meaningless forms of aggressive delinquency could be rendered intelligible and rational by taking account of their author's 'definitions of the situation' and by conceiving of delinquency as the solution, rather than as a problem.
> (Downes and Rock 2003:141).

Cultural and Subcultural theories and their critiques thus add to the interactionist theories discussed earlier this chapter to provide an understanding of issues of culture, team and deviance. A third body of work is particularly useful in understanding issues of deviant and criminal behaviour and Cultural Criminology

has much to add in terms of its focus on the foreground and immediacy of cultural action.

Part Three: Cultural Criminology – 'Turning the kaleidoscope[9]'

Although subcultural theories of deviance have largely fallen out of favour in recent criminological research in favour of policy oriented administrative criminology[10], there has been a recent resurgence in the form of cultural criminology. One of the main tenets of cultural criminology is the shift away from the positivist premise that has dominated criminology during the past 50 years and towards a radical process of research and debate (Ferrell, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001; Lyng, 1990; Morrison, 1995; Nelken, 1994; O'Malley and Mugford, 1994; Presdee, 2000). In his early article Ferrell (1995) suggests that the theoretical framework of cultural criminology allows for an analysis of collective behaviours, which are structured around imagery, style, and symbolic meaning. Ferrell argues that in order to examine collective behaviour there needs to be a "move to towards an integration of cultural and criminological analysis" (1995:25) to view social events. One might question the need for a distinctly criminological analysis of hockey to the extent that violence legitimised with the sport has thus far avoided the criminocentric label. However, viewed from the perspective of cultural criminology, it is cultural action, deviance and the labelling of offences as criminal that is of importance. This allows us to view what is

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[9] The term 'turning the kaleidoscope' is introduced by Ferrell *et al*, (2008) to recognise the unique contribution of cultural criminology to the study of deviant behaviour. Where the focus of much work on the sociology of deviance was the background of those who engaged in deviant behaviour and issues such as class, age and race, creating an almost deterministic account of the behaviour of particular individuals; the unique focus of cultural criminology is on the foreground, the immediacy of action. The focus is on the agency of the individual and the feelings that may be evoked by conducting behaviour that may be viewed by others as deviant.

10.. Hillyard *et al* (2004) present an image of a criminology ruined by the focus on Home Office funded administrative criminology at the expense of original research.

almost acceptable (albeit illegal within the rules) behaviour as being deviant despite the normality of that behaviour within the culture of the sport.

Cultural criminology sees deviant behaviour as not only a response to the demands of society, but also as a search for excitement (Ferrell 1999), building upon earlier work by Elias and Dunning on the excitement of physical action. As well as the encouragement to view the 'seduction' of crime (Katz, 1988), the unique contribution of Cultural Criminology is in the attention it gives to the 'foreground' of action (Ferrell 1999) - the excitement, the thrill and the positive experiences of deviance. This perspective allows us to see deviance as not only a form of retaliation or a negative response, but rather as a positive decision to seek out experiences that may offer fun, excitement or a thrill. The insight that cultural criminology as an emerging discourse gives is that behaviour that is seen by some as deviant, or delinquent, may actually be sought out not as a reaction, but due to the feelings that playing with the boundaries of acceptability can be positive and enticing.

Cultural criminology has emerged in the last 20 years as standing in stark contrast to administrative or policy-driven criminology. Billed as a convergence of criminal and cultural analysis combining ethnographic methodology, interactionist sociology, cultural studies and postmodern theory, it "import[s] the insights of cultural studies into contemporary criminology" (Ferrell, 1999:395-6). Seeing crime as a culturally constructed concept, it is not only individuals, but groups, subcultures, neighbourhoods and whole societies that become the object of investigation. This is in stark contrast to the lens of Randall Collins or microsociology as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Drawing strongly on Becker (1963) and others' work on interactionism, it brings together the subjects of deviance and crime in a clear convergence with the earlier section on interactionism. In so doing:

> Cultural criminologists attempt to elaborate on the symbolic in symbolic interaction by highlighting the popular prevalence of mediated crime imagery, the interpersonal negotiation of style within criminal and deviant subcultures and the emergence of larger symbolic universes within which crime takes on political meaning.
> (Ferrell, 1999:397).

This approach draws upon criminological and sociological traditions of deep enquiry; Cultural Criminology seeks to build insight into the situated dynamics of subcultures (Adler, 1985; Becker, 1963; Ferrell, 1999; Humphreys, 1975). Viewing both crime and control as culturally constructed products, cultural criminologists believe that the relationship between constructions is important: "Its focus is always upon the continuous generation of meaning around interaction; rules created, rules broken, a constant interplay of moral innovation and transgression." (Hayward and Young 2004:259).

Polsky (1969) has been highly critical of research undertaken in artificial surroundings, such as project evaluation and anti-crime settings that have dominated recent criminological research, believing that these over depend on a skewed sample or requires data to be collected a long time after the event has passed. Like Park's call to the scholars of the Chicago School, Polsky states that, as criminologists and sociologists, it is integral to carry out "genuine fieldwork on these people" (Polsky 1969:218)[11]. Under a constructionist epistemology, ethnographic observation of delinquent subcultures where deviant behaviour is commonplace is thus considered

[11] Polsky, writing in 1969, was not part of the relatively new school of cultural criminology. Some might argue that cultural criminology offers little new to academic study, given their return to the ethnographic methods of sociologists such as those highlighted in sections one and two of this chapter. However, as cultural criminologists would maintain, they place themselves deliberately within the discipline of criminology in order to bring a renewed discussion of the sociology of deviance to an increasingly administrative, policy-driven criminology.

essential as it provides information that cannot be gleaned from simply quantifying criminal acts after their commission (Bachman and Schutt 2007:22). As Presdee states: “[Cultural criminology] has the ability to do precisely what administrative criminology is unable to do (or more importantly does not want to do); that is to unearth and discuss the ‘meanings’ of crime” (2004:282-3). Therefore, if we are to unearth not only the actual behaviour of individuals - or groups of individuals, we need to understand the ways in which they frame, understand and explain their behaviour.

Comparing cultural criminology to the earlier mentioned micro-focus of interactionists such as Collins, whose focus concentrates on interaction in specific contexts, cultural criminology encourages an understanding of the symbolic ‘meaning’ of the act. While Collins and others focus on the specifics of the act, the *who*, *when*, *where* and *how* of a specific situation; Cultural criminologists focus on *why* the act occurs and *what* the act means to those who conduct it *and* to the wider audience who views it. This is perhaps the most important distinction between these two concepts and I maintain that this is why they are both of use in the analysis of this research area. By combining these two perspectives it is possible to understand both how actors define their acts, but also understand meanings attributed to those acts by others.

Edgework and adrenaline

Although it could be argued that Albert Cohen was among the first to discuss deviance in its non-instrumental form, as behaviour undertaken just for the highs that it provided; it was Jack Katz’s seminal work on the ‘Seductions of Crime’ (1988) which viewed crime through an original lens, where it is seen for its excitement, hedonism, adrenaline and excitement. In this viewpoint, crime and deviance are

something to enjoy, something that can give one a thrill and may be viewed positively as an experience in itself. The adrenaline rush of crime that takes place between "pleasure and panic" (Ferrell, 1998) contrasts with some criminological accounts, "Crime is seldom mundane and frequently not miserable" (Hayward and Young 2004:261). Contrasting this view with some perspectives such as rational choice and situational crime prevention, Lyng believes that the draw of some behaviour is in the "immediate experience, having more to do with the rewards of the crime experience itself…Some criminal actions are experienced as almost magical events that involve distinctive 'sensual dynamics'" (Lyng 2005:361). It is reasonable to suggest that this may particularly be the case for some extreme sports or high risk occupations as the commission of them may increase the pleasurable sensations received in 'reward'. This point will be expanded upon in Chapter Seven.

Lyng (1990), Presdee (1994), Tunnell (1992) and Ferrell (1999) among others have built on this idea, their research highlighting issues such as "edgework" where negotiating the "invitational edge" (Matza 1969:147), the line between deviance and conformity can bring a thrill. Several high-octane behaviours have been researched including, skip-diving, base-jumping, graffiti, skate-boarding and the Occupy movement. Lyng (2005) calls this "criminal erotics", of activities such as high risk occupations or extreme sports, the pleasure given from some types of criminal or deviant behaviour; "the seductive character of many criminal activities may derive from the particular sensations and emotions generated in the high risk character of these activities" (Lyng, 2004:360). This understanding is not limited to those who consider themselves to be cultural criminologists but has much in common with other critical theorists who acknowledge that:

> Individuals are allowed to take their quests for personal pleasure and infantile thrills right to the edge of morality's toxic core because the counterculture…has glamorized the violation of norms as a blow stuck against the system that represses us all.
> (Hall et al, 2008:168)

Verstehen-oriented research into these subcultures reveals "the ways in which collective intensities of experience, like collective conventions of style, construct shared subcultural meaning" (Ferrell, 1999:404). The construction of crime has served to make some of these edge behaviours increasingly criminalised and the subcultures made illicit. The role of the cultural criminologist in this case may be to 'attentively document the lived realities'… [in an] attempt to deconstruct the official demonization of various "outsiders" (Becker, 1963)…and to produce alternative understandings of them." (Ferrell, 1999:408). In this sense, it is easy to see why some (for example O'Brien, 2005) have criticised cultural criminology as romanticising the underdog. However, in a similar manner to that accounted for by Bakunin (1974) in the quote which opened Chapter One of this thesis, cultural criminologists maintain that it is important to consider not all action that is labelled deviant, as being intentionally oppositional. Cultural criminology gives a unique insight to the excitement, thrill and carnival (Presdee, 2000) that comes from engaging in behaviour that is among the edges (Lyng, 1990).

Cultural Criminology and Research Methods[12]

One of the aims of cultural criminology is to expand the gaze of inquiry to move beyond the traditional and somewhat confined boundaries which have informed

[12] Please also refer to the discussion on this point in the methods Chapter Four.

debate on culture and crime thus far. As Garland and Sparks argue: “Academic criminology can no longer aspire to monopolize ‘criminological’ discourse or hope to claim exclusive rights over the representation and disposition of crime” (2000:190). With a focus on ‘Verstehen-oriented’ methods (Hayward and Young 2004:9) much cultural criminological work focuses on the researcher submerging themselves in the culture they are researching. Considered as being an ‘attentive gaze’, this naturalistic method requires a commitment to be true to the research subject without resorting to “romanticism or the generation of pathology” (Hayward & Young, 2004:10).

Much criminality occurs in an area unseen by many of the research methods “a place incidentally where ethnography can go, but where social surveys merely reflect the surface” (Hayward and Young 2004:7). They consider this to be a second life, or second city (Hayward 2013) that exists away from the normal behaviour of everyday citizens and actively tries to find ways in which to go against the rules and find new ways of deviance while society above tries to fill the gaps. This is perhaps one of the reasons why cultural criminologists are critical of positivistic or rational choice theories as they neglect the idea that some people might actively choose to be deviant despite the current dominance of situational crime prevention. This is why the cultural criminological focus on how “humankind makes sense of, and, at times resists” social structures and society at large (Presdee 2004:275) is so integral to the methodological foundations of this theory. The study of the everyday is privileged for cultural criminologists “it is here that the criminologist ought to reside – analytical yet passionate about how the ‘crime’ question affects us all” (Presdee 2004:275). Cultural criminology therefore focuses far beyond the narrow legal

definitions of crime into boundary breaking behaviour and hedonistic experiences of individuals and groups.

Cultural criminologists in the field often also research the mediated images of the field in which they study “not only images, but images of images, an infinite hall of mediated mirrors” (Ferrell and Sanders, 1995:14). Cultural Criminology is thus useful when combined with visual images and film such as that used in eliciting information from participants used in this research. Using images and media in this way may invoke a response from the respondent and allow for a fruitful discussion. After all, images, like societies, do not exist in a vacuum. Further, not only the images, but the ways in which images mediate culture and are mediated by cultures are important, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Five to Eight through the work on visual criminology by Carrabine (2008); and Ferrell & Van de Voorde (2010).

Cultural Criminology and the media

In an increasingly globalised society where media and social networking abound, cultural criminologists believe that a consideration of the subculture has moved on in a way that transcends space and time. This heightens the stylised versions of the culture and broadens cultural codes in a way not seen before. As Gelder and Thornton (1997) note, along with Ferrell (1999), “a mix of widespread spatial dislocation and precise normative organisation implies subcultures are defined less by face to face interaction than by shared, if second-hand, symbolic codes.” Perhaps then, it is not the minute detail of the interaction espoused by Goffman, Collins,

Atkinson & Housley discussed earlier in this chapter, but rather the shared symbolic codes that are of importance in researching this area.[13]

Many of the objects of inquiry are intrinsically cultural - art, media and sport are well known for their cultural understanding and are themselves involved in the creation of that culture; further, criminalisation is also culturally created. The media, by way of news stories, sound bites and social networking is able to construct a particular culture as being deviant or not. Seen this way, cultural criminology is not simply the criminalisation that occurs through the legal process, but the criminalisation of culture (Ferrell and Hamm, 1998:80-82). This is further built on in manners of consumption, often used against particular subcultural groups and bringing about a moral panic (Cohen 1972) as "the stylistic practices and symbolic codes of illicit subcultures are made the object of legal surveillance and control, or alternatively, are commodified, and sanitized within a vast machinery of consumption." (Ferrell 1997:408).

The media involvement in crime and deviance causes every minute detail of behaviour to be "reflected in a vast hall of mirrors…the line between the real and the virtual is profoundly and irrevocably blurred" (Hayward and Young, 2004:260). Thus cultural criminologists believe that it is essential to consider the mediated images of a subculture as well as the grass roots of the culture itself.

While there have been strong critiques from some members of the academic community of cultural criminology, I maintain its usefulness in providing a unique insight into the foreground of action. Liazos (1972) and Gouldner (1975) criticised

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[13] This perspective will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

earlier subcultural researchers as being contemporary “zoo keepers of deviance”. In a similar vein O’Brien states that the sympathetic ‘tales’ offered by cultural criminologists:

> …presents a gilded invitation to readers to revel putatively and voyeuristically in the exotica of putatively (but not always actually) deviant doings...This is not necessarily a bad thing, but, as currently presented, it is moot whether or not it is criminology.
> (O’Brien, 2005:610).

O’Brien (2005) is critical of the ways in which idiographic thick descriptive work is used to support grander nomothetic theses without accepting the integral confrontation of the two. However, it is clear that by focussing on deep exploration of cultures, Verstehen, and the idea of deviant behaviour being both pleasurable and enticing, cultural criminology has much to offer the culture of dangerous power sports in particular. Cultural criminology was developed in part to bring a discussion of the cultural back into an increasingly administrative criminology, aiming to explore the boundaries of criminology, anthropology, politics and sociology.

It is the unique insight of cultural criminologists into the concepts of deviance and legitimisation of behaviour of those in the boundaries that is of particular interest. I would maintain that a criminocentric view of criminology which only takes into account the letter of the law and fails to consider the boundaries of legality and the changing nature of criminality is damaging to the discipline of criminology. As criminologists, we must surely strive to understand all aspects of behaviour, both law-abiding and illegal as all behaviour exists on a scale of acceptability that does not conform to individual distinctions of academic disciplines.

More recently there have been attempts to consolidate the theories of cultural criminology with realist criminology, creating a form of cultural-realism. This in part deals with the criticism of cultural criminology by O'Brien (2005) above that it is unable to create nomothetic understanding. Combining realism with cultural criminology:

> …involves moving beyond pure description and an exclusive focus on human motivations, emotions and intentions or on accounts given by actors themselves, to a form of analysis that can identify the key relations between individuals and the way that they are structured in different contexts. (Matthews 2014:109).

Integral to this understanding is the idea that it is possible to use the understanding engendered from case studies to create wider statements relating to work in other areas. This has much in common with Becker's recent publication on cases (Becker, 2014) and provides a way in which the limitations of some case study research can also be viewed as strengths.

With regards to the claim on the previous page that cultural criminologists are mere zoo-keepers of deviant species, I do not consider myself the 'zoo-keeper' of the particular breed of professional ice hockey players. Rather, I would contend that the insight that may be obtained from understanding the explicit detail of this specific group is useful in understanding wider concepts of social behaviour, whether that is considered deviant, criminal or legal by the beholder. The legitimisation of violence in sports does not exist in a vacuum away from wider society; rather it is a part of human activity and can provide useful insights into a range of social behaviours.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out the three broad areas of sociological and criminological perspectives that have explicitly emerged through conducting the research and through the analysis and representation of the data. This is not to say that other theories and perspectives are of no use in understanding the culture of legitimised violence; certainly, many other perspectives will offer a unique viewpoint of the scenario, some of which will be referred to later in the thesis and some of which I look forward to exploring further in later publications. These three perspectives specifically when used together offer a unique viewpoint of this research area and support the analysis and representation of the data for this thesis. By simultaneously being aware of the limitations of each of these perspectives whilst also allowing for the benefits of their unique individual insights, they combine to become a fruitful way in which to understand the complex culture of study.

To represent hockey professionals in a case study format is not to be a 'zookeeper' of deviance, it is quite the reverse. Hockey players are actors, their activities and actions are located in shared groups which may contain a shared resonance for action. Ethnographic fieldwork isn't the telling of a pretty tale, we do not cage our participants and lay them open for public viewing, rather we seek to understand their realities and look to apply these outside of the specific remit in which they exist. The combination of theories used to support this ethnography as outlined above do not simply support an understanding of the sport of hockey; rather they extend beyond the particularities of the sport allow us to see certain behaviours as exemplars of broader analytical ideas. The nature of violence in hockey illuminates the nature of edgework, of excitement and of emotion; it illuminates the importance of cultural groups, teams, subcultures and of performativity. Violence in hockey is a social

phenomenon that, when supported with the concepts and perspectives offered by the theories considered in this chapter can be understood as having broader remit than the simple understanding of individual behaviour.

Chapter Three

Violence, Masculinity, Sport and Occupational Culture

> *"Hockey can only be compared to the Roman circus in the days of Nero when people were seriously injured for the amusement of the Roman populace"* (Judge in the 1953 murder trial of a player on the Aurora Bears hockey team. Cited in Rhind et al 2013:254).

Introduction

As this chapter will demonstrate, there is a scarcity of empirical research into hockey culture, this paucity encourages the consideration of broader literature relating to other sporting and occupational cultures in this chapter. This chapter will discuss a range of subject areas that may combine to shed light on the situation in hockey itself. This chapter is divided into two parts; Part One gives attention to empirical research on hockey; Part Two considers both wider sporting literature of similar male-dominated or power sports, along with a consideration of particular occupational cultures that employ violence outside of a sporting context, including the police, bouncers and private security. These combine with the literature on hockey violence by giving a cultural depth absent in most hockey research to date. In both parts, themes that emerge from the literature, such as masculinity, emotion

and power will be discussed. The main aims of the chapter with regard to the thesis are to provide a useful summary of the empirical findings of extant research in relevant fields; to consider critically the methodological approaches that have been used in such studies; and highlight the key gaps in existing knowledge that the current study may address

Part One: Violence in Ice Hockey

There is a distinct paucity of relevant recent data on this subject area and although now dated, the work of Smith (1983) and Vaz (1977, 1979) remain the most important pieces of empirical research in this under-studied area. Research on hockey has been almost entirely restricted to North America; with no research conducted in the UK prior to my two MSc dissertations, discussed in Chapter One.

As stated in Chapter One, hockey, at least in the UK and North America, is a highly physical sport where fighting is considered an acceptable and often central part of the game. Professional hockey players tend to be aware of their responsibility for physicality on the ice, (but unlike many criticisms pointed to other users of criminocentric violence) are also able to utilise a degree of discretion, often displaying knowledge of when to 'behave' if taking a penalty will hurt the team (Colburn, 1986; Bernstein, 2006). Violence in hockey is not (mostly) in the form of random acts of emotive violence, but is used in highly organised and directed ways to the tactical benefit of the team, retaining important instrumental benefits.

Smith (1983) designed a typology for violence in hockey, which, he argues, has never been seen by spectators or participants as "real violence". The most lenient first example is of '*Brutal Body Contact'*, both legal within the game rules and legitimate (this includes body checks); Secondly '*Borderline Violence'* which

violates the rules of the sport, along with player norms and the laws of the land. However, is widely accepted as 'part of the game' (including fist fights and 'face-washing[14]'); Thirdly '*Quasi-Criminal Violence'* both violates the rules and is not accepted as legitimate by participants (this includes behaviour such as assault with a stick and sucker-punching). The final type is that of '*Criminal Violence'*, which Smith states is extremely rare and takes place off the ice. This typology has been repeated in other work (including Colburn, 1986 and Robidoux, 2001) but has not been subject to empirical testing or application to date.

According to Vaz (1977, 1979), rule violations in hockey are integrated in the knowledge of hockey players on three levels. Firstly, 'Occupational', where toughness, aggression, size, playing with pain and demeanour are seen as functional to the sport (Colburn, 1986; Smith, 1979). A willingness to violate or bend rules has been claimed to assist the player in junior hockey and identify a player to coaches and scouts as someone who will do anything necessary in order to win. Secondly, at the 'Structural' level, roles are assigned to players, when they sign for a team, and also during the game, following commands such as "Take him down" from the coaching staff (Bernstein, 2006). Thirdly, it is integrated at the 'Individual' level, occurring through the media; through news articles, enforcers' biographies or hockey films.

Smith and Vaz remain the most eminent scholars to theorise on the culture of hockey violence developing typologies in the sport that more recent authors have not attempted to develop. As such, their ideas remain a dominant discourse in hockey research and will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

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[14] For a glossary of terms including 'facewashing', please see Appendix 2.

The functionality of the fist fight

Colburn undertook qualitative interviews with professional hockey players in order to establish why violence is so inherent in the sport. He specifically investigated what he calls the "functional indispensability of the fist-fight" (1986:63). Similarly to the argument put forward by Gruneau and Whitson (1993), Colburn argues that hockey requires a way to deal with the inevitable surfacing aggression (due both to the presence of a weapon in the form of a hockey stick, the confined playing space and the nature of the game), in a legitimate manner. He argues that due to incompatible aims of the sport, to win games and also "intimidate opponents, on the one hand, and the need to prevent illegal assaults from damaging players' careers on the other" (1986:64), that the fist fight is an entirely functional solution. It therefore tends not to be considered violent by players in a way that stick assaults would be and is a culturally accepted way to resolve differences between players, functioning as a form of informal social control. Colburn considers the fist fight a "less than legal, but still highly pragmatic compromise" between those conflicting interests (1986:71). It can be seen here that the hockey fist fight is accepted therefore as a form of institutionalised deviance, a form that is permitted due to the function that it serves. This is central to players' ideas of violence in the sport and will form a large part of Chapter Six.

The Legality of Institutionalised violence

To a limited extent, contact sports including wrestling, boxing and indeed hockey are exempt from the criminal laws governing assault. These sports have some protection due to the idea of players implied consent to this violent force used only in the commission of particular sports (Katz, 1988). The legal principle of v*olenti non fit*

injuria (no injury is done to he whom consents) allows for players to consent to injury or assault providing it falls within the reasonable accepted level of violence. Although it has been notes that it can be difficult for the legal system to ascertain what *reasonable* may mean in any given context (Jones & Fleming, 2010; Kerr, 2006; Timmer, 2002).

Hockey can be viewed as a microcosm of society, separate from the legal and criminal justice systems that govern regular social behaviour. Players do not consider their actions on the ice in the same manner that they would their conduct off the ice. Within the particular circumstances of a game of hockey, they justify what are often quite extreme levels of violence as necessary and indeed acceptable ways in which to achieve a goal – that of winning the game. The sport can be seen as being compartmentalised, viewed as a "separate reality by the players, quite apart and distinct from real life" (Katz, 2000:838). Under these circumstances, perhaps, it is only right then that the government of the sport and its laws should be different from that of society as a whole.

Hockey is not alone in this special dispensation and many sports have systems in place for the control of violent behaviour and punishment of those deemed to be unacceptable or deviant. Specifically within the sport of ice hockey, leagues have their own rule books detailing rules, legalities and consequences of particular behaviour and detailing the particular process under which behaviour will be investigated. See Appendix 1 for a full list of violent offences some of which are considered to be acceptable in the sport, others punished within the rules and occasionally others that step over the rules of the game and need additional punishment in the form of suspensions or penalties. The pertinent question is raised of where the line is drawn as to what is within the remit of the particular league

officials and what demands the external governance of criminal sanctions. This is an oft mooted point, most particularly in North America where cases have arisen against players for extreme violent on-ice acts (Oh, 2006; Timmer 2002; Thornton 2009). These have been petitioned mainly by the complainant (injured player), seeking justice against the perpetrator. Their main claim has been that they did not consent to that particular level of physical violence, requiring it to fall under the remit of the criminal or civil law, beyond league rule book (Karon 1991, Oh 2006, Neilson 1989). The cases obtain a great deal of media attention due to their rarity, although the above authors point to their increase. It is also clear from a legal perspective that fighting is seen as part of the job of the sport: In the ruling of Court of Appeals v Virginia in 2005 (cited in Thornton 2009) a hockey enforcer was granted compensation for injuries he sustained in a hockey fight, as the coach of his team had ordered him to fight.

In England and Wales, regarding the full range of contact sports, the legal precedent was set by R v Brown (1993), which, for the first time, allowed acts that occur in the commission of the sport, but which fall outside the accepted 'rules of the game', to be challenged in court (Pendlebury, 2005). However, in 2004, the case of R v Barnes allowed for sports participants for the first time to consent to physical contact which falls outside of the rules of the sport. This shares similarities with the Canadian legal system which acknowledges that ice-hockey allows the commission of acts that are illegal outside of the sport, only to the extent that a player consents to the norms and culturally accepted margins of illegal, yet culturally legitimised violence without requiring outside legal intervention. According to Pendlebury (2005), this has led to a broadened defence of consent in contact sports which we see today. However, this defence of consent can be challenged by the court as demonstrated in 2007 when

Rhys Garland, an amateur rugby player was imprisoned for an 'illegitimate' violent act on the pitch (See [www] Slapper. 21st Nov 2007, Times Online). As ice hockey remains a marginal sport in the UK, the British courts have yet to be tested for this applicability of the defence of consent to violence.

The culture of hockey violence and 'The Code' of behaviour

Through his qualitative interviews, Colburn found evidence of an "occupational subculture of pro-violence attitudes and values acquired by players through the process of socialization" (1986:72). This corroborates several pieces of research undertaken by Smith, who considered hockey violence to be "socially acquired normative conduct" (1975:72). Smith's later research (1979) establishes the players' 'models for imitation' in regards to their attitudes about violence approval to be dominant male parents and coaches, who combined to sanction this 'macho' behaviour as "a means to an end: winning" (1979:107). This, coupled with an overwhelming desire to gain the approval of spectators and team-mates, legitimised violence used against the opposition with an aim of attaining status.

This type of socialisation forms what is a recurrent concept in journalistic discussions of ice hockey, that of "The Code", a code among players based on culturally-mediated unwritten rules of hockey violence. As with the rules of engagement, there is an emphasis on fairness and justice. Paradoxically, enforcers on hockey teams may even consider themselves to be 'policemen' (Bernstein, 2006; Robidoux, 2001) taking responsibility for rule enforcement on the ice. There is some evidence of referees' implicit acceptance of this quasi-official role (Colburn, 1986:68; Robidoux, 2001; Silverwood, 2009).

Whilst much of the research reviewed acknowledges the existence of some form of code (Colburn, 1986; Robidoux, 2001; Ingham and Dewar, 1999), until my first MSc (Silverwood 2009), no academic research aimed to fully uncover the nature and extent of this code. However, non-academic, journalistic accounts of the code are rife, for example those of Ross Bernstein, who interviewed many current and retired hockey enforcers in order to establish their understanding of the code. Bernstein (2006) detailed several key aspects of the code pertinent to this study. Regarding the rules of engagement of a fist fight, three key rules were discussed: first, the fighters must only fight other designated fighters; second, fighters must 'show up' to fight, by taking responsibility for their actions and those of their teammates; and finally, that they must 'fight fair'. To fight fair requires a prescribed series of actions to ensure that the fight is between two willing combatants, for example, by the removal of gloves and helmets and by giving respect to the referee when told the fight is over.

This considered, the fist fight could be termed pre-meditated assault, yet one that is only punished by the relatively minor penalty of five minutes in the penalty box (See Appendix 1 for a list of hockey penalties). The ritual of 'dropping the gloves' draws the attention of the audience to the impending fight causing play to stop as all eyes to focus on the combatants. It is of note that these rules of engagement do not appear in any rule book yet are considered to be a universally accepted code of behaviour.

Through his extensive journalistic interviews with hockey players, Bernstein developed a 'definitive list' of the legitimate causes of a fist fight consistent throughout the professional North-American leagues. Some of these culturally acceptable reasons for fist-fights during the game were: retaliation; intimidation; retribution; to send a message to the opposing team; to deter illegal stick work or physical behaviour; to try to draw a reaction penalty; to ensure job security for

fighters; to swing the momentum of the game by exciting the crowd and team mates; to make a name for oneself; to protect skill players from physical play and as a result of bad blood - usually a historical rivalry between clubs or players (Bernstein, 2006).

We can see therefore that, despite a lack of academic research in this area, there is clear anecdotal evidence of the existence of an unwritten culturally mediated code of conduct on the ice. The code is not limited to fighting, it also deals with issues such as personal conduct, respect for peers and consideration for other professionals' careers. This is in many ways far removed from traditional criminological theories of deviance, and also from examples of impassioned violence. The particular violence that Bernstein's interviewees spoke of was premeditated, justified and ruled wholly by 'The Code'.[15]

The code is learned through the culture of the game, as Ingham writes:

> Incorporated into both the formal and informal socialization process, then, is a more or less formal set of rules which guide the athletes in their interaction with the 'external system'. Athletes are taught to walk the fine line between play and display. Organizations on the other hand walk the fine line between sport and entertainment.
> (Ingham, 1975:360).

Here Ingham introduces the key idea that the acceptability of violence is not limited to the players but also to the business of hockey and those who seek to make a living from the entertainment provided by the sport and the integral physical nature of the game.

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[15] An analysis of the hockey culture and the code of players in the UK is given in Chapters Six and Seven.

However, the concept of 'The Code' is not without its critics, most notably, Canadian journalist Adam Proteau who describes it as "hockey's twisted sense of heroism" (2011:91). Dumfounded by the romanticisation of this notion of function, loyalty and culture, he writes:

> The Code is the umbrella term for an unwritten, supposedly sacred set of etiquette guidelines hockey players claim to adhere to on the ice…very few of The Code's tenets are able to withstand any scrutiny. But, for decades, The Code has been fetishized and romanticized strongly, corporately, and consistently enough to have legions of supporters who swear by it today. The on-ice officials themselves could - and should – have more power to call the game by the league's written rules, but they have been systematically conditioned to give players far more leeway that athletes in other contact sports are permitted.
> (Proteau 2011:96).

As a writer for The Hockey News, Proteau has made a name for himself as a critic of violence in the sport of hockey, which he feels could be perfectly well played without the needless levels of violence accepted by many. He himself has been criticised widely by some members of the hockey fraternity who do not wish to see the current levels of violence policed out of the game. The Code then, is a hugely important element of the discourse of the sport, in journalistic accounts, in player accounts and in the media. However, as yet, there is no empirical research on this phenomenon, either in the UK or globally. Rather, there is a plethora of quantitative empirical research which uses National Hockey League (NHL) statistics to outline how many fights occur in games (Allen 2002), whether there is a financial incentive to fight (Levitt 2002) and whether supporters consume more beer at games where there is a fight (Jones *et al* 1993). To me, this is to ignore the central issue of the sport, namely who is involved in the violent action? How do they make their

decisions about what violent act to commit? and how do they account for their actions after the event? To me, these are essential to the understanding of the sport and it is these issues that the thesis seeks to explore.

The economy of violence in ice hockey

In addition to the players prioritising violence and male dominance over non-violent play, the sport itself endorses violence due to its economic benefit in terms of crowd attendance. Allen (2002); Jones *et al* (1993, 1996); and Paul (2003) each found positive correlations between levels of violence and crowd figures at games. Therefore, for the players, violence is considered to be both functional and financially rewarding. As the Toronto Star newspaper highlighted "Brawling helps sell hockey" (15th Dec 1971:19. In Smith, 1975:78).

Jones *et al* (1996) advocate a more thorough control of ice-hockey violence by punishing the teams who endorse it as well as the individual players. They state:

> Since there is an incentive for teams to promote violence and because the legal system normally only prosecutes players not teams, the standard methods used to control violence – self regulation and the judicial system – are unlikely to work.
> (Jones *et al,* 1996:231).

Lloyd considers violence to be the "USP (unique selling point)" of ice-hockey as a marginal sport in the UK ([www] Lloyd, 2009 Pro-Hockey News). Despite the role of the league and the team in allowing - and in certain circumstances in endorsing - violence for the crowd figures and consequential financial effect, any legal repercussions of this are aimed squarely at the individual players, perpetuating structural power inequalities.

If hockey violence is linked to the economic success of the sport, and one acknowledges that hockey players are to some extent commodities of the club for which they play, the following questions must be addressed: To what extent are hockey players rational free-willed actors? and how much of the violence they engage with is due to wider structural conditions?[16] There is a long criminological tradition of explaining deviance by rational free-willed choice, dating back to 'classical' theorists such as Beccaria and Bentham (Downes & Rock, 1997; Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1995). In recent years, the perspective has seen a renaissance with the growing popularity of the "criminologies of everyday life" (Garland & Sparks, 2000). The seminal article on rational choice theories was written by Cornish and Clarke providing three main components to the perspective: firstly, the image of a '*reasoning offender'*, standing in sharp contrast to earlier pathological explanations of '*born criminals'*; secondly, a crime-specific focus, rather than the individualistic focus of symbolic interactionists and subcultural theorists; and finally, the development of separate decision models for the involvement processes and the criminal event (Cornish & Clarke 1986).

David Allen (2002, 2005) compared the economic model of societal crime with that of hockey crime. He argues that in societal crime, the criminal gains "income through illegality rather than legal means. In the analysis of crime in the context of ice hockey, income will be assumed to take the form of wins for an individual player's team" (Allen 2002:42). Allen further found that these illegal acts were intentional, that players considered whether they would make more impact on the results of the game if they pursued illegal play. Simply put, "the offender gains more

[16] This is also of interest in Part Two of this chapter and will be discussed further in relation to other occupational subcultures towards the end of this chapter.

utility from illegal activities than from legal activity" (2002:43). However, the difference with team sports and individual societal crime is that with team sports such as hockey, often the 'offender' is acting for 'the good of the team', not for personal gain (Allen, 2002; Heckelman, 2003:705; Levitt, 2002).

By only considering the rational behaviour of hockey players or other social actors, this literature however ignores the emotional involvement that players or actors experience in the commission of a game (De Haan and Loader, 2002). As argued by Elias:

> Every investigation that considers only the consciousness of men, their 'reason' or 'ideas', while disregarding the structure of drives, the direction and form of human affects and passions, can from the outset be only of limited value.
> (Elias, 1994:486)

Greater discussion of the importance of emotions and passion will be given later this chapter.

Masculinity and machismo in ice hockey

Several researchers attribute high levels of dominant masculinity in hockey as a potential cause of violent behaviour on the ice. Weinstein *et al* (1995) found players' endorsement of masculine behaviour had an effect on the exhibited level of violence and that it was fighting (rather than skating or scoring ability) that was seen to be a strong indicator of masculinity. The culture of the sport encourages violence and actively teaches players how to intimidate others through force "to create anxiety in opponents" (1995:831). This 'hegemonic masculinity' has an active effect on the normative standards which excuse violent, aggressive behaviour. Players adhere to

beliefs about appropriate masculine behaviour, such as violence, power, winning and strength. Atkinson and Young (2008) focus their theoretical discussion on the "mimetic function" of these concepts and consider "the code" of violence as "an ideology shared between warriors" (Robidoux, 2001).

Ingham and Dewar considered the effect that this 'hegemonic masculinity' had on 13-14 year old hockey players. Through the use of qualitative interviews with young players, they found evidence that even young adolescents understood "the code" (1999:19) and actively sought out ways of demonstrating this dominant masculinity in order to prove their status as "real men". They found that the "felt want for masculinity begins early in the biography of a hockey player" (1999:19). Ingham and Dewar do not hold to the violence as catharsis thesis held by some, rather they hold that 'violence-begets-violence'. They found, paradoxically, that deviant behaviour was in fact a demonstration of conformity for young boys aspiring to be physical, aggressive and successful hockey players. This two-sided coin of "honour and shame" influences these boys and "reproduces a cycle of violence that is so much a part of hockey" (Ingham and Dewar 1999:23).

This dominant masculinity is not only one which prioritises force, power and winning at all costs, but also the heterosexual male model which becomes the *only* acceptable model for players to identify with (Robidoux 2006:127). Players learn quickly that it is important to gain the respect of their teammates and the most common method is through accepting physical challenges on the ice, fighting for both their team's respect and their team's result (2006:136). This intense sub-culture of hegemonic masculinity in the sport (Allain, 2013; Atkinson and Young, 2008; Robidoux, 2001; Weinstein et al, 1995) contrasts starkly with the broader cultural changes of increasing gender equality. It could be argued that all-male sports teams

are one of the few areas unaffected by increased female equality in the workplace that has affected other areas where there has historically been male dominance, for example the armed forces and emergency services.

This reinforcement of machismo and demonstrative male dominance serves to protect the interests of the player in performing masculinity for the team and also for the good of the game. Weinstein, *et al* (1995) note that hockey coaches viewed their players as more athletically and physically competent if they engaged in physical altercations beyond those required during the commission of a game. Thus, strength may even be shown in receiving an injury or contusion as these are known to be considered as badges of honour among athletes (Muir and Seitz, 2004; Weinstein *et al,* 1995). As Bourdieu (1979) notes, notions of honour may be stronger in those who see themselves through the eyes of others; as athletes who compete in a public sphere, with an audience, it appears likely that concepts of honour and violent reputation may be important for professional athletes competing in power sports. Even without an audience of spectators, players engage with a performance for other players and can thus be seen as a masculinity-enhancing competition of status and bravado (Daly and Wilson, 1988).

As mentioned earlier, there has not been any research into the violence of hockey in the UK. The only research of any description on ice hockey was undertaken by Garry Crawford in relation to ice hockey supporters (1998, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2010). Crawford undertook both survey and qualitative research on spectators of one team in the Ice-hockey Super League (ISL, which was re-formed as EIHL). Crawford's research is useful in establishing demographic composition of spectators; which is "fairly affluent, local based (almost exclusively) white" with a large proportion attending games in "family units" (Crawford, 2001). Hockey fans are

usually in full-time employment and are middle-class with a good income (Crawford, 1998:6). This demographic profile differs radically from that of other competitive team sports in the UK and from that of hockey in North America as suggested by Gruneau and Whitson (1993) and Crawford, (2001).

Whilst Crawford's research provides an overview of the UK hockey spectator, it does not explicitly deal with violence. He does provide one question in his survey asking spectators the most appealing aspect of attending hockey matches. 48.6% of males and only 34.6% of females found the aggressive nature of the game one of the most appealing aspects of attending ice-hockey, which was the one question that separated an otherwise similar gender response throughout the questionnaire (Crawford, 1998:8).

While Crawford's research is now dated, with the ISL disbanding in 2003 and some fourteen years having passed since his last study, it is the only academic work on UK hockey to date. As Crawford himself states "the nature of British sport...audiences has changed significantly since the early 1990s and nowhere more so than in British ice-hockey which has seen itself repacked and targeted towards a 'family based' market" (2010:x). He goes on to argue that:

> Sport, stripped of heritage, tradition and the importance of locality...was consumed, utilised and experiences in the supporter's everyday lives in many different and complex ways. The sport formed the basis of social interactions, networks, performances, community and was a constituent part of many fans' social identities
> (Crawford, 2010: x).

Importantly, Crawford considers the centrality of supporters' role in moulding and maintaining the culture of the sport, rather than as end-point receivers of the sport

product. He ascertains "it is sports fans themselves who help create the atmosphere at 'live' sport venues, constituting a major part of the text that is viewed and consumed by other audience members" (Crawford 2004:3). It is clear, that despite a focus purely on the consumption of sport, he offers an important part in the development of spectators as creators of the culture of the sport. This is a point that was built upon in my second MSc dissertation (2010) as explained in Chapter One.

Part Two: Masculinity, deviance, violence and emotion in other sports and occupational subcultures

The phenomenon of violence in sporting contexts was not invented by modern organised sports. As discussed in Chapter Two, the state control of violence has caused violent behaviour to move to a more professional sporting context (Elias 1994; Elias and Dunning, 1986). These contexts can often appear gladiatorial - cage fighting, the fighting in a ring of boxing, or in an enclosed rink in ice hockey, is reminiscent of these historical contexts, although it could be argued that modern competitors have rather more control than the original gladiators. The pitting of two contestants against one another in a physical context is a familiar sight, with a strong warrior ethos emerging through many organised sports (Dunning, 2000). In a realm where legitimised violence is limited to the state and certain sporting contexts when modern life became increasingly routinized there remained the need for "the ephemeral experiences of excitement" (Brent & Kraska, 2013:366) in the form of mimetic activity for both competitors and spectators.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the 'culture of control' (Garland 2001, 1996) has led to individuals actively seeking out the thrill of mimetic battles, physical contests and violent fights (Atkinson, 2002; Atkinson & Young, 2005; Barthes, 1972; Brent &

Kraska, 2013; Hayward, 2004; Young, 2007). The "petite barbarism" (Brent & Kraska, 2013:373) of these sporting contests serve to highlight some of the most negative aspects of human nature and of society. Many commentators raising concern that the stratospheric rise of sports such as cage fighting demonstrates an increase in hegemonic masculinities struggle back to dominant control that has been increasingly removed from modern life (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Dunning, 2000; Hall, 2002; Winlow and Hall, 2009). In a discussion of the blurred area on the edge of criminality, Brent and Kraska (2013) discuss sport fighting and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and the continued rise in popularity of organised forms of violence. In common with previous findings of hockey violence: "Such fights deviate from commonly held notions of assault as participants engage in consensual violence without malice" (2013:358). Of importance in this area is the challenge to the traditional criminocentric ideals of much recent criminological research that ignores the concept of emotion in violence and is similarly blind to the idea of violence existing outside of a criminal environment.

Integral to many of these contests is an audience of spectators, who are present to enjoy the emotions along with those actively involved in fighting:

> "Punishing another human being by beating the consciousness out of them – or making them submit to you by putting them through excruciating pain – provides these fights and their audiences with a profound sense of patriarchal power and control"
> (Brent & Kraska, 2013:373).

The authors also draw similarities of observing violence in this sporting context and observing violence caused by one's own state in the form of the criminal justice service or the military. They make the important point that although there are many differences, each situation draws the conclusion that our acceptability of violence is

an entrenched cultural pattern that warrants further exposition. Barthes (1972) essay on wrestling confirms that spectators are in fact integral to the observation of the atavistic playing out of violence in power sports, contending that the spectacle of suffering, success, defeat and justice are played out in wrestling in a similar manner to that seen in Roman gladiatorial battles.

Many sporting examples of violence are criticised as being falsified for an audience, or as being sham fights. This criticism is aimed at hockey fighting as much as it is on diverse areas such as wrestling (Barthes, 1972), martial arts (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004) and even cockfighting (Geertz, 2005). The criticism of fake displays of violence is tied in with masculinity and is seen as a display of 'show' rather than one of true masculinity. This point will be expanded upon in greater detail in Chapters five to seven, demonstrating the common ground between disparate sports being masculinity, physical dominance, power and the ability to generate excitement and other emotions in spectators. This builds upon Geertz's (2005) notion of 'deep play' where violence is enacted passionately, wholeheartedly and without a consideration of the legal consequences of such behaviour.

Randall Collins' interactionist perspective, as discussed in Chapter Two, has much to offer the micro-sociological study of sport. He states that there are three types of dynamics relating to emotions that that collectively form the background for outbreaks of violence in sport. These are the build-up of tension in the audience; the level of collaboration in the team emotionally; and the emotional energy with the opposition (2008). Making an important distinction in the term violence, as being behaviour that happens outside of the rules (rather than violent conduct that is accepted within the game and is unpunished in the game), sports violence is that which brings play to a stop and draws the attention of the referee. For Collins,

sports, like hockey, where there is tension of the offence and the defence and the potential for sudden changes in the game there is a corresponding build up in emotion of the game and it is this emotion, whether it be dominant or subordinate that is the cause of violence erupting (2008:285-8). He adds that the prevalence of consequences of physical behaviour (such as playing short-handed while a player sits out a penalty in the sin-bin) are so ingrained into the game that they form the basis for offensive and defensive team strategies integral to the sport.

Interestingly, he comments on the fact that while some sports such as American football and basketball have a similar level of penalties as hockey, they do not have the same amount of fighting, which he puts down to the equipment the players wear and their lack of purchase on the ice in skates which legitimises fighting as being not as damaging as it would be in either of the other sports mentioned. For Collins (2008:302) "Violence in hockey acts as a high intensity interaction ritual, riveting collective attention and producing emotional entrainment." This highly organised interaction ritual allows for the allocation of roles to members of the team (e.g. enforcers, fighters, scorers) without requiring explicit communication of that to the opposition. Collins's notion of emotional energy sits well in a discussion of sporting violence as his focus on violence erupting when there is no '*Emotional Equilibrium'* (hereafter EE) has much in common with sporting notions of fairness and sportsmanship. Much research (for example Jones & Fleming's 2010 paper on physicality in professional rugby) points to the increase in violence outside of the rules when one team perceives the referee to be 'calling' the game unfairly. It is when the 'fairness balance' (Brent and Kraska, 2013:315) or Collins 'Emotional Equilibrium' (2008) is uneven, that violent situations escalate.

Drawing on his research on affluent suburban youth and their commission of fighting outside of sporting contexts in everyday life, Curtis Jackson-Jacobs is focussed, like Collins, on the interaction of specific fights. He provides a generalisable theory of the three stages of a fight: First, that those involved agree to fight as a solution to their differences; Second, that they must overcome the ordinary fear of violence; and Third, that competitive techniques of violence are used (Jackson-Jacobs 2013:23). In a similar argument to Brent & Kraska, he argues that fighters do not simply lose control; rather they are actively involved in the decision-making process. Like Collins (2008) idea of "emotional dominance", Jackson-Jacobs believes, drawing on the work of Katz (1988), that it is the collective provocation of emotions in the group that actively seeks out excitement and dominance as a way of maintaining control, rather than being seen as a 'loss' of control.

Concepts of masculinity and of control also emerge in research on other male-dominated power sports. In his ethnography of the professional boxing community, Loic Wacquant (2004) analysed the ways that the 'body capital' of male boxers was constructed and maintained in a dominant masculine subculture. Klein's (1989) anthropological fieldwork among bodybuilders suggests that the most exclusively male institutions (for example sport, policing and armed forces) exhibit the strongest examples of masculinity, far wider than others in general society. Male traits such as "hypermasculinity, homophobia and narcissism" are common in athletes (Klein, 1989; Muir & Seitz, 2004; Wilson, 2010). Klein argues that there is a societal resurgence of atavistic masculinity: "Comicbook masculinity depicts men one dimensionally as stoic, brave to a fault, always in control, aggressive and competitive" (Klein, 1989:12). This culture of masculinity is one which can extend

beyond those who play the sport to those who observe from the stands and identify themselves as fans of particular teams and spectator subcultures such as football 'firms' (Ayres and Treadwell, 2011; Treadwell and Garland, 2011). The "narcissistic notion of the male self" (Geertz, 2005:73) is inexorably tied up in gaining status from demonstrating prowess in the use of violence.

The 'deviant' subculture of collegiate rugby players was researched Muir and Seitz (2004), keen to specifically address this perceived problem in male sports. They found that the deviant conduct of the group is considered by participants to be functional in that it leads to group cohesiveness, despite being "largely perpetuated by the notions of homophobia, machismo, and misogyny." (2004:303). Sport plays a cultural role in society and also plays a part in the socialisation of sex-roles (Curry, 1991; Hughes and Coakley, 1991; Kreager, 2007; Messner, 1988; Messner, 1999; Messner and Sabo, 1994).

Deviance is integral to the subculture of sporting groups and often forms a ritualistic device, being learned by exposure to the subculture after gaining successful entry. It, of course, holds some similarity with initiation and degradation ceremonies common in fraternities and secret societies and is essentially a group phenomenon (Garfinkel, 1956; Jones, 2000, Katz, 1996; Muir & Seitz, 2004). As previously stated, deviant behaviour among athletes tends to remain within the group and does not impact on the athlete's behaviour away from the group or subculture. For example, Smith (1983) found there was no increased offending among hockey players compared with their non-sporting peers.

Deviance in sporting contexts may include behaviour in the commission of the game, such as result-fixing, cheating and violent assault, as well as subcultural behaviour

away from the arena. This is commonly accepted to include ‘benign’ behaviour such as the boisterous singing of sexually explicit, racist or derogatory songs and immature physical horseplay, to far more serious conduct involving binge drinking, drug taking, vandalizing public property, theft, the infliction of injury, and indecent exposure (Sheard and Dunning, 1973). Hughes and Coakley (1991) offer an interesting insight into the kinds of deviant behaviour athletes engage in, perceiving it to be a form of positive deviance that is caused by the need to conform to the sports ethic of winning at any cost:

> …athletes lives are already controlled through the often repressive systems of social control. We argue that a significant portion of deviance…is grounded in athletes’ uncritical acceptance of and commitment to what they have been told by important people in their lives ever since they began participating in competitive programs; in a real sentence, it is the result of being too committed to the foals and norms of the sport.
> (Hughes and Coakley, 1991:307-308).

In this view acts that others may consider to be deviant, such as the taking of performance drugs, hyper-masculine team-bonding social activities and the degradation of those who do not conform to the ethics of the sport (including women and men who reject the hyper-masculine heterosexual identity) can be seen as being positive for the maintenance of success in the sporting culture. This ‘positive deviance’ encourages athletes to be seen as conforming to the sport ethic thereby encouraging the support of coaches, sponsors and others in order to maintain their position within the sport. Hughes and Coakley maintain that the cause of this is usually in the system that puts children into a competitive environment from a young age and rewarding them for positive deviant acts that are seen to enhance their sporting ethic. Thus, paying the price for involvement in the sport by building their

bodies to a competitive standard, or playing through pain (often relying on pharmaceutical help) is a form of positive deviance in maintaining their ideal of a role as an elite professional athlete. Further: “Their goal is to show through their deeds that they belong in a special group, a group comprised of people willing to pay the price, strive for distinction, accept risks and exceed limits” (1991:322).

Many of these forms of deviant behaviour are perceived to be temporary, occurring in the youth and young adulthood of a team of boys and men who create their subculture outside of the realm of that of traditional society. Thus it could be considered to be “transitory deviant behaviour” (Muir and Seitz, 2004). This also has parallels with Hayward’s (2012) concept of the ‘dominating body’ and life stage. This is relevant to many professional sports, but also pertinent to many occupations such as the military, the police and security services. The dominating body “celebrates a commitment to violence beyond any reason comprehensible to others” (Katz, 1988:100). The owner of a dominating body is not calculating – he is ‘always prepared to go crazy if the situation calls for it’ (Lyng, 2005:369). It is no coincidence that many involved in contact sports, along with many joining the military or policing occupations are young men between the ages of 18-29. Keith Hayward (2012) considers this life-stage ‘emerging adulthood’ and argues, along with Arnett (2000) that this stage is distinct from later stages in life as development of the part of the brain responsible for emotion control (pre-frontal cortex and cerebellum) continue throughout this period of life (Hayward, 2012:220).

Muir and Seitz consider behaviour that may seem completely normal for college students, for sporting groups or for groups of men at play, who may accept an ‘aura of hooliganism, alcohol abuse and sexual conquest” (2004:307), the proverbial

assertion that what goes on tour stays on tour' - this is not accepted by others outside of that subculture:

> While the athletes themselves largely perceive their deviant conduct as ephemeral, the behaviors nevertheless have crucial manifest and latent functions for the group and its individual members.
> (Muir & Seitz, 2004:306).

Another similarity between teams and college fraternities is that players are often in close contact with each other even when not participating in the sport, living in team houses or flats and staying in hotel rooms together on away trips. There is certainly a continuance of the subculture of the sport away from the sporting arena and into the social lives and even private lives (in the case of shared housing). This leads to elements of the culture remaining outside of the physical space of the rink and the requirement for some behaviours such as hypermasculinity, courage and bravado to remain.

In terms of groups and teams, acceptance and access is essential. In order to perform as a sporting team, each individual needs to ascribe to the same goals and work towards the same aims, thus the subcultural deviance of the team functions to strengthen that:

> When taken together, ritual and tradition form almost impenetrable barriers which determine whether a person is accepted into the bond or denied access, Bonding rests on the supposition that every member participates in the same ceremony, hears the same words, and lives the same experience. If successful, this common experience gives the organization continuity and structure.
> (Muir & Seitz 2004:113).

It can be seen then, that these deviant subcultural rituals that teams perform could be viewed as positive in terms of the cohesiveness of the team as a whole. Goffman referred to these as functional necessities. As an outsider this behaviour may not be accepted and may seem harmful, but it is legitimised within the team and within the subculture of the game. As Collins and Makowsky (1989) state, this behaviour must be evaluated with the inherent exigencies of the group in mind.

It is common among subcultures and teams in particular that specific norms, beliefs and values are created and continue and this is vital to the group. Indeed, the group is expected to willingly abide by the rules of the team. As Muir and Seitz explain:

> In this regard, participation in the group's ritual is viewed as altruistic; the more closely the individual's behaviour parallels the philosophies of the group, the higher the degree of adulation and acceptance.
> (Muir & Seitz, 2004:309).

However, the detrimental side of this cohesion is that if an individual does not live up to the rules of the group then they face ostracism.

> One is punished by one's fellows; and since one's self is derived from others, one may well be struck with a permanent spoiled identity as a faulty interactant, but all this is necessary to preserve symbolic reality for those who can participate in it.
> (Collins and Makowsky, 1989:239-40).

Machismo, misogyny, homophobia and racism hold strong ideological importance for male athletic subcultures, as examined in research on college athletes and others (Curry, 1991; Dundes and Stein, 1985; Dunning, 1986; Kimble *et* al, 2010; Messner, 1999; Wheatley, 1988; Whitson, 1990; Winlow, 2001). Deviance is not pursued in its own right and for its own ends, rather it is seen as being a purpose or function for the group, to reaffirm masculinity, strength, power and control and to increase social

cohesion among the individuals that form the group. Some however, view this more critically, like radical feminists such as Lynskyi (1990) or Pryer (2002). The critique that has been developed sees:

> …the male athletic ethos is the embodiment of traditional values of masculinity, and the behaviors exhibited within these male-dominated subcultures serve to rationalize sexual differentiation and heterosexual male superiority.
> (Muir & Seitz, 2004:305)

Muir and Seitz, whilst critical of the machismo of professional sports, maintain that the degradation of women, (or men that are perceived to fail at masculinity), can be seen as functional in terms of its effect on social cohesion:

> The subculture of collegiate rugby functions as a figurative providing ground for excessive bravado and audacity. Athletes amplify their masculine attributes through participation in a variety of activities unique to the subculture, often at the expense of women, homosexuals and less virile teammates.
> (Muir & Seitz, 2004:306).

Brown *et al* (2002) noted that suffering and tolerating excessive amounts of pain reinforce the notion that heterosexual masculinity, sexiness, and bravado are partially judged by an athlete's ability to tolerate injury and continue to play sport. Nelson (1994) further noted that sports violence plays an integral role in maintaining male dominance over the whole of society, with sports violence, innuendo and behaviour towards women and homosexuals being perceived as acceptable both on and off the athletic field.

One should not assume that all criticism is directed outside of the team, however. Among many sporting subcultures alcohol consumption, drug use, success with

members of the opposite sex and popularity of those within the group may also be negatively judged and openly ridiculed (Muir and Seitz 2004). Homophobia, misogyny, racism and ridicule are common within sporting teams themselves (Dundes and Stein, 1985; Messner, 1999; Muir and Seitz, 2004; Pronger, 1999; Schacht, 1997). These themes will all be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five of the thesis.

Violence and Masculinity in non-sporting occupational cultures

As explained above, male athletic subcultures could be seen as having much in common with male-dominated occupational subcultures such as those that emerge in the military (Brown, 1988) in policing (Reiner, 2000; Chan, 1999), security work, and door bouncers (Winlow *et al,* 2001; Hobbs *et al,* 2002), all roles which state the importance of strong team work and male dominance. Research into these subcultures has much to offer the current project in terms of understanding subcultures in an under-researched area.

"Storytelling occurs naturally in all social settings" (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003:28); it is an aspect of occupational culture that is integral to the transmission of culture over time. This has received most attention in terms of police occupational culture and it has its similarities with sporting culture too, as athletes will be asked to tell the story of their great win, or the great fight. This issue has been discussed for many years in terms of police subculture, as Van Maanen found, novice officers were keen to hear tales of what real police work was like and would listen to hours of police stories, starting in police college and continuing through the culture of the occupation (Van Maanen, 1973:410). Understandably, much ethnography, including

those of the police are full of stories, many people like to tell stories of their profession and "a willing researcher is an invitation to impart stories" (Mishler, 1986, In van Hulst, 2013:626).

Much police research on subculture historically has focussed on the idea of police chatter in the canteen or shift room as being the real opinions of police officers, which will negatively affect the ways in which the police conduct their work on the street. However, Waddington (1999) was clear to point out that the talk in one area remained a performance and did not necessarily impact how the work was conducted away from that area. The similarities of this and that of sporting subcultures are clear in terms of the backstage space in which an ethnographer is often privileged and will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Dominant in studies of police occupational culture is the work of Rob Reiner who states that:

> Cultures develop as people respond in various meaningful ways to their predicament as constituted by the network of relations they find themselves in, which are in turn formed by different more macroscopic levels of structured action and institutions.
> (Reiner, 2010:116).

The culture that Reiner refers to is one that exists prior to an individual entering, but one in which an individual has very little direction over. Building on Skolnick's (1966) account of cop culture, Reiner points out the many of the perceived negative cultural traits of policing, such as machismo, misogyny, homophobia, racism, a high rate of divorce and alcoholism amongst officers actually form as coping strategies for officers in dealing with the stress of their position. To Reiner, Skolnick, Chan and others, occupational culture is integral to the practice of policing but must not be

viewed as a deliberately negative aspect of the profession. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, hockey players have created their own culture which includes mechanisms to maintain solidarity and a sense of team membership while reinforcing dominant characteristics such as masculinity, force, power, and success.

The early 21st century brought with it a catalogue of ethnographic research focussing on the night time economy and the privatisation of traditionally public policing duties. Researchers such as Hobbs, Hadfield, Winlow and Lister opened up a new understanding of occupational subcultures relevant to criminologists and sociologists alike. Research into the physical dominance of doormen and nightclub bouncers and how they perform masculinity and the threat of violence is useful in understanding those who use violence or threaten violence in a sporting context. Hobbs *et al* (2002) talk about the importance of demeanour and self-presentation in establishing the threat of violence and the presence of power:

> An ability to 'look the part' by possessing an imposing physical presence suggestive of potential violence allows the doorman to underline his position of authority and dominance within the milieu. Physical potential can be suggested by bulk (in the case of body builders), evidence of engagement in combat, for instance a battered or scarred visage, or in the display of a highly specialized body suggestive of equally specialized combative skills. (Hobbs *et al,* 2002:357).

The legitimisation of these forms of violence within the subculture and to the wider society is also of interest and Hobbs *et al* talk of the astounding acceptance of levels of violence that are not often seen outside of the military or policing institutions among individuals in the night time economy. This is in part due to the acceptance by those within the subculture and many who use their institutions of the idea that

this form of public order policing should only be carried out by private institutions, and not the '*real*' police (Shearing and Stenning, 1983).

Research by Winlow *et al* (2001) demonstrates that the use of violence and intimidation are inherently cultural and personal as well as commercial. He terms this 'a choreography of violence' (Hobbs *et al,* 2002:358). In a similar manner to police occupational culture, bouncers both create, and are created by, the culture in which they operate and will adapt to that culture when taking on the role of their occupation. This idea that violence within the subculture remains within it but is demonstrated to others by the use of violence or threat of violence (as demonstrated by size and demeanour) is of interest not only to those studying this subculture, but also others in which violence or its threat are used and therefore provides an interesting insight into the potential for violence in sporting contexts. Similarly to the bodily capital displayed in sporting contexts (Wacquant, 2004), bouncers, bodyguards, police officers and those in many other physical occupations use their bodies as "marketable assets" (Winlow *et al,* 2001:539). The body type; appearance; presence of scars; the manner of speech; and intimidating stance are all of importance. As Hobbs *et al* state: "violence is a highly marketable economic resource (South, 1988), and the ability to fight is the bottom line" *(*Hobbs *et al*, 2002:358)

Many have pointed out that the dominance; masculinity and force portrayed by the police, bouncers and the military are grounded in masculine working-class culture and self-identity (Willis, 1977; Winlow, 1999). Perceptions of honour are strongest in those who see themselves through the eyes of others (Bourdieu, 1979:115), and those whose working life is spent in the public eye such as bouncers, policemen and professional sportsmen fit that image. In particular, a sporting context where players

are placed on pedestals and 'worshipped' as celebrities, might particularly lend itself to this area of investigation.

Occupational subcultures of violence as a product of structural power inequalities

Radical and Critical Criminology have much to offer the study of an institutionalised sport. From these perspectives, violence is seen as a social construction that is not irrational or sporadic, but is functional to the broader, dominant system of economic and power relations. Thus, violence and other forms of deviance need to be understood in terms not of individual pathology or of subcultural responses to problems, but rather in terms of activities that are actively shaped and sustained by the system (Tombs & Whyte, 2007). This system can be viewed as corrupt in that the dominant agents manipulate those in that group to act in a way that perpetrates the power balance. In this view, to simply consider deviance as 'primary' or 'wanted' fails to acknowledge those individuals and groups who may be hurt by that deviant behaviour (Gruneau & Whitson, 1994).

Several theorists (Archer, 1994; Atkinson and Young, 2008; Bandura, in Jones, 2000; Campbell and Muncer, 1994; Gruneau and Whitson, 1993; Levi *et al,* 2008; Messerschmidt, 1993) suggest that subcultures of violence and masculinity negatively affect violent behaviour. Segal (1996) considers violence and masculinity to be linked, partially due to the fact that the majority of "socially approved" users of violence, force and aggression are engaged in careers that are male dominated such as the police and the army. Messerschmidt says masculinity accomplished through sports participation "creates an environment for the construction of masculinity that celebrates toughness and endurance, incessantly advocates competitiveness and a

shame of losing" (1993:93).This coupled with the prevalence of illicit drugs and consumption of large amounts of alcohol (Ayres and Treadwell, 2011) can lead to an intensely hypermasculine display of behaviour involving violence.

This is not simply a matter of masculinity however, many theorists contend that the 'problem' of violence is compounded in working class young men. As Winlow and Hall (2009) explain:

> Men who carry with them the deeply ingrained visceral dispositions that are the products of socialization within micro-climates of insecurity, aggression and domination often come to value violence and place its enactment close to the centre of self-identity … the desire not to be dominated by another can become extremely potent (Winlow and Hall, 2009: 287-288).

Thus, working class males seek to display their masculinity in the presence of other working class men demonstrating an anxiety to 'to secure admiration in subcultures that are characterized by mimetic rivalry, where young men judge each other quite ruthlessly on their performances of normative sub-cultural expectations' (Hall, 2002: 46). It can be seen that there are similarities here between those who use violence in the commission of sport, those who use violence as part of their occupation as bouncers and those who engage in violence in the street, despite many differences between these groups.

Marxist theories consider the capitalist hegemony inherent in western cultures whereby deviance can be considered lucrative. With specific regard to the owners of sports businesses, it can be seen that deviance is viewed as financially beneficial; it sells seats and fuels a media interest in the sport, in turn increasing advertising revenue. However, certain individuals are harmed by this dominant culture:

> While, owners, sponsors and officials prosper from on-field deviance, athletes are fined, suspended, dismissed or banned permanently from

> competition when their behaviour is perceived to cross the ambiguous line from wanted to unwanted. The contradictions and hypocrisy are obvious. (Atkinson & Young, 2008:8).

The lens of the power inequalities has been built upon in many legal publications relating to individuals who suffer due to carrying out a role for the team. For example, Feldman, 2002; Jones & Fleming, 2010; Levitt, 2002; and Thornton, 2009; who point out the inherent difficulties in holding individuals accountable for a role they play in a team. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

The role of emotions in sporting and occupational cultures

As stated earlier in this chapter, it is contended that one cannot consider only the role of the structure that allows violent behaviour, neither can we focus entirely on the definition of actions by those who engage in them; rather, we must also consider wider notions of emotionality experienced by social actors. Emotions are of course integral to all human action, specifically that which requires the presentation of a particular form of emotion in order to behave in a particular way. As set out in Section Three of Chapter Two, cultural criminologists (such as Ferrell, Lyng, Presdee and Snyder) focus on the role of positive emotions, such as excitement, fun and carnival in the commission of particular acts. This of course is not particular to cultural criminology and there is a wealth of sociological literature on emotions, emotional labour and the seduction of euphoria gained in undertaking particular actions.

Jack Katz, in his study of the seductions of criminal and deviant behaviour, discusses the importance of rule deviation, not as a negative act, but as a positive act, seeking out particular experiences of emotions and a 'sneaky thrill' (Katz, 1988:52). Integral to the understanding of emotions is the fact that they are "corporeal", as Katz

(2000:7) explains: "Through our emotions, we reach back sensually to grasp the tacit, embodied foundations of our selves." As one might expect, the emotions that arise as part of shared human actions can be considered as "emotionality" which is distinctly in the world of shared social interaction (Denzin, 2009:3).

Emotions, which may of course be felt on an individual basis have a greater degree of resonance in a shared social setting and therefore are inherently interactive. Indeed, if one is to understand violence, one needs a good understanding of the emotions that lead to violent behaviour and the feelings of aggression, anger, fear, dominance and danger, among others. To Denzin, violence is such an emotionally-experienced behaviour that it must be defined as "…the attempt to regain, through the use of emotional or physical force, something that has been lost" (Denzin, 2009:168). To Denzin, the organisation of violence, must therefore take into account the myriad of emotions and feelings that occur in the commission of a particular act. "The violent self is a feeling self, feeling in and through violence, a sense of outrage, a sense of loss, and a desire to regain" (2009:170). In order for an act to be considered violent, it must be placed in an interactive subjective place and "involve the articulation and expression of an emotional definition of an interpersonal situation." (2009:171).

Denzin places human emotion centrally to violent behaviour and explains that one cannot be understood without consideration of the other. This process is inherently interactional and cultural which may explain some of the perceived differences between criminal violence and those actions that others perceive to be legitimate in particular contexts. Therefore in order to understand how violence is perceived as acceptable, unacceptable, illegitimate or otherwise, we need to understand the emotions that lead to violent behaviour as well as the interpretation of those emotions

and that behaviour by others. Similarly, Hochschild (1979) calls this the interactional, intersubjective meaning of ritual.

Hochschild's later (1983) work on emotional work, which involved the observation of, usually female, employees as they engaged in emotion management in their occupational settings. Hochschild states that women often split apart their real bodies from their professional bodies, allowing them to engage in emotion work that is not an accurate representation of their real selves. While focussing on female workers in largely caring and service roles, it could be suggested that this form of emotion-work is also involved in traditionally male occupations, such as those where an emotional front of bravado or aggression may be required. Hochschild's work thus may give an understanding of the differences between displayed masculinity and emotion and the masculinity and emotion of the self. In the particular case of those who use violence, aggression and display as part of their occupation, her insight may be particularly important.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed some of the limited research undertaken on the subject of hockey violence and has supplemented this with a consideration of other sporting contexts and other areas where there is an occupational culture of dominance and masculinity. In doing so, it has broadened the understanding of this study to include wider social situations and leisure and occupational activities.

While existing scholarship of hockey violence has been criticised as myopic, focusing only on statistical inferences of causal links between violence and spectator attendance, economics and small-scale interview accounts, it is still of use in

understanding the particularities of hockey violence. Broader research on other sporting cultures, such as boxing, wrestling and rugby remind us of the possibility of rich analysis of culture within the sport of hockey that have to date been missing. Further, consideration has been given to other occupational cultures in which a level of legitimised violence is enacted. By understanding the cultural processes involved in the creation and maintenance of other masculine occupational subcultures, such as those involved in formal and informal types of policing, we can understand the virtue of ethnographic research in the field.

The particular and varied literature that has been drawn on in this chapter has given an understanding of several key concepts. Violence, sport, entertainment, dominance, masculinity, occupations, and teams are all considered and an understanding of these is integral to an understanding of the occupational culture of hockey players.

Chapter Four

Research Methods

"…tales in search of an excuse for their telling"
(John Van Maanen, 1988)

Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the methods used to research the nature of violence in professional ice hockey. As mentioned in Chapter One, deliberately broad research aims were drawn up to allow theory to emerge from the data and as such the relationship to theory and research that underpins this research is 'adaptive' (Bottoms, 2007; Layder, 1998) rather than deductive in nature.

The original research aims have been identified as:

- To describe and analyse key dimensions of the occupational culture(s) of professional hockey players
- To explore the sources and social processes by which such cultures emerge and are sustained
- To elicit retrospective accounts of motives for violent behaviour and justifications for its use.

- To examine the relationship of cultural traits with players behaviour on and off the ice

An ethnographic case-study was undertaken in order to discover the cultural justifications that excuse violent behaviour within the confines of the game. This ethnographic case study comprised:

- A nine month period (one hockey season) of ethnographic observation. This involved being present at team training, school visits, media interviews, promotional work, meetings, all home games and several away games as well as social time away from the rink. Over the hockey season, I spent an average of 35 hours per week observing or interviewing the players.
- Extensive oral history interviews with 18 participants. These involved long and detailed unstructured conversations with each player during the first few weeks of the hockey season.
- Guided Conversations with participants, and others involved in the process during the collection of my data. Many of these were not recorded and occurred casually through the observation process, but more than 300 of these exchanges were transcribed from my note book or from audio files.
- Visually-Elicited interviews through the use of photographs, images and film of hockey games. In total I recorded 46 hours of audio recording from these interviews with a total of 20 participants.

This Chapter is divided into five main sections. The first section, Ethnography, discusses the ethnographic methods used both theoretically and practically and gives an account of some of the important events that occurred in the research process. The second section, Interviews and Conversations details the three very different

styles of interviewing used during the data collection process. The third section Principles of Research and Data Analysis discusses both the theoretical and practical approach to analysis undertaken, the following section deals with the ethical implications of this research before a final section concludes the chapter with a consideration of some of the broader recurring methodological themes. Throughout each of these sections reflexive accounts of issues such as ethics, field role and gender are discussed.

Ethnography

People are 'meaning-makers' and interpret the world in which they live, construct and utilise (Goldbart & Hustler 2005:16). Ethnography is based on the premise that people actively collaborate in the construction of their meanings and maintenance. This requires a research method that can engage with those meanings. It is "the most basic form of social research – and resembles the way in which people ordinarily make sense of their world" (Liebling, 2001:475). Kane affirms the use of ethnographic methodology for those seeking to understand culture, stating "there is no more tangible way to systematically collect data on how people create, transform and give order and meaning to social life" (2004:306).

There is a long and distinguished history of the use of ethnographic methods in researching issues of crime and justice. As Levi *et al* have stated, qualitative methods are particularly useful "especially where justifiability and excuseability are involved" (2008:689). Ethnographic research has been a key aid to those researchers seeking to understand deviance, subcultures and groups of people (for example, see

Becker, 1963; Hobbs, 2001). Ethnographic methods, of course, are not limited to criminological study and have been used throughout the social sciences and humanities to obtain naturalistic accounts of cultures and societal groups.

Ethnography has adapted from forms of anthropology and developed partly through the Chicago School, Richard Parks allegedly telling his students to "get the seat of their pants dirty with some real research" (Hobbs, 2001:207) and the earlier works of Becker, Lemert and others who sought to truly understand the culture and experiences of those they wished to study. Much of the early work in the sociology of deviance and later, cultural forms of criminology studied groups on the outside of society from within and it has been used most widely in the study of gangs, cultures and those who negotiate their identity on the edge of legality. This has been criticised for focussing mainly on the abnormal and outside of society, rather than normalised legal behaviour. Ethnographic research is naturalistic, aiming to study social situations in their natural settings, rather than impose a formal or experimental structure on them. Ethnographers aim to explore and learn about the complex social organisation of a group or culture and how it is represented (Atkinson *et al,* 2003:31). Rather than provide a data set to be taken away and analysed, analysis and theorising is an ongoing process throughout and representation usually takes the form of "thick descriptions" of everyday life (Rock, 2001). In doing so, it has provided detailed descriptions of how different actors or groups of actors view their complex social worlds.

In the words of Anderson "[m]y primary aim is to render ethnographically the social and cultural dynamics" (1990:10-11) of the particular culture and individual

participants. By starting the research process with broad personal questions as 'how do those using violence perceive their role?'; 'to what extent is violent behaviour motivated by the individual and how much is ordered by the culture, the coach or the team?' and 'what factors affect the decision-making process?'; one can gather information and responses to further formulate the research process. Anderson's work on the "code of the street" which shapes the fabric of everyday life has much in common with the code on the ice that both regulates and justifies hockey violence. The way to access this code is not through statistics, surveys, structured questioning, but rather through living the life as closely as possible of the research participants and gaining their responses and understanding throughout (Anderson, 1990:326).

There are of course problems with ethnographic research, not least anthropologist Malinowski's concept of "going native" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:110). This problem certainly transpired in Harper's (1982) ethnographic study of the homeless. Ethnography is also criticised in terms of its validity, generalisation and replication. If one accepts that the ethnographer is a "human instrument" (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005:16) then that comes with the unavoidable problem that the findings and representation will be coloured by their personal opinion and agenda. This will be discussed further in relation to my own research.

Ethnography has recently attracted negative attention amidst claims that it lacks scientific rigour by uncritically accepting its participants' opinions and statements. A polemical exchange between urban ethnographers Wacquant and Duneier in particular gained negative attention as the back and forth exchange of criticisms of the others work was played out in publications. Wacquant (2002) criticised Duneier's (1999) book Sidewalk for being myopic, contradictory and un-reflexive in

taking participants accounts as being fact without engaging in critical reflexivity. Duneier (2002) reaffirmed his reflexive methodology later raising concerns about Wacquant's structural accounts of his own ethnographic research indicating some tension within the methodological school of ethnography between structural and interactionist sociologists. More recently still, Alice Goffman's monograph "On The Run" (2014) has been criticised as being partly falsified, with critics claiming that some of the accounts in her book are not only inaccurate, but are entirely incorrect and at times purely fictional. At the time of writing discussions continue, with both Goffman and her publishing editors maintaining the accuracy of her accounts. It is clear that ethnography has specific criticisms aimed at the work due to the nature of not only conducting the fieldwork but also in the eventual presentation of the fieldwork, both to participants and to an academic audience.

Ethnography is "messy" (Liebling, 2001:474). The idea that one can perform a 'snatch-and-grab' collection of observable data is both naïve and dangerous. Researchers must be acutely aware of the presence they have in the field and be ready to adapt to changes in the field. With its focus on the seldom-researched or the powerless in society and attention paid to the agency of those individuals it seeks to study, ethnography is accused of avoiding wider economic and political structures. However, my previous two dissertations, discussed in Chapter One, and the extensive research and time spent in the field researching other groups such as referees, spectators and league officials, partly addresses some of these limitations.

One of the great benefits of ethnography is the depth that it is able to achieve. Hundreds of smaller research questions can be asked and answered in a fluid and

flexible manner by disseminating and analysing the talk, actions, behaviour, meanings, settings and accounts. (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001:163). Of particular use to research on deviant or violent behaviour, it can help establish "which theories, motives, excuses, justifications or other explanations do actors use in accounting for their participation? How do they explain to each other, not to outside investigator, what they do and why they do it?" (Mitchell, 1991). The naturalistic setting may aid the understanding of these issues exponentially.

Access and Participants

Selecting a hockey team for observation was a task of serendipity rather than random sampling. The team was selected on a combination of methodological and pragmatic grounds. First, it was important for a study on violence to select a team that was among those exhibiting the most violence with one of the highest incidences of penalty sanctions. Secondly, in practical terms, it made sense to choose a team with which I had an established relationship in order to gain the greatest access and deepest understanding of the culture. In accordance with other subcultural research on deviance and to aid a rich understanding of the culture, it was decided that the research would most benefit from the extensive observation of one team of hockey players, rather than attempt to provide a comparison between two or more groups which may limit the depth of the connections I, as a researcher, could make. The Barton Grizzly Bears were selected on the basis of my already good relationship with a number of the team and the willingness of the club for me to be present with the team during the season. The Bears comprised around 25 players at some point in the duration of the research, with some players leaving due to injury and others arriving to replace them. In addition to the players there were coaches, team managers, club

owners, club officials, team support, equipment managers and team medics (a further group of 12 people). Although the focus remained on the players themselves, the relationship between the players and those that surrounded them was of interesting. For example, the justification and encouragement of violence from those surrounding the game was relevant at many times.

The issue of access is at the forefront of any social science research and the negotiation of access must be given considerable thought during the planning stage of any research (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). The importance of this is particularly great when researching "hard-to-reach" and vulnerable groups in society (see Emmel *et al,* 2007 and Wardak, 2000). Although one could not consider hockey players as being a 'vulnerable' group in many situations, however, hockey clubs are environments which, being in the public eye, are often closed to 'outsiders'. As local celebrities, sports teams and athletes are often suspicious of the motives of those who seek to get close to them and it was very important that a high level of trust and respect was established quickly between the club, the players and myself. Prior to commencing this research I had been volunteering for a hockey club in the Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL) as a writer. My work involved interviewing players for articles which were then published in the match night programme and website. As this writing was for the club, it was often a form of publicity which required me to write flattering, positive accounts of the players' early lives, current behaviour and outside interests, effectively telling their stories to the fans. This was hugely beneficial in establishing myself as trustworthy to the players, as I was ostensibly 'pre-selected'. When I wrote for the programme, players would often ask me for copies of the article to send to their parents and I was often in touch with their wives

and families in the line of my work. This built a great deal of rapport as teams and players changed and continued to inform those in other teams around the league that I was 'safe'. Although I finished volunteering for this club long before my data collection commenced with the Barton Bears, I was fortunate to be well respected in the very small world of the hockey community which allowed my access.

Volunteering has been used effectively to gain access by a number of ethnographers, for example Cohen (1973) worked as a volunteer throughout his research so that access could be achieved. To obtain the trust of an enclosed group is a long process and one that I cultivated in over five years, initially to improve my writing skills before returning to academia, and then later in order to gain and keep access to this incredibly hard to reach area. In fact, there has only been one published ethnography of hockey culture, undertaken by Robidoux (2001) who was frustrated to receive limited access to the hockey players despite volunteering for a menial job in the locker room. The access I was allowed was unprecedented in this area and benefitted from many years of negotiation with gate-keepers, former and current players, their families and club employees, all of whom saw the benefit of my studies and continued to support me.

However, this access was not without its problems, not least the precarious nature of access to the group which had me permanently on edge that at any point I may be asked to leave. At the time, there was a great deal of political turmoil in the EIHL, with several hockey clubs struggling financially, liquidising and changing ownership. I was often concerned that the terms of my access would change, and frequently engaged in intense re-negotiation among the powers that be, while the players

carried on with their business as usual – showing perhaps an acceptance of the fragility of their job market.

The process by which I eventually gained access was rather unorthodox, although many ethnographies also detail a messy and incomplete process to gaining access. Rather than a single 'gate-keeper', over the period of my research I have had a series of gate-keepers with occasionally rather interesting opinions on my research. With social ties to many of the Bears' players, I was put in touch with the team owner and presented my previous research to a group of the management, explaining the funding arrangement that I had with the ESRC. The ownership team seemed a little bemused by my presentation and it was only when they spent time discussing in hushed tones that Fred, the main owner said *"Well, what we don't know and what you keep skirting around is what you want from us?"* I reiterated that I wanted an agreement for access to the team and the rink for the purposes of my research. Fred then said *"Yeah, but what do you want from us financially?"* It seems that they presumed my rather formal presentation complete with presentation files for each attendee, copies of my CV and examples of previous work, meant that I was seeking financial support from the team. I reiterated that I was already funded for my research and that I merely wanted access to the team, whereby they visibly relaxed and Fred explained that he was happy to support my research, but did not need any information from me and would rather I did not approach him, instead speaking to the Company Director. While giving a pared down version of my original presentation to the Company Director, he cut me short saying he didn't need details and was happy for me to go ahead, but to clear it with the Director of Hockey. Being more difficult to tie down at the commencement of the season, I approached the

Director of Hockey at the rink, a man whom I had previously had contact with when volunteering for the league. He simply put his thumbs up and said *"yeah, just go for it, whatever you need just tell the boys* [the coach and players] *that I OK'd it".* Having expected a rather complex access negotiation with the management, it was a relief to know that all the gatekeepers at that point had been rather relaxed about my presence and couldn't understand my need to assure them of their rights to consent to the research.

After this rather informal approval, I approached the coach of the team, Chester, knowing that it was he (rather than the club) who held the all-important access to the locker room, team bench and players. I was cautious of this aspect of the negotiation as I during my previous work as a writer, I knew how closely guarded the players' private areas were from fans and sponsors and simply asked if I could have access to a series of steps, some 12 feet away from the team bench, which was used by photographers during the game. Cringing a little as I asked this, as I expected Chester to tell me that this request was too bold, he simply said "*nah, you'll get better research stuff if you just stand on the bench with the guys*". I hadn't anticipated gaining this level of access as the team bench is a highly guarded area, but was thrilled to know that not only did this access mean that my research was accepted, but that I was accepted as a trustworthy individual, there is no praise higher in the hockey community. Previously, the only people with access to the players' bench and locker room were those assisting the team such as medics, physiotherapists and equipment managers. I was doing nothing of any assistance to the team but had the privileged position of better access than I could have expected. As with many people in the public eye, these sportsmen are highly suspicious of the

motives of those who get close to them and are far more used to adoring fans attempting to gain access to them than criminologists.

Representation and Role: Gender

Gender is highly significant both for the researcher and the researched, more notable in an area of high masculinity (Woodward, 2008.) For non-hockey playing men or for women, access to the inner-workings of hockey team is problematic which perhaps explains the lack of ethnographic research on studies in this area. As a female researcher, it was imperative to consider which role of femininity I was to adopt, knowing that “field settings socially construct the researcher’s identity” (Mazzei and O’Brien, 2009:363). Similarly to many ethnographers (Mazzei and O’Brien, 2009; Woodward, 2008) I was aware that the role I was allocated by the players would determine my access to both the physical space of the locker room and bench as well as the level of disclosure they gave in interview. The dominant masculinity of much professional power sport tends to consider women as one of three norms: the future wife; the ‘puck-bunny’[17]; or the family member. My age and marital status served to prevent me being cast in one of the first two roles, being neither a ‘prize’ nor a ‘threat’ (Ortiz, 2005) and expedited my acceptance as an almost androgynous family member. Had my behaviour or adopted role been seen as any other, I would not only have been refused access to the players’ space, limiting the data collection, but also, limited the depth of data that I was able to uncover.

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[17] "Puck bunnies" are defined by Crawford and Gosling: “The term ‘puck bunny’, which is applied almost exclusively to female ice hockey fans, implies that these supporters are ‘inauthentic’, not ‘dedicated’ in their support, and are more interested in the sexual attractiveness of the players rather than the sport itself” (Crawford and Gosling 2004)

Having had a working relationship with hockey players for many years before entering the field, I deliberately framed myself as pseudo-sibling and confidante and ensured that there was a clear understanding that I was indifferent to their male performativity. Thus, developing the quick put-downs and banter of the locker room was essential. I had expected some initiation[18] in the form of locker room nudity and sexualised behaviour and had imagined that I would be judged negatively if I was either impressed or disgusted by their sexual actions. I therefore went along with a thoroughly unimpressed and critical approach that they take with one another. In order not to challenge their norms it was imperative to be seen as 'one of the guys' and to banter and back-chat in accordance with the ways in which they behaved with one another in the locker room. Being able to participate in negative banter with a smile on my face (on par with Sampson and Thomas's "sardonic gaze or raised eyebrow" (2003:179)) meant they were aware that I would be neither fazed nor impressed by their 'tests' of nudity, 'helicoptering'[19] and acting out. This meant that they actually got over their performance of that at a relatively early stage, allowing me to continue my data collection without a risky incident. The presence of female doctors and physiotherapists also enabled me to align myself with their professionalism and practice studiously ignoring displayed body parts.

The dynamics of a sporting team required those occupying their space to be in a supporting role. Taking my lead from the staff members allowed in their space of

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[18] Tests and Initiation. Tales of hazing and initiation are common-place in sporting environments. This form of hyper-masculine sexualised behaviour, similar to fraternity initiation has received negative media attention and has been criticised for legitimising sexual abuse in junior hockey.
[19] "Helicoptering" is a slang term in common use in locker room environments. The Urban Dictionary defines this as "the act of rotating ones penis thereby emulating that of the blades of a helicopter" (www.urbandictionary.com. accessed 20.03.13)

being supportive, clapping when the team scored or made a good play and being seen to be quietly supportive became important in retaining my place in the field and thus not at risk of being asked to leave. I had framed my access to the players in terms of wanting to give their side of the story in the discussion of the code of acceptable violence. It was integral to my acceptance to be on their side and not be a dispassionate observer. In addition, the importance of time spent in the field "hanging out" (Woodward, 2008:549) was hugely beneficial in terms of making me almost invisible to the players at times. Had I taken a role integral to the team or area[20] this would not have happened. As it was, it allowed me to access rich data in the form of talk and quiet observations that I would not have been privy to otherwise.

Standing on the players' bench without a role (for example, physio, doctor, equipment manager) was unusual, with only team employees allowed in the restricted areas. Specifically, women as partners or family members would not be allowed in the private space of the players' bench or the locker room, so, despite taking a role of confidante and friend, I actively had to negotiate my identity continuously throughout the period of research. The elite hierarchical environment - comprising not only team, but captain, coach, general manager, rink management and team owner - also contributed to the need to continually re-negotiate my access during the process. Like Sampson and Thomas (2003) found, the need to remain '*in favour*' of those with power in the research field was imperative and it was this that I found more politically difficult than accepting the dominant male culture itself:

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[20] Robidoux (2001) took a role of equipment assistant in order to access the backstage locker room area of a professional hockey team in his ethnography. He acknowledges problems with this role and simultaneously researching the culture of the team.

> Ethical researchers do not challenge the overall scripts operating in the culture, then. Rather, they adopt, strategically deploy, and challenge the applicability of these scripts to them by marshalling their intersectional self in light of what the field setting has determined particular attributes to mean. (Mazzei and O'Brien, 2009:363)

As a non-sporting observing participant I did not have to focus on physical or bodily capital for entry into the field to the same extent as Hadfield (2007) or Wacquant (2004), but the negotiation of my position as a female and as alien to that environment meant paying attention to the culture and norms which I had to blend in to.

My "ethnographic self" (Coffey, 1999) was of course integral to the research, and as I could not perform the masculinity on the ice, I was not expected to perform it in the locker room and thus could not be considered a full 'insider', however the presence of other support staff with roles to perform allowed me access to much of the banter, acting out and culture of the team both on and off the ice.

Reflexivity, Self and the Field Role. Ethnographic Observation.

The rink, and particularly the locker room, are hyper homo-social, heterosexual environments where hegemonic masculinity is maintained (Bird 1996). Sporting subcultures are often those that "facilitate[s] the symbolic expression and validation of hyper-masculinity" (Poulton, 2012), sexism and heterosexism. This is more prevalent in hockey where an extreme level of violent behaviour on the ice in form of function as violence-reduction and entertainment in the game (Silverwood, 2009, 2010).

The potential risks that I had expected to face were physical and sexual, but also, due to the fact that I was conducting my research in a privileged elite area, also risks of not playing the part right and of not toeing the political line. While the physical risks of errant pucks, punches and hockey sticks were dealt with by developing an 'eye' for the game and ducking rapidly, the issues of my presence in an elite, hierarchical and hegemonic environment required constant negotiation.

Studies have highlighted the lack of suitable researcher roles to adopt in a 'closed' private space of a professional hockey team (Robidoux 2001). Having 'insider' status as someone who has worked alongside several hockey teams aided access considerably (Mears, 2013; Palmer and Thompson, 2010). It was important to adopt a polite, likeable, supportive role and owing to the 'elite' nature of this professional athletic space, subordination of body and talk (Mears, 2013) in the players' space. Similar to many athletic or entertainment professionals - superstition and sanctity of preparation space and time are essential. Consistent with Mears' research on fashion models, hockey players are reticent to talk to researchers and media given their poor treatment and criticism by them. I was concerned that I would have the same experience, yet access was far smoother than I imagined. I had previously worked with several UK hockey teams and magazines as a hockey writer which gave me several gate-keepers who were willing to help me access their team. My previous occupation as writer may have cast me in a 'media cheerleader' role, in favour of players and capable of establishing rapport. I had learned, given this knowledge, to be passive, submissive and non-threatening (Gurney, 1985). For access and to maintain relationships in the field, rapport is essential but there is also a requirement of objectivity for the social researcher (Miller, 1952); as Wacquant notes, "Go native, but come back a sociologist" (2011:88). I also became aware of the importance of

establishing trust during the research process, as Polsky's first rule of research in the field calls us to "keep your eyes and ears open but keep your mouth shut" (1971:126-127). I must admit, that I had to repeat this rule to myself as a type of mantra as I have a tendency to talk too much in social environments.

I found the relative ease with which I was allowed access to the team rather unnerving. Having expected a more complicated negotiation, I should have been pleased that I was in fact gifted better access than I had imagined, and certainly better access than previous researchers in this field. However, it was rather more disconcerting than pleasurable as the informal consent that I had been given, later made more formal with informed consent forms and covering letters, made me concerned that at any point, my access may well be refused in a similarly easy manner. It is only after the reflection several months after the data collection was completed that I realised just how cautious and nervous of this I had been during the research process. This cautiousness resulted in my desire to divert attention away from my presence in the hope that they might forget I was actually there at all, and had an impact on the role that I played in collecting my data and the way in which the players noted my presence. This had the desired effect of improving my access to behaviour in the locker room I ordinarily would not have seen had I been more visible. Taking on the role of "observing participant" (Wacquant, 2004:6) didn't require me to actually play the sport, but rather be accepted as spending time in the players' area and occasionally taking on a role when one was required. Occasionally fetching their vitamin water or passing them ice for their injuries ensured I was useful enough to keep around but not so useful that working for them detracted me

from my observations. It enabled me to be seen as an "Inside-Outsider" (Brown, 1996), but did not occupy me so much as to limit the role of ethnographer.

My relationships in the field developed far faster than I had expected. Initially, upon access to the team at the start of the season, I set about making connections with players that I did not know, informing all participants what my research was about and building relationships. The access to the locker room effectively came about in a natural way. During a pre-season game, I had been on the player bench and had, during the period breaks stayed just outside the inner locker room in the treatment area with the doctor, physiotherapists and stick boy. I had established rapport with this group quickly during the pre-season, with the team physiotherapists in particular seeming keen to have another female in the sphere with whom to exchange raised eyebrow expressions at times. After the first pre-season game, I was in the outer locker room while Bandit was having some deep tissue massage treatment to a shoulder injury. I had established in early conversations with the team that Bandit was highly enthusiastic and was keen to be involved in the subject of my research. As Stella worked on his shoulder injury, Bandit gave me a detailed account of his introduction to fighting in the junior leagues of Canada. He was explaining to me the process by which he left his family home and moved in with a team coach elsewhere in Canada and how he was rewarded for any physical role he added to the team. As his massage ended he rose from the massage table dropping his towel from around his waist and continued to talk to me as he walked through the door into the players' inner locker room and shower area. I hesitated at the door, expecting him to tell me he'd tell me the rest of the story when he was dressed, but he stood in the open doorway, entirely naked telling me to *"man the fuck up and follow me in, don't tell*

me you're afraid of a bunch of cocks." Cautiously (fearful that I would be publicly removed from the locker room by the other players and lose future access) I followed Bandit over to his stall and to the shower area where he proceeded to give me a detailed and very personal account of his life as a junior player and his perceived emotional and physical abuse at the hands of his junior coach and the captain of his team. I was flabbergasted that, some five days into my data collection and only four days after the majority of the import players arrived from North America, I was standing in a room of naked professional athletes being told a deeply personal account of the reinforcement of violent behaviour through abuse in Canadian junior hockey.

It therefore wasn't through the strategic planning of research design and months of establishing rapport that I was launched into the deep end of ethnographic observation, rather by the decision to start the research and see where it led me. After the months and years of planning the research, it took me by complete surprise how quickly I was thrown into the depths of such privileged data. Writing up my fieldnotes that evening at home it became clear to me that my reaction to the players' nudity, honesty and masculine behaviour was of paramount importance and that I needed to be reflexive about my behaviour as a female and as researcher whilst I was in their presence.

Despite the access I received reminding me that I was trusted, I was still aware of any reactive effects. Aided by the medical/equipment staff's presence and the fact that they knew they were being observed by several thousand fans would have assisted with this, but I paid great attention to every aspect of the game, not purely the physical fighting. I drew my guidance on when to clap by observing the medical

and team staff (who exhibit different behaviour to the majority of spectators) and responding as they did so as not to draw attention to myself.

My adopted space on the bench during games enabled me to not only observe, but be right in the centre of the action. I could smell the sweat, blood and ice; feel the cold rush of wind over ice when momentum built during the game and hear tone in the voices of the players, the spectators' chants and the referees' debates. I was also aware of the dangers of the space, ducking to avoid sticks, skates, pucks and occasional punches. It gave me a greater awareness of the experience of the support than I had previously noted in four years of research and fifteen years as a spectator.

Keen to fit in to the group and understand their language, I paid a great deal of attention to the ways in which the players verbally and physically communicated. Having been involved in the hockey subculture for many years, I was aware of some of the differences in key phrases between the predominantly Canadian players and the British. In common with many male sporting groups, there was a great deal of swearing, obscenities and slurs between players of the same team and the opposition. In this very male environment a great deal of female and sexual degradation is apparent. Players who perform badly have their sexuality questioned and insulting a players' wife or girlfriend is commonplace. I was aware that at some point the group may well carry out some form of informal initiation ritual to try and figure me out as I had been subject to similar behaviour through my volunteering. I had decided to deal with this by responding to them in the same way that they did each other, in a light-hearted banter. This worked well, established me as a humorous addition to the locker room and ensured some form of invisibility. Had I been awkward about their

nakedness or brash behaviour, I would not have been given access to their sacred space. While still playing at being a 'hockey player' in their locker room, it is very much their private space, where they continue to act out the team nature of the sport. Their locker room behaviour was not the same as their individual behaviour away from the rink but it was far more intimate than their public hockey player presentation.

I soon began to understand the styles of behaviour that were associated with different types of games. I took cues from the players themselves and also from the medical staff. Before the game, superstition and stability were of huge importance to players who had a two hour routine that required continuity for them to believe they would play well. This increased substantially when the team was on a winning streak or for a serious game or final. The need to be highly sensitised to their behaviour and drawing on the advice of Kane (2004:304) I practiced an "indirect approach and sidelong glance", which she considers to be essential skills for participant observation. I called this 'obvious ignorance', acting as if I hadn't noticed their behaviour and be engaged in something else while observing them unobtrusively. This was particularly beneficial when I was observing behaviour in the locker room and in other private spaces of the rink. I was also aware of when it would seem appropriate for me to make occasional notes on my iPad or notebook – for example, while watching a game, or noting down conversations I had with the players on the bench and when I needed to seem less visible and appear less as a researcher. As Kane explains "Sacrifice of notebooks, typewriter and camera can be a small price to pay for savvy" (2004:308).

Over the course of eight months and well over 1,200 hours of observation, I developed a practical system for dealing with the lengthy field notes collected, and the information I had not been able to write down in the field. On returning from the rink each night, I made extensive fieldnotes. These were often messy, even when typed or dictated into voice-recognition software; grammar and presentation were not my primary concern, particularly after a long period of observation. Rather, my observations merged with my initial data analysis and theorising. Many late nights of ensuring I had documented all that I could remember led to rather garbled notes. I addressed this by revisiting all notes the following morning and ensuring they made sense.

Making the familiar strange

While undertaking the ethnographic observation in an area of social life that I accessed initially through volunteering, I then attempted the key task of an ethnographer, making 'the familiar strange' (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). It has been said of a subject such as sports that they are too familiar to view in a detached way (Mennell, 1998:140). However, I was able to address this by making a concerted effort to view the behaviour as strange and making copious fieldnotes with this in mind. It was important to me, on first arrival at the rink, to pay attention to the sights, smells and sounds of the rink. At the commencement of my fieldwork I spent time writing an account in my fieldnotes of how this social environment would appear to a person who has no understanding of sport, or of games. Writing a first person account of my experiences of the rink, of the players and of the game itself gave me a fresh insight that had been missing due to my familiarity with the sport. Completing a glossary of terms as I went along for the appendix reminded me just

how much cultural understanding I previously had of the game and reminded me to watch for this while analysing my findings and representing them in this form. I was keen to occasionally act stupid to the players, in order that they explained exactly what they meant by a particular term (e.g. brawl, facewash), rather than impose the understanding I had already gained of the term from my previous involvement in the sport. In order to ascertain their description of something I had to be willing to be "a horse's ass" (Goffman, 1989:128). By playing dumb, I could elicit the players' own words to describe an action that I already had full knowledge of, but wanted to understand in their own words.

Interviews and Conversations

Three types of interviews were conducted: oral history interviews; guided conversations; and visually-elicited interviews. The data created by these semi-structured interviews were rich in narrative, allowing great opportunity to consider them in light of the research questions. Such narrative would not be possible to obtain from statistical analysis, structured surveys or attitudinal questionnaires (Bachman and Schutt, 2007:257). As discussed in Chapter Three, the only previous research on this area in North America has been quantitative and unable to elicit such narrative.

Interviews stem from the ontological perspective that an individual's views are meaningful aspects of social reality and that interviews are a meaningful way to generate data (Mason, 2002). While this is heavily dependent on the respondents' ability to understand and interact, professional hockey players are well used to giving

journalistic interviews and analysing their playing behaviour, it is therefore likely that they are an effective source of interview data. There remains a risk that they would therefore treat my interviews as standard public relations interviews and give their usual responses. However, the time taken to become familiar to the players and the way in which I conducted these interviews in private spaces helped to tackle this problem. Ethnographic research allows for the discovering of a narrative (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996:23) which can be analysed, furthering our understanding of the subject's lived reality.

The use of semi-structured interviews and guided conversations is appropriate to the interactive nature of the research. Although some would advocate a technical approach that sees interaction as a "potential source of bias, error, misunderstanding or misdirection" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1999:105), I consider the interaction essential, allowing for explanation of questions, probing and clarification throughout. I conducted interviews, not in a formal setting, but rather, in the form of personal conversations between myself and my participants. I considered the methods of data analysis during the design of the research allowing for this interaction, keen to discover narrative accounts, rather than set responses. Data analysis continued during the interviews, in clarifying points and probing responses, as well as after the interviews had been conducted and transcribed.

Oral History Interviews

Several forms of interview were conducted during the course of the research. Initially, prior to the observational study, oral life history interviews were conducted with each of the participants. These were intensive, exploring issues not only

relating to their hockey career, but also to their family background, upbringing, education and friendship groups. Early experiences of the hockey culture were discussed in detail, aimed at establishing a deeper understanding of the culture. These interviews were beneficial, not only in terms of the data collected, but in establishing a certain familiarity and rapport with the players that often comes from sharing a part of their lives through their stories. I spent time with each participant, often over the course of several 'coffee-dates[21]' learning about their lives, backgrounds and stories. While some players were less open than others, many of these interviews continued even after I had collected the data, having established familiarity and friendship over the course of the data collection. Through life stories, individuals account for their lives, experiences and explain the formation of their self-concept (Kaufman, 1986:24-25). By establishing rapport and familiarity with the participants in this manner, my access was eased from the more public to increasingly private spheres of the space in the rink, assisting the detail of my observations. In terms of establishing rapport with the players, these interviews were incredibly useful and they were often keen for me to understand more of their lives, talking about their girlfriends or families and suggest that I meet them too, so that "You'll see what I mean" or "You'll love her, you should get coffee".

Guided and Naturally Occurring Conversations

During the period of ethnographic observation, I participated in several hundred conversations, some of them naturally occurring; some slightly guided to investigate particular aspects that arose. These were not all recorded on audiotape the way that

[21] 'coffee-date' is a term used by the players, which does not constitute a romantic date, but rather a diarised arrangement to spend time together drinking coffee.

the oral history interviews and in-depth interviews were, instead they were written as fieldnotes as soon as the opportunity arose. This was a conscious effort to limit any observer effect an unexpected formal recording may have caused in terms of some types of response being more notable to me than others. The data generated during these conversations were often far more 'raw' than the more conscious responses I received using other interview techniques. When a player spoke to me during a game, or in a social situation, their 'interview-guard' was lowered and I would occasionally get an immediate 'real' response rather than a more 'reasoned' answer. This was particularly useful in capturing opinions in a state of heightened emotion, immediately following a physical altercation, or in reaction to a referee's penalty call. As might be expected, language during these exchanges tended to involve much more profanity and emotion that interviews after the events. These situations are essential in understanding the reality of player accounts and behaviour as they were useful in explaining how they felt at the specific time of the event. In criminological research in particular, it is incredibly difficult to obtain immediate accounts of offending behaviour, the use of ethnography and these naturally occurring conversations were therefore hugely beneficial to my understanding of the immediacy of action.

In-depth interviews with visual elicitation

Throughout the period of research and immediately following the end of the season, players were interviewed on a one-to-one basis about their attitudes towards violence, motives for physical behaviour on the ice and their understanding of the culture of violence. These were aided substantially through the use of visual methods of elicitation, such as photographs, video and advertising documents.

Players are familiar with video analysis of their play and provided rich explanations of behaviour and retrospective accounts of motive. This yielded a great deal of richly detailed information regarding specific violent events involving both the players themselves and others, which may have been harder to uncover without the use of these methods. Visual material was showed to the players on an iPad smart-tablet. They were encouraged to hold the device and move through the videos and images at a pace to suit them, stopping when they wanted to discuss something in greater length. This gave them a sense of participating in the direction of the interview and in the analysis of the films.

While I was undertaking my observation, I was fortunate that the team were trialling some newly developed analysis software. This software was able to bookmark particular events in the game through touch-screen technology operated by an assistant at the game. In addition to goals, face-offs and penalties being 'marked' on a visual time-line, I was able to hybridise the visual software to mark violent incidences for further viewing and for discussing with my research participants. This saved me many hours of viewing game DVDs after the event, but also meant that I could note events in real time when they occurred, aiding my analysis substantially. [22]

These interviews involved a form of *active interviewing* style proposed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995; 1997). This method calls for the interviewer and the interviewee to work jointly contributing meanings to the spoken word, in doing so, we recognise

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[22] I am grateful for the help that I received in accessing this software from the development company.

that respondents are not mere “vessels for answers” (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 114). The interviews were relatively unstructured and while I had a list of themes that I wanted to be discussed, many of these were discussed in “naturally occurring talk" (Hammersley, 1992). Hence, the types of questions I asked were open-ended and fairly general, to allow the interviewee to respond freely and at length about their social world.

In each of the interview types, I phrased questions with the intention of them providing moot points for narrative, rather than a dedicated framework for responses (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000:170-1). This allowed interviewees to choose the direction of the interview and to raise issues that they considered be significant.

Principles of Research and Data Analysis

A thematic and flexible approach to data analysis was adopted for this research study. The aim of this research is not to establish a cause of violence, but rather gain an understanding of how players themselves negotiate the use of violence through their culture and how they justify or criticise specific violent incidences. Given the ethnographic research methods, I do not seek to infer causality, nor assume that this research can be generalised to the wider population, however, it is possible that an effectively conducted ethnographic research study can be generalised to theory. Rather than a purely grounded approach (Glaser and Strauss,1967); an adaptive theoretical relationship is formed concurrently underpinning the research design, data collection, analysis and creation of theory, with ongoing analysis informing the process of additional data collection and new data informing the analytic process. In

designing the research, it was important that the analysis approaches were considered first and foremost, rather than as an afterthought (Punch, 2005:194). I was keen to combine this plan with an adaptive approach as the research required (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996:2-6). The flexible approach to analysis of qualitative data has been an ongoing feature, as analysis is not seen a separate phase (Noaks and Wincup, 2006; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). This is particularly pertinent in ethnographic research where the analysis of data should underpin the research and aid the formation of all chapters (Rock, 2001).

The Grounded Theory approach, as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) grounds all theoretical findings in the data collected. By advocating continual theoretical sampling, coding and analysing until theoretical saturation is reached, a "flexible and iterative" process (Pidgeon and Henwood, 2002:630). Grounded theory complements ethnographic research (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). However, it could be argued that pure grounded theory is unrealistic in terms of previous knowledge of the field and the two pilot studies undertaken: "Much ethnographic work is concerned with developing theoretical ideas rather than testing out existing hypotheses, but it is silly to imagine that you should (or could) 'enter the field' with a blank mind." (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005:18). Indeed the application process for PhD funding requires some justification of a 'problem' that needs to be researched and for early research questions to be formulated. As trainee researchers we are taught to establish and refine our ideas over time, continually reading and adding to our knowledge. Gaining access to an institution often requires us to understand the culture, the process and make relationships with gate-keepers, all of which will enlighten us to potential avenues

which we may research and limit the extent to which fully grounded theory is a possibility. An adaptive approach involves the constant interplay between data and ideas throughout the research process (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1985).

While I am keen to avoid the criticism of providing mere “lip service” to grounded theory (Bryman, 1988:54-5), it remains the key objective of the research to generate theory from the data themselves. In fact, to label a group of hockey players as a subculture implicitly implies the awareness of subcultural theories which may guide the researcher in their analysis and indeed did, in terms of the desire to gain a qualitative ethnographic understanding rather than conduct research based on previous North American quantitative efforts. It is impossible therefore to purport to be blind to this prior to planning the research. However, the approach to analysis remains on the inductive side of adaptive theory that has been advocated by Layder (1988).

Layder’s ‘adaptive strategy’ can be distinguished from the dual processes of deduction and induction as it conceives the social work as including both deduction and induction. According to Layder, social settings and social interactions, despite being analytically separate are both ‘real and connected features’ (1998:141). While grounded theory can be seen to exclude theory from the collection of data, Layder’s adaptive theory encourages the tacit acknowledgement of the researcher’s assumptions, values and theoretical dispositions from the outset. There is no doubt, that having undertaken previous research in this area, I specifically used ethnographic methods due to my belief that culture and group justifications for behaviour were important in determining the use of violence. I was therefore not

blind to the processes involved and was not led purely by the data I collected in this research process itself.

The pilot studies undertaken previously had given me an understanding of the culture of the sport and of the concept of a 'code' of behaviour justifying violence, and I deliberately set out on an ethnography in order to fully understand how players understood 'the code' and how this contributed them to justify their behaviour in its terms. However, other than this broad focus, and criminological/sociological understanding I had obtained on similar subjects in undertaking my earlier studies, I was keen to allow theory to emerge from the data, rather than testing theory in undertaking my research. This ongoing 'back and forth' relationship between my own knowledge and reading and the data that I was in the process of collecting, meant that I was constantly making meaning of actions during the collection of data and that understanding was taken back with me into the field, a constantly evolving relationship emerging between theory and data.

The relationship of research methods to data, evidence and theory is important here. Downes and Rock (2007:43) point out the inter-relatedness of each of these things and confirm that the understanding of them is integral to the thorough planning and evaluation of research. Coffey and Atkinson state that analysis is "inseparable from processes of theorising" (1996:23) and as such, consideration must be given to the epistemological framework from the very inception of the research project. The ontologically constructionist view that culture is always being renewed and renegotiated is taken, this focuses on the idiographic nature of subjective human subjects. There is a focus on the agency of humans in interpreting their own environments and giving meaning to the world in a manner that is not fixed, but constantly changing (Gurney, 1999).

The social construction of violence in hockey is through discourse, ritual and social negotiations and it is my fundamental belief that reality can only be understood through the subjective eyes of the social actor. In an attempt to fully understand the "created reality of deviance" (Atkinson and Young, 2008:41), mind-sets of rule-violators must be sought. This ontological position allows me to focus on the social construction of behaviour and attitudes through discourse, ritual and social negotiations (particularly with regard to shared behaviour, such as players of the same sports team); stressing that reality can only truly be understood when viewed through the eyes of the social actor. The relativistic ontological position requires "*a more interactive research process" (*Guba and Lincoln, 1989:42. In Bachman and Schutt 2007:23). Ethnographic observation of particular cultures is essential as it provides information that cannot be understood from the simple quantification of criminal acts after their commission (Bachman and Schutt, 2007:22). The analysis of this fieldwork needs to "deconstruct carefully the social constructions which each of us use in observing and participating in social life" (Bottoms, 2007:90). It thus requires the acceptance that there are no such things as objective, theory neutral facts and that all knowledge is obtained through viewing the world through "one perspective or another" (Burr, 2003:6). However, as Becker recognises, the constructionist position cannot be taken to the extreme and is always in the process of being formed:

> people create culture continuously…no set of cultural understandings…provides a perfectly applicable solution to the problem people have to solve in the course of their day, and they therefore must remake those solutions, adapt their understandings to the new situation in the light of what is different about it.
> (Becker, 1982:521).

Throughout this research process I have retained a commitment to naturalism, the inclusion of naturally occurring talk and guided conversations rather than formal interviews assists in this way (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:7). However, to profess to have no effect on the research environment would be false and further attention will be paid to this shortly.

The use of qualitative research methods in this area is important. As detailed in the literature review chapter, there is a paucity of qualitative research on this subject area. While quantitative methods have been useful in examining levels and patterns of 'violent' incidents (as categorised by formal measures of sanctioned violence such as penalties or suspensions) in the sport, they have been unable to provide a rich contextualised understanding of the social nature, meanings and functions of violence in the sport. The focus of this research project is to provide a greater depth to understandings of violent subcultures that have emerged in the sport of hockey and to provide an account of the experiences of those who negotiate this subculture daily. In order to accomplish this, qualitative methods are used, allowing for deep explanations and understanding of the complex issues that have emerged in this subculture. As Bachman and Schutt (2007) acknowledge, in previously unstudied processes, quantitative surveys are of little use and qualitative methods not only investigate the meaning that actors give to their actions, but also create research interconnections between social phenomena.

Research into subcultures requires research methods that uncover the meaning that individuals give to their actions as evident in sub-cultural research conducted in the mid twentieth century by the likes of Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1961) and the resurgent cultural criminology of Lyng (2005), Ferrell (1999,2004, 2008) and

Katz (1988) as outlined in Chapter Two. These studies shared the use of combinations of ethnography, intensive interviews, guided conversations and in-depth analysis to create an understanding of the factors that contribute to and sustain a subculture and the lived realities of those that operate within it. Polsky has been highly critical of research undertaken in artificial surroundings. He feels that criminologists can only truly advance our understanding of criminal lifestyles by undertaking "genuine fieldwork on these people" (1969:218). Under a constructionist epistemology, ethnographic observation of delinquent subcultures and cultures where delinquent behaviour is common-place is considered essential as it provides information that cannot be gleaned from simply quantifying criminal acts after their commission (Bachman and Schutt, 2007:22). A detailed qualitative inquiry is considered to be more useful in generating a better understanding of the social world which hockey culture inhabits, rather than the scale with more shallow detail exhibited in quantitative research in this area. In accomplishing this, the research is breaking new ground in the investigation of the violent subculture of the sport and the identity of those who are involved in forms of legitimate violence.

In terms of the practical aspects of data analysis, having taught computer assisted analysis software courses for a number of years, I was well aware of the benefits and uses of software programmes such as NVivo and Atlas ti. On commencing my data collection I was full of intention to use NVivo for the analysis of texts and to combine this with Atlas ti in order to best incorporate the visual methods and aspects of audio analysis.

I was well aware of the academic research on the benefits of CAQDAS in terms of its effectiveness in searching the entire set of data (Coffey *et al,* 1996: Section 7.2) and in the effective and quick retrieval of data storage (Lee and Fielding, 2004:534),

as well as its use in the rigorous analysis of data consistent with grounded theory (Silverman, 2005:189). However, after initially entering my data and fieldnotes into NVivo I found that given the scope of the project I felt that I was losing touch with the data and preferred to use NVivo and Atlas ti as data storage and to use printed paper copies of data for analysis. I got a great deal of satisfaction from sitting on the office floor surrounded by pieces of paper and actual highlighter pens in a series of colours. The process felt creative and I was aware of my involvement in this process when I was literally surrounded by the data that I had collected. I felt far more involved in the analytical process when I was able to physically sort the data and apply a range of codes, post-it notes and brightly coloured words to the original paper. During the research process I became quite unwell with anaemia which affected my eyesight and ability to concentrate on a screen. To be involved in a creative physical act, provided some respite from my eyes and reduced the headaches that I had suffered from. During the research I had collected several hardbacked books of field notes, research diaries and analytic memos and there was a great deal of satisfaction in returning to these original forms of data. Holding a book that I recalled using in the field, that retained the scent of the ice rink reminded me of greater detail that I felt was missing from my computer files. Data analysis has never comprised a one-directional flow of work from raw data to theory; rather it has been cyclical, and at times, rather messy, with steps repeated and condensed over time until the development of theory became clearer. Interacting with the data in this way, felt like I was engaging with an "intellectual puzzle" (Mason, 2002:159). It certainly felt this way when I would continually wake at 3:05am re-arranging virtual post-it notes in my head and suddenly coming to a theoretical awareness. Having gone back to sleep on the first occasion and forgotten it entirely

I started to keep a notebook by my bed and make the most of these interruptions to my sleep, often finding that my brain subconsciously worked on the puzzles while I was asleep.

Each transcript and all of my fieldnotes were systematically analysed at various times. After regaining familiarity with my data, codes began to develop and I started to see the emergence of a pattern of meta-codes that ultimately helped to shape the pattern of the following chapters of this thesis. Substantive themes were developed and analytical distinctions between parts of the data arose. New codes were constantly emerging and continued to emerge throughout the writing of the thesis. Analysis of the data continued throughout the drafting process of each thesis chapter which made the eventual writing of this thesis appear as messy as the original floor of paper had. The perils of this method were that I felt that unlike some of my colleagues who had distinct chapters completed before commencing the next, I was always working through the thesis from the start to the finish at the same time. I am also aware that I will continue to analyse this research during each of the times I represent this data in any form.[23]

Ethics

Most important to a researcher using qualitative methods in seeking to understand social behaviour is an awareness of the responsibilities that one has to the research subjects; not only in the carrying out of the research and data analysis, but also in the eventual writing of the research.

[23] See Chapter Eight for more description of how the codes and themes emerged from the data

> Most fundamentally, analysis is about the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena. We do not simply collect data, we fashion them out of our interactions with other men and women...It is therefore inescapable that analysis implies representation.
> (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996:108).

This is something that we must be aware of throughout all the stages of the research process even after completion (British Society of Criminology, Code of Ethics 4.1). As qualitative researchers we need to take seriously the ethical responsibilities to our participants in an endeavour to increase the ethically sound and meaningful production of knowledge in our research field.

I paid clear attention to the requirements of the British Society of Criminology, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and the Cardiff University School of Sciences Research Ethics Committee at each stage of the planning, administering and presentation of the research. There are clear ethical considerations for all stages of the research. It was important to ensure that my respondents were aware that participation in the research was voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Informed consent from all participants was obtained. Further, participants were informed that conversations that took place in the group or during a game may be recognisable to another team member in the final thesis and informed of the limitations of that anonymity in this group scenario. Copies of the information sheet for participants and the informed consent form are available in appendices 3 and 4.

I promised my respondents anonymity and confidentiality at all stages of my research, and explained how I would provide this which was imperative in gaining their trust. They were informed at all times of how the data would be collected, stored and anonymised with pseudonyms. All field notes were kept in my possession when not locked in my desk and there was a password enabled on my iPad and

iPhone in case these were lost or stolen. It was important to me to protect my participants from harm throughout the process. An important part of doing this was to disassociate myself from the organisation prior to entering the field. This served me in terms of the respondents being aware that I had no motivation (beyond my academic one) to collect inside information on them.

The desire to protect the respondents from harm continued in asking them to consider some of the current debates in hockey fighting such as Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). I did not intend to affect their playing behaviour by discussing issues that were of concern to them. However, I found that they were more than happy to share their thoughts with me.

The participants were not a particularly vulnerable group, however, I was aware that they had a variety to intellectual levels and worded my informed consent and information sheets very carefully to be understood by all the participants. This was made apparent when one of the participants asked me "*what are my initials*?" when completing the form. I made a particular effort to explain each point separately to him before helping him to complete the form.

In terms of confidentiality, it was particularly important to ensure that I did not repeat information from individual interviews when with the entire team, and not to acknowledge in interviews with other players that the issues had arisen in previous conversations with their teammates. The hockey world is an extremely close-knit environment but also rather competitive and player movement between teams is high. Due to this, players are often guarded in the ways that they communicate with each other in case it could be used against them when they become on-ice-enemies playing for other teams.

I had to think ethically - beyond the rules of the ethics committee, particularly when undertaking intensely ethnographic work and there is an issue of power involved. This power affects not only our research participants, but also our 'selves' (Ferrell and Hamm, 1998), we must ethically be aware of the effect of our research on ourselves. This, as mentioned above, was aided by the keeping of a research diary and by communicating with my friends and colleagues, who became a useful mutual-support group as they carried out their fieldwork in different environments. The most important ethic of all remains, which could be termed the "ethic of rigour" (Liebling 2001:481), of being true to the data. This is something that remains in me long after leaving the field each time I represent the research in writing or presentations. A concern about accurately representing the research in written form is to be expected, as Bourdieu states: "how can we not feel anxious about making *private* worlds *public*, revealing confidential statements made in the context of a relationship based on trust that can only be established between two individuals" (Bourdieu, 1999:1).

In presenting this work at conferences and in publishing aspects of the research (Silverwood, 2014) I have been questioned about the location of the team I researched and the season in which the research was undertaken. Having offered anonymity to my participants and provided pseudonyms to the team and players, it is essential for me to be deliberately vague about when and where this research was undertaken. Occasionally in this thesis, steps have been taken to obscure matters of geography, time and identity.

Reflecting on the research process

Combining methods

One could readily accept the macho subculture of the sport from the 'talk' that is heard in the locker room and on the bench, but the use of interviews along with observation clearly shows the limits of the masculine culture in forming personal private attitudes away from that environment. This has much in common with that found by Reiner (2000) in relation to police subculture and sees the masculine 'acting out' as a veneer for the messy part of policing. He saw this acting out as having a job for them in reinforcing the perpetuation of their strength, bravery and 'manliness'. It could be that this collective cultural phenomenon helps them in making sense of the world from them; it reinforces the ideas of strength, bonding and being a team and the subsequent rationalisation of particular types of behaviour. One could easily take locker room conversation as *prima-facae* evidence of particular homophobic hate or female degradation , but actually as Waddington (1999) found with police canteen culture, much of this 'acting out' is simply 'venting' and serves as a function in neutralising their behaviour, but may not impact their lives away from the locker room to any great extent. Attention to this has been paid throughout the analysis and writing of the thesis and the discussion is extended throughout the findings chapters that follow.

This is a salient point when considering the paradoxical accounts given by a research participant in the locker room and later during interview. One day after practice, the players in the locker room were discussing the National Hockey League's proposed five point plan to eradicate hits to the head in professional hockey. The plan was being criticised and one participant said:

> *A five-point plan… I'll tell you what to do in 2 points, keep your head up and man the fuck up, this is a man's game and it's not for pussys.*

Later that week during interview, the player brought up the issue of hits to the head and expressed a rather different opinion to that he had stated in the locker room:

> *We all stick with the bravado stories of it being a tough game and being able to take a hit, or headshot and whatever, but deep down you see how scared guys are when they get a concussion. The stuff in the news scares the shit out of me…It makes you think twice about it every time you go into a corner, every time you take a fight.*

The combination of observation on the bench and repeated depth interviews with the players allowed both these accounts to emerge and highlights the benefit of mixing these qualitative methods in a hegemonic masculine culture.

Risk

After leaving the field, I began to question why I never felt threatened in the field, did not carry an alarm, or inform others of my whereabouts[24]. I came to the conclusion that I had perhaps partially 'gone native' and accepted the culture and the accounts of players who argue that their violence only ever occurs on the ice, despite evidence to the contrary. Baigent (2001), Fincham (2004), Palmer and Thompson (2010), and others have expressed concern about the homophobic, sexist attitudes of their participants, whereas I saw this as a potential for acquisition of knowledge of

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[24] In relation to the issues of safety and wellbeing, Bloor et al (2007) discuss PhD students propensity to become their own risk assessors in fieldwork situations. In practice, it was only when recalling events after fieldwork did I truly understand some of the potential risks I could have faced; my comfortable working relationship with the players negated my awareness of risk at the time. However, I feel confident that I would have had the necessary skills to deal with any problems that might have arisen.

part of their culture and never felt threatened by their attitudes to me as a female, or to friends of mine who are homosexual. I have spent time reflecting on this since leaving the field and consider that I saw their culture as a separate part of their existence that existed in their space and did not occupy the outside world. Similarly to that found in canteen subculture among police officers (Reiner, 2000), I saw this as 'acting out', rather than their personally-held beliefs, which was partly aided by my combining the ethnographic observation with life history interviews and repeated in-depth interviews.

Understanding those involved in this kind of behaviour, through the oral history interviews and from spending time with them over the course of nine months, enabled me to see the locker room behaviour I had observed as a form of 'acting out' and performing 'hockey players at rest'. It is a rich source of information (Warren, 1988:36) about the culture, and did not offend me as an observer. Part of this reduced risk was acknowledgement of this performance of masculinity as enactment of a dramatised charade, functional to social cohesion and morale, accepting this limited the extent to which I felt threatened. Furthermore, spending part of my day surrounded by this hegemonic form of hyper-masculinity was counterbalanced by my other roles of social science student sharing office space with feminist researchers, and as a mother of small children. This gave balance to the field and enabled me to see the research field as separate from my other 'selves'. It also allowed me to feel marginal to the group, which as Gurney (1985) points out can be uncomfortable and awkward, without that feeling remaining in my private life away from the rink. In common with that Ortiz (2005) experienced with wives of professional athletes, an outsider strategy to the hyper-masculine environment served to be beneficial, allowing players to let their guard down in interview and explain the

juxtaposition between their locker room behaviour and their personal behaviour[25]. Thus managing risk in this way not only led to methodological benefits, but also to data benefits, establishing richness in experiences.

An Impartial Researcher?

The idea that one can ever truly be an impartial researcher (Rapley, 2001) or that total objectivity is achievable is something that has eluded me and many qualitative researchers. As Becker found, it is not about whether we take sides, as that will invariably happen, but it is "whose side we are on" (1967). This point has been discussed frequently in social science research when many of the research topics focus disproportionately on the underdog and in qualitative research where the researcher is an integral part of the research process and can form relationships, friendships and attachments to their participants, often working in close proximity to them for some time. As Liebling has questioned in relation to prison research:

> Does acquiring sympathy for those whose worlds we study undermine our professional integrity? And does it matter which social groups draw these feelings from us? How do we tackle issues of publication, if our research might damage or offend those we have come to regard almost as friends? (Liebling, 2001:472).

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[25] Much research acknowledges the use of a particular 'gaze' through which to view the culture under research. It might be questioned whether this research could use a feminist gaze instead of the socio-criminological gaze which I espouse. I am aware that interpreting this through a feminist gaze such as that advocated by Letherby (2003) may be problematic, were my focus predominantly on the masculinity and positioning of females in the culture of the sport, this would be something that would have been rather different. As it was, retaining a criminological gaze, focussing on how hockey players construct the level of violence in the sport and justify their temporary violent identities enabled me to partition that part of my self off while conducting the field research. I am not suggesting that you can choose such separate gazes, but rather, that in analysing the data during the process of collection, you can learn to take certain behaviour at face-value and choose the lens through which you gaze at any distinct point.
An interesting feminist perspective of the game is given by Pryer (2002) who likens the hockey stick to the phallus, the goal to the vagina and the puck as the seed. While this is a unique insight, it was not the focus of my study and not a theme that emerged from any of my research.

However, the way we, as researchers conduct ourselves can have significant bearing in achieving access as well as the data collection process, and forming bonds with participants is often beneficial to the depth of responses we receive. However, it is important to be reflexive in research as to the extent I am aware that my relationship with my research participants aided or limited my fieldwork and the impact that has on the final representation of the research as a thesis and a series of academic papers. Further, as Liebling confirms: "empathy is important…Research is after all, an act of human engagement. To achieve criminological Verstehen…researchers have to affectively be present as well as physically present in social situation. Some turmoil is productive" (2001:474)

Reiner (2000) notes, the relationship forged by the researcher and the researched requires reflexivity in terms of the participant's perceptions of the researcher and how this leads to a divergence in data. As Denzin and Lincoln state:

> Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.
> (Denzin and Lincoln, 2004:8).

Therefore the researcher is an active part in the construction of the research process (Flick *et al,* 2004:7; Kane, 2004).

I paid, and continue to pay, great attention to my status as a non-participant. Was I to be a sympathiser? A fan? A critic? Could I choose this? Or would it be decided for me by my participants. I decided to let my role develop naturally in the field and believe I became a form of "Inside-Outsider" (Brown, 1996). In a culture of

hegemonic masculinity, being a female non-playing observer was automatically going to set me aside from the group, however, players spoke of me being "one of them" because I understood their situation, it was a privileged position to be in.

The quest of social scientists is to understand the social world of different actors and how meanings are understood by varying groups in society (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). I had a fear of disempowering the community, would that naturally lead to an intention of empowering them above and beyond representing their attitudes? And how could I avoid this? I knew that players wanted their stories to be 'understood' and the pressures they were facing to be made explicit, but how did I couple this with my desires to represent them as a social scientist. Despite language being inherently value-laden, this leads to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) should one make moral judgements of the social world of others, or, do we merely describe what we are seeing. Hammersley and Atkinson note: "…accounts are not simple representations of the world; they are part of the world they describe and are thus shaped by the contexts in which they occur" (2003: 16).

Unlike much research on deviant groups, I am not making the assumption that the hockey players are necessarily a disempowered group, although Marxist accounts may consider them to be the expendable pawns of capitalist team owners. On the other hand, feminists may well consider the players as part of the construction of hegemonic masculinity and ultimately in a position of great power. While Becker maintains that we need to position ourselves clearly from the outset, Gouldner's response has much to offer in terms of allowing a flexible attitude to partiality and being aware of its sources.

My role as a female was also of ongoing interest. At first fearful that I may not be accepted by the macho male subculture, I found that they had placed me in a role of listener. I believe that being female was beneficial when it came to the players' disclosure of information. As we know, commonalities and differences can allow for a rich source of data (for example Phoenix, 2001 and Rakhit, 1998).

While there are "inevitable" difficulties in researching violence, including "juggling our emotional reactions to the subject matter, feelings of ambivalence towards and allegiance with those we research, and discovering the best way of capturing and understanding what violence means without jeopardizing our own safety" (Liebling, 2001:422). Researching violence in a legitimised context to a certain extent avoids some of these concerns. For my research I have observed various acts that could be categorised as violent – including forms that are perfectly legal within the sport of hockey ranging to forms that are sanctionable according to the game rules to those which would be sanctioned by neither the game rules or the criminal legal system. This has some parallels with violence in other contexts, for example the widely accepted use of violence among certain gypsy communities and incarcerated prisoners as a legitimate way to settle grievances.

When violence is justified to you through the culture, it (along with manners of communication and language) become part of your life too. While, I certainly do not consider this "going native", there were certainly occasions when I had to check my behaviour and language to see if it was appropriate to use in the various different social situations I would find myself in each day. From early morning observation of

hockey training sessions, with the corresponding macho insulting language and humour – to my workspace at the university where I share a desk with three active and vocal feminists – to my evenings spent with my young children before going back to the ice rink for a hockey game surrounded by aggression, tension and insulting language. I paid great attention to how I dealt with my different roles by using my travelling time in the car to leave one manner behind and adopt another and by the keeping of a research diary in which I often wrote highly reflexive accounts of how I was feeling. In some ways, it would be seen as beneficial to inhabit so many different worlds at the same time, as I was less likely to adopt that of my research field completely, aided by the balance of 'ordinary' academic and family life.

The use of ethnography has been reduced somewhat in recent years in the research of crime and deviance, as the focus has increasingly been on policy formation and testability at the expense of theory (Hobbs, 2001:215). This reticence to undertake research on individuals without trying to change their behaviour or civilise them is of great concern to many (including Polsky, 1971).

Conclusion

Atkinson and Delamont warn of the importance in avoiding "reductionist views that treat one type of data or one approach to analysis of being the prime source of social and cultural interpretation" (2005:20). The adaptability of qualitative research in both methodology and analysis is perhaps one of its strengths, particularly when aimed at the understanding of a group or culture. As Coffey and Atkinson state, qualitative methods share a "central concern with transforming and interpreting

qualitative data in a rigorous and scholarly way – in order to capture the complexities of the social worlds we seek to understand" (1996:3).

Qualitative research can be assisted by continual reflexivity of the researcher to ensure that they avoid imposing views on the subject in this interactive research process (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004:155). As Jupp explains: "The validity of such data lies in the extent to which it is true to those actors viewpoints" (1996:29), rather than in the natural science notions of validity, generalisability and replicability.[26] As this chapter has outlined, I believe that ethnographic qualitative research alongside in-depth repeat interviews to be the most effective way to uncover cultural understandings of violence among a group of professional ice hockey players. I am of the opinion that the use of both methods is complimentary and will increase my understanding of both the culture, and the attitudes of the players towards violent conduct on the ice.

[26] While quantitative researchers such as Sherman *et al* (1998) stress the importance of the quest for control and certainty in research and insist of replication and generalisability which would make them highly suspicious of any claims I infer from my small-scale exposition. However,in ethnographic research, insight and serendipidy (Kane, 2004) are more important than generalisability.

Chapter Five

The Occupational Culture of Hockey Players and the Placement of Violence in Professional Hockey

> *"Here's Wellwood, seven and O in the faceoffs, plus two assists, played 20 minutes, drew eight minutes on the powerplay, lost a tooth and a pint of blood. What a guy."*
> Don Cherry. Hockey Night in Canada.

Hockey is a game of physicality and of violence. Violence in hockey is not necessarily deviant in the manner that non-sporting violence can be. Rather, violence is a necessary tactic that emerges from the counter-pressures of a contact sport played in an enclosed environment, with the presence of potentially injurious objects, where there is also the element of competition and a desire to win. Hockey is a contact sport; the ability to compete in hockey contains the necessary physical element of playing the opponents body as well as the puck; of the physical domination of the body, as much as it is in scoring a goal on the net. It is a game and a culture where physicality is required and rewarded. Here, physicality is inextricably woven into the celebration of success and of dominant, hegemonic

masculinity. In order to understand the nature of violent and physical behaviour in this sport, it is integral to understand the culture that builds and reinforces this physicality.

This chapter presents the ethnographic data collected in relation to a background of the culture of the sport. In Part One – Culture, a consideration of the area in which I collected my research is given, followed by an account of a game of hockey, incorporating an understanding of the foreground of action. In order to fully understand the multi-faceted aspects of the culture surrounding the sport, a section on the lifestyle of hockey players, in the form of an understanding of the background and backstage of the players' culture is given. Part Two of this chapter discusses the use of violence in the sport; presenting a typology of this violence which enhances our understanding of the various ways in which violence is used within the sport and culture.

Part One: Culture

Professional ice hockey can be seen as a microcosm of society, but also as a society in itself. This is not limited to the players themselves; rather, it is a shared activity between players, spectators and team owners, each party being highly integral to one another's existence. These three groups are not only dependent upon one another, but also share, at times, an antagonistic relationship. While the owners focus is on financial development and profit, and the fans' on entertainment and leisure; the players' focus is on both performance and their own financial livelihood.

The EIHL is a professional league playing at the highest level in the UK. It is comprised of ten teams from all over the UK. These teams are separate businesses

that operate within the league, but the league itself is owned and run by the team owners in collaboration, which makes it an interesting object of study. While each team is different, in terms of ownership, capital and management, they are run on similar terms dictating the maximum budget for players' wages, number of players and rules.

The Bears consist of up to 20 hockey players at any one time Up to 12 of these players are on 'import' contracts, usually from Canada and the USA, but occasionally from Northern European countries where hockey is popular, the remainder are home grown players from around the UK, who are called the 'Brits'. Many of the import players are drawn from the minor leagues of the NHL, drawn to the EIHL once they are aware that they no longer have an opportunity to be successful in the NHL and choosing to combine their playing careers with travel or with academic sponsorship. The result of this composition of the teams is that the UK follows a predominantly North-American style of hockey, with a focus on physicality and body contact, rather than the more European style of skill and goal scoring. The season runs from September to April, with the regular season culminating in a 3 week playoff series and a weekend final for the 4 most successful teams. Players then tend to have the best part of 5 months off over the summer. Some take on summer jobs like cash in hand painting and decorating work or hod-carrying, others travel and spend time with their families before getting back into shape for the following season. For those returning to North America along with several of their friends from other hockey teams, it marks the start of several months of parties. Contracts in the EIHL tend to be short, mainly limited to one season so the structure of the season is rather rigid. There are games two or three nights a

week including every Saturday and Sunday. Players have a day off on Monday, so Sunday and Monday nights tend to be their drinking nights.

Space of the rink

There are many similarities between rinks globally, partly due to the league requirements of their use and to the companies that design them. There is a front stage and a back stage, as in theatrical conditions. The front stage is the area that fans will see in the ice arena, containing the entrance, bar, café, seating, and toilets. The backstage is where the work of maintaining a hockey rink is conducted, this space tends to be cold, wet and damp. There are hazards all around from Zambonis[27], pipes, spare plexi glass and broken hockey equipment.

In Barton, the rink is known as the Bear Pit. The set-up of the seating slightly above the ice surface and banked steeply, means that on the ice, the noise of the spectators and the stamping of feet can be heard clearly. It is seen as a difficult place to play in opposition, as you have a great deal of interaction with the fans. The relatively small size of the ice surface in comparison with some rinks - (more of a North American size than a European size) - means that the focus of the game is less on skill and speed, and more on body contact, grittiness and aggression in the corners. The Bears usually build their team with this in mind, preferring the more physical players over the skilful puck handlers of the larger ice surfaces. Fans are able to buy tickets to stand next to the plexi glass as well, which can be intimidating to opposing players as

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[27] A Zamboni is an ice-resurfacing machine. For further details please see the glossary provided in Appendix 2.

fans make rude gestures to the players and subject them to a barrage of noise by banging on the Plexiglas[28].

The players' benches are adjacent to the ice surface and are accessed only through a security cordon at the end of the rink. They are thin benches backed with plexi and can accommodate 15 players. To access the ice during the game the players can use the doors or climb over the boards, which are barriers about three feet high between the bench and the ice. Next to the bench before the locker room there is another bench where additional players stand, along with the equipment manager, stick boy, team doctor and physiotherapist. It is between these two benches that I stand to observe the games. (See Chapters One and Four for a further account).

The rink has four locker rooms, two for each team, which are small interconnecting rooms under the spectator area, opening across from the ice surface and team bench. They are edged with benches and full to the brim with kit bags, medical supplies, a treatment bench, with toilets and communal showers at the end. It is an airless pokey place which emits a pungent aroma of stale sweat, hockey equipment and first aid supplies such as Deep-Heat. You become accustomed to the smell when you spend a lot of time there, but it is a particularly repulsive and lingering odour. As stated by the wife of a corporate visitor to the rink upon visiting the team in the locker room after a game: *"oh this is so gross, it smells of 'man', and not in a good way."*

The second of the locker rooms is a continuation of the first, but with stalls made out of wood which contain the players' equipment. Under these the players sit before

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[28] Plexiglass is a brand name for the transparent glass that sits above the 4-foot high boards of the rink. It reaches 10-14 feet and provides a window to the action on the ice. More commonly made of acrylic or plastic, it is still termed by its brand name Plexiglass, or plexi and will be called plexi for the remainder of this thesis.

and after a game. There are televisions on the wall for impromptu video analysis (often unused) and a large whiteboard for conveying team tactics and notices. It is a very cramped area for 20 or so large males plus bulky equipment and as the door was open between this area and the main room, when going into the locker room I tended to stay out in the first room where I could see and hear what was happening in both of the rooms.

The locker room is considered to be an inner sanctum; a sacred space where players know outsiders will not be and can relax knowing that information will not pass from there to the general areas. There is a code of "What goes on in the locker room stays in the locker room". As Austin, the stick boy says:

> *First day I was in there, I was like 14 and I couldn't get over the fact I was here with the professionals. They said "take that look off your face, you're lucky to be here, what goes on here never ever gets repeated and if you want to keep the job you need to shut the fuck up to everyone about everything - got it". It scared the life out of me. I was so young and naïve, but I never have spoken about what goes on in there. The way I deal with it is if I say nothing ever I can't get myself into trouble.*
> Austin – Interview.

There are a few occasions when I would choose to leave the locker room for the privacy of my participants, but most of the time I willingly made myself seem invisible and if I was noticed it was to make myself helpful to hold onto scissors when a player was getting stitches, to pass a stick to someone or to act as security diverting unwanted people from the general area outside the locker rooms.

Hockey players are minor celebrities to the hockey audience. The import players with the best skills or strongest characters are fan favourites and get mobbed when they enter the bar after the game, but some of the younger British players can be

more anonymous. Import players have posters and full size cardboard cut-outs placed around the rink. However, the players are more readily accessible to fans than the majority of other sports at this level, regularly mixing with the fans in the rink bar after the game and socialising with them at fan events. Socialising revolves around the bar, which being in an ice rink, remains a dirty basic area, with rubber matting and grimy tables and chairs. As well as the normal seating there is a corporate area, with its own bar for game sponsors and guests.

As discussed in Chapter Four, I was able to get access to many of the areas where the players both worked and congregated; accessing the players' bench during practice and games, the stands, the locker rooms and the backstage area generally. I also spent time with the players away from the rink at their homes and out socially at restaurants and bars. The benefit of this privileged access is that I was able to see not only how the players perform when at work (at practice, games, meeting fans for example) but also when they were at rest. I do not presume that by gaining this access I was able to understand every area of their life however; I did not live with the players, accompany them on the team bus or go along to team only nights out except when invited. This ethnography therefore focusses on the culture of the players both within and beyond the rink. However, it is important to explain some of the ways in which the players conducted their work at practice and during games, for those readers who are not familiar with professional hockey.

The Game

For a detailed account of the structure of a match of hockey and a comprehensive list of hockey rules and infringements, please see the additional notes in Appendix 1. Here, I will explain a little about the match experience.

Ice hockey is played in three periods, each of 20 minutes. However, due to the fact that for each stoppage in play, the clock is stopped, it is usual for a period of hockey to last between 45-65 minutes. At each break in the game, the players leave the ice for 15 minutes and return to their locker rooms for a team talk, rehydration, kit adjustment or to treat any injuries. These add up to make the usual match of hockey at least 3 hours long. Players will usually be present at the rink for at least 90-120 minutes before a game and 60 minutes afterwards, so this element is a reasonably long period of time of six to eight hours. Players also consider the pre-game morning training of one hour, followed by carb-loading lunch and afternoon pre-game sleep an integral part of their job, referring to all activities on game day as being work.

On arrival at the rink on a game day, the players will be wearing smart casual clothes; this is particularly the case when there is no game the following day as the players will go out to nightclubs after the game. The away team will usually be wearing their team sponsored tracksuits after a coach journey. It is customary in Barton for the players to stop at Starbucks for triple espresso coffee as part of their food regime, with caffeine linked to physical performance. Players arrive in their sponsored cars and park behind the rink, entering through a rear door into the backstage area. There are stark differences in players' behaviours depending on whether they have recently won or lost a previous game; how important the game they are due to play is; and who is their opponent. Players enter the locker room and

get dressed in their 'under armor' base layers before each undertaking their own individual warm ups. The players often have very distinct systems which they follow, some call these superstitions, but many of the players refer to these as their system for mentally preparing themselves for the match. While some will do circuits of the stands or plyometrics, others will simply wander over to the rink shop to chat with their friends. At this point, the rink is only open to the players, employees of the team and rink staff, so the players seem to occupy a larger area of the rink than they will do once the spectators are allowed in to the rink an hour prior to face-off.

It is common in Barton for the British players in particular to find a space in the rink or the car park to play games with a football as part of their warm up; keepy-uppy and one-touch being the most common. It is an opportunity to build camaraderie with the other players and to enjoy a bit of banter with pride going to the winning player and derision for those who lose out early on. Often only half of the import players will join in with this, preferring their own systems of game preparation. Players then tape their sticks and engage in chit chat with team staff or myself before the doors to the rink are opened. Once the spectators enter the rink one hour before face-off the players withdraw to their locker room and the player area is restricted by barriers and stewards. In the locker room they begin to 'suit-up' ready for the warm-up which commences 40 minutes before the game starts. By this time, the spectacle of the event is in full swing, the lights are on full, with fans mingling around the arena and the shouts of hot dog vendors and raffle ticket sellers rising above the general noise level.

There is a precise order in which music is played by the DJ, intending to build up the momentum of the event. Once the opposition players enter the ice for warm-up, the home players stand by the door in the Plexiglas waiting to enter the ice. The team

enter the ice to a loud 1980s rock classic, which has been the warm-up anthem for the team for as long as anyone I asked can remember. The Bears enter the ice at high speed, giving the impression that they are ready for this physical challenge, with some 40 players sharing the ice, there is a blur of the colours in each half of the rink. Pucks are shot frequently, as players practice stick handling and shooting on the goal. The netminders take it in turns to fend off these shots and to perform their own stretching routines. The noise level in the arena at this point is high, with one loud rock song after another, each marking to players a set point in the warm-up routine. The sound of tens of pucks and sticks hitting the plexi and boards in quick succession as well as 80 skates testing the ice combines to a cacophony of noise.

With the number of people now on the ice, one would expect it to feel warmer but on the bench, the temperature drops as the speed of the players passing over the ice whips up a strong breeze. There is no body contact between players during this warm up time; it is a focussed, structured affair. The first players leave the ice after 10 minutes or so, often the veteran players, some not feeling like they need the full 20 minutes and others choosing to focus on locker room preparation. At this point fans surround the plexi, some very excited to be a glass-width away from their favourite player, others watching the opposition closely and hoping to pick up on which players will be in the starting line-up and which might be nursing an injury. The players ignore the fans at this point, emphasising their professionalism and focus on the upcoming game. Superstition comes in to play again when the teams leave the ice at the buzzer, several players have particular goals they need to score on the net first, others have to leave before or after the netminder, others still are determined to be the last on the ice and ensure that no pucks are left in their end, preparing for the game by making order out of the rink surface. Superstition is integral to many

players' game preparation and it is usual for player's to refer to themselves as obsessive about how they prepare. Vern, in particular stated to me that he was "*a bit OCD"* about how he prepares, even having to chew the required number of pieces of chewing gum in a particular way between leaving the warm-up (which must always be last and with no errant pucks on the ice) and starting the game.

In the locker room players sit discussing their thoughts on the game, the coach will often give additional instructions and the team captain often gives advice or motivation to the team before the game. Other than this, the focus is on the team's own music, similar to that outside, but with more of a focus of uplifting house music than the prog-rock of outside. This music enables them to all sit comfortably in silence as they adjust their kit and put their game jerseys on, some talk together in small groups and others put headphones or earplugs in to stay in their own zone. The emphasis is on shutting out the noise and presence of the spectators outside and encouraging their own focus. Despite this, you can hear a lot outside of the room, with the stands above, the noise of fans stomping their feet and clapping their hands is quite deafening below.

At five minutes before the game commences, the officials enter the ice. In the EIHL there are three officials on the ice, one referee and two linesmen, who enter the ice from the opposite side of the rink to the players, they are announced onto the ice by the announcer, with some fans eagerly awaiting the announcement to see whether it is their preferred or most hated referee accompanying the announcement with boos and "*You're blind ref*" before the game has even begun. The opposition team enter the ice first; the aim of the DJ here is to make as minimal fanfare as possible, announcing their name quietly, or playing a derisive song that insults their team name. If there is a large following of away supporters they will cheer loudly or bang

their drums, but the rest of the crowd remain silent. The lights are then blacked out and the drummers lead the spectators in clapping to the rhythm of the entrance music. This starts out slowly, building the atmosphere up into a slow crescendo at which point the announcer shouts "*Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls, please welcome onto the ice your* (sponsor's name) *Barton Bears!!"* The home fans all stand on their feet as the players enter the ice at high speed, racing around their half of the ice, once their entrance song finishes each team lines up on their defensive blue line facing centre ice for the ceremonial face-off. Sponsor and official photos are taken before the red carpet is rolled off the ice, the two team captains shake hands and the national anthem is played. Once this has finished the players skate around once more - often performing their superstitions, such as touching the goaltender a certain number of times - before leaving the ice onto the team benches. The remaining players get ready for the face-off. Five players plus a netminder for each team remain on the ice, along with the referee and linesmen. The music is stopped as the referee blows the whistle and drops the puck and the game commences.

At each stoppage in play the announcer explains the reason for the stoppage or infringement and whether any penalties have been called. Music is played until the puck is again dropped by the linesmen. Hockey is played in these short shifts of time, each 'line' of five players plays for around 60-90 seconds of intense speed before heading back to climb over the four foot board and be replaced by a fresh pair of legs. The communication that goes on between the players is intense, while players will know their position on the ice, when to change lines and what they need to do, it is an intense moment as the personnel on the ice are replaced by another while the game is in progress. The tactical element of this is immense, if a player touches the puck while his opposite number is still on the ice, they face a penalty for

having too many men on the ice, if they change shift while defending their own zone, they risk conceding a goal. It is a complicated system that is constantly evolving through the game. Every part of the game is ruled by planned tactics that are adapted according to team members, time, rink and opponent.[29]

Morning Practice

The 'real' work of being a hockey player is said to be one of the practice and refinement of skills, many of the players will consider many of the games played as the part of their job that they consider to be fun. What is less fun and more mundane are the 9am on-ice practices four times a week. On non-game days, the Bears' training sessions run on the ice at the rink, commencing at 9am with a financial penalty for lateness. Players begin to arrive 30 minutes before this and enter the locker room with cups of strong coffee and no willingness to talk. They kit up into their practice kit, which consists of the same padding, helmet, skates and shorts of game day, but with a colour coded practice jersey, rather than the official game shirt. The colours of these practice jerseys are based on the position and the line in which the player will be playing in. For example, all defencemen wear black training jerseys, the three forward players on the 1st line wear white, 2nd line blue and 3rd line red. Players who do not have a set line position, but move around or are simply training with the team in order to earn a spot on the roster wear grey jerseys.

Drills are organised around the lines and positions. When the players enter the rink they start a gradual warm up of skating around the surface of the rink, followed by their own individual routines of stretching exercises. Players seem to have their own

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[29] Please see Chapters Five and Seven for further discussions of hockey games

spaces for these, claiming their areas day after day. For example, the defensive blue line opposite the bench is always used by the starting netminder for stretching and opposite him, the back-up netminder, if a third netminder is training they will move onto the opposition blue line for their warm up. The players have a set choreography of warming up, utilising the full space of their end of the rink, one which is repeated at the before game warm-up. Once the players are ready, the coach details the plan for the day, often allocating drills and ordering specific players to take responsibility of those drills. There is a hierarchy to this, the captain and his two alternates take charge of specific drills; the responsibility for distributing and collecting pucks before and after the drills falls to the young British players who have yet to earn themselves a spot in the regular roster. I did not see anybody being informed of any of this on the ice, it is a system that they have accepted themselves and that appears to be learnt through repetition throughout the hockey community. An elaborate series of drills which my un-trained eye was unable to decipher despite seeing them performed at hundreds of observed training sessions follows with the players practicing their skating, defence, man-marking and shooting all moving together in a small space but managing to avoid contact.

Practice drills tend to be a serious affair with little communication between the players, unless one falls over which calls for cat-calling and cheering. After these drills the coach or his designated senior player will spend some time discussing tactics for the next game using a white board to demonstrate the ice surface complete with line markings and a complicated system of dots and arrows to signify planned moves for the players. This session is often brief, the players are attempting to get their breath back after the drills and are rehydrating from their water bottles, the often ‘take a knee’ and gather around the coach. Despite their being no audience for

these practices (except for me, the trainer and the occasional member of management) players are quiet and professional for this stage of the practice.

In extended training sessions there is often a scrimmage (an informal friendly game) where players can practice the required moves in a pseudo-game scenario. This tends to be a much more vocal part of training, with players working together and communicating as part of a team and against the opposition. Despite the focus on skills there is certainly much more joviality during this game with players testing each other out and winding each other up. It is at this point in the training where friendships and rivalries are made evident. Players who are disliked find that they do not receive the puck and are closed-out from the game which can lead to vocal exchanges and a great deal of swearing and threatened aggression.

At a training session one Wednesday morning midway through the season, two of the players - Sherman and Slinger - engaged in a fist fight in the centre of the ice during training. This was seen to be highly irregular with many players stating that it did not happen in training and often did not occur between two members of the same team. Sherman had previously been vocal about Slinger taking liberties with him and the overly-physical nature of his play in training that week, with the two players repeatedly exchanging swear words and refusing to shower at the same time after training. As Slinger challenged Sherman in the corner, pushing him into the boards and aggravating an existing upper body injury, Sherman shouted "*that was a dick move*" and dropped his gloves, skating towards Slinger in the centre of the ice. He grabbed Slinger by the back of his jersey and the two exchanges punches until Slinger was bought down to the ice. Ordinarily this behaviour would have drawn the attention of the coach, Chester, who was out on the ice with the players, but as many of the players looked towards the coach to see what he was going to do, Chester

rolled his eyes, muttered "*ah fuck this*" and left the ice to enter the locker room. Sherman and Slinger both left the ice and entered separate changing rooms with many of the other players remaining on the ice waiting to hear whether the session would be re-started. On assuming that it was over as Chester was nowhere to be seen, the players stood around discussing the fight and seemed surprised that it had occurred at all. It was interesting that many of the players chose to skate over to my position on the bench and speak to me about their feelings of the event. At least three players apologised for me that I had to see that. I found this interesting, as there had been no apologies to me for any fight of an opponent in previous games and in fact I was six months into my period of data collection, so felt very familiar with the setting and players. I asked Beau why he had felt the need to apologise to me.

> *I dunno man, you shouldn't see that kinda stuff, it's not part of the game and it's not nice. I've never seen it in training, not since juniors and it's not for you to see.*
> Beau – conversation.

This was an interesting moment, as despite the fact that I had been around the players for so long and seen far worse aggression and violence for many months, it was this violence, that wasn't considered legitimate by the players and was not considered 'part of the game' that some players were concerned would offend me. This point will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

Returning to the events of a usual training session, after the scrimmage players will often fall into smaller groups to practice certain elements of their game together. It is at this point that the official part of the training session concludes with penalty practice, which is incorporated into a game called 'Juice Boy'. It seems that this

game follows similar rules in hockey in North America, as it is described in Robidoux's 2001 account of AHL professional hockey. It is during this game that the really fun part of training comes out. Players all line up along the sides of the ice and take it in turns to take a penalty shot on the netminder. Once a player successfully scores on the netminder they are allowed to sit on the side of the bench or stand around and torment the other players, trying to distract them from scoring. If a player fails to score on the net, he must join the back of the queue of other players and take another turn. Once several players have successfully scored on the net, they combine to deter the others even more, cat-calling, whistling, insulting and distracting the players in any way they can. In exactly the same manner as they do the opposition in a game, but with smiles on their faces, they will insult the remaining contenders sexuality, manliness, girlfriends and general lifestyle continually. This game continues until there is one last player who has been unable to score on the net. He is then crowned as 'Juice Boy' and 'roughed-up' by his other team-mates. This rough-housing is gentle enough to avoid injury that will cost the team and usually involves pulling the players helmet off and rubbing the players head and face with their knuckles or slapping their backside. While players all discussed this game as being called 'Juice-Boy', while they were talking to each other and during the game itself, they called it 'Juice-Bitch.' This was a further way of showing dominance of the player who had failed, by intimating that not only had he failed at his task and his masculinity, he was also in some way owned by the rest of the team. Unlike Robidoux's account of this game, he does not have to serve juice to the other players, but he is treated with general well-meaning derision until the following practice when he has the chance to hand over his title.

Once the 'Juice-Bitch' has been decided, the players are free to train how they wish, the highest paid and most skilled players will often leave the ice at this point, opting for the peace of an early shower, but it is essential for the young British players looking for a regular line, and those recovering from injury to demonstrate their dedication by being the last to leave the ice. Occasionally, the veteran players will stay on the ice to work specifically with the grey jersey players, the netminder offering advice on style to the young back up player or the veteran offering defensive advice to the new Brit.

The culture of hockey is not limited to the game itself, or the morning training session. The following pages will discuss in further details some of the key elements of the culture of the sport that emerged through the fieldwork that, I will argue, are relevant to the players' use and legitimisation of violence in the following chapters.

Lifestyle – Alcohol and Drug Use

Alcohol is a dominant element of the hockey players' life, not only the 10 pints and Jager bombs of Sunday and Monday nights, but also the post-match (Man of the Match) beers[30] and the drinks on the coach on the way back from an away trip. During observation there was never a game that did not end in at least one can of beer per player, often many more. The NHL standard of strict nutrition guidelines, fluid replacement drinks and avoiding alcohol after training are not present in EIHL hockey. Occasionally players would turn up at a game already under the influence of alcohol, either poured into their pre-game Starbucks triple shot espresso or openly

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[30] The off-ice officials vote to select a "Man of the Match" for each team. The winning player is given a crate of beer for the locker room and is photographed being presented with this beer by the match sponsor.

drunk from a bottle for less serious exhibition games, or games that the outcome has already been decided. To some players who have previously played in higher level leagues in North America, the EIHL is called a 'beer league' and this title and beer drinking practice is mirrored and celebrated in recreational hockey leagues. In several years of work with hockey players, as a writer originally and then as a researcher, I have never come across a player who does not drink alcohol. One of the times when I felt at my most awkward was when a player who had clearly had more than one or two drinks would drive their car home or into town after a game. Had individual cases been apparent and I had observed a player doing this having known his exact intake, I would have had ethical concerns about not speaking up about this at the time. However, I was never knowingly in a position whereby I could prevent this from happening.

In contrast with their open discussions about binge-drinking, players were reluctant to speak about drug use initially in interviews. It was after leaving the field, when players were aware that I had some understanding of their drug use, that they were forthcoming with information. Players frame themselves as harmless nice guys away from the violence they exhibit in the game. Any account of a hockey enforcer to the media will be presented with the proviso "enforcers are the nicest guys off the ice". However, there is a deviant undercurrent to this culture, one which endorses illegal drug use and overuse of prescription medication as a way of dealing with the pressures of the sport and the physical pain it causes. I observed use of over the counter pain medications on a daily basis, and particular stronger ones which the players managed to obtain privately from the team doctor and physio when the pain got worse than their tramadol and co-codamol could deal with. There were also pain-med injections being given on a regular basis in the locker room. I spoke about

it with Buck, the most garrulous of my respondents who liked to tell a good story and tell it well, he had played in numerous teams in the UK from a young age.

> *I remember my first pro season, that was an eye-opener, they used to have a tub about three times the size of that [points to large Starbucks milkshake cup], in the dressing room, just full of ephedrine – we'd all be grabbing handfuls before games and in the period breaks. "Have some wake-me-up pills". We were off our face every single game. Back then we even used to get the team owner offering us coke, he's be like "have some coke", and I'd be like "no it's alright buddy I'm good" Don't get me wrong, I do a bit of speed, ephedrine and I'm always off my face on pain meds, whatever I can get on the side, but I'm no coke head.*
> Buck - Interview.

Buck presents an interesting neutralisation of drug use here and provides a distinction between 'good' drugs that aid performance, and 'bad' drugs that inhibit your ability to function as a player. This has much is common with Lee Monaghan's work on good and bad use of steroids in garage gyms (2001) as well as Hughes and Coakley's (1991) focus on positive deviance. The above account was in relation to Buck's earliest hockey days, as a 16 year old in a locker room of grown men, some 15 years later, he says times have changed, but remains fond of what he calls 'Old School Hockey' and went on to tell me about the drug testing procedures they had when he started hockey:

> *We'd know the drug testers were in cos they'd carry the big suitcase and there was a phone in the dressing room. Reception would phone us and say "drug testers are in", and the coach would be, "Who's had drugs? who has taken the drugs? hands up boys" and 80% of the team would be hands straight up. They have to tell you, I think it's the end of the first period who they're going to test and if you don't finish the game and you go to the hospital then they can't test you, cos there's no way of knowing what the ambulance or the hospital has given you. I remember one game 6 people*

> *went to hospital and it came down to two Brits and a dopey Canadian who didn't have a clue. The team lost by some ridiculous score, they were winning when the testers first turned up, come the third everyone's on the ice saying, "ooooh, ohhh, get me to hospital" and H, the first aider would be sat there chain smoking saying, "why do I bother".*
>
> Buck - Interview.

While the increased professionalization of the sport has resulted in less open displays of drug use and less testing enforced by the league owners (see following chapters in relation to the politics of a team-owner-managed league) there were still numerous incidents of illegitimate drug use within the locker room and in a social context. During my period of observation many teams took the offer of free drug testing for those training to perform the official drug testing at London 2012 Olympics. A player from an opposing team tested positive for drug use and after a weak investigation acknowledged that the drug use had come from cannabis brownies his girlfriend had made. He was allowed to play just two weeks later. This initial investigation, ban and subsequent turn-around to allow him to play was discussed openly by players in the locker room. Earl was keen to discuss the attitude of the sport to drug use:

> *When he got caught it could have been as many as half the players from each team you know? The news got round quickly and everyone stopped for a while a got all scared, but when they believed his ridiculous story that it was in cookies we all started up again. When the ban is that short and there isn't much of a fine then it's no incentive. They could have carried on with this testing you know, sorted it out in hockey while they had the chance but they didn't.*
>
> Earl – Interview.

When pressed on why he thought it hadn't continued, Earl stated:

Well, I'll tell you, there are two reasons, firstly, testing costs a fair bit when it's not a freebie and secondly because it would cost the owners to lose players. The [team] owners also own the league so they have no interest or incentive in cleaning the game up.
Earl – interview.

What is interesting here is that almost all the players openly talked about the league, officials and other players being fully aware that it was not cannabis that the player tested positive for, but rather a combination of other drugs including cocaine and speed. The explanation from the player that he had mistakenly eaten a brownie laced with cannabis was seemingly accepted by the league. Players thought that this was intentional naivety on the part of the league as most people would tolerate the accidental use of cannabis in a way that they would not tolerate harder drugs deliberately consumed. This demonstrates a certain neutralisation of cannabis use as opposed to harder drugs as well as a willingness for the league to avoid further testing for fear of financial costs.

Several of the players, once my observation had concluded were willing to talk about drug use:

Well, I take stuff in the summer you know high caffeine stuff and some juice y'know 'roids' but I never would in the regular season. There are 7 or 8 guys on the team that take stuff all year round. You know you should look at Jessie's stats for that year; he took it for half the season and then kicked it because he was getting into too much trouble with it, look at his penalty minutes for misconducts and stuff and you can see there is a pattern. It makes guys angry you know. A lot of tough guys take it too to help them during games. I don't think it makes the fight, but the heart is already racing so it's easier to get the launch out and get fired up.
Donny, Interview.

Again, Donny here differentiates between the controlled use of drugs in order to build stamina or body shape during the off-season, against those that use it year round, where it then has an impact on their playing style or temperament. He was keen for me to somehow quantify the difference in penalty minutes received by Jessie, in particular the misconduct penalties he had received while he was using performance enhancing steroids, seeing a clear link between Jessie's inability to control his temper and his drug use. However, like Monaghan's (2001) good steroid users, he felt that it was acceptable to control his own use of drugs in order to achieve something that he did not feel would be possible without the summer use of performance enhancing steroids. This has clear links to Hughes and Coakley's accounts of positive deviance necessary to fulfil the sports ethic (1991).

Donny also alluded to the physical effect that steroids and other drugs had in terms of increasing one's ability to get fired up for a fight. Amphetamine and steroid use has been linked to increased aggression and potential for violence in many cultures (see Monaghan 2004; Winlow, 2001). Despite pushing some of the team fighters on this issue, however, they were not open to discussions of drug use during the season in interviews with me.

Prescription painkillers are used often by several players. Certain high strength drugs that are available through the team doctors for injuries and pain, but according to Tyrone are used to the point of excess:

> *It's a weird thing really, you know, it's not a Brit thing, I don't think so anyway, it's more of a Canadian thing, they must get addicted through junior hockey or somewhere, you know I've had injuries too but I'm too scared to use them as I've seen what the addiction looks like. I've never asked the guys why they do it…but it's all the time. What worries me most is that pain-killers and stuff like that are said to have caused the death of some of those*

> *players over there you know… [Alludes to NHL player Derek Boogaard's high profile death] …you know that's nasty shit and I wouldn't want to get into that. I don't ever take – well - oh shit here goes. I do occasionally do a line of coke on a big night out - but not a lot - just when it's going round at a party, I'm no coke head like Bandit or Jefferson, they were on it all the time, but you know, just like a social line or two you know, just social. Shit, I shouldn't have said that, why do I always admit to shit when you get me here? Thank God for anonymity (laughs).*
>
> Tyrone - Interview.

Tyrone was candid in explaining his use of illegal drugs, but showed awareness of the potential for harm if he was found out. However, he also explained that he was fully aware of the drug use of his team mates showing an openness about drug use within the team environment. He happily admitted to the use of prescription pain medication in the team, and this was something I observed on many occasions, with players recommending particular prescribed medications to each other and explaining how they could get hold of them legitimately as well as illegitimately through some of the team's friends who were in the medical field. The equipment manager at the time, Bubba, was also known for his drug use and would happily repeat a little rhyme when asked about it: "*Codeine for fast hit, Tramadol for a long hit, Amytrip and Eph for the combined buzz, and Diaz for a nighty night.*" He saw this over-use of medication as being a matter of pride as much as a necessity and would often demonstrate by taking excessive numbers of tablets in front of others. While this was occasionally privately criticised by players in interview, most endorsed the use of extremely high levels of medications, neutralising their use as being a necessity when you are forced to playing with an injury each day.

Relationships

Hockey players tend (like many other athletes and minor celebrities) to attract a large following of women. As mentioned in Chapter Three, hockey players tend to categorise women according to whether they are wife or girlfriend (WAG) material, girlfriend material or simply puck bunnies and rink rats. The players' permanent wife and girlfriend group are a close-knit group of women. There is a definite 'look' to them, all sharing a common physical type and presentation that shares similarities with wives and girlfriends of football players and other athletes. These women are attractive, with long hair and attend the games in smart clothing and high heels, standing out from the hockey fans in jeans, trainers and hockey jerseys. They are a close knit group who support each other through similar trials of being in a relationship with a player. They socialise together and with the team on nights that partners are allowed. Many girlfriends of import players are often not allowed to work over in the UK due to their VISA constraints, some raise children here and others take a break from studying or their careers to support their partner here. The educational standard of these women is often higher than the players themselves; many met their partners when they were on a hockey scholarship to colleges in the United States with several of the women undertaking postgraduate studies while in the UK. They act as a support group to one another, but know that their ultimate loyalty is to the team, in common with Thompson's (1999) research on hockey wives in the NHL. Some of them will be aware that their friend's partner has other girlfriends, but would never tell them as the first loyalty is always to their own partner's position on the team. They all seem to operate on an assumption that their partner is the one player who is not cheating, despite evidence to the contrary.

A second group of girlfriends, often in twos and threes either come in as a freebie on the player list[31], or if more stealth is required, they knock at the back door to the locker area and give a code word to the equipment manager and are whisked up to some empty seats. Looking rather like the original WAG group, these ladies are aware that the player has a formal girlfriend; they will often know who she is and know how to negotiate the rink avoiding them. They are attempting to gain access to the permanent group despite holding a low position in the players' life.

The third group of women are individuals who hang around in the same places as the players, or around the rink. Known throughout the hockey world as puck bunnies, puck sluts, or rink rats,[32] these girls are aware that they are not part of the permanent or even temporary groups of WAGS, but who try to gain relationships and experiences with as many of the players as possible. These girls often engage in sexual relationships in the toilets of the rink with two or three players at a time, they turn up half way through team social events in order to pleasure the players in the toilets or in a private room or car nearby[33]. They enjoy the bragging rights of being sexually involved with a player. Some of these women are known to opposition teams and are the 'girl in town' for those players when they visit. Likewise many of the players in Barton have a list of girls in every other town in which they play that they can call up for an evening, a night out or just for sex. Players pass information about these women informally in the locker room, often bragging about the kind of

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[31] Players are commonly allowed to name one or two friends or family members that do not have to pay for their tickets, simply stating their name at the VIP entrance to the rink.

[32] These terms have a range of meanings, see glossary in appendix. While many women are happy to be termed puck bunny or rink rat, the term puck slut is seen as derisive and is generally only used by players towards women who they deem will sleep with any hockey player. Puck bunny is also a negative term that is given to men who show an interest in hockey players as an affront on their sexuality.

[33] I have copious fieldnotes relating to this behaviour but as it is not the main focus of the thesis I have opted to limit this discussion here.

acts they participated in, or observed, to the locker room or players on the team coach.

There are bragging rights, and these are an important element of the hyper masculinity that the players seek to express. Many of the players keep a tally of the number of women that they have been involved with and acts they have carried out. Tall tales and exaggerated stories gain legendary status in the locker room. Ladies night is a great source of these and the player who has managed to carry out the most perverse or extreme behaviour gets bragging rights for a few weeks, if not the whole season. During the season that I observed, players kept a points tally of those that they had engaged with sexual behaviour; a certain number of points being given for different levels of sexual act with additional points available for 'harder to reach' women, such as sponsor's wives or those who had repeatedly turned down offers of sexual engagement with other players. This points system brings a competitive nature to sexual behaviour that players engage in, and is mirrored in other displays of competitiveness and masculinity displayed as will be discussed in Chapter Seven. There is academic evidence, as well as media portrayals to suggest that this objectification of women is common in 'jock' cultures (Allain, 2013; Bass, 1996).

Corporate Sponsors and Spectators

Important to the continuing of a marginal sport in a small country is the corporate sponsorship that the team receives which pays the wages and provides the perks for the players, ranging from car sponsors, kit sponsors, accommodation sponsors and free pizza suppliers. The players know the importance of keeping potential supporters happy and willingly attend corporate events and represent the team

despite engaging in negative comments about the sponsors with other players. Corporate sponsorship and the various complimentary goods and services that players receive also contributes to the ‘celebrity’ status of players, further allowing them to access VIP entry to night clubs and bars and the opportunity to improve their status by mingling with other local celebrities. The status of VIP is often appealing to hockey players, opening up opportunities that would not have been afforded to them if they were in another occupation. This occurs in many sporting environments, particularly those that attract the attention of the media (Adler & Adler, 1999).

Spectators or fans are also a specific status symbol for players. There are many super-fans in the arena, those who ‘friend’ all of the players on Facebook as soon as they sign their contracts, those who collect the game-worn hockey shirts and have them signed by the player. These fans tend to cluster by the barriers waiting for a glimpse of their favourite player, for a photograph (immediately tagged on Facebook) of themselves with the player. There is another group of hangers-on who consider themselves to be the inside group – who are invited to player events and go on nights out with the team. These people fall into two categories, either they are an important, but fun, sponsor – someone that does something for them, such as gives them free Nandos, golf or gym membership; or they are those that get them to VIP entry to night time venues. This second group forms an entourage of people who hang around with the team and use their contacts in the small social world of Barton for VIP club access, free drinks or supply of drugs.

The involvement of spectators of fans in the sport will continue to be considered in relation to their involvement in the endorsement of violence in following chapters. Specifically, fans are often aware of their importance in maintaining what, in the UK, is a marginal sport by contributing towards player wages. In common with many

other sporting and entertainment cultures, sycophantic relationships emerge between fans and their favourite players, often, those who engage in the most entertaining violence, or who push the boundaries of acceptability. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six in relation to the finance of hockey violence.

In presenting this account of hockey culture I do not purport to state that this behaviour constitutes violence or in any way attempt to gauge a physiological link between drug use, womanising, masculinity and violence. However, I do believe that understanding this culture is integral to understanding the masculinity and other behaviours exhibited by players in the execution of their game, in common with David Smith's (1996) and Janet Chan's (1997) work on police cultures. As explained in Chapter Three in relation to police culture, occupational subculture can be seen to encompass more than just the players' behaviour on the ice. Many sporting and occupational cultures learn about group loyalty and aggression through "masculine displays of drinking and toughness" (Winlow, 2001:40). The second part of this chapter moves on from wider cultural behaviour and engages specifically with players' use of violence within the sport.

Part Two : Violence

Physicality explained

Despite the image of hockey being a rough game played by goons, there is a craft to the sport; there is grace in the way 250lb players can carve through the ice on 1cm blades; there is beauty in the way that a scorer's wrists can manipulate the stick to shoot the puck into the smallest of gaps in the net. These are elements that are often ignored in hockey accounts, but certainly elements that are there despite the desire of

others to focus on the masculine physicality of the sport. That said, when focusing on the body contact, it is often difficult to see beyond the motivations and accounts of the violence and on to the effect that this has on the body. Unlike many sports, it is rare that a hockey player is playing without some form of injury; hockey is tough on the body, the ligaments in the knees and hips take a lot of strain in addition to those body parts that are battered by contact. There is rarely a player without ice applied to at least one body-part following a game.

Focus on hockey injuries in the press lately has focused on the high profile head injuries received by players. As I write this, a high profile class action suit is ongoing in North America brought by former hockey players who suffered irreversible brain injuries while playing the NHL and its subsidiaries. Sidney Crosby, perhaps the world's most famous hockey player of current times has sat out almost an entire season following two concussion injuries caused by body checks. While the media are arguing whether it is now the time to remove the tacitly legalised fist fight from the game, it is worth noting that the majority of the high profile head injuries were not sustained by players during fights, but rather through contact in the game, shoulders to heads or heads to Plexiglas. Despite improved safety equipment in the form of helmets and body padding, it is a rough game, even without the renowned fist fights, which, looking at recent trends are gradually disappearing from the game through policy changes such as lengthy bans and through public opinion. However, in the UK, fist fights in hockey are as popular as ever and as explained from my pilot study detailed in Chapter One, some 93% of fans stated that they would reconsider attending games if fighting were banned from hockey. It is worth reiterating at this point the earlier literature on hockey fights as outlined in chapters two and three. Staunch defenders of the safety of the game will

confirm that fighting is already banned from hockey, however, the behaviour remains 'tacitly permitted' (Colburn 1986) by the small infringement of a five minute penalty for the fighters, a penalty that does not hurt the team - but rather the individual players. Those involved with fights explained to me that they would need at least a five minute rest after a fight before returning to the ice due to the exertion so the penalty itself is not a deterrent. It is clear then, that while fighting in hockey is outside of the rules, it remains a strong part of the game. As mentioned earlier, there are in the UK no other options to conduct a bare-knuckle fist fight legitimately - whether in a sporting or a non-sporting environment. Hockey truly is a unique environment from which to study this particular form of contact legitimately. As a researcher with a particular interest in violence and deviance, despite the fact that an entire thesis could be dedicated to the skill and grace of the sport, or to the acting out of masculinity in the locker room and other places, it is the violence that is the main focus of my analysis.

The Role of the Enforcer

The sport of hockey historically allows for a role player in the form of a fighter, who may be less skilled at the sport, but will have gained their position on the team by taking on the physical responsibilities of a fighter. Called an 'Enforcer' in acknowledgement to their role in the maintenance of rules and their willingness to ensure the game is played in the manner they like, or ridiculed as 'Goons', considered to be of lower intelligence and needlessly physical for money. It is this image that the media are drawn to when deriding hockey culture, and this image that film maker's focus on for entertainment or humour (see Appendix 5 for media images of hockey fights in films). The role is so well-known within the culture of

the sport, that players will willingly accept that role and title in order to carve out an identity, thereby ensuring their continued employment, position on the team and character. Academic accounts reviewed in Chapter Three such as those by Smith (1979), Vaz (1977, 1979), and Colburn (1986), acknowledge the existence of enforcers in the game. Research by Jones *et al* (1993, 1996), Levitt (2006), and Raney (2009), also explains the financial incentive for fighting, with the highest wages given to those players who engage in the most fights.

Over recent years, the presence of the enforcer has been eroded, the EIHL preferring to draw upon players from North America who can not only fight and show physical dominance in that manner, but can also skate, defend and score goals. Therefore, the job title of the enforcer has become less desirable, even if a player willingly takes that responsibility for a team. For example, players prefer the nickname of the 'sheriff', 'policeman' or 'protector' to the negatively titled 'enforcer' or 'goon'. That said, despite the title given or accepted, both spectators and players are well aware of who is responsible for taking on that physical role on the ice and a great deal of respect and consideration is given to that player who willingly puts his own body in the line of injury on behalf of other team-mates. During my research, Barton Bears had two distinct players who had this role, as well as others who focussed on their skill but would step into a physical altercation if needed. While both Sherman and Bandit took a similar amount of penalty minutes and fighting majors, it was Sherman who most lived up to the expectations of the role, in part due to the way in which the team acted around him. Far from being the best player on the ice, he was certainly the most dominant and had played in Barton for several years in a role that he was cast in. Unlike some of the other league enforcers that played one character on the ice but actually went out of their way in order to explain that role was not their

personality off the ice, Sherman always had a little edge to him. I could tell by the way that his team-mates responded to him that he was to be allowed to behave in exactly whatever manner he wished and that others had to work around that, which was illustrated earlier in this chapter when Coach Chester did not intervene during a fight at morning practice. As one of the most dominant enforcers in the entire league, Sherman was an enigma to many, even those on his team.

> He's a great guy but you know he's the boss what he says goes and people move everything to fit around him. He never says anything, never shows his anger, but he has that silent intimidation you know that makes people just do things for him, he gets things the way he wants them without speaking, it's just a respect thing….He gets all the perks like the back seats on the bus, he gets to change the music without anyone complaining. If he says 'move' you move. It's funny really as I'm friendly with him but to see how much he intimidates other people new to the team or some of the younger Brits, they near wet themselves when he says something. (laughs). You know, I get more points than him in a game, I think I'm pretty integral to the team, but I wouldn't ever be like that - you know, like take the back seats on the bus, stop people sitting there, or, like that time when he made Trigger give up his bar stool in McCabe's? Remember that Vic? haha, yeah he just gets people to do things.
>
> Cletus - Interview.

Cletus was referring to an incident that I witnessed when drinking with the players after a Sunday game in the usual Sunday night bar - McCabe's. The players had played two home games that weekend and after two fairly uneventful games they were enjoying a night out with each other, their partners and several friends of the team. The bar was packed and the players had managed to find three bar stools to perch on while several of the girlfriends had moved across the room into a booth. Trigger, Vern and Jefferson were on these stools leaning against the bar, when

Sherman came along to the group with a couple of pints of Guinness. Trigger (at that time the league's highest goal scorer) was talking about the goal he had scored earlier in the game on a breakaway when Sherman walked over and said "Hey Trig you're in my chair", I had expected Trigger to banter back to Sherman and refuse to move, but he immediately blushed said "Sorry Sherm" and not only got off the stool but moved away from that group of players. Sherman and Jefferson then laughed and high fived while another conversation started up among the others. This display of dominance can be seen to illustrate the status that those who use violence have in a team, even above those who are voted Man of the Match, or the league's MVP. Trigger, a player with superior academic qualifications and job prospects to Sherman, who had proven success in the skilful shooting nature of the sport, appeared to feel inferior to Sherman due to his nature and the threat of physicality. In hockey, as in many other masculine environments, those who present a physical threat can be seen to attain some status for that role. This is akin to Winlow's concept of "cultural millionaires" (2001:54). It would be said that enforcers receive a great deal of status from their role which is more important to them than any physical harm they might endure in conducting their role.

Enforcers tend to be the character players on a team. In Barton, the two enforcers Sherman and Bandit were no exception, the most popular players for signings, for puck sponsorship and photographs. Bandit in particular made a name for himself as the kind enforcer and introduced charity work to the club, inviting disabled youths and their families to watch the game and then meet him afterwards. He was incredibly personable and keen to demonstrate at every opportunity that violence was to remain on the ice and that he was a good guy away from the ice.

During one game, I stood with Bandit while he met a group of teenagers who were in care. He had fought twice during a testy game against the Thunder and was a little bruised. The young boys ran over to him to tell him how amazing the fight was and to get his autograph in their programmes. Bandit asked me to take a photograph of them all with him behind the scenes and tried to include their carer, who had until that point been standing off to the side watching. She launched into a tirade against him about how he should not be glorifying violence and that he was a '*vile disgusting specimen'* who should be ashamed of himself. Bandit was visibly distressed by her comments and tried to talk to her about the role of the enforcer and its containment on the ice in policing the game. She refused to shake his hand and took the boys away. Bandit spoke to me for a while after that. He said that he was really shocked by the way the lady had spoken to him but more shocked that she would not even shake his hand. He said "*I'm not a bad person, I never hit anyone off the ice, it's just my role, it's not me.*" I was not used to seeing Bandit in a negative state and it was clear that this lady's opinion and snub had really affected him. Bandit, like many enforcers was used to the adulation of the home crowd. He accepted that he would be booed and ridiculed in opponents' arenas but had not expected it in his own rink. This perhaps alludes to players' acceptance of their neutralisation of violence among fans and many spectators, and the surprise felt when an observer did not acknowledge those justifications for violence. Bandit took this as a personal slight and was concerned that this carer was judging him, without allowing him to justify the use of violence in the sport.

This justification of the role of violence can be seen in the fact that many of the EIHL teams the enforcers are the character players going by names such as "The Sheriff", "The Policeman", "The Judge" and "Weapon X". Many have outgoing

personalities and recognisable features that they 'peacock[34]' to draw attention to themselves. For example, The Sheriff had his own Facebook account where he posted pictures and encouraged fans from around the league to comment on his fight videos. The Judge, a 6' 5" African American is bald except for a Mohican which he dyes orange to match his team's jersey colour. Weapon X has his own physical stance crossing his arms to make an X shape whenever he feels he has been particularly useful on the ice, usually following a fight or altercation. Players often differentiated between enforcers, according to their perceived traits, there were goons or retards (who were only signed to the team to fight and were not able to take part in the rest of the game), policemen or enforcers (who kept the game clean but could also play a part in the game and were generally respected), and character fighters (who fell somewhere between the two). Players certainly had more respect for policemen and enforcers and very little respect for goons, as will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

> *Most people have that little switch that you can flip when you need to. I don't think you are born with that anger, I think it's bred into you by the culture of the sport. If you are big in Juniors then you are trained to fight and to use your size, we even had a full time boxing coach in juniors who would analyse the fights in the same ways by video playback as the coach analysed the goals, that's pretty nuts for teenagers. Yeah. It's bred into you, to flip that switch and just go.*
> Wade - Interview.

The pilot MSc study conducted in 2009 illustrated that players felt they were bred as fighters and had little choice but to accept that role. This has much in common with

[34] Peacocking is a term that many of the players use, their use of it derived from slang among pick up artists for the dominant demonstrative drawing of attention to themselves in order to gain status. See glossary in appendix for further details. Neil Strauss's (2005) book on pick up artists was popular with the players on bus journeys and in the locker room.

biographical accounts of players (John Branch 2014 on Derek Boogaard; Dave Schultz 1981) which both allege that training for a future fighting role is endemic in junior hockey in North America and verges on abusive. Player 1 from the 2009 pilot study explained in detail that he was forced into fighting due to his size, actively rewarded for every fight he had and ignored or refused food and drink when he tried to avoid physical play and focus on scoring goals. There are many accounts in the hockey world of the damaging nature of this behaviour on young boys (For example Laura Robinson 1998 and Theo Fleury 2011). What is also of interest here is the differences between the North American Junior hockey programme where physical size is valued and the US college scholarship programme where skill and speed are of higher commodity, indicating perhaps a class-based bias inherent in the system.

Hockey Violence and the Media

There are a plethora of hockey themed films and television shows, many of which focus predominantly on the violent aspect of the game. 2012 blockbuster 'Goon' (See Appendix 5) takes a humorous look at hockey fighting, after a team employ a doorman and local fighter who has never before skated in order to dominate the opposing teams. Here, the fighter is seen as being a mindless and naïve henchman, who is unable to do anything but fight. In accordance with other accounts of hockey enforcers, the story encourages you to see the soft side of the enforcer away from their 'role' whereby they come to lead their team by example and make a difference in the lives of all around. Similarly, classic favourites such as 'Slapshot', 'Youngblood' and 'Mystery Alaska' each reinforce the stereotypical image of talentless goons fighting so hard that their team mates cannot help but to respond with a renewed vigour for their sport, leading to the underdogs winning the

championship. Images of illicit and prescription drugs, alcohol and 'puck bunnies' are prevalent in each account. Each of these films acts to reinforce the image of a successful, if marginally broken, hockey culture where good will out (with a side helping of humour).

The news media, on the other hand, does not give one prevailing image; rather it is divided into two distinct camps. The first is in favour of the physical aspect of hockey and of the fist fight; the second resolutely against fighting in the sport, desiring instead to revolutionise the game in order to make it safer for participants and more wholesome for a family audience. In North America, full-time hockey columnists and television hosts take a pro or anti fighting stance leading to numerous sound-bites used by players, teams or pressure groups in their discussions. Perhaps one of the most well-known of these presenters is Canada's Don Cherry, a cultural icon and huge proponent of fighting in hockey. Cherry presents Coaches Corner on CNBC's Hockey Night in Canada where he calls out players who do not play according to 'The Code' (see Chapter Six) and rewards those who can play in what he calls "Rock 'em, sock 'em old Skool hockey". Cherry is globally renowned in the hockey community and sells a vast range of pro-fighting memorabilia. Taking a different view of the same stance are the wider news media who view hockey fights very such as staged entertainment (similar to WWE) rather than real violence, a view that is taken by many home spectators of the sport and certainly many of those who get their information on hockey from the media rather than watching a live game.

Figure 1. CBS's Don Cherry. "Rock Em, Sock, 'Em Hockey"

Don Cherry has made a career as a hockey pundit using the brand "Rock 'Em Sock 'Em" which has resulted in more than 40 DVDs, numerous books, t-shirts, caps and beer glasses, all encouraging the physical fighting side of the sport. As Young states: "the media approve of sports violence and violence-doers in a myriad of subtle and not-so-subtle ways, including selling products on the basis of their violence appeal". (2000:399).

The opposing view to those outlined above is that violence in hockey, specifically the fist fight is unacceptable in the sport. This opinion is much more pervasive in recent years following the better understanding of brain injuries and their likely cause among power-sport participants in the repeated concussions that athletes are subject to. At the time of writing, Players in the National Football League (NFL) have been successful in suing the league due to their failure to protect players by 'burying' knowledge they had on the effect of head injuries (Katzowitz, J (2014) In CBS Sport. September 30th 2014). Following on from this, a class action suit has been commenced by a group of former NHL hockey players against the league. It is likely that the eventual outcome of these high profile cases and those that will follow may well lead to wide-scale changes to both of these sports. The scientific evidence

that has been published is sobering to participants of contact sports, demonstrating the existence of a degenerative brain disease in many of those who have played these sports. The condition, Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, (CTE) has been discovered in the brains of former athletes that have been donated to medical science (Canadian Press, The Hockey News 21st August 2013). It is hypothesised that this condition, which is irreversible, which causes behaviour changes and mental health problems, may well be partly responsible for the high profile suicides of at least three former enforcers that marred the hockey community in 2011 (Branch, 2011a. New York Times, 1st September 2011). Another considered cause of these suicides is alleged to be the over-dependence on prescription drugs given to players by team owners keen to keep players on the ice despite injuries and ongoing pain. The father of Derek Boogaard, one of the suicide victims, is currently taking action against the team and doctors of the New York Rangers for their encouragement of Oxycodone as a way of dealing with the pain of bare-knuckle fighting (Branch, 2011b, New York Times 5th December 2011). Regardless of the proven cause of these health concerns, it is clear to many that the culture which support, reinforces and indeed celebrates violence in the sport, has many problems that have come to light in the past four years. The anti-fighting pressure groups and media outlets have become a much more dominant voice in recent years, which is beginning to affect a tide-change in public opinion, which may be the death knell of fighting in hockey in this form. Adam Proteau, a writer for The Hockey News has been a driving force for this sea-change and his book (2011) on the subject and the resultant discussions in the media will be discussed in further detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

Typology of Violence

It is important when discussing violence to be clear from the outset how we are to define violent acts. The typology most used in hockey literature was that devised by Smith (1983), as explained in Chapter Three. Smith's four-type analysis separates three types of legalised violence with a fourth type that is a criminal act. However, this differs from the legal distinction of violence as discussed in Chapter Three. Despite the fist-fight being illegal in England and Wales, constituting an assault, it is inherently legitimised or '*tacitly* permitted' within the sport and does not fall into the criminal violence described by Smith. I would contend that Smith's typology, while useful in differentiating between types of violence and legitimisations of its use, needs to be extended to account for a wider range of violent acts.

Across the thesis, I have examined and will continue to explain many uses of violence and now present a 5-part typology that will be of use when considering the following findings chapters.

1. **Verbal aggression and physical horseplay.**

The use of abusive language, sexist, racist and homophobic language, the rough and tumble in practice and after man of match when players receive knuckle-rubs to their head or are pushed in the face. This is neither legitimate in the game, nor would it be acceptable in many other occupational environments, but players feel it is entirely acceptable 'banter' and do not see it as illegitimate or even deviant behaviour.

2. **Legitimate violence during the game.**

Body checks, boarding, collisions and accidental injuries received from pucks are all considered to be part of the game and are neither criminalised by the referees nor

wider society. This is similar to Smith's example of brutal body contact and has much in common with other sports such as wrestling, rugby and American football.

3. **The sanctioned violence of the fist fight.**

This is officially outside of the rules of the game in that it incurs a penalty of five minutes in the sin-bin. However, it is subject to strict codes of conduct and rules of engagement and is tacitly permitted because it is punished by relatively minor penalties and acknowledged as part of the game.

4. **Illegal or unacceptable violence**

This incorporates instigation of a fight without a willing combatant or without heeding the rules of engagement such as sucker-punching as well as behaviour such as intentional stick assaults. This behaviour is both outside of the rules of the game and outside of the acceptable levels of violence and therefore perceived to be illegitimate by both players and spectators. As a result this behaviour tends to draw stronger personal penalties and sanctions.

5. **Criminal violence**

I would extend Smith's type of criminal violence to include not only acts that take place off the ice, but also more serious versions of type four, when players are assaulted on the ice without being aware. There have been several high profile examples of this in the NHL in North America, where players have received criminal convictions as well as lengthy sanctions from their league. Neither informal legitimisation, formal rules of the game, nor criminal law accept this most extreme level of violence and its use is rare.

This typology will be referred to in the following chapters, as it emerged throughout the data collection and analysis, however, in order to be clear about how I am defining violence in this thesis, it is important to define these types of violence from this point. While many of these distinctions were explained to me by players and indeed journalistic accounts of physicality during the game, players themselves did not refer to these types and rather used more of a sliding scale between these groupings. In particular, none of the players referred to type 1 as being deviant or violent. In common with many other masculine subcultures, this behaviour is 'banter' or 'lad' and perceived to be entirely acceptable. As a female researcher however, it is important to note that my understanding of this part of aggressive behaviour is that to others, it constitutes a deviant act if not an outright criminal offence, particularly with regards to legislation on hate speech. This least extreme type of violence has been missing from previous research on the topic and is relevant in terms of the link it makes between the subculture and the legitimisation of various acts.

Conclusion - Introduction to the other thematic chapters

This chapter has comprised a discussion of several cultural traits that exist in the world of hockey. Whilst some of these traits speak to wider criminological issues such as violence, drug use, racism and homophobia; others, while not being criminal, or perhaps even deviant, are relevant in terms of the way in which culture is acted out in wider society. In understanding these factors, we can make sense of the data that is discussed in the following two thematic chapters. Chapter Six, which discusses in detail the extent to which a code of honour rules the use of violence in hockey, attributes much to the account of Bernstein (2006). When looking at Bernstein's

analysis of the code in conjunction with my ethnographic fieldnotes and interview transcripts, it is clear that these concepts that he lists are not stand alone concepts, rather they all fall into two distinct themes: those that involve the positive *function* of physicality; and those which correspond to the *financial* success of the sport. These themes will form the basis for chapter six of this thesis. The clarity by which these two meta-codes emerged was through analysis of the ethnographic fieldnotes, the in-depth interviews and the life history interviews, in conjunction with previous pilot research conducted in 2009 and 2010 with a wide range of stakeholders in the game.

A third theme emerged which does not form part of the code, but was evident in players behaviour, locker room conversations and both observation and interviews with the players as to the retaining of physicality in the sport - that of *fun*. Whilst players at no point have ever justified or neutralised their behaviour on account of it being fun, it seems to be a large deciding factor not only in the use of physicality during the game, but also in the enactment of masculinity and team-work bonding in the sport. This also brings to the forefront some of the excitement of violence for the players, the rush and the challenges of 'getting away with' certain acts of violence as well as balancing on the edge of justified behaviour.

All these three themes form part of the ways in which players justify their violent behaviour, how they feel it differs from other forms of violence away from the rink and how this violence is reinforced in the culture of the sport. As such, it engages with each of the research questions as outlined in Chapter One.

Chapter Six

The Code: Function and Finance of Hockey Violence

"Hockey is a man's game. The team with the most real men wins."
- Brian Burke.

Introduction

The pervasive physical culture of ice hockey has been highlighted in the previous chapter; a culture that not only engages in violence, but one which has an explicit way of framing and explaining that violence. The justification of violent behaviour in the form of a rudimentary unwritten manual detailing the rules of engagement and prohibitive behaviour is referred to by the players as being 'The Code'. This chapter will discuss players' accounts of the code, the expected rules and etiquette of the game and the dual way in which violence is justified for the good of the game. While a more detailed introduction to the concept of 'The Code' will be given in the following section, the fieldnotes excerpt below provides an example of violent

behaviour in a game breaking the code of violence and resulting in a bare-knuckle fist-fight as a form of payback for the breach of the code.

There is a change in the feeling of the rink, the Bears know that if they must defend their net and get another goal in the next twelve minutes to draw the game and therefore bring about overtime. There is a tangible change in the emotions of the rink, players return to the bench after their 90 second shift utterly exhausted, sweat pouring from their heads as they remove their helmets to wipe them with a towel already drenched in their teammates' perspiration. There is no idle chit chat on the bench now, just breathing, recovery and focus on the game. Every shift is rewarded by pats on the back – like comrades returned from the front-line to recover. Gone is the humour of earlier in the game and as the physicality in the game increases the look of fear in the eyes of those returning to the ice for their next shift.

There is a determination that joins the players together in the joint purpose of winning this game. There are sudden screams from the crowd as Trigger, the star forward and their best hope of scoring is checked to the head from behind by Barnaby. The agitator is renowned power forward and gritty player Barnaby - whose role and identity has been built upon taking things a little too far in order to cause injury or to incite a fight. Nicknamed 'The Bulldog' by his fans, he is not as tall as Sherman, but he is tenacious and well aware of his role in the team.

The referee has blown the whistle on the play and fans are up on their feet trying to discover whether Trigger is hurt seriously, or whether he can continue. He stands and is helped back to the bench by the linesman – he can't be too bad as he went to the bench rather than heading to the door and locker room for treatment but it is clear that he has had a knock. The equipment manager yells down the bench "fucking ice

bag" and as the physio is already tending to Trigger, I reach into the orange bin and grab out a polythene bag of ice that has been prepared for this using the snow produced by the Zamboni cutting the ice for a new shift. I pass it down the line of players and it is placed on Trigger's neck. The team are wound up now, what hope do they have of winning when the star player is out and there is anger towards the referee for failing to call the penalty on Barnaby, a clear breach of both the rules of the game and the code in checking to the head from behind. The coach and players are all calling for the attention of the ref, for the coach to speak to him but the ref waves him off and Chester calls him "*useless cunt*". He seems to hear this and smirks calling the players back to the faceoff circle in the Bear's defensive zone, there is a short delay as the players argue with the ref and linesman before he shakes his head and blows the whistle indicating that the conversation is over, the teams must face-off. Sherman, taking the role of enforcer, or policeman seriously, is on the bench, he is shouting to Barnaby every time he skates near the bench "*Fucking watch it you prick*", "*try it on a real man next time then you'll be shown up you fucking pussy*" he hits his stick on the boards a couple of times and while the coach is joining in with the shouting he pulls Sherman by the shoulder and says "*we'll get him but keep your fucking head, you can't sit it out when we need bodies on the ice – wait and calm the fuck down*". Sherman shouts "*fuck*!" but backs off and takes a swig of water from the bottle. The game continues.

After 4 more minutes of play Trigger has recovered well enough to take his shift, he is patted on the backside by his teammates as he takes to the ice "*Go fucking hit 'em where it hurts", "top shelf buddy*". Barnaby is not expected on the ice having not long finished a shift, but seeing Trigger go for a shift he gestures to his coach that he is going to join his team. Furious at this, Sherman calls BillyO back off the ice, nods

at the coach and takes his place across from Barnaby, (an implicit acknowledgement of his role in protecting Trigger from Barnaby). Sherman shouts to Barnaby repeatedly during the faceoff "*Bitch", "I'll get you pussy*". Still needing the goal - the players initially play the game (focussing on scoring a goal rather than starting a fight), occasionally pushing past one another in an aggressive manner but neither willing to damage the team by being the instigator and getting the extra penalty.

Barnaby then sticks out his stick when Trigger is on the breakaway - all the time looking at Sherman looking like he is trying to incite something. The entire rink erupts with a cacophony of noise from the fans and from players on the bench. At the sound of the fans Sherman turns and chases across the ice fronting up to Barnaby and nodding his head fiercely. Sherman speaks to Barnaby which I cannot hear from the bench but which he later tells me are "*Fucking payback bitch, time to face up*" and nod to each other. The other players know instinctively what is about to happen as they back away from the two players who are skating away from each other, circling a little, backwards towards the centre of the ice. As they do this they drop their sticks to the ice, drop their gloves in a decisive movement of the wrists and remove their helmets. Sherman removes his elbow pads, both giving himself more time to prepare and also to limit the purchase that Barnaby can get on him while fighting.

As soon as the spectators see that the players have agreed to fight they start baying, "*Baaaaaarrrrrnnnnnaaaaabbbbbbyyyyyyy!" "Kick the shit out of that fucker Sherman, murder him."* The drummers have changed their pattern; they now hit their drums to the tune from Terminator 2 (where the two Terminators are marching angrily) which builds tension in the rink. The DJ is playing "you gotta fight for your right" by the Beastie Boys and all around people are screaming and goading the players. Fans implicitly know that a fight is about to occur and their emotions are

deliberately built by the drums, feet stomping and the music played by the DJ. Fans are banging on the plexi glass or hanging over the edge of the seating, mobile phones in hand, trying to video this fight between the heavy weights. Those on their way to the bar or toilet have stopped in their tracks – eyes glued to the centre ice and the inevitable fracas. The noise levels inside the rink are the highest that they have been all game.

The players circle one another with their fists raised, trying to decide who is going to make the first move, it's Barnaby, several inches shorter than Sherman who grabs out at Sherman's collar, trying to get a handhold so that he has the stability to punch him without falling, this angers Sherman and he lifts his arms high, using his height to rain in the punches from his non-fighting hand as he holds off Barnaby with the other. The DJ switches the music to Sherman's song [removed for anonymity – but a popular rock song about super-human strength] and everyone is cheering and shouting, watching the display, smiles on their faces, anger on some and others watching through their parted fingers, in the childlike pattern of wanting to see but wanting to avoid the worst of it. The fight lasts about 25 seconds, which is reasonably long for a hockey fight and ends as Sherman pulls Barnaby's jersey and drops him down to the ice, landing on top of him. Punches stop straight away and the linesmen move in to drag the two players to the bench. They go into their respective sin bins without argument but while hurling abuse at each other as the referee stands in front of the penalty box and calls the penalties. Both get 5 minutes in the sin-bin for fighting, with Barnaby also getting 2 minutes for the original tripping penalty on Trigger.

On the bench the players are happy, this penalty won't cost them at all, in fact they'll be up a player for 2 minutes, it has worked in their favour.

Players retrieve their own team's kit on the end of their sticks and deliver it to the penalty box with a shout of well done to Sherman and a hit of the tip of the stick on the penalty box plexi as a mark of respect. The fans are all singing their chant for Sherman [anonymised chant] but one which acknowledges Sherman's enforcer role and reminding him how much it is appreciated by them while waving their shoes in the air in a sign of respect. There is a definite feeling that this battle has been won by the Bears, partly due to the fight ending with Barnaby on the floor but partly because the penalties have been called in the Bears' favour. A double win.

The next line, rejuvenated by their rest take to centre ice for the face off and the game resumes as before without further incident.

We chat about the fight on the bench. The physio said, "*You know Casey* [referee] *could have avoided all that if he had just called the first fucking check from behind on Trigger*". Heath shrugs and says "*Don't knock it, this way we get the powerplay and the fans got to see a fight – listen to them, they love this shit, they'll be back*".

This fight, whilst clearly mediated initially by the players as being a function of the game (to repay Barnaby for his dirty hits on Trigger and to send a message that you cannot mess with the star player without the repercussion of the enforcer), is also shrouded in tactical decisions of when to avoid a fight, when to take a fight, the benefits and weaknesses of being punished more severely than your opponents and that effect on the team and the score. After the conclusion of the game, the event remains shrouded in justifications and excuses that violence is needed for the spectators, positively influencing game attendance. The players clearly

acknowledging again how important that aspect of the game is to the enjoyment of the fans.

This excerpt from my fieldnotes highlights many of the aspects of the code of the game; the perceived function of fist fights and the reasons behind the financial benefit of the legitimisation of such behaviour. This excerpt is just one example of behaviour viewed over the season, similar accounts emerging from each game played in the EIHL that season. Once we have established the understanding of this cultural code, we will further analyse the justification of violent behaviour, with particular reference to fist fights in terms of the function that they hold for the players and the financial benefit that can be gained by the clubs.

Part One: The Code

> *"The first rule of Fight Club is…you do not talk about Fight Club. The second rule of Fight Club is…YOU DO NOT TALK ABOUT FIGHT CLUB. Third rule of Fight Club: if someone yells Stop! goes limp, or taps out, the fight is over. Fourth rule: only two guys to a fight. Fifth rule: one fight at a time, fellas. Sixth rule: no shirt, no shoes. Seventh rule: fights will go on as long as they have to. And the eighth and final rule: if this is your first night at Fight Club, you HAVE to fight."*
> - Fight Club. Movie, 1999.

A continually surfacing topic in journalistic discussions of ice hockey is that of "The Code", the unwritten rules that govern physicality and fighting within the sport. Part of the code acknowledges the role of enforcers in effectively policing the physical element of the sport; indeed many enforcers consider themselves to be 'policemen' (Bernstein, 2006; Robidoux, 2001). There is evidence to suggest that referees acknowledge and even encourage this quasi-official role believing certain elements

of the game to be beyond their capability in controlling (Colburn, 1986:68; Robidoux, 2001; Silverwood, 2009).

Despite acknowledgement of the existence of a form of code is discussed in some of the qualitative research reviewed in Chapter Three (Colburn, 1986; Ingham and Dewar, 1999; Robidoux, 2001), there remains no academic research that aims to fully uncover the nature and extent of this code prior to my first MSc dissertation as discussed in Chapter One. However, non-academic, journalistic accounts of the code flourish, specifically that by Ross Bernstein who spoke to many high profile NHL enforcers to establish their understanding of the code. His 2006 text uncovers several key aspects of the code which are pertinent to this study.

Bernstein's text (as detailed in the review of literature in Chapter Three) established three key over-riding rules governing the overall principles of legitimised fighting in the sport: Firstly, fighters must only fight other known and willing fighters; Secondly, that they must 'show up' to fight, taking responsibility for their actions and those of their teammates; Thirdly, they must 'fight fair'. Fighting fair is a fluid concept but is well known among those who watch hockey games or who are aware of media dramatisations of fights. The symbolic rules of engagement as demonstrated by 'dropping the gloves'; removing their helmets, and respecting the referee and linesmen when they call and end to the fight. A quote from the film Fight Club is included at the start of this section, an oft-repeated saying by the players. The rules of engagement in hockey fighting are similar in many ways, as indicated in the account of a fight in Chapter One, and will be discussed throughout this chapter. It is considered important to remove one's own helmet (to protect the knuckles of the opposing fighter and as some players say to avoid negative labelling as a pussy, demonstrating a masculine trait of hardness). Gloves are removed in a

symbolic manner, which actually results from the necessary way in which to remove the gloves without help, the lifting of the hands and single shake of the hands in order to fling the gloves away from the body which gives a strong symbol of throwing-off the rules of the game. It is also common to give some vocal signal of the impending fight, as well as a nod of the head in agreement. “Let’s go”, “wanna dance?”, “payback time bitch”, and “it’s on” are often used to acknowledge the intention of commencement of a fight.[35]

It is important here to reiterate that fighting is not legal in the game, but it is punished by such a relatively insignificant penalty (often shorter than it takes a player to physically recover from a fight and be able to take to the ice again), that it is considered to be ‘tacitly permitted’ (Colburn 1986). A bare-knuckle fist fight that could be termed pre-meditated assault in another context is only punished by the relatively minor penalty of five minutes in the penalty box (see Appendix 1 for details of rules and sanctions). Unlike regular assaults away from sport, the ritual of ‘dropping the gloves’, or circling each other at centre ice with fists raised, draws peoples’ attention to the impending fight causing a stoppage in play and all eyes to focus on the combatants. To clarify, these rules do not appear in the hockey rule books, but they are universally known to players and are common place in hockey games from the NHL right through to junior hockey. However, it is only the leagues which continue to ‘permit’ a fist fight by failing to punish offenders severely that this occurs. In many of the hockey playing countries of North-West Europe, such as the

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[35] If the focus of this PhD was purely on the way in which players interact with one another and the minute detail of these fights, an interesting comparison with the works of Goffman on Interaction Order and those of Randall Collins on the micro-sociology of violence would be utilised in comparison with this behaviour in hockey. However, the wider focus of intent, code and culture is taken and therefore attention to wider social and criminological theories is instead presented for discussion.

Scandinavian countries, France, Czech Republic and much of Russia, a more skilful game is played, which does not legitimise fighting and punishes fist-fights with lengthy suspensions and monetary sanctions rendering games largely free from this form of violence. Here, while there is no doubt that violence does sometimes emerge from the sport, the entire legitimation framework is phrased in a different manner altogether.

There is anecdotal evidence therefore of the existence of some form of unwritten code of conduct on the ice. Rather than being merely a code that governs fighting, it also contains guidance on professional conduct and respect in the sporting environment. In contradiction to much criminological research on criminalised violence and assault, this form of fighting and violent conduct is often premeditated, planned, mediated and recognised through the culture of the sport, through the existence of 'The Code.' It is thus important not to limit an understanding of the code to the use of fist fights and to broaden this out to include wider concepts such as motive, culture, competition and masculinity.

Previous research I undertook as part of my first MSc dissertation (discussed in Chapter One) highlighted player acceptance of the term 'The Code' where participants gave accounts:

> *There is a code of conduct and you mess with it at your peril. People have long memories and payback is a bitch.*
> (Player 2).

> *You live by the code and you die by the code, it is the hockey way.*
> (Player 4).

While The Code was referred to implicitly or explicitly during observations on the bench, in the locker room and in conversations with the players; it was during the visual interviews that the clearest accounts emerged.

I showed Video 23 of a fist fight between two players during interviews in order to elicit opinion from players and allowed them to give their own accounts of action:

> *That's the Code right there, the word is 'willing combatants', that's even written in the rule book like that, both guys willing to go, gloves dropped, lined against each other, 'wanna go?' And off they went. There is a code of conduct between those players. 'Good luck man, nothing personal, gotta do what we gotta do, see you next time'*
> Jackson - Visual Interview.

None of the players referred to the code by any other name than 'The Code', when asked they said that they first heard about it in junior hockey and on shows like Don Cherry's HNIC as well as in films and books. It was a known concept to them which they learnt from those sources and from others on the bench during games, at practice. They each used incredibly similar definitions to those provided by Bernstein despite only two of the players having read the book themselves. As one of the more educated British players said:

> *I'm aware of the kind of cultural aspect, criminology, sociology or whatever, but I don't think the others are aware of anything like that. To them it's just hockey you know, it's just the way it is.*
> Donny – Conversation.

Fighting Fair

Of the three meta-codes provided by Bernstein above, each of these is incorporated into the principle of fighting fair. One of the strongest discourses around fighting in hockey is one of respect. While undertaking my research for my earlier MSc, there had been a brawl in an EIHL that started during a game, but had continued off the ice surface. This was such an unusual occurrence that the video made the mainstream news in the UK and sports news globally. As such a rare event I used the video of this fight in the visual interviews to ascertain the opinions of other players in the league who weren't involved. Many of the players were familiar with not only the video but had also spoken about it with other players present at the time and had discussed the event with their team mates. The professional hockey community is small and well connected. Players were keen to discuss this game and the events that occurred and use it to both justify their position in opposition to this as well as paradoxically talking about it in an excited manner. It was widely accepted by the players that this behaviour had gone far beyond what was acceptable even in a legitimised manner in the game. There was no doubt that to other players this was not a fair fight, they often referred to the tactics as 'prison rules' which they defined as being something that went beyond the legitimised violence in the game. In prison rules, the rules of engagement and fighting fair no longer limit the action of fighting, enabling players to fight in any way at all, players alluded to behaviour such hair grabbing, head butting, eye gouging and kicking the opponent with the blades of the skates. I asked the respondents what prevented other fights on the ice becoming like this:

Respect, you know, knowing the code and acknowledging the purpose of the code and the fight, it keeps it clean. If you accept a little bit of a fist fight and just deal with it in a small way by five minutes each then its worth letting them have a fair fight and stopping the game going rogue. On the ice players know what the limitations are to fighting and they keep it clean, you can get a KO [knockout] *but no prison rules, keep it fair.*
Beau - Visual interview.

Players were unanimous in their explanations of what 'fighting fair' constituted. They mentioned 'respect' more than any other term. The concept of a 'gentleman's agreement' was mentioned too, the idea that the fight is almost like a duel in the sense that it is fair within the agreed rules and under the supervision of a referee.

There is respect in the code in that you have to stop when the linesmen come in. you gotta do what you gotta do on the ice and then leave it at that. If you have to deal with it at a later time by fighting it again, you agree to fight again, you don't carry on when the linesman stops it. Often you'll even have a beer with the guy and talk about the fight next game. Players don't usually carry on that anger after the fight and after the handshake at the end of the game. There's closure in that handshake and it's over. Over until the next time.
Elroy - Interview.

Universally, players acknowledged the fairness of fighting as being guided by particular behaviour, akin to rules of engagement. Both players must agree to a fight, a player signals his intention to fight by putting down his stick and the physical act of dropping his gloves. As a matter of respect, a player should remove their helmet (in order to protect their opponent's knuckles from unnecessary injury) and the play often will move to centre ice, in order to capture the gaze of the audience. Similar guidance is used in duels, a fight or test being accepted, but there being rules that

keep this as a fair event for both participants. This is in stark contrast to the majority of other examples of non-sporting public violence in public, which take place from one vantage point or another.

In addition to these rules at the commencement of a fight there are other rules that dictate when a fight ends. In the EIHL, the referee and linesmen will watch a fight and will only step in to break the fight up when they perceive that one of the players has had enough. It is widely accepted that when a player falls to the ground, the fight must stop, or when one player is no longer a willing combatant that the fight must conclude. Again, unlike other fights, communication is kept open between the players themselves and between them and the officials; players often policing themselves and stopping when a fight is no longer fair.

As explained by one of the EIHL referees:

> *People don't realise that players are talking to each other throughout the fight, they're saying 'have you had enough?' 'want to stop?', they're even communicating with us and telling us when to step in. You can tell when their heart is no longer in a fight and step in so that they save face; it's a matter of communication between them and us.*
> Woody - Interview

The concept of fighting fair and sharing a gentleman's honour is pervasive at all stages of the violent infraction. Keen to establish whether this was a local phenomenon particular to the EIHL, I spoke to players about their experiences elsewhere. Players that had played in Europe, at a lower level in the UK and in North America all responded that the code of the fight was universal in that, you listened to the referee and the other player and you respected the fact that a fight was over when you were told it was.

> *It's just one of those universal things, the refs know why we fight, they hear it all and we talk to them while we are fighting so they know when to step in when someone is tired or has had enough. It's the way hockey is. We are not savages, we respect when the other guy has had enough.*
> Snoop – Interview.

Snoop's desire to be seen not as 'savages', but as fair players, is something that recurs in many of the players' accounts. Throughout the hockey community - whether through media interviews, my ethnographic observation, interviews, or in hockey films; players are keen to neutralise their violent behaviour by situating it within the legitimised framework of the culture of the sport. This is a subject that I will address further in the following chapter, as despite many reiterations of these neutralisations, there were times when players' behaviour demonstrated something beyond this.

The issue of fairness is one that is demonstrated in the rules of engagement - where the players agree to fight, drop their gloves ceremoniously, move to centre ice, and remove their helmets. Many are intrigued by the removal of helmets that are meant to protect your head when it is one of the times when they might be most needed, but players were keen to point out that it is a matter of respect among the players to remove their helmets to avoid injuring the opponent's hands. During one game when Bandit was in a fight with a member of the Cruisers, he removed his helmet, but this was not copied by the Cruiser. Players from the Bears' bench were outraged and shouted to him to remove his helmet *'like a man',* to '*stop being a pussy'* and shouted *'your wife's vagina takes a pounding tougher than your head'*. As Wade said on the end of the bench *"There's no justice in that, no fairness, that's not the code man, you gotta respect Bandit man, not keep your helmet on like a pathetic little girl."*

Thus, in addition to being a gentleman's code in terms of fairness, it is a masculine code in terms of the way it is shrouded in respect. Repeatedly, as has been discussed in Chapter Three, respect is demonstrated as being something quintessentially heterosexual and male. Continued slights at a player's masculinity, sexuality or physical competence are linked to the idea of an effective male player. In this case a perfect male sportsman is one who is strong, brave, physically dominant, demonstrates respect to an opponent, and is demonstrably heterosexual. This was as apparent in ice hockey as it was to Hughes and Coakley (1991) in other sports, Klein (1989) in his study on bodybuilders and Muir and Seitz (2004) on collegiate rugby players.

Beyond the concept of fighting fair and its relevance to the rules of engagement, there are many more aspects of 'the code' highlighted in media accounts, such as Bernstein's book of the same name (2006). These, along with references to the code that I have uncovered in my research fall into two separate themes: those that involve the positive *function* of physicality; and those which correspond to the *financial* success of the sport. These themes will form the basis for the remainder of this chapter. The clarity by which these two meta-codes emerged was through analysis of the ethnographic fieldnotes, the in-depth interviews and the life history interviews, in conjunction with previous research conducted with a wide range of stakeholders in the game (Silverwood 2009, 2010). These themes form part of the ways in which players justify their violent behaviour; how they feel it differs from other forms of violence away from the rink; and how this violence is reinforced in the culture of the sport.

Part Two: The Function of Violence

This section discusses some of the ways in which players both explain the purpose of the fist fight and violence in general in terms of function, and also the ways in which this was demonstrated during my observation. As discussed in Chapter Two, violent play is very much couched in excuses or neutralisations and player accounts discuss the excuse/neutralisation of necessity as the first and foremost reason for violence in the game generally and in fist fighting specifically. As Richard Gruneau (1975:145) states, sport can often be viewed as functional when on examination it is rather dysfunctional. This section aims to present and examine some of the ways in which players explain violence in the game in terms of serving a purpose or a function, but also ways in which that ideal collapses on examination.

Pressure valve

The concept of fighting in hockey being a necessary 'pressure valve' in releasing some of the inherent tensions of a game played at high speed in an enclosed space is pervasive in the sport and is covered by two of Bernstein's descriptions of The Code:

- to deter illegal physical play such as stick infractions;
- to protect skill players from physical play;

This is a recurrent phrase in media discussions and holds that fighting paradoxically reduces the amount of violence in the form of illegal stick infractions and violent body checks - by allowing pent up aggression to be released (Bernstein, 2006; Collins 2008; Jones & Fleming 2010; Podniecks, 2006; Vaz, 1977,1979; Whannel, 2000). During my observation, there were certainly several times where a palpable sense of aggression was felt before a fight, but whether the fight caused that to

dissipate or whether other means could resolve it, is a matter for discussion in each of my interviews. As this discussion with Roscoe demonstrates:

Roscoe: *You gotta see it like, you get mad right? You get the rage and you want something to pay. You're stuck in the glass, going 30 mph on knives on your feet and a frickin stick weapon in your hands and you're fighting the other team to win, having a fight in that situation kinda releases the pressure that's building up – we can all kinda relax after a fight.*

V: *So, do you think there would be more illegal checks and hits if you couldn't get rid of that tension by having a fight?*

Roscoe: *Well, that's what they say, you know, that it prevents shit like that.*

V: *Who is the 'they' that says that?*

Roscoe: *They - Them - I mean the stories that you hear coming up through hockey, game commentators, papers, films and stuff. They say it reduces other stuff.*

V: *In your experience does it reduce other violent acts then?*

Roscoe: *Well, I just always assumed it did because they tell you that, but it sorta does, like, getting the first fight out of the game sometimes lets you relax a little and think, ok let's get on with actually like playing hockey and shit.*

This justification firmly falls into the idea that fist fights are cathartic for those playing in the game. It considers this violence as the natural eruption of aggression of having 12 men in a small space, skating at high speeds with sticks and skates in a competitive manner. By tacitly allowing an outlet to that aggression in the form of a fair fight, you reduce the other forms of perhaps more injurious violence such as hitting with sticks, or checking from behind. This holds the idea that it is perhaps not

possible to play the game without some form of aggression surfacing and therefore that this aggression needs an avenue to erupt. Fist fights in particular are seen as being cathartic in dealing with the ever-present tensions of the game.

Interestingly, though, this is also tied into governance and it would be interesting to conduct research on whether there are in fact more injuries from other forms of violence in teams where no fighting is allowed. For example, in junior hockey, women's hockey and in many of the European leagues, fighting is punished by a several game suspension and therefore occurs far less. Are there more dangerous violent acts in those teams? Or have they found other ways in which to relieve the pressure without the formal fist-fight? While this is not the specific investigation of this thesis, it was a question I put to players who had experience of professional hockey in other countries.

Snoop, who has played in several leagues in Europe as well as in North America before playing for the Bears says that there is a link:

> *You gotta have the option to fight it out like men really, sure I like the speed and skill of hockey in Europe more, I mean it sure suits my playing style, but because there is no threat of violence, only of penalty if you catch someone badly with your blade or something, they get a bit chopsy out there* [Europe]. *I mean, the amount of times I've been sliced by a stick blade, like right near the eye, or been butt-ended in the ribs or something, and you can't do anything about it, so you retaliate and spear them back…I'd prefer a fight to be honest – not by me you know* [laughs] *by like by Sherman, Bandit or someone else, but it does, you know, police it all a bit, it's like accountability, it intimidates them to behave.*
> Snoop – interview.

Also, of relevance to Roscoe's conversation on the previous page is the implied acceptance on The Code in the media and fictional accounts of hockey. This idea that the media legitimises and perpetuates the continuance of fighting in hockey will be referred to in greater detail later in this chapter in relation to the financial incentives for fighting. However it is not only the financial function of fighting, but also the perceived cathartic effect of releasing the tensions of the game in a fist fight that is of interest and players certainly acknowledge this effect in similar ways to that discussed by Brent and Kraska, (2013) and Dunning, (2000).

Retribution and Retaliation

This is perhaps one of the loosest functional terms in The Code and leads further into the discussion of masculinity and power. If fighting is a reactionary response to an event then how can it be actively functional? With games lasting 60 minutes and seasons several months, the threat of retaliation or retribution can be a powerful deterrent. It is necessary to deconstruct this idea of retribution and retaliation as being functional in the first instance, when they constitute a future-oriented goal for a past digression. I observed many counts of what appeared to me to be retaliation or retribution during the observation and this was regularly confirmed as motive by the players themselves. However, it was rarely as simple and clear cut as one retaliation equals out one offence and then it is dealt with. Retaliation can lead to rivalry which brings its own problems. The justification that once a situation is dealt with by a retaliatory body check or fist fight then the slate is clear is logically fallacious. In practice, each act of retribution draws an act of retaliation and the circle continues. While it may seem like a nice neat neutralisation for justifying the behaviour (Sykes

and Matza's concept of neutralisation on the basis of the denial of victim, 1957), in practice, it rarely works that way.

For example, one game against the Knights turned into a line-brawl towards the end of the game. Vern had been unnecessarily rough against the Knights' most expensive import and caused a season-ending injury to a team already depleted by injury. The Knights' enforcer had spent a large part of the game chasing Vern around the rink demanding a fight, a matter that had not been dealt with by the referee. Vern is quick and had so far avoided an altercation and refused to fight, but the enforcer was stubborn and eventually, two periods later, chased him down and 'mugged' him from behind. Vern immediately dropped to the ice and 'turtled' (see glossary in appendix 2). Not satisfied with this, the Knight's enforcer continued to throw punches while Vern was down on the ice (an act considered to be in breach of the code and the concept of fighting fair) which was retaliated with a line-brawl, several players trying to pull the enforcer off Vern and force him to fight another fighter, with Sherman and Jefferson both ready to face up to this challenge. While this was couched in many players accounts as being an entirely functional event and a demonstration of The Code; players seemed unaware that actually other codes were being repeatedly broken and that each break of the code demanded the code to settle it. This resulted in a game of extreme violence and extensive bans for the players involved.

> *It's a fucked up thing really but it makes perfect sense at the time. Yeah Vern completely deserved to answer for breaking the code in that bad check during the first* [period], *but he's not a fighter and I'm not going to stand around and watch him getting punched while down on the ice. So, as it turns out I'm retaliating to his retaliation of an offence I had nothing to do with….it sounds strange when I put it like that…but this is what we all know, it's what we*

> *agree to and there is always a price to pay for something.....I can't even remember when it ended, when we stopped retaliating game after game…did we make up? I don't remember* [laughs].
> Sherman – interview

Game officials and referees are aware of the informal policing of the game through retribution and retaliation and would often overlook an offence, allowing players to sort things out for themselves. As one referee explained to me:

> *You can't be calling everything, even with ZT* [zero tolerance rules] *because it would slow down the game - there wouldn't be any flow to the game. So you have to kind of let them sort it out between them, if I call one thing, I got to call it all, so if I know I let something go on one team in the first [period] then I've got the give the other team a chance to retaliate that without calling that too.*
> Casey – interview.

It is interesting that Casey here is keen to avoid delaying the game too much by calling every penalty, which is a tacit acknowledgement of the spectators who wish to be entertained by a game, rather than experience several delays. This is pertinent to an acknowledgement of the spectators in the way that the game is played and this discussion will follow in the upcoming discussion of the finance of hockey violence.

While standing on the bench, I often heard exchanges between the referees and the players. In one game between the Bears and the Blades, Elroy was slashed on the hand by one of the Blades in the corner and came off the ice to remove his glove and examine the bruise. Coach Chester was shouting down the ice for the ref and when Casey came to talk to him about whey he hadn't called the penalty, he said "*Listen Chester, you know the score, he* [gestures at Jefferson] *went in too hard from behind last shift, I didn't call it, so they retaliated – they even each other out*". They all agreed that it was fair enough and the game continued without incident. Thus by

allowing the players to deal with relatively minor offences themselves, the game continued and 'policed' itself without the need for lengthy penalties. Of course, the usual reality of this is that each team will at some point feel that they have been unfairly treated by the referee, and certainly the fans will always be most vocal about this. However, there is some level of agreement from the players that the alternative to this, where each infringement is called, is not conducive to a fast-flowing entertaining game.

Intimidation and Sending a Message

There is little that distinguishes these two excuses as they seem to be used interchangeably for different things. On the one hand, it is important for players to demonstrate their strengths in the game - for some teams this will be in scoring prowess, or excellent goaltending; for the Bears it is about physicality. As I mentioned in Chapter Five, the relatively small ice surface of the Bears' rink reduces the skilful passing element of the game. Using your body to check opposition players to grind along the boards and be gritty in the corners is of more importance and it was on this premise that the Bears' team was constructed.

> *We don't want fancy fast guys here, we need at least two gritty rough as fuck players on each line. I can't be doing with pansy players who are too scared of their manicures to get down and dirty in the corners, we need men on this team, we need to make it a frightening place to play in for the opponents, play the physical card, make it a bear pit – that way we can be intimidating.*
> Coach Chester - Interview.

Here, intimidation is something that starts long before the players arrive at the rink, when the coach is deciding tactics for the team and players are recalling other games

in an oppressive environment. During games, the 'game plan' was often to get some early hard body checks in to rough the opposition up a little, to establish the team as one that will not be pushed around and to deter both physical play from the opposition and limit their ability to play skilful passing hockey, what Chester calls '*pretty hockey'* in a derisive tone. It is interesting to note this behaviour as mimetic of war-like tactics and justification; demonstrating strength and force from the outset in an attempt to dictate the pace of the game. While it is an offensive show of behaviour, it is also a defence to a team that know that they cannot let a more skilful team use the best of their abilities and try to make them afraid of the repercussions. It can be likened to the 'emotional dominance' discussed in the work of Collins (2008) and Jackson-Jacobs (2013). Offence and displays of power being a positive and strong way to demonstrate dominance.

During the season, there emerged a line of three forward players, known as the trouble line, who despite, being the second line, were pitted against the first line of the opposition for their ability to intimidate them out of the scoring chances they were more capable of than the Bears team were. Each player was over 6' 2" in height and considered to be 'power' forwards, meaning that they fore-checked hard, used their size to legally hit and check opponents and were an inimitable force. You could see the opposition's fear as they used their often smaller skilled players against that line and the ways in which their gameplay changed when they were faced with the fear of injury from (perfectly legitimate within the rules of the game) checks and hits. This, combined with the size of the rink, the noise of the fans, their proximity to the ice surface, and the deliberately poor conditions of the away locker room made the Bear Pit an uncomfortable place to visit. Demonstrations of emotional dominance here starting early before the opposition even started the game.

Using 'trash talk' as intimidation is something that every hockey player knows well. There is a longstanding joke that every hockey player is bilingual, speaking both English and profanity. The regular conversations around the players are punctuated by swear words and slang, which one has to learn to understand the context (see glossary). The ice is a noisy place; there is constant communication between the players, the officials and the benches. Despite the high volume from fans, you can hear each other clearly on the ice and on the bench. It is usual for the players to call out plays and passes to each other, each using nicknames and code words. In typical masculine jock culture much of this language is homophobic, racist and offensive. It is common to insult the females of the players, the wives, girlfriends, ex-sexual conquests and the mothers as a way of criticising their maleness (as highlighted in Chapter Five). This has much in common with other sporting cultures (Dundes & Stein, 1985; Muir & Seitz, 2004; Schacht, 1997; Pronger, 1999).

Intimidation in the form of violent threats is common; similarly, intimidation in the music used in the rink also sets the tone. This could be considered functional in terms of making the other team intimidated and limiting their chances of being able to play the game they would like to play. However, it is questioned whether much of this 'neutralisation' in terms of function is demonstrated in practice. It can be seen as functional in terms of the way it might improve the home team's chance of winning the game; but it could hardly be classed as functional in terms of being a pressure valve, when it is more likely to incite violent behaviour and intimidation than to diffuse it. This is something that I noticed on many occasions during my season of observation. Despite the players commonly subscribing to The Code, and justifying their behaviour according to its terms, in fact many of these neutralisations are incredibly fragile and used in situations where they are not applicable. The

commencement of The Code, historically, in Canadian hockey teams was more about protecting players and playing fair (Gruneau and Whitson, 1994) and it was unlikely to have been used to justify fan behaviour, noise and entertainment at the rink. However, code terms are used interchangeably, and only fall apart once subject to closer inspection.

V: *So, you said earlier that you can use the code to intimidate other players?*

BillyO: *Yeah sure, it's code to intimidate. Something we all know yeah.*

V: *Why is that? Does it serve as any kind of function, to do anything?*

BillyO: *Well it functions to help us win, kinda, to scare them and stop them playing their game, and helping us win.*

V: *Does it work as a tool to prevent violence on the ice as well?*

BillyO: *Well, yeah, well, kinda, cos if we use a bit of violence at the start, you know, come out hard, finish our hits, scare the shit outta them, then it's going to prevent them from hitting us hard and injuring us.*

V: *So, could it be that you're using violence or the threat of violence in order to prevent violence which might not even happen?*

BillyO: *I hadn't looked at it that way, but yeah... definitely for the skill teams, we are never going to beat them on skills, they're far more offensive than us driving the net, we haven't got a hope, but if we can scare them, get rid of the space they have with the puck out there, we can win a game.*

V: *So, violence, or a threat of violence in order to win a game is acceptable?*

BillyO: *It doesn't sound right when you say it like that, but basically yeah, there are a lot of functions to it and if one of them is winning the*

game, or not losing by a stupid margin, then yeah. I mean we've got our pride.

This exchange demonstrates that the justification of function does not mean the same thing to everyone, which relates to the work of Sykes & Matza (1957) and Klenowski (2012). While some will neutralise violence as intimidation to prevent further violence, others will use intimidation as a justification of causing more violence themselves in order to win the game. As with much research on the justification of deviance, (Becker, 1963; Cohen, 1955; Sykes & Matza, 1957 and Klenowski, 2012), neutralisation is in the eye of the actor alone and often fails to take into account perspectives that may contradict this.

To Draw a Reaction Penalty

Another tactic that can be used to gain an advantage is to manipulate the penalty system to your advantage. As mentioned in Appendix 1, the justice system of the game punishes both individual players and teams with timed penalties in the penalty box. As a general rule, when one player is in the penalty box, their team must play with one less player on the ice; this is called a penalty kill. The aim is to be defensive enough to kill the time on the clock without allowing a goal. The other team is rewarded with a powerplay, meaning they have a man advantage on the ice. It is often these power-plays that decide the outcome of the game and they are used to great tactical advantage. Players often try to manipulate these by performing deviant acts without being noticed by the referee and playing up to the reactionary offence to draw the referee's eye and result in a penalty for the opposition team.

This does not always work out in the way a team would like, as the referees become accustomed to the same players who would claim injury, perform in a dramatic way to a dive or would continually instigate trouble. Among the team there was vocal agreement in the derision of football players for their continual protestations to the referee for being pulled or tripped and pride was taken in being tougher than those who play 'Wendyball'[36]. The physicality of hockey is so vastly different to football that in many games, even the presence of blood on a player would not always necessitate a penalty for the opposition. It was not unusual for the referee to call a concurrent diving penalty along with the tripping penalty that necessitated the dive, because he thought it was too dramatized a dive. To this, the fans would often chant "*give him an Oscar*" in derision at the poorly acted fall of the tripped player. The implication being that the referee can control a game without the histrionics and the idea that violence in hockey is more acceptable than in other sports, so people had to get used to it. Similarly to that mentioned earlier, this too was often couched in comments such as "*it's a man's game*". This behaviour of course parallels that of other hyper-masculine sports such as rugby (Muir & Seitz, 2004), bodybuilders (Klein, 1989) and, somewhat paradoxically, in girl's roller-derby (Cotterill, 2010).

In one game, Chip, well known to referees, players and fans alike as an agitator, spent a great deal of the game 'chirping' the Blades netminder, skating in his crease, 'snowing' (see glossary) his mask and winding him up. When the referee was skating to the other end of the rink, the netminder hit Chip hard with his blocker in between the legs causing Chip to roll around the ice in pain. The referee, upon seeing it was Chip didn't blow his whistle or call a halt to the game (the usual

[36] 'Wendyball' is a term of derision used towards the game of football or soccer, with it viewed as being 'a game for girls played by pansies' (as explained to me by one of the players - Brooks)

practice for a player lying prone on the ice). Even when Bubba the equipment manager walked on to the ice to tend to Chip and the play was halted, no call was made despite Chip shouting and swearing to everyone about what had happened. The game continued with Chip on the bench with a bag of ice over his crotch shouting at the linesman who was in front of the bench watching play. "*Hey, you fucking fag, why didn't you call it? what the fuck, you pussy"*, to which the linesman Stig said "*Oh fuck mate, you're serious? You're hurt? In the nads man? I thought you were hamming it up again for a penalty, sorry mate.*" This demonstrates that the referees are aware of individual players' characteristics and judge the seriousness of an apparent injury in accordance with their opinions on what kind of history that player has in terms of integrity and previous injurious/agitator behaviour. It seems then that players, like offenders by the police, are labelled (see Becker, 1963) by the referees on the basis of their propensity to incite violence, falsely claim injury or intentionally aggravate the opposition. In interview, Chip acknowledged that he was aware of the perception of the referee and felt that he had been "*somewhat fairly if I'm honest*" cast in the role of "*agitator and general whiner*." This label affected the extent to which he was taken seriously when he was an actual victim of injury.

Swinging the momentum of the game

Earlier, when discussing intimidation, I highlighted that the purpose of the rink in intimidating the opposition was central to the game plan of the Bears. This intimidation role was always stressed to fans by the club in the media, spectators were asked to be the 'extra player' on the ice by a 'white-out' (See Chapters Five and

Seven) of the rink, waving 'terrible towels' (glossary) and proving an intimidatory environment for the opposition to play in. The idea of a 'white-out[37]' comes from North American teams during the playoffs. Where they will pick the dominant colour of that team's kit and all aim to wear that colour and wave towels in that colour as a dominant display of support and as an intimidation tool. Other teams have 'Orange-outs' and 'blue-outs' but the Bears chose their colour based on their kit. In these white-outs, the lights, lasers, boards, seats, t-shirts and towels of the fans are all a block of colour in order to show support. As Coach Ward says:

> *People don't realise how much of a mental game hockey is. You can play a load of mind-games on the players that they are the dominant force – an army almost, that they are a force to be reckoned with and that the opposition are outnumbered, out supported and inferior and that can win you a game even if the other team is far better. It's all in the mind; intimidation is as much a tactic as offence is.*
> Ward – Interview.

The role of fighting in swinging the momentum and in crowd involvement will be discussed in greater details in relation to finance in section 3 of this chapter. However, swinging the momentum is as much getting the fans behind you as it is getting the team working together and in believing in themselves. Having up to 5,000 voices, hands and feet behind you can bring about a great change in atmosphere when you feel that they are responding to you. This demonstrates that not only are fights important for getting fans through the door and coming back again, but also in terms of the benefit of vocal supporters to the success of a team.

[37] Actual colour has been changed to maintain anonymity for the team.

Of course, this works more for you if you are playing in your own rink, but equally when you are away you can convince yourself that the more boos you are receiving on the ice, the more chirps, the better a job you are doing.

> *Weirdly, I actually prefer winning a fight away from home, you don't get the cheers that you do here, but you get the satisfaction of putting their big guy down on the ice and ruining their momentum. Of course, I get caned for it from the management, I remember a couple of seasons ago the owner gave me a right caning for it, telling me I should save all the fights up for the home fans.*
> Bandit – Interview

A similar account came out of my interview with Sherman:

V: *How do you feel about the negative attention you get from fans in other arenas, does that put you off a physical game at all?*

Sherman: [laughs] *Hell no,* [puffs up chest and laughs again] *they're rewarding me in their own way too. Like, if the enemy's fans hate you, they hate you for a reason right? You're doing your job right if they hate you, you get me? I get hate mail online from them and they always take the piss outa my hair or my style, but my job is to be good enough with my fists and with my body that they hate me. It just makes me smile when they play music at me or boo. I'm all 'bring it on!'*

The acting out that occurred in this interview with Sherman puffing up his chest and to perform a masculinity role, albeit in a humorous manner, is perhaps indicative of the way in which Sherman performs masculinity on the ice. To him, this performing of a character that is not concerned by negative attention and instead is energised in that it demonstrates that he is working correctly, could be taken as being a reward, one that reinforces his demonstration of hyper masculinity and power on the ice. This

has much in common with the role of comic-book villain or hero discussed by Klein (1989). Sherman, who cannot be rewarded for goals scored, or goals prevented takes his rewards from the reinforcement of his identity as a dominant male, cemented even further by the opposition and their supporters acknowledging that status.

A flip side of the role in swinging the momentum is the idea that players will break the respect element of the code in order to entice the opposition to fight, which could lead in a change to the swing of momentum in favour of the team that broke the code in the first instance. The role of the 'agitator' (someone who intentionally bends or breaks the rules, who chirps and gets a bit 'stick-happy' in winding up the opposition) is acknowledged by the players and the culture, despite it not falling under any of the justifications provided by the code. For example.

> *Being on a line with Sherman gets me a lot of freedom, sometimes he will tell me to "go out there and start something, we need to do something to get this game going", a bit of spearing, or hitting heavier than normal and he'd have my back. He made me feel like the toughest guy in the world…but I wasn't because I knew he was behind me to answer for my behaviour.*
> Donny – Interview.

However, these juxtapositions and contradictions of the use of the code, do not appear to occur to players, who continue to state the function of the code in reducing violence. Despite clear evidence that they frame the code in a way that will suit their team, allowing themselves to break the code if it leads to a positive result for their team, while simultaneously berating another team for breaking the code for similar behaviour, they still maintain the functionality of the code in reducing violence. The code, or the use of the code in neutralising deviant acts, is thus somewhat paradoxical, or, rather, it is ultimately used as an excuse, motive or justification for deviant acts, as discussed earlier in relation to the works of Sykes and Matza (1957).

Harm reduction and crime prevention. Intimidation, Protection and the role of The Enforcer

Much of the discourse surrounding fighting, as mentioned above, is the idea that fighting prevents other harmful behaviour, and although I have detailed above weaknesses in that in terms of harm also being construed as losing a game, there is clear evidence that there is an overall acceptance of the role of the enforcer in the game. The enforcer is a known term in North American hockey, the idea that you have an intimidating, forceful player, who 'polices' the game, but polices it on behalf of one team only. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the enforcer is a recognised role in hockey, these players may not be as skilled in terms of hockey play as their teammates, but their size, strength and demeanour make them an intimidating presence on the ice. Such players will normally know their role on the ice, knowingly recruited for this purpose and aware of their responsibilities. Penalty minute statistics and fight statistics are almost as important as other points in recruiting someone to play a physical role on the team, as confirmed by Coach Chester in interview. These players are often showmen or 'peacocks[38]' for the team. Their appearance is often deliberately attention seeking; even if it were not for their 200lb, 6' 5" frames, they often draw attention to themselves by way of a particular hairstyle, like a blue Mohican to match the jersey colour, or visible tattoos. These players are often scarred from previous fights, often showing bruises and stitch marks from previous altercations, often play without their false teeth and they are a domineering force to the opposition. As Bandit explained to me about his heavily

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[38] See Chapter Five for a clarification of the use of the term 'peacock' here.

scarred face, "*hockey's a man's game and chicks dig scars*". Enforcers are also the character players, which shall be discussed in further detail in chapter Seven.

As Chapter Five introduced, enforcers often outwardly relish the role of 'policing' the game. Many of them adopt names such as "Policeman", "Sheriff", "Judge", "Weapon X," or "Terminator" as some form of dominant identity. However, it is known throughout the sport that often the toughest players on the ice are the nicest and most amusing players away from the rink. They often see their persona and their role as being something that they adopt for the game.

> *I put on my policeman role like I put on my uniform when I kit up. I psyche myself up for it like that, 'right gotta go to work here Bandit, gotta get a job done, show no weakness, show no mercy' and then I take it all off again when I finish the game.*
> Bandit - Interview

The effectiveness of the Bears' intimidation can be seen in the interview account of Brooks, who was new to the Bears this season having previously played elsewhere in the EIHL.

> *You know, part of my decision to come to the team was to have Sherm and Bandit on my team for a change. Having played against them on a team where we had no fighters - it was fucking frightening thinking about having to face them. I came here because I knew the coach had signed a tough team and that I would have some protection from things. Barton is intimidating before you even get here, you have a long journey up on the coach thinking about how you were going to get bullied on the ice, then you get beaten black and blue on the ice before heading back on a long coach journey - icing your injuries all night. There was no fun to be had here and I used to hate it. Nobody likes to admit that they are scared but I was, a few of us*

were…petrified, every time we came here. When you play here with a few tough guys on the team you get extra space to play, to move about because they intimidate the other team.
Brooks – interview.

The idea of intimidation in the EIHL was taken to extremes by the signing by another team of a largely non-playing 'player', an enforcer who could not take a regular shift on the ice and did not have the skill required to make the league, but who was a dominant physical presence on the bench and would join the ice to fight if called upon. This tactic was commonly used in the NHL some 20-30 years ago, and is termed 'Old Skool Hockey'. Few leagues now retain this kind of role, the exception perhaps being the LNAH in Canada, and these 'goons', as they are called, are not treated with the same respect as physically dominant players who can also play a part in the game; As Buck stated:

He [Knuckles] *is like a rabid dog at the end of the leash; if you behave badly out there he's going to get let off the leash and let loose on you. He'll go nuts because he's an idiot, he is crazy and he is not even a real human being* [laughs], *he is a crazy dog, a proper 'roid head. He doesn't even need a switch; he snapped that switch a long fucking time ago.*
Buck – conversation.

The intimidation factor of having a heavyweight fighter on the opposing team was obviously a matter of concern for some of the players, who despite repeating how little they respected him because he did not play hockey and was just a 'goon' many players admitted to being intimidated playing the sport knowing that he was watching them.

The role of enforcer has been acknowledged and to a certain extent accepted by officials. As Woody explained in interview; stressing the importance of the players sorting out altercations between them without unnecessary involvement of officials. During one game against the Blades, I heard Woody approach two players who were 'roughing' and said *"You guys gonna just handbag* (see glossary) *or are you gonna go? Gonna sort it out? I'll call five each if you both go right now, now's your chance.*" Here, Woody was acknowledging that the game might need a fight to resolve conflict and that he would punish both players minimally with a concurrent penalty, rather than calling one of the players on an instigator penalty and harming their team more. Both players then dropped their gloves and started a fight, which the officials stood back and watched. At the end of the fight both players skated to their penalty box and sat for five minutes of the game. This demonstrates an interaction between the players and officials and a degree of communication regarding the purpose and outcome of the fight and acknowledges the functional or instrumental purpose of the fist fight, permitted not only by players but by officials too.

In interviews, the visual examples I used to elicit responses of particular incidences of behaviour were incredibly useful in drawing out from players exactly why certain behaviours occurred at particular times. In one excerpt, a player from Team A[39] 'ran' a goalie from the opposing Team B while scoring a goal. The goalie was injured but there was no call on the play from the referee. At the following centre-ice face-off, the enforcer from the Team B faced off against Team A's goal scorer. The enforcer from Team A told the skill player to move away and took his place at

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[39] I use the terms Team A and Team B here in order to maintain the anonymity of those involved.

the faceoff. The two enforcers agreed to drop the gloves and fought for a period of time before skating to the penalty boxes. Players were keen to explain this behaviour.

> *That skill player is never going to have a fight so A's enforcer knows it's his role to step across and take the fight. Yeah neither of them were involved in the original incidents but that's how it is, it's the enforcers role to step in and fight another fighter, it's retaliation.*
> Earl – Visual Interview.

> *The swapping of faceoffs is common and the ref knows what is going on straight away, he drops the puck so that the fight starts and he turns round to watch it look. You see there – him turning? They hear the talk you know, so they know what to expect.*
> Cody – Visual Interview.

> *It's respect, retribution, sending a message, protecting a team mate and a whole load of the code all mixed up there you know.*
> Jonesy – Visual Interview.

This highlights the pervasiveness of justifications and neutralisations of the code in that so many of the players detailed the same cultural explanations of why behaviour has been carried out and has much in common with the subcultural work on gangs and groups (Cohen, 1955; Collins, 2008; Jackson-Jacobs, 2013) as detailed in Chapter Two.

The role of the enforcer in protecting the skill players is uppermost in discussions with players; there are unwritten rules about skill players not needing to fight and also of goal-scoring players being protected from physicality. Much of the

discussion around this falls under the umbrella term of finance and will be discussed in greater detail in section three of this chapter.

> *There is an unwritten rule that you don't run the goalie, or mess with the top players and that, it's about respect, it's about sport, and fairness. I don't think it's in the proper rule book like, but it's one of those things you know you're not supposed to do, same as hitting from behind, you take advantage of something and you know you're gonna pay for it later in the game like. For that game the guy is numbered, guys will run around trash-talking him all game, saying they're gonna kill him. It's not a rule but it is a rule if that makes sense. It's a lack of respect; we are protecting the respect and integrity of the game.*
> Wade – Interview.

Much of the role therefore of the enforcer is protection, protection by intimidation and protection by retaliation, the excuses offered by the code are invariably linked in defence and in offence and can be complicated to untangle. Terms are often used interchangeably and as is the cases with justifications and excuses, they are used in a way to make the person speaking or acting reflect the most appropriate manner, in the best light. Players are keen to fall back on the justifications provided by the code and take reassurance that their behaviour has limit and has explanation. It is a matter that unites both the team and those surrounding the sport.

Cultural Solidarity and Hegemonic Masculinity

The utility of the code in maintaining cultural solidarity is apparent throughout player accounts and shares similarities to that discussed by Kiesling (2005) and Collinson (1988). There is a perceived purpose in breaking the laws of the game, or in deviating from the norms, in that the goal is always to win the game by whatever

means necessary. Players utilise agreed-upon unwritten cultural terms of justification of these acts which can be seen as neutralisations, such as those defined by Sykes & Matza (1957) and Klenowski (2012). It is important to reiterate that the excuse of functionality or utility, as has been illustrated, is limited and partly falls down on deep analysis. However, it is utmost in the neutralisations of hockey violence, tying in with the defence of necessity and the defence of function of Sykes and Matza's (1957) theory of neutralisation.

In addition to the function of the code in terms of winning the game and in maintaining the solidarity of the culture, there is also a clear role of the code in prioritising the demonstration of hegemonic masculinity. The concepts of respect, protection, enforcement, retribution and intimidation are key concepts here which the players frame in terms of their usefulness in playing an effective game. These terms are shrouded in masculine notions and highest respect goes not only to those who are most successful in scoring or preventing goals, but also, perhaps further, to those who willingly take on a dominant masculine protective role for the team. The deification of the enforcer, as described in Chapter Five places this role as a dominant respected position on the team and links it strongly to notions of masculinity and success. This form of masculinity is considered to be atavistic (Klein 1989, Gruneau and Whitson 1993) and, as demonstrated in Chapter Three, is often demonstrated not only in other sporting contests, but also in male-dominated physical professions, such as the military, policing (Chan, 1997; Reiner, 2000) and security work (Hobbs *et al* 2003).

This chapter opened with a section of fieldnotes from one game, which could have depicted any number of games in the league during the season of observation. Much of the code of hockey culture, not only in terms of violence, but also in terms of

masculinity, occupational subculture and sporting behaviour as illustrated in the opening fieldnotes, has been expanded upon in this chapter. It is clear that players couch their justifications of particular behaviour as being functional or necessary for the game. There remains another aspect which can be considered functional, which has requires further development, that of the function of the sport, and of violent play in particular, in attracting a paying audience and it is to this that we now turn our attention.

Part Three: The Finance of Hockey Violence

"Players are competitive, we sell hate. Our game sells hate."
Colin Campbell. Ex-NHL Chief Disciplinarian

Finance is integral to the culture of professional hockey as it serves as an institution of employment and as a business for the owners. Further, even junior hockey is seen as a business in that the best players will provide a more successful team and be more likely to be successful in their own careers in the future. In North America particularly hockey is big business and is worth billions to the economy, with some individual team's revenue topping $1 billion (Ozanian, 2012). In the UK, hockey ownership is seen by spectators and players as more as a plaything for those with the money to put into it, rather than as a sustainable business on its own. However, integral to the continued success of the sport and the entertainment of the supporters ensuring their continued attendance is the violent aspect of the game, what Lloyd refers to as "the USP of hockey" (Lloyd, A 2009. In Silverwood, 2010).

Professional hockey is an economic institution with a labour market of its own (Ingham 1975:337) in which there are those who control the allocation of resources

(team owners and management) and those who sell their services for financial gain (players). There is an integral commodification process here between the blue-collar labouring proletariat class, who only have their labour to bargain with, and the ruling class of bourgeoisie entrepreneurial owners (McPherson *et al,* 1999:263); thus an element of social differentiation and inequality is inherent within the sporting culture. With a financial relationship integral to the maintenance of the professional game, there is a corresponding financial element to both the culture and the playing of the game. Performance is integral to the employability of players and this performance is framed in certain ways, firstly in terms of winning the game, by scoring goals or defending well, but it is also framed in terms of the entertainment provided to the supporters of the team. This entertainment can be seen in two ways: in terms of winning the game; and in relation to the entertainment and enjoyment of spectators who pay the gate money. Keeping supporters happy is an essential element of a marginal sport in order to attract paying fans and a major element of this is the unique physical element of the game. Previous research has focussed on the importance of the physical nature of the sport and the fist fight to attract supporters as displayed in the MSc theses that form a pilot for this research, outlined in Chapter One, as well as in terms of much of the quantitative research conducted in North America's NHL (Jones *et al,* 1993; Levin, 2006).

Fighting for the purpose of attracting and retaining an audience remains in the EIHL, where hockey is a marginal sport, as there is the fear that outlawing physical contact generally and fighting specifically, will lead to the demise of the product as a financially stable entity. This has been criticised by those within the field, such as Murray Costello, vice-president of the International Ice Hockey Federation:

> In my view, every time one of those ridiculous side-shows happens, it's a forthright statement from the NHL [board of] Governors to the public-at-large that says "We simply have no confidence in our core product. We don't believe it's good enough to attract customers, so we must embellish it with the ridiculous sideshows just to attract interest from people.
>
> (Cited in Proteau 2011:182).

In interview, I probed players to discover in what ways they differentiate between what they call '*functional violence'* and that which could be considered to be '*financial violence'*. All the Bears were united and vocal in their distaste for planned fights, particularly those involving a player in the league who could not play a regular shift or contribute to the game in any way other than through fighting, who I have given the pseudonym 'knuckles':

> *It's fucking ridiculous, you get 'Sideshow Bob'* [knuckles] *over there flexing his muscles to the crowd in the warm up and building his entire career on the fact he's juiced up. There is no need for those kinda fights; it's fucking embarrassing to be associated with that.*
> Interview – Elroy.

The only slight difference was from the coaching staff who occasionally still played, who were more aware of the importance of the sideshow in attracting fans:

> *Even [*knuckles*] has a purpose really, he doesn't make us scared because the fight is never for any reason other than to get the fans happy, but you can't deny that people come to games against* [Thunder] *just to see him put on a show and get his fists out.*
> Interview - Ward

As previously mentioned ice hockey is a marginal sport in the UK and attracts a share of fans due to the physical nature of the game. It has been suggested that only

two teams in the league actually make any profit from their business, although players dispute even that being possible. With only 7-8 months of the year able to bring in an income for the teams, most teams struggle with cash flow, particularly in a market recession. With money being important, clubs themselves are also competitive, seeking out the advantage of scheduling games on their busy nights and limiting the lengthy road trips in order to maximise cash flow. Sponsors and advertisers are important and are aware of their essentiality to the maintenance of the game. This can lead to some of them (particularly the ones who are also hard-core fans of the game) having a high level of self-importance and dictating conditions such as fight or goal bonuses for the team. When there is a financial benefit to the physical side of hockey there will often follow an explicit encouragement by owners or sponsors of the physicality, whether or not the players believe it to be absolutely functional to the result of the game. This creates an unequal relationship, with the players being unable to choose where or how to engage in physical play, but rather being directed or encouraged to undertake violent acts in order to make more money for the club.

During my observation I saw numerous examples of players feeling that they had no choice but to engage in a fist fight despite feeling that the game did not need this, because they were ordered to do so by the coach or management. This has much in common with notions of sham violence in the work of Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004), Barthes (1972) and Geertz (2005) as discussed in Chapter Three. That is not to say that there aren't other occasions when a player will fight for an unnecessary reason, such as needing to prove their masculinity, or due to their emotions and these will be detailed in the following chapter. For this chapter, in terms of finance, what

is important is the power, or perceived lack of power that the players have over their level of physicality.

At the most basic level, players are a commodity for the club. Their terms of employment are dictated in favour of club owners and players are aware of the need to keep club owners, and therefore fans happy. This may well have as much a part to play in the identity as character fighters, with the corresponding nicknames, lines of merchandise and appearance, as it does for the purpose of intimidation.

Similarly, it is the league which instructs the referees on how to call the game (Proteau 2011:221), how strict to be and it is the league that pays the referees. In the UK, where it is the team owners who own the league, it is the team owners who dictate how much violence will be acceptable. With the thought in mind that violence draws in a crowd, what incentive is there for the owners to deal with violent incidents in the game with supplemental discipline and to instruct referees to allow for zero tolerance. A critical theorist would question here, how can refereeing be impartial and be called policing when the agency doing the policing is controlled by those who have fighting in their best interests financially?

Finance and Social stratification

As mentioned above, it is impossible to ignore the social stratification of the hockey world. Rather than class being seen in terms of upbringing and education, it can be seen as a form of stratification where those who have the power to dictate culture, violence, behaviour and money are those who pay for the services of the players, the team owners, management and to a certain extent advertisers as well. As Ingham (1975:337) states “athletics has become work and the athletes provide services which

have exchange value." However, the role of performance in professional sport confuses the situation somewhat where rather than simply the owners and management to keep happy, players also need to keep the public happy and the public often "demand a dramatic event" (Ingham, 1975:339). This leaves players with a multi-faceted role to play in terms of keeping many groups satisfied at one time. The result of this is that they need to perform in a particular way, under the spotlight/halogens of many different gazes.

The players are not simply performing in the industry of recreation; professional sports combine recreation with business and entertainment. According to Becker the fact that the athlete is in "direct personal contact with the ultimate consumer of the product of his work, the client for whom he performs the service" (1951:136), situates him in a service occupation. It is this change from an original recreation activity to the professionalisation into a service occupation with integral financial recompense and involvement that requires the player to become "socialized into the occupational subculture of the sport" (Ingham, 1975:338). This role requires him to take upon the culture of the sport that is not simply of his own choosing, but one that is acceptable to himself, fellow players, team owners, management and ultimately the consumers of the sport themselves. In doing so, players lose a great deal of their own control of the culture and become instead, controlled by the pertaining culture, reducing them to a commodity and removing much of their power.

When violent behaviour beyond the legal rules of the sport, is not simply tacitly encouraged, but rather is explicitly requested by a club owner, there is a question as to who should pay the financial penalty for the offence. In whose interest is it that a player is punished by an additional suspension and financial sanction? Often, it is

the players, who feel that they have no choice but to engage in physicality that are disadvantaged by the repercussions of this behaviour. This is an important issue.

> *There are cases when an individual player should be punished because they've taken it way beyond the game, beyond what is acceptable, but for the most part it is the team and the club that encourage the violence so it should never be the player charged with committing that behaviour that should be punished himself. How is that fair? Are you going to fine goalies that let in goals? No? So you shouldn't punish fighters and enforcers for doing the job you asked them to do.*
> Interview – Trenter.

> *Yeah there are fines, there are times when the league is a dick and doesn't look at the full situation, we all know the league is biased right and it's really only [Team[40]] and [Team] who get their say in disciplinary situations. But the fans can be good sometimes, if they know you got a fine they'll be there doing a whip around to pay it off like, so you're not out of pocket. They like the fighting see, they don't want their player fined for it.*
> Interview – Cletus.

The integral nature of finance to the physical role of the game is something that many players are aware of. In fact, there are elements of the Code as demonstrated by Bernstein and others that excuse (or even encourage) fighting in terms of appealing to a crowd that would not be entertained by a simple skill game of the sport such as that popular in Northern Europe.

Players thus feel that it is the fist fight explicitly which is encouraged by the audience and the club who seek to make regular customers of an audience. This responsibility is passed on to the players, in particular the enforcers, who then bear the brunt of the resulting sanctions. This contributed to the powerless feelings that many players

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[40] Names removed to protect anonymity

report feeling. Players are aware that swinging the momentum of the game in a fight (a 'function' code mentioned earlier) is also of utility in terms of entertainment for the fans and therefore serves a financial function for the club and the league as a whole. It is the players themselves who bear the brunt of the physical damage that this causes.

> *You can tell when I'm not in it, when my hands are killing me, look I've got three broke knuckles, right down my hand, I've got arthritis in them, my shoulders are going to need full reconstruction when I retire and my wrist is almost fused. These aren't just hockey injuries, I've got those in my lower body from the skating, these are just fighting injuries. Some of these fights I gladly went into because they were right, others I had to do it, because it's my job as enforcer or because the management told me to. That sucks, there's no pride in those injuries, in those scars and you can see it in the way I fight.*
> Bandit – Interview.

As a player close to retirement, Bandit felt that his heart often was no longer in it as he wasn't any longer seeking to progress in hockey and did not need to fight in order to gain the attention of opposing teams for another season, rather he had his mind on the injuries and the effect that they might have on his future life beyond hockey.

Nevertheless Bandit and others do understand the need for violence in terms of fan attendance. Many will understand the cathartic nature of violence for fans that are unable to get another legitimised outlet for their pent up aggression. A famous ex-NHL enforcer, Chris Nilan explained "*18,000 people want to punch someone in the mouth where they work but they don't get to do it, but they like to see someone else do it"* (The Last Gladiators, film, 2011). The findings from my pilot MSc dissertation on spectators' endorsement of violence (2010) highlighted the levels of desire for blood sports, red mist and for mimetic battles. If one accepts that the

spectators encourage violence in the sport, it is interesting to see how the players themselves frame themselves centrally to this. By encouraging violent identity, talking of local rivalries, of 'calling out' opposition players in the press before a game, players are also involved the continuance of the popularity of fighting in the identity of the game in the UK. Thus, an understanding of the media and of the visual turn in criminology and sociology is integral (Carrabine, 2008, 2012; Ferrell and Van de Voorde, 2010; Rafter, 2007) which is a point that will be referred to later in Chapters Seven and Eight.

The financial cost of injury

Many of the players were keen to talk about injury, not simply in terms of the cost to their team but the ways in which the league or club responded to injury. In the UK, where unlike the NHL, spares of players are not held and each import injury costs a great deal of money, the injured player's team will play short benched when a star player is injured. This may well affect their product on the ice, damaging their championship chances and potentially damaging the club financially. It is this concept that has led to a lot of the justifications in this chapter, for example, the idea that you do not harm a skill player and that you do not touch the goal-tender. The respect for these players is of course tied into respect for their skill, but also respect for the financial state of the club if key players are unable to play through injury. As explained by Wade:

> *It's about respect, the idea that you don't run a goalie, isn't because goalies are weak, it's because if you take a goalie out then the back-up can't win the game for you. That's the purpose of the rule to protect certain roles.*
> Wade – Interview.

During the time of my data collection, concussions, 'head-shots' and rules to prevent these were highlighted in the media by several key events in the NHL in North America. The key player of Pittsburgh Penguins, Sidney Crosby missed a season following a concussion, a point which many players brought up:

> *The head shots are the biggest thing they are coming down on, they're starting to realise that the players are their assets and without players they have no money. Look at Crosby, marquee player of the league [NHL] and he is sat out for more than a season, not good for his team and not good for the league as a whole. It's that kind of thing that has made them realise they need to cut down on injurious violence and they're making rules about stuff like headshots now. Not out of concern for the player, but out of financial concern for the sport. That's the kind of thing that drives rule change, you know changes in policies and things, it shifts your type of thinking.*
> Trigger – Interview.

Players are keenly aware that the game at this level is about finance, while to them, much of the time it is about the sport, at its base level, the issue of money is always involved. There was also an element of realisation that as times changed, the acceptance of The Code as a justification for violence could not remain:

> *You always have to look out for these headshots now, the climate has totally changed in terms of their acceptance now, we can't take it lightly. The teams, the insurance companies, the doctors, everyone is trying to control this and make a change. The players are a commodity and you have to look after them now, in the past it'd always be 'you know he deserved it, his head was down' or 'he moved across centre ice, that's a suicide move' but now it's changing. It's coming from the top down and it does make you look at them differently. It's now the responsibility of the check-er and not the check-ee as it was before. It's all changing and the code has to catch up with that. We can't romanticise it any more, it's got to change.*
> Interview – Jefferson.

As stated in Chapter Three, there were times when the performance of masculinity in the locker room ridiculed the whole concept of head-shots and of concussions as being non-masculine and weak; however, more players were aware that times had changed, and with the awareness of the long-term effects of head injuries, that the sport had to also adapt. Much of this awareness came from the events of the summer of 2011, when three high-profile players in North America committed suicide or died of an accidental overdose of drugs. This was at the same time that research at Boston University on the brains of professional athletes demonstrated that there was long term damage to the brains of athletes who had received concussions while playing the sport. Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) was a hot topic in the news stories and acted as a driver to the NHL, and subsequent global hockey leagues concern over concussion. This has undoubtedly affected my participants and has been the subject of a great deal of discussion.

Further to this is the awareness of the extent of painkiller prescribing in various professional leagues, brought about in particular by the accidental overdose of New York Ranger enforcer Derek Boogaard. Boogaard, who spent his summers running hockey fight training, was a famous enforcer in the NHL but had a strong addiction to Oxycodone (hillbilly heroin) a powerful painkiller. His father is currently suing the NHL and the Rangers institution for their acceptance of painkillers and for their over-reliance on these drugs (Branch, J 2013). As mentioned earlier in the Culture chapter, even in the EIHL, there is a strong reliance on pain-killers among certain players. The idea that hockey is such a vicious sport on the body that only extensive reliance on very strong prescription pain-killers will keep these commodities playing is of great concern.

Advertised Violence

Appendix 5 shows some examples of advertisements for the sport which feature the violent aspect of the game. Discussions of grudge matches, heavyweight bouts and battles were prominent in media discussions and advertising throughout the EIHL. Two of my participants were talking in the locker room about a newspaper article they had seen linked on Facebook in which a player from the Morton Tigers had advertised a fight between them and the Bear's enforcer as being a 'sure thing' in their next game. The potential fight was built up to such an extent that it was expected of the game:

Vern: *You know it has to be from the faceoff in a game like that, called out in the press.*

Cody: *I don't like it but you tolerate it in the game as they are clearly trying to get a crowd in to the rink, a new crowd – "wanna see the two toughest guys in the league deke it out?" kind of thing.*

Vern: *Fights like that are pointless though, it's fucking embarrassing, pantomime, pure sideshow, nothing to it.*

Cody: *It's probably not even him in the quotes though, just the team media guy bigging it up for the papers.*

Vern *Went to a fight and a hockey game broke out' kind of crowd, but you know, it might work for one game but unless they do it all the time then it's going to fail, they won't come back all the time if there's no fights.*

The concept of 'calling out' is an interesting one, copied from press calls of boxing matches, but is it a plan to sell more tickets and sell more papers, or is it a demonstration of masculinity, declaring that they feel tougher than their potential

opponent? From discussions with the players it is very much an acceptance of the financial element of the role and very rarely about rivalries between the players themselves. As mentioned earlier, enforcers will often socialise with their sparring partner off the ice and are often seen buying drinks for one another at the rink bar immediately after a big fight while one is sporting the black eye and split lip caused by the other. Bandit talked to me about this *"Well, you know us hating each other is all a farce, it's all a con to get the fans excited about it, yeah I might hate him while he's beating me up, but he's my buddy and we respect what each other have to do."* This certainly demonstrates an acceptance of the role of fighting in bringing a crowd and the idea that it is important for fans to believe that the fight is real and that the rivalry is there.

Many players referred to a player from the Pythons who took pride in his role as bad-guy, who did a lot of work with the media in advertising the games and was generally a large character within the sport.

> *…he brought in a lot of money to that team, doubled the attendance sometimes you know, that's why you're never going to get rid of that part of the game in the UK because it's so closely tied to game attendance and that. Players all hated him but he got the fans in and he got them excited. We wouldn't get the fans here without stuff like that, we need the excitement factor, the sport isn't enough.*
> Wade – Interview.

However, some players are more critical about the continuance of these kinds of fights:

> *You'll always hear that as a justification like, that fans like fights, but actually they like the physical nature of the game when it boils over on to the ice and becomes a fight out of something, that's what they like, if they wanted*

a fight for fighting's sake then they'd just go to UFC or cage fighting or whatever, I like to think we've seen the end of those out and out goon fights over nothing at all. For a player too, it does nothing, watching a kind of staged fight for no reason at all other than ego or advertising does nothing for me as a player, it doesn't excite me, doesn't change momentum. Knocking a guy out is there for the media and to get the fans, none of us on the ice want to see that, it's a selling point but I think fans are a bit bored of that now and want to see something else. I'm all for fighting but it has to come from actions on the ice, it has to have a reason, not just to line the pockets of the team owners. I'm not a fighter like, but if I got a concussion in order to make my owner some cash and bring in the fans that's pointless like, if I got one for defending my team mate from someone else, for standing up for something I believe in, well that's what would be worthy of it, it's a matter of respect.

Interview – Donny.

Returning to the issue of respect, it is clear from Donny's account that he differentiates between acceptable use of fights as a function to protect the team or respect the game and those that occur purely for the financial incentive of entertainment. He differentiates between legitimate causes of injury, it is acceptable, indeed noble, to incur an injury in protecting a teammate in a way that it is not agreeable to sustain an injury from a staged fight. Despite players offering acknowledging themselves as commodities, it is clear that they differentiate between causes of fights, or incidences of violence and are to an extent rational decision makers in undertaking fights. Not all players appeared as decisive and rational as Donny, (one of the more educated and astute team-members), some feeling that they had little control over their likelihood of injury or their decision to fight. There seemed to be a clear division between players who perceived that they had an

alternative to fighting (such as goal-scorers, stay-at-home defencemen) and those who felt that they had no option but to accept that role if they wanted to remain in the game (the more blue-collar physical players). This indicates that the classification or commodification of players compared to team-owners is not as simple as a proletariat- bourgeoisie Marxist distinction.

During my observation there was a great deal of talk about a fight that had occurred between two players in the rink car park after the game. When I asked the player involved why it had not been settled on the ice, he explained that this was a reaction to dirty behaviour during a fight they had on the ice earlier in the game and was agreed between the two players. It was genuine hatred and needed to be off the ice, away from the fans as it was no longer beneficial for the function of the game or the acceptable level for the fans. So, it seems that there is awareness from the players as to how much violence and what kind of fights should be viewed by a family audience. This is a problem inherent in the sport, in that while advertising to a new kind of follower enticed by the potential violence, the sport still continues to market itself as a family sport and has a large number of young families who attend every week (see Silverwood 2010, for further discussion of this).

Self promotion – The Enforcers

There is a paradox here, particularly with regards to Bandit's account earlier this chapter about not wanting to fight and the contrasting image presented to the fans and media where their enjoyment in the role is framed and highlighted (Whannel, 2000). Players simultaneously talk about the importance of violence to the game, thus ensuring their employability, whilst also explaining that fist fights are a mere

function of the game in reducing other injurious behaviour. This paradox is not something that stands up well to examination as we have seen. Many sociological and criminological theories could account for this difference. For example, if, for enforcers, fighting is their gateway to a career and money that they could not gain by other legitimate means, such as goal-scoring or defending, this could be considered as a form of strain (Merton 1957). Enforcers become innovators, adapting their aspirations to the needs of the culture and finding another avenue (physicality) to gain their status and monetary reward. This does not preclude the issue of power and status, in the sense that we must remember that there are those who stand to gain money by encouraging others to damage their bodies in a physical game. There are many questions that emerge here regarding whether players are aware that they are commodified, whether they feel powerless or whether they feel that they are actively choosing to engage in this behaviour in order to gain status, money or power. While there is not space in this thesis to consider this in great detail, the extent to which players accept that they have sacrificed or sold their bodies to injury, to concussion and future brain injury is of interest and the ways in which it is framed by Donny earlier in this section highlights this concern.

On some level enforcers in particular seem to accept their commodification, going so far as to advertise themselves, build a persona and encourage fans to support them.[41] However, there is a level of opposition to this from other players, who risk injury but do not foster an identity based on that role.

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[41] See earlier references to the persona of enforcers, the peacocking of their presentation, the use of nicknames and the advertising of their role. For example, one player from another team who identified himself as 'The Sheriff' sold sheriff badges at games (both home and away) to fans, encouraging a cult following and maintaining his identity as a commodity.

How does hockey culture react to the role of finance in its continuance?

Hockey players are seen as a commodity from a young age, having very little control over their employment conditions in the higher leagues. The draft system of the NHL impacts upon the minor leagues in North America, where players can be bought, purchased and traded as commodities. They have very little control of their position on a team, their geographical location and their conditions (Holman, 2004). While free-agency allows a little more freedom, with minor leagues and European teams like those in the EIHL even more freedom, players are accustomed to having little control over what is expected of them. Even with the independence of being allowed to choose which team to play for, influence perks and contract deals, players are still aware that they are bound to the conditions required by a team, the owners and ultimately to the fans, whose money pays their wages.

Loyalty is seen as very important with players expected to align their objectives with those of the fans and management instantaneously. Vaz calls this, the organisational charter "a more or less formal statement or rhetoric of its objectives and ideals…the representation of a specific image or impression of the group and what transpires within in" (Vaz 1972:223-224). These operational ideals require the adoption of a specific culture that is hegemonic within the sport (Ingham, 1975:362). The financial goals of the organisation can often counteract with the individual athlete's own, but, combined with the team mentality of an almost military war-like idea of the team as a battalion or army, combine to make the players individual needs (such as location, proximity to friends and family, housing, pay, education, injury prevention) far less important than the needs of the group as a whole. Ingham (1975:365) sees the ways in which players accept slurs, punishments, and playing

through pain as a necessary condition of a team that will pull together and win, as unnecessary hardships that would not be acceptable in other areas of commercial life.

Further, there is evidence to suggest that players view one another as commodities. While I did not notice anything as overt as that stated by Ingham (1975:379) that "athletes relate to each other primarily on those attributes which will further their economic goals"; there were certainly many examples in which players mentioned their team mates in terms of the load they were carrying in the team, whether they were pulling their weight and what the statistics were showing regarding their abilities. Positive reinforcement was given to those who were carrying their own weight or that of others, such as leading goal-scorers, goal-tenders on a winning streak, or those placing their bodies on the line by fighting, or lying down in front of pucks to protect the net. Negative attention meanwhile was paid to players who were unable to play due to injury, or those who were a defensive liability to the team. I observed many incidences of exchanges of temper between players who felt they were overworked and those they perceived to be unhelpful. If a players +/-[42] statistic was not favourable it would be brought up regularly to them by other players, even more so if it was perceived that a player had contributed to an own-goal.

While observing the Bears, the team went through several times of austerity both in terms of finance and in terms of man-power. There seems to be an implicit understanding that finance is precarious in hockey and acceptance of being paid late, of not having the appropriate equipment, of injured players being unable to play, or playing with injury, is something that while grumbled about incessantly in the locker

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[42] +/- is a statistic that is kept by teams and the league. Whenever an even strength or short-handed goal is scored, then a (+) is given to every member on the ice for the scoring team and a (-) is given to each member on the ice for the team scored upon. See glossary.

room and elsewhere, is reluctantly tolerated as a public front. At several points in the season, the Bears had more than a quarter of their import players out to injuries such as concussions, knee surgery or broken bones. Due to the lack of depth (cost cutting initiative) in the bench, other players would have to double or triple shift, spending 40 minutes or so on the ice during a game, this would then exacerbate their own injuries. The following fieldwork notes excerpt describes how the players managed their frustrations in the various public and private spaces of the rink.

Tonight the locker room was a pretty horrible place to be, Brooks, Jonesy and Roscoe are beyond miserable as their injuries are taking a while to heal and they're not able to do anything to stop the guys getting mugged out on the ice. There is a lot of hard feeling in the locker room, players are short sticks and Bubba has even been sent into the other team's dressing room to beg to borrow some stick tape. I'd heard mutterings about the players being paid late again, but could sense that it was a time to be quiet in the locker room and not ask too much about it. It transpired that the team had refused the ice the previous night up at Pirates and it was only when the team owner came in with a load of cash, about a day's pay that was already a week late that they went on the ice. Morale is pretty low with not much conversation occurring in the locker room, heads are down and answers are one worded or grunted.

Out on the ice, you don't see this, out on the ice they are clapping for the fans, trying to score goals, getting involved in the game.

On the bench they are quiet, but supportive of each other,

In the locker room there is silence.

One of the main concerns with commodification and finance in terms of the culture of violence is that once the players ascribe to ownership, they risk losing control of their product and being instructed to adopt a role that is not conducive to that which they wish to present, such as that of the enforcer, agitator or fighter. Sage calls this being "alienated from their own expenditure of energy" (2000:269). This has been demonstrated in Bandit's account earlier in this chapter.

Conclusion

We have seen then that finance is considered to be an acceptable justification of violent conduct in a marginal sport. This part of the chapter has demonstrated that finance is integral to the maintenance of the legitimated fist fight in the sport in two ways. Firstly, in terms of the clubs finance and continuance of the sport itself in the UK; and secondly in terms of the players own financial position and desire to compete in a sport which they may not have the skills to make a full-time profession without their physical prowess in a fighting context.

However, it has also been demonstrated that this research has taken place at a time of great change in the sport, and in power sports, as we become more globally aware of the inherent dangers of repeat head injuries on long term health of competitors. Players have begun to question the balance of being successful in a sport for a short career, and of their health after retirement from the sport.

This chapter has demonstrated that there is an extensive code of behaviour guiding the use of violence and physicality within the sport. This code is dually focussed on framing this violence as being either a function of the game, or as a financial necessity to the continuance of the game at this professional level. However, as has been shown, there is a great deal of difference in how these justifications of the code deal with violence, whether they paradoxically encourage, rather than excuse, violence and whether they stand up to extensive scrutiny.

Bernstein's (2006) journalistic account of hockey players gives a somewhat one-sided view of players but does not seek to critically examine the code or players' accounts. While Bernstein differentiates between different aspects of the code, he fails to take into account the overall structure that underlies these justifications and fails to provide a consideration of the commodification of the players, critiquing the broader sport for violent behaviour, rather than taking player accounts at face value. A unique contribution of this chapter, unlike Bernstein's account is that it separates players' concepts of functionality or instrumentality into two areas, those which speak to the function of violence in reducing other violent incidences and those that highlight the role of finance in the maintenance of violence legitimisation.

Of greater importance still, is the critical stance that is taken in terms of exploring not only what players say, but also what they do and how they do it. To accept the code as it was explained to me by players would be myopic and the focus of the chapter which follows is to continue to uncover, assess and critique the excuses, motives and justifications given by the players, comparing their interview statements to their actual enactment of behaviour and providing a critique to the idea that the code is all-powerful in ruling decision making in hockey.

Chapter Seven

Excitement, Emotion and Edgework

> "The quest for excitement in our leisure activities is complementary to the control and restraint of excitement in out ordinary life…the mimetic sphere provides a specific type of pleasurable excitement…which does not disturb and endanger the relative orderliness of social life...the mimetic sphere offers…refreshment of the soul…it is excitement which we seek voluntarily…it is socially and personally without danger and can have a cathartic effect."
> (Elias & Dunning 1970:66).

> *"How much can you know about yourself if you've never been in a fight?"*
> (Tyler Durden. Fight Club, 1999).

Introduction

Hockey is a game of emotion, beyond the structural and instrumental accounts of violence provided in the previous chapter, there is an unknown about each game of hockey. Which team will win? Which players will be injured? What will the prize be for the victors? To ignore this aspect of the sport is to render the agency of the actors useless. Any game where there is a focus on action will invoke strong reactions and emotions from the players, one that is played in front of an audience and has winning, satisfaction and reward riding on it will involve a range of emotions: passion; aggression; desperation; joy; disappointment; pain and rapture. Hockey is

about excitement, risk, success and about the ultimate goal of winning a game and improving the chances of succeeding in their sport and in their career.

The previous two chapters give an account of the culture and structure of violence in the sport as well as a player account of the instrumental value or function of violence within that culture. This chapter uses the rich ethnographic observations, fieldnotes and conversations with players to uncover another perspective of the reasons behind the violent culture in the sport; the excitement and emotion of the sport, masculinity and power that are involved in the day to day activity of being a hockey player. In particular, the notion of edgework will be discussed in relation to the ways that the players deliberately negotiate the boundaries of acceptable levels of legitimised violence in conducting their behaviour. A specific focus on the enjoyment of the edges of acceptable violence and deviance will be explored. The themes of this chapter emerge from the deep understanding of the practice and culture beyond that reported by the players in interview, a perspective gained from ethnographic observation and exploring broader themes throughout the research. First, an exploration of the concept of excitement, mimetic battle and fun that comes with a game played in a public arena where certain acts are rewarded by fans. Broader than this, however, secondly, are perhaps more negatively-viewed emotions of anger, aggression, frustration and conflict that emerge out of the game, such as those which players use to justify the need for fighting as a pressure valve in the previous chapter. Finally, a consideration is given of some of the rewarding emotions that arise from the sport such as exhilaration, adrenaline and the deification which emerges as a perk of the physical aspect of the game. These three sections combine to provide an account of the foreground (Ferrell, 1997) of violence within the culture.

The focus of this chapter is to consider the following question:

- How do the emotions that are expressed and experienced in hockey culture relate to group and individual players identity and culture?
- Might there be more to hockey violence than the 'functional' account presented by players and discussed in the previous chapter - what other aspects might be involved? Does emotion play a part in the legitimisation or decision-making process of 'The Code'?
- Do players enjoy the emotions that they experience in the game? Do they enjoy playing with the boundaries of acceptability of violence? How do players recognise the boundaries and edges of acceptability and transgression?

A culture of excitement

As an exercise in entertainment, excitement is integral to the satisfaction of the paying audience. For the players themselves, the roller coaster of playing a professional sport where there is ultimately a big prize, but also regular weekly or daily small prizes, means that there is a wealth of emotions that will emerge at every stage. As stated in Chapter Two, much of the literature that explains sport in general and hockey in particular is mimetic of battle or war (Barthes, 1972; Duquin 2000; Elias and Dunning 1986; Gruneau and Whitson 1993) and this will be discussed below. This quest for the excitement of battle, for the significance of war and for ultimate success will involve all those participating in the sport from players to spectators; an excitement that they may ultimately be rewarded for. The 'drug' or 'high' of excitement and success is strong in sport, particularly in recent times, as Elias and Dunning highlight in their quote that commences this chapter.

‘Powder’ Games.

Sport’s competition culminates in a winner and a loser, one team against another, and this creates in it a heightened sense of importance and emotion. Once one adds in to that an audience and their reactions, the excitement is multiplying. This is further enhanced by a sound system, entertainment group and music designed to increase the atmosphere and excitement. Not all games are of equal importance, for example cup games tend to have a heightened sense of importance, as do games against rivals, where the importance of demonstrating power over the opposition by winning is as important as the result itself:

> *You know it’s an exciting game anyway, even when we are playing shinny in practice, we celebrate the good hits, the good goals and laugh at the crap things, but the level of excitement is completely different in the actual game, when it means something and when you know you will achieve success.*
> Trigger – Interview.

> *The most exciting games are the ones that mean something, the ones when the potential prize is biggest. Yeah of course the crowd affects us then, when they ‘white-out’ the rink, when they’re on Facebook getting excited before the game, it gets exciting for us then. You can actually feel it from there.*
> Heath – Interview.

Players often refer to high-tension games as ‘powder games[43]’. They say that you can tell when something is going to erupt; the game is just waiting for that spark to ignite it and for it to boil over. You can feel it when you are a fan in the stands and you can feel it even more so observing from the bench; for the players, that emotion is even more palpable. A ‘powder game’ will often be expected in advance -

[43] Referencing gunpowder, where a small spark can make a big impact.

sometimes this is due to a known rivalry or a previous disagreement between players; sometimes it is due to the high stakes in that particular game, for example, the second leg of a cup final or playoff game, when the winner really does take it all. That is not to say that other games cannot become 'powder games' due to events that happened during the course of the game itself. Examples of this include the referee failing to call offences that players perceive to be outside of the accepted rules of the game, or a referee being perceived to call offences unevenly; or when there has been a noticeable lack of respect from a player of the opposition in terms of a physical or verbal attack on another player or that teams' fans.

The benefit of my daily proximity to the players and familiarity with situations that emerged allowed me to sense, engage with and document the palpable sense of emotion that surrounds these games from the participants' perspectives. One does not need to be an avid fan to be aware that certain sporting events have a great deal riding on them resulting in tensions running high and emotions appearing to be stronger.

One such game occurred for the Bears in the second half of the season when they were due to play the second leg of a cup semi-final at home to the Newton Blades having finished the first leg with a two goal deficit the week before. According to many fans in the week preceding the game, it was not worth attending the return leg of the game as the team were bound to lose with an existing deficit. In response to this, the Bears' public relations and press office team were faced with the task of building up the game to a challenge that reflected not only the team's pride, but that of the city and even the country. Daily press releases, repeated interviews with players ruminating on their desire to dominate the Blades and win the game, and prolific Facebook posts and Twitter re-tweets of positive thinking were building up.

Many Bears fans changed their Facebook statuses to "I believe" and had t-shirts made up with the saying displayed. These events had a dual purpose, of not only building up the expectations of fans and encouraging their attendance at this non-season ticketed game (an important financial opportunity for the club); but also in building the tension for the players and urging them to take responsibility of satisfying the crowd by putting on a spectacle and ultimately overcoming the goal deficit.

Whilst these occasions were incredibly fruitful in terms of my observations and fieldnotes; they were often difficult times to observe the team as they effectively closed up and kept their heads down in order to focus on the game. That week there had been extra on-ice training sessions, each of which was specifically focussed on learning and practicing dedicated plays and tactics based on the perceived weakness of the opposition. The white board in the locker room was dedicated to lists of the strengths and weaknesses of the Blades' key players, known injuries and recent scoring history all laid out in what players came to term the 'war room'. Prior to the Saturday evening game I had already decided that I would not enter the locker room this week. Whilst I framed this as being a matter of respect in order to ensure my continued access to this sacred space for the rest of the season, in part, I imagine that I too was caught up in the palpable tension of the forthcoming match and wished to observe this from outside of the locker room.

As the week continued, advertisements appeared on social media quoting the team captain and coach and giving a call for fans to 'be the extra man on the ice'. The team (under the instruction of the marketing manager) were reiterating the importance of the game and expressing their desire to 'sell-out' the arena and build the atmosphere in order to make it an oppressive environment for the opposition.

Several years before I commenced my observation, the Bears had brought over a tradition from North American playoff games, where fans dressed only in team colours and waved so called 'terrible towels' in the air in order to intimidate the opposition team, as described in Chapters Five and Six, this is known as a 'White-out.' White lights were assembled around the rink, a smoke machine and white laser light were hired for the day and fans were arranging the bulk purchase of white towels and Bears' t-shirts in order to appear threatening to the opposition. When I spoke to the players and the coach about this, they conceded that while the fans certainly had some effect in games such as this, they had been compelled to 'whip up a frenzy' in order to entice fans to come to a game that might otherwise make a financial loss for the team. However, during practice cool-downs, the locker room was full of talk about what particular fans had posted on Facebook, how many of them were going to wear wigs in order to look like Sherman, and how they might intimidate the opposition; it would seem that the original financial incentive for making the game a battle was beginning to have a rousing effect on the players' emotions.

It was clear from the moment I arrived at the rink three hours prior to faceoff that the game had a different feel to it. Security was tighter at the doors and a barricade of chairs had been assembled in the corridor between the players' locker rooms. Unlike many games where players would move between the public and private areas of the rink or meet up with friends from the opposing team over coffee or while warming up, there was no communication between the teams at all. Security guards and stewards were instructed to refuse to make eye contact with the opposition and refuse the complimentary tickets to their families usually gifted at games. Some overly excited rink employees entrusted me with their secret that they had covered the away

changing room with gravel to blunt their skates and turned off the hot water to the showers and the cold water for the drinking taps, requiring the stick boy to walk around the exterior of the arena to refill the team's water bottles. From my vantage point outside the locker room by the bench, I could see that the players were keeping their heads down. Gone was the frivolity of many games and the focus was on coming out strong and making up the deficit. The atmosphere at the rink was electric, the PR offensive had worked and the game was sold-out – albeit with two and a half blocks of highly vocal away fans as well as the home spectators. The white lights, towels and smoke machine had an effect on the atmosphere as did the extra drummers assembled at one end of the rink banging in time with the feet stamping above the locker room and bench.

When Austin emerged from the locker room before the team briefing, an unusual move for him, it reinforced my decision to remain away from the players' locker room space before the game. Austin explained that rather than the usual two or three players vomiting before a game, there had been a queue in the stalls, with many players waiting to purge themselves of the tension before the commencement of the match.

When the team came out of the locker room to enter the ice, there was an explosion of noise, exaggerated fist pumps were given to the captain by each player at the gate and there was a cacophony from the stands above and the fans that surrounded the ice banging their fists and rattling the plexi-glass. The game started with an immediate dominant physical demonstration from both teams; there were numerous hard hits against the plexi-glass and more unusual mid-ice hip-checks that left players from both sides lying prone on the ice.

The 'terrible towels' were indeed effective in building up the momentum of the crowd and the atmosphere as righteous indignation at every call the referee made against the Bears. The intimidating atmosphere in the crowd was a matter of concern to the security guards and stewards who made plans to patrol the player area and provide an escort to the referees as they left the ice at the end of the first period. It was an exciting game to watch with both teams having their share of momentum and an end to end battle which remained goal-less until the half-way point of the second period.

Players were clearly revved up on the bench, watching the game far more closely than they often do, with none of the frivolity and banter of a usual game. Injuries were far more frequent than the usual game and I lost count of the number of bags of ice that were distributed along the bench in between shifts. The referee, who had been letting a lot of physical infractions slide in the first period was beginning to tighten up and started to increase the calls for behaviour that had previously gone unpunished for both teams. The resulting power-plays increased the tension of the game as directions on game play and timings were shouted around the bench.

Whilst the Blades were on a powerplay and the Bears were trying to kill the penalty by playing defensively, the Bears' notorious power player Bullet executed a vicious hip-check (which was more of a butt-check as the players later joked) on the Blades player - a man vilified by Bears' fans for several seasons. The crowd erupted with laughter, cheers and chants to Bullet but he did not look happy and was frantically searching the ice to see if he had been observed by the referee and was going to be punished. Had he received a penalty for the hit, with the referee calling a strict game, the Bears would be two players down and highly likely to concede another goal, making a three goal aggregate deficit - a mountain to climb against the

defensive skills of the Blades. Players on the bench seemed to be holding their breath, not sure yet whether Bullet would be punished or whether they would congratulate him. The Blades' player lay prone on the ice, having lost his helmet with the initial check and falling awkwardly. The referee and linesmen retired to their crease to debate a call and listened to objections from both team captains before issuing the direction to the timekeeper's box. No penalty.

The noise that followed this decision echoed through the home crowd and the players pumped fists as if they had scored a game winning goal. The Blades were clearly irate at this call and were approaching the referee's crease in order to present an appeal. Their calls fell on deaf ears and the game continued.

The momentum of the game shifted immediately, despite being two goals down on aggregate and one man down on the ice, the Bears began to dominate the play, they continued to finish all their checks, to use their bodies to exert pressure on the opposition in the crease, to increase their speed up the ice and they were almost instantaneously rewarded for this. Some 34 seconds later Bullet scored a goal from the point, beating Blades keeper to a top shelf, glove side goal. White lasers flashed, the goal horn sounded and the uplifting noise of the goal song, still audible above the cheering of the fans erupted. This was now a one goal game, finally the Bears were looking relaxed and like they believed it was possible. They had momentum. This ebb and flow of momentum, excitement and disappointment is well documented in many sports, as well as in the Collins's (2008) of emotional dominance and equilibrium as discussed in Chapter Two. As Collins states, it is not only sporting contests that retain this shift of balance, each violent altercation between willing combatants retains this feature, with momentum shifting constantly moment to moment within a fracas.

The Blades on the other side were dejected, they had been scored on by a player who had also physically embarrassed their coach, their heads were down and they didn't appear to be communicating or discussing tactics any longer. Capitalising on this momentum change, the Bears changed lines and whilst still on the penalty kill managed to skate past the shell-shocked Blades netminder and execute a perfect tape-to-tape pass which Trigger one-timed into the net. The Blades showed no reaction at all, their heads remained down while the Bears hugged and danced around the ice as if they had already won the game. Those who follow sports know that games or competitions are often won on these moments. There was electricity in the air. The Bears were dominating and were confident in their ability to maintain this and to win the semi-final.

The emotion on the bench changed completely after this point. There was a great deal of banter among the players, with fist pumps and high fives abounding once more. The third period of the game remained strong; The Bears were not winning the game, but had tied it up from an original deficit and given themselves a fighting chance of winning. Bullet was particularly rewarded by the players not only for his original goal but also the 'butt-check' that had levelled the Blades player and escaped the call. The 'high' of getting away with a borderline illegal hit without penalty which resulted in the team equalling the game up was evident in Bullet's demeanour. Players were slapping him on the backside each time he had a line change and the management of the team came down to the locker room as the players left the ice at the end of the second period in order to congratulate him specifically. It was at this point that it became clear from hushed comments I heard on the bench that the management had also offered the players a financial bonus if they won the game and made it to the final. A previous discussion of this kind of behaviour was given in

Chapter Six, with the use of financial incentives common-place in the league during my fieldwork, a clear example of the commodification of the sport in this league.

I had expected the third period to maintain this intensity, but tactics had changed in the period break and much of the third period was a rather boring game of defensive trap hockey. Emotion on the bench was back to a sombre, tense atmosphere and there was focus on recovering from the physical stresses of the game and maintaining the protection of the netminder in order to keep the goals even. During this period the crowd was significantly quieter, they no longer had the underdog mentality, but neither did they have the excitement of physically dominating their opponent.

It wasn't until the final two minutes of the game and the Blades pulled their netminder in favour of an additional forward on the ice that the noise and tension increased. With the Blades effectively on a powerplay, the Bears knew they had to maintain a strong defensive box, albeit with their eyes on the prize at the other end of the rink – an empty net. If the Bears managed to score on this empty goal they would win the game and proceed to the cup final. Just seven seconds from the end of the game Beau took the chance on a long hit up the ice, clearing the puck and there was a huge cry of noise from around the arena as the puck looked likely to head straight into the net. Almost painfully slowly to the remainder of Bears' players on the bench the puck trickled over the goal line, the red light went on over the net and the goal horn sounded.

Ecstatic shouting occurred and players jumped high in the air over the bench to join their team on the ice and celebrate the win. It took almost a minute for the referee and linesmen to calm the situation down in order to face-off at centre ice for the last seven seconds of the game. During this time, fans started singing along to the music

being played by the DJ, Bryan Adams -'We're gonna win' and they maintained this when the puck was again dropped, several of them shouting down "7, 6, 5…" The Bears won possession of the puck and kept it under control trying to run-down the clock "…4, 3, 2, 1". The end of game claxon sounded and the atmosphere once again erupted, players leaping to their end of the ice, congratulating the netminder for maintaining a shut-out and jumping on Bullet for his involvement.

The Blades players silently regrouped at their end of the ice, waiting quietly for the man of the match announcement which would enable them to leave the ice. Once they had left the ice, the Man of the Match for Bears was announced, it was Bullet, a video replay of his 'butt-check' was played on the screens and he skated to the red carpet for the sponsor photograph and to be presented with the Man of the Match beers. Once his duty was over, he was physically jumped on by the remainder of the team, having his head rubbed violently by his team-mates knuckles, receiving slaps to his face and then lifted up by the players for a few steps before being dumped back on the red carpet on his backside. After two circuits around the ice (rather than the usual one) thanking the fans and high-fiving children as they climbed up the edges of the plexi-glass, the players left the ice and sprang into the locker room full of excitement.

Knowing that in those spirits, I no longer needed to avoid the locker room, I walked in to a party where beer was thrown around the room like champagne and the players danced around in various stages of undress taking their time to get to the shower and dress. The physical nature of banter continued, with players giving each other slaps to the backside with sweaty towels and jumping on each other's backs heading to the showers. Despite the physical nature of the game and the number of injuries that had been received, there was no queue to receive treatment from the doctor or

physiotherapist, first there must be celebrations and horseplay. The dominant masculinity demonstrated by the players' use of physical forms of teasing and banter and the carnal nature of these acts was integral to the team's post-win bonding.

This account of just one game of hockey can be discussed at great length in terms of the emotions involved in the game, before, during and after the eventual win. There is a wealth of data here that could be analysed in many different ways to produce many different types of thesis. From an interactionist's point of view, such as that of Randall Collins (2008) discussed in the review of literature, there is a great deal to discuss in terms of emotional equilibrium and dominance and its role in the ebb and flow of the game and in the individual actions of the sport.

In terms of temporality, a whole thesis could discuss the importance of emotional labour, such as that discussed by Denzin (2006) and Hochschild (1983). Here, some of the perceived 'negative' emotions of aggression, fear and determination can be seen to be positive in terms of the way that players work among these emotions to perform their role and achieve their goal.

There is undoubtedly a great deal of work that may be referred to in terms of the role of the crowd in impacting the players' emotions. The temporality of the game, momentum, space and rhythm of not only the players but also the spectators, DJs and drummers, who aim to impact the players with their support, designated player songs, drumming techniques that build the closer the players are to the opposition goal all play a part in the shared emotion of the game. Without spectacle, without spectators, the game would undoubtedly be very different (Mustonen *et al* 1996; Paul, 2003; Pryer, 2002; Roberts & Benjamin, 2000; Russell, 1995; Ward Jr. 2002). While the game may well remain full of emotions, it would retain a different rhythm,

focus and feeling, once all the spectacle and razzmatazz of entertainment has been stripped away. As Elias and Dunning (1986) point out, the spectacle of the game is integral to the shared emotions of the participants, whether they are spectators, employees, players, referees or team managers.

The Mimesis of War and Battle

Mimesis is omnipresent in human action. In terms of its inclusion here, it is described as being reminiscent or of incorporating a form of battle, or of war. To a certain extent, any sport that retains the final goal of a victor and incorporates an audience, will be a contest, a fight and involve a champion and a defeated party. Many sports retain gladiatorial elements, with a perceived righteous and ultimately victorious group pitted against a dastardly enemy that must be overcome. As chapter two highlights, many accounts of hockey violence (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993; Cashmore, 2001; and Smith 1976) focus on the mimetic nature of this aspect of organised sports, perhaps most noticeably in the 'Bear Pit' environment of a central enclosed stage and an audience baying for blood.

As the 'powder game' account above demonstrates, many games are treated as a form of battle or as a war by the players as well as by the spectators. The opposition team become the enemy that must be defeated. Often a player's way of dealing with this is by closing down and focussing quietly on the match in hand, but for others that surround the players, the team, the PR, and the fans, there is a role to play in that mimetic battle. There are colours to be displayed, flags to fly and a role to play in terms of making a threatening environment for the opposition. This is further cemented by the insistence of players in press calls that fans are able to be 'the extra

man on the ice' and that they each have a role to play. This, as my earlier research amongst spectators (2010) shows, has a strong impact on attendance and spectators perceived enjoyment of the game. As explained in the quote by Chris Nilan in Chapter Six, spectators often feel some cathartic benefit of watching violence on the ice. This is also confirmed in the quantitative research undertaken in the USA, as outlined in Chapter Three (Fiske, 1991; Gantz, 1989; Jones *et* al, 1993, 1996; Lance & Ross, 2000; Levitt, 2002; Mustonen *et al*, 1996; Paul, 2003; Raney, 2009; Roberts & Benjamin 2000; Russell, 1995). This ties-in with much of the work on cultural and visual criminology by Carrabine (2008), Ferrell and Van de Voorde (2010), and Rafter (2007). The popularity of viewing violent acts and other images of crime is said to be enticing because it reminds us of: "…a deep yearning for the dramatization of the ultimate thing in human life, namely life and death, through crime and punishment, struggle between man and nature." (Fromm, cited by Carrabine 2008:8).

Music is essential to the atmosphere and the building of spectacle in hockey performances. The music played in the rink engages different responses from the crowd, who with their own chants and drumming patterns add to the atmosphere. This was discussed at length in my previous research on hockey spectators (2010) there was a keen awareness that certain songs encouraged specific chants, claps and behaviour and that there were particular songs played at different times of momentum in the game. There is a wealth of academic literature on the use of music and its effect on emotions, such as that of DeNora (2003).

Players are often aware of the music being played in the rink, but sometimes they do not appear cognisant of these moments and express their lack of interest in any of the 'entertainment' aspects of the game. There is however a great deal of superstition

among the players of when certain songs can be played. One of the Bears' goaltenders vocally criticised his team's DJ for playing "We're Gonna Win" and provided a long list of criteria that must be met before the song was aired, including the time left in the game, the number of goals that the team were leading by and the perceived performance of each teammate. For some reason this complaint was made to me, when I was present as a researcher with nothing to do with the music of the game. Interestingly, the team won that night, and the player, the most superstitious of all I have come across began to put a pre-game whine to me as part of his pre-game preparation and superstitions from that point until the end of the season. I was not expecting to become part of a player's pre-match routine when I entered the field, but it gave me an interesting insight into the particularities of player's behaviour and the role of superstition in their preparation.

Spectators are keen on the musical support of the entertainment, voting for particular songs to be played for individual players and for particular entrance songs, winning songs and even warm-up songs. The players themselves are keen to develop their own playlists for their MP3 players before the game in the locker room stereo, with superstitions abounding relating to whether a particular song was played at a certain time in each of the games that they had previously won. The many informal and fan supported YouTube channels dedicated to highlights of the game, or replays of famous fights are overlaid with atmospheric, celebratory or successful music. On viewing an excerpt of one of the rivalry games between The Bears and The Thunder that was uploaded onto YouTube by a fan, overlaid with the music from Pirates of the Caribbean, Bullet laughed:

> *Ha-ha, that is so dramatic with that music, but you know it was pretty accurate, there always was a battle…there is no love lost between the two*

> *teams and it is like a war. You fight like an army to win and if you're not winning you fight like an army to make them hurt.*
> Bullet – Visual Interview.

A game is, after all, like many traditional images of war, a spectacle, a battle and a show of strength and might. Accompanied by music, chanting, drums, it is reminiscent of a battle field and that is considered as being a spectacle for the fans, but also as an important part for the players, who take rivalry games very seriously:

> *It's always those games that do the most damage to your body, you are so concerned in sticking it to them that you forget it is a game at all, you forget to rest and you forget to listen to your body. I bet if you measured our ice packs from those games then we'd get through a whole lot more icing our injuries and contusions. It's fucking epic man, it's like a frickin war. I love it.*
> Brooks – Interview.

While players will attest to some games feeling like a war, others are more detached and see the sport as a game rather than an all-encompassing moment in time. Wade, for example explains how easily people keep the aggression and violence on the ice:

> *These guys will fight it out on the ice but at the end of it it's over and they're in the bar drinking and chatting it through, next game they're at it again. No hard feelings on the ice, plenty of respect, but on the ice, gloves off and fighting again. I don't think you'd see it anywhere other than at hockey. People say it's a bit war-like, but it's not, in a war you want to kill then enemy you hate them, you wouldn't have a drink with them between battles would you. No, maybe I'm more detached because of my role on the ice, but I don't feel like it's a war, it's a game, a serious game, but a game.*
> Wade – Interview.

The image of war therefore is not the same for all the players, at times they accept that they are 'playing battles' but at others experiencing strong feelings of hatred. What is unique to hockey is the acknowledgement of this behaviour as being part of the game, and hard-feelings being forgotten between contests. Hockey is a small world in many ways, and sworn enemies one season will become team-mates with a small roster change the following year. This tacit acceptance of the violence as being part of the game and staying on the ice is not often echoed in wider society away from sports such as hockey, MMA and boxing. This can be seen as forming part of the 'implied consent' to assault that was discussed in earlier chapters. The contest is undertaken within the limitations of the game and does not continue outside of that arena. This was explained by Wade in Chapter Five, talking about a switch that he throws when he dresses for a game and puts on a violent persona, but which is then turned off after a game upon removing his costume. As in Goffman's (1967) account of front and backstage behaviour discussed in Chapter Two, it is only by observing several different areas of the players' world that we are able to understand the limitations and particularities of specific areas. Ice hockey is unique in the sense that violence, even which experienced as emotional, is somehow instrumental and can be switched on and off in the way one puts on a uniform and removes it.

Deification and the perks of being an enforcer

A discussion of the personas of hockey fighters and enforcers was given in Chapter Five, it is also important to reiterate it here, as both emotionally and in terms of deviance, it is a very specific role on the ice. There is a great deal of respect given to team-mates who put their bodies on the line for the game and who fight for the team, not only by their colleagues but by fans and spectators. Whilst the fighters

themselves were not forthcoming with any of the perks that they received, saying that they were 'just one of the guys' and this was just their role, others were keen to point out that the enforcers of the team had additional perks that others did not.

> *If he wanted to fight someone in practice, he'd fight them, none of the rest of us would get away with that, Chester would be like 'off the ice now' but if he wanted to snap he would snap. In training guys would never hit him the way they hit the rest of us, I remember one time in practice, he fought Jackson pretty hard because he went in too hard on a hit, none of the rest of us would have taken that seriously, we'd have said 'what the fuck Jackson' but we wouldn't have started an all-out fight about it. It's like on the bus, he sits at the back, everyone knows it, he has to invite you to sit there with him and he'll tell you know if you get cheeky with it and just go there, that's normal in every team though, tough guy gets the perks. I get on ok with him because he's my buddy and I'm not up in his face all the time, but I see what he does to others as intimidation, I'm not sure whether the others do. We get maybe two crates of beer on the bus after a game, he'll take one crate just to himself you know, nobody questions it.*
> Donny – Interview.

After observing a team event with the fans in a bowling alley, I noticed that Sherman did not buy his own drinks and that Cletus moved out of the best seat in order for him to take it. I asked Vern about it later that evening, he confirmed that it was common to all fighters in teams that he had played in:

> *Oh it's definitely just a case of respect for them, they get the space on the bus in the locker room, you know when to speak to them and when to give them the space and thank them and buy them beers and stuff. Even though Sherman is quiet he controls the locker room. They're not all alike though, Bandit was respected and had space and stuff but he used to be our cheerer-upper in the locker room, he used to tell us rude jokes and shit and he was a bit less intimidating but still respected you know.*
> Vern – Conversation.

This is interesting as it goes against the idea of working as a team and all players being equal. The concept of certain players being in charge due to their role, not due to their perceived rank, such as that of Captain, but rather their role in terms of the physicality displayed appears to go against some of the existing literature on teams (Goffman 1967). This indicates that the specific role of enforcer is given status above other roles but that this is also tied in to notions of fear in some of the players. This is interesting as in many accounts, particularly those in the media, players go out of their way to explain how non-violent and threatening players, and enforcers are specifically, are away from the ice. Again this highlights the importance of ethnographic observation, as this is not an insight I would have had from player interviews had I not specifically questioned players about behaviour I had seen in social or professional environments.

Bandit was the only fighter to open up about this kind of special treatment and talked about how it started when he was playing junior hockey:

> *Ha-ha, yeah, that was a pretty cool thing about fighting you know, I'd get all my food and drinks bought for me on away trips, I'd get the parents passing me 20 bucks here and there for looking after their boy. I looked after them and they looked after me. I've never demanded it, I don't think [pauses] No, I've never demanded it but I'll take it if I'm there, I do a role and this is the perks of it.*
> Bandit – Interview.

This has similarities with the NHL as described by Proteau, an anti-fighting journalist, who talks about a famous enforcer Todd Bertuzzi:

> He was reared in and rewarded by a hockey culture that encouraged guys to cross the line with regularity…He was accepted as someone who played 'on

> the edge', which is hockey code for 'this guy is allowed to go over the edge every so often'.
> (Proteau, 2011:90)

Proteau, who himself used to play hockey at a high level in North America gives an account of when he broke all the rules, he was deified and given the nickname 'Hacksaw' but at one point decided that he no longer wanted that role and began to actively avoid violent conduct:

> When I was 'Hacksaw', I was deified by team-mates – I honestly felt as if they wanted to carry me off the ice on their shoulders – and demonized by their parents. When I was a pacifist the converse was true. They couldn't quite accept that the old me was now the new me who'd been made to stay behind a clearly defined behavioral line in the sand.
> (Proteau, 2011:84)

During one training session I was speaking to Brooks, who was sitting out the training nursing an injury. Brooks was a valued defensive player, but never a fighter. I asked him whether he felt that there was any respect associated with his role on the ice in the same way that the enforcers were respected. This was obviously something that he felt strongly about as he was dissatisfied with the worshipping of enforcers by the fans and by some of the other players:

> *You know all sports come with some kind of punishments and all positions on the ice do. It's not just the fighters that put their bodies on the line, I block shots and put my body on the line and take on a physical role without fighting. We all suffer for our role and we are all at risk of injury or concussion, even if not from fights, should we not all have the same respect*

for each of us?

Brooks - Interview

This highlights some of the ill-feeling that important players such as netminders, stay-at-home defencemen and top goal-scorers may feel when they are overlooked by fans in favour of physically dominant players, who are allowed to be let loose and receive individual attention for their physical behaviour. The popularity of the enforcer which is in part due to the deification of their role and behaviour but also in part in how war stories and fight stories hold a great deal of cultural capital in their re-telling (Jackson-Jacobs 2004; Collins, 2012). Phrased this way violence is neither purely functional in this manner (as stated in 'The Code'), nor is it an absolute example of a lack of self-control, rather it is an enticing and inherently emotional experience (Jackson-Jacobs 2004).

Showboating:

Showboating is a local 'folk' term that derives from the gaudily decorated entertainment boats of the past century that drew a great deal of attention. In a negative sporting context, a showboat is a player who draws attention to themselves at the expense of performing their sport-related goal effectively. As discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, enforcers are often good at self-promotion and negatively labelled as 'showboats' by opposition players. The enforcers themselves are often keen to distance themselves from this title, despite often building up their own personas and titles through advertising, gesture and behaviour (as described in Chapter Five). They lay themselves open to accusations of 'showboating' and over-emphasising their perceived physical prowess at the expense of the team role and it is a term that players are keen to distance themselves from. The desire to separate their

role from this behaviour often stems from the issue of respect and the pervasive discourse that hockey violence serves as some kind of function beyond that of entertainment (as discussed at length in Chapter Six). While the banter and performance of a dominant and legitimate win by a player is perceived to be entirely acceptable, there is consternation towards individual players that 'showboat' their own involvement in a fight. Despite this, you still see Weapon X forming an X shape with his arms and the sheriff handing out badges to fans. This point has also been noted by Ingham, who states:

> Teammates will negatively sanction the athlete who goes commercial and indulges in 'showboating'. Similarly the organization will negatively sanction the athlete whose entertainment antics reduce organizational efficiency. Yet both will applaud the spectacular play which furthers their goals. Thus both the formal and informal processes of socialization attempt to acquaint athletes with the correct use of the spectacular.
> Ingham (1975:360).

Thus there is awareness that while players will often detract attention from the idea of show-boating or pantomime fighting, there is an element of entertainment and reciprocal encouragement between the players and the spectators. However, as mentioned previously, there is consternation towards role players who play no part in the game. As one player said in relation to Rocky:

> *I don't think he's right in the head, he's just watched UFC DVDs and strapped a pair of skates on, he's not a policeman, he's a fucking retard, no brain there at all, he's a big 'roider' you know, all he does is supplements and 'pump pump pump, look at my muscles' that's gotta mess with your noodle. They show off because they like the attention and because they can't get the attention any other way. Me, I'm all about the team, I couldn't give a fuck about the fans and whether I'm entertaining them or not, it's all about*

> *the W, I don't give a fuck and that's my honest answer, I'm no showman me.*
> Buck – Interview.

Several Bears players are particularly worshipped and adored by fans and these tend to be those players who are deemed to be physically dominant in the game, Sherman, Bandit and Bullet are amongst the most popular with fans for player signings and poster sales, not due to their position on the scoring charts but due to their image as dominant, physical players. While Snoop and Trigger are two of the highest scoring players in the league, frequently winning league-wide 'Player of the Week' contests, they are not worshipped by fans to the same extent as their more physical, less high-scoring counterparts. The hockey audience values dominant physical prowess in terms of violence demonstrated on the ice. This was evident during the pilot MSc research on spectators (Silverwood, 2010), who acknowledged 'hero-worship' of fighters, with male and female supporters alike admiring the display of power and masculinity, above that of offensive-skill offered by other players.

It is clear that there is an element of risk-taking in playing the sport. The risk of injury, of permanent or temporary damage and pain for the role played, and the risk of emotional injury have all been discussed. What is of importance in addition to this is the ways in which players negotiate the boundaries of the sport and the rules of the game. 'The Code' as discussed in Chapter Five gives justifications of when players may act outside of the rules of the game, blurring the boundaries or edges of rules, deviating from the acceptable conduct of the game and negotiating the edges of acceptability and legality. This is not simply a rational decision, while accounts above have shown that players negotiate these edges in a decisive manner in order to further their goals and win the game, there are also times when boundaries are

crossed due to the perceived enjoyment that will be gained from crossing the line. This enjoyment or excitement is explained well in much diverse research on cultural criminology, for example Lyng's (1990) account of edgework; Snyder's (2009) research on tagging the New York underground; Raymen's ongoing work on parkour (2014) and the work of Oliver Smith and Thomas Raymen (2015) on the deviant consumerism in the Black Friday sales.

Risk Taking, Edgework and Emotions

Accounts above have given some attention to the idea of taking risks and working on the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable levels of violence and deviance. For example, the thrill of 'getting away' with an act that you know could easily have attracted a negative sanction from the referee is an exciting feeling to the players. As Jefferson mentioned after watching a video of a butt-ending and high elbow he gave to an opposition player:

> *It's so exhilarating, being able to dominate someone in that way and not receive any punishment for it, it's a high for sure. Not just in terms of being able to physically injure someone, but also in terms of getting away with it. Even if you get a penalty you kind of get away with it, as you're allowed, no not just allowed, actively encouraged, to take things over the line. It's a buzz that you can do that. It's almost a sexual high if you know what I mean, to physically dominate another guy like that… I'm not gay… you know that right?… not at all, but it is a dominant primal feeling of control and power, it's like it takes me to a separate place away from the normal rules that restrict my ability to be a man in that way. Being able to dominate someone in a primal way, it's like that never really left my mind in evolution and I get such a great satisfaction from that physical base-level of dominance and*

power.

Jefferson – Visual interview.

This was a feeling echoed by several other players. On occasion this was about the ability to score a goal and the physical skill of that minute detail, but often it was relating to the ability to physically dominate another person in a way that is not acceptable in other spheres of life.

I see it like this, I'm a nice guy and in real life I don't really ever get ruffled, but I have a role as a protector and a provider on the ice, I get to pretend to be fearless in a way that I wouldn't in real life. Part of that is being in a controlled environment and trusting the officials to know the limits and intervene when necessary, but part of it is the thrill of knowing that you can dominate and control and actually hurt someone and get away with it. It's like two things, I've got my role on the ice and I'm a protector, but I also get to be a bit of a violent criminal as well, but because it's on the ice it's ok. Even then though, it's always good to push it a little further, to try and get away with something a little more, to try and avoid the referee's attention, and to try and do a little more, getting away with it, that's a buzz.

Bandit – Visual Interview.

These accounts have much in common with the concept of the catharsis of violence as detailed by Elias & Dunning (1986) and Cashmore (2001) in Chapter Two and will be discussed further in the discussion chapter that follows. It also speaks to the controlled loss of control, written about in stories of edgework and cultural criminology as mentioned by Hayward, 2002 and Measham 2002). They also speak to other work on the pleasure of violence and of fighting (Wacquant, 2004, Jackson-Jacobs 2004) and the pleasures of the skin. There is a lack of criminological discussion on these and on the emotion of violent behaviour (A point which is

beginning to re-enter the criminological field through the cultural work of the likes of Ferrell; Hayward; Katz; Presdee; and Lyng, as highlighted in Chapter Three).

Edgework as a concept can be expanded upon from this data. A complicated relationship exists in professional contact sport between 'acceptable' deviance and 'unacceptable' criminal acts. To this end, in hockey edgework is something that is actively encouraged within the rules of the game and the allowances made for violent contact and fist fights. When considering this point, can a legitimate (unpunished by the rules) injury-causing body-check be considered to be deviant, or edgework when it is actively encouraged by the culture of the sport? In a similar manner, can the fist-fight be considered deviant or criminal when despite being punished by a coincidental penalty of five minutes for the two combatants; it is tolerated and even celebrated in the game? Edgework as a concept becomes inherently muddled when engaging in deviant or edgework behaviour is not only encouraged by spectators, team owners and coaches, but is actively encouraged and is rewarded financially and emotionally. This is tied into the concept mentioned in relation to the financial section of the previous chapter, as players are not only independent actors but are also effectively commodities for the team and as such are able to act in both of those roles.

What is clear, despite this unique nature of the relationship between players and deviancy or edgework, is that there exists in the sport a large degree of behaviour that could be considered deviant, whether this is legitimised or not. Forms of this behaviour are not only often deviant, but can also be seen as potentially criminal as despite the fact that they have not been tested in the criminal courts of England and Wales, they would be considered criminal in other circumstances. As is displayed in this chapter, there is an element of an illicit thrill experienced by many players as

they literally ‘play’ the boundaries and edges of deviant behaviour. As highlighted in Chapter Two, edgework has been criticised as limited, however, the more nuanced account of edgework in relation to professional hockey players displayed in this chapter demonstrates the complexities of edgework as a concept. What has been discussed in earlier chapters and is the concept of edgework throughout hockey culture, not only in the commission of violent acts in the commission of the game, but in terms of the hyper-masculine jock culture, where thrill-seeking behaviour such as illicit sexual conduct, drug and alcohol use and masculine horseplay may also be seen as boundary behaviour, where there exists an exciting element in pushing the boundaries of acceptability.

Not all emotions that arise from the game are as positive as the above accounts might suggest. One of my criticisms of many journalistic accounts of hockey violence and ‘The Code’ is that they tend to romanticise the positive notion of catharsis and violence and discuss it as if hockey violence is a victimless crime that can be ‘got away with’ without any negative sanctions. By using an ethnographic focus of research onto an entire team - unlike the frequent journalistic account of named enforcers only - it is possible to get a far deeper account of the realities of the use of violence upon the entire team and allow them the space and anonymity to offer less popular discourses about their experiences. One of the reasons that I chose to ask the players about their physical role in this manner was due to the changing cultural awareness of violence in the sport in terms of head injuries and the high profile physical players who were suffering the after-effects of this behaviour. I asked players whether they were concerned about this and whether it would have had any impact on their playing style had they been aware of this before starting their professional career.

I'm concerned by this story about concussion and all that, but I don't think it's going to scare people from playing the game you know, they'll still fight to get there, still slug it out because that's what you do. If you said to a young guy keen to make the big leagues, you can do this, but there might be something wrong with your brain in 30 years, they'll still want to do it – you know they don't care about the risks in the future because it's all about the feeling of now and I get it, you hear the crowd, you see the potential to further your career and make money and have fame and all that, you're not going to avoid that and have a mundane life, you're going to take the risks for the enjoyment of the now and the future, you're not going to worry about the future of your life beyond hockey. In juniors, NHL is the goal, it's NHL or die trying, it's all about the now, the right now, it's all about making it. Wade – Interview.

Other players were a little more concerned by the repeated news stories and mentioned that it was beginning to have an impact on the way in which they played the game. Several of the players, Beau, Trigger, Snoop and Donny all commented that they were now more aware of the long-term effects of repeated concussions and that it was not only influencing their game but also may well impact their decision on when to retire from the game. These four players were substantially more academic, having graduated from college and were focussed on postgraduate studies and a future career outside of the sport which they felt contributed to their unwillingness to sustain a life-changing brain injury at this stage of their lives. Donny gave a strong account of his awareness of concussion after his parents sat him down with what he described as a 'dossier' of information of the dangers of concussion. He said it knocked his confidence on the ice for quite some time, as he began to think about each check he threw or received and that pause for thought often resulted in him missing what he would previously have considered natural behaviour. However,

even Donny, one of the players who was most educated about the after-effects of brain injuries mentioned that this awareness went out of the window whenever a game began to mean more to him, or to the team such as finals and playoff games. He put this down to the fact that in these high profile games, the:

> *…mentality of the game is beyond anything else, it's all about that battle, it's all about the win and it's an all or nothing thing. That game means everything, everything is required, even my health or my awareness of injury. Games like that must be won, won at all costs, never mind a concussion, winning is more important.*
> Donny - Interview.

It is tempting, and certainly something that remains the focus of journalistic accounts of hockey violence, to focus predominantly on the positive aspects of emotion, of dominating, winning, power, excitement, edgework and fun. However, there are a great deal of other emotions that are involved in the playing of this sport which merit further attention here. One of the dominant findings of the observation is that contrary to 'The Code', violence is not always a matter of a weighted decision on the relative merits of action or the function of a particular action in terms of controlling violence, rather, violence can erupt in dysfunctional ways, it does not always serve a purpose to the game and it can equally have a negative effect on the game, the team and the individual players.

Frustration/Aggression

Whilst the frustration-aggression hypothesis is a well-known psychological theoretical concept (Dollard *et al* 1939), when I refer to this I am focussed on the

observations that I made in my fieldnotes about what I called Sherman's Frustration-aggression behaviour. Much of the aggression of a hockey game comes about as a result of a previous frustration. Thus, violence is not always a function of the sport, or a financial excuse, there are many examples of violence and aggression naturally occurring from the game or culture of the game. Sherman was the most obvious example of the link between frustration and aggression, perhaps due to his propensity to draw a penalty following his aggressive responses to his frustration. I noted that every time Sherman was embarrassed on the ice, by falling over whilst skating, or missing a hit on an opposing player, he would react in an aggressive or violent manner, as if trying to reassert his physical dominance in the game (what Collins 2008, would term, emotional dominance). Referees were also aware of this behaviour and often gave punishments such as penalties in the sin bin for his retaliatory behaviour. Other players in the team were aware of Sherman's disposition to behave in this manner and would try and pre-empt this by drawing his attention away from his reaction, or giving him the space to cool down. This type of behaviour is not accounted for in the functional accounts of 'The Code' but is involved in many acts, not only by Sherman but by many other players in different scenarios.

There were many examples of these incidences throughout my period of fieldwork, but to take just one field note example from three of my research sites:

Team Bench:

Snoop has become increasingly frustrated and vocally aggressive in games lately. This seems in part that fighting against the injuries and potentially losing the title with short benches over the next few games have led to his concern over his future employment opportunities. Tonight as players were confused over line changes and

were lacking direction in leadership from Chester and Ward on the bench, Snoop shouted out when a bad line-change resulted in a Pirates breakaway and subsequent goal. He shouted loudly on the bench, which would have been heard in the first couple of rows of stands "What the fuck 'Shifter'! You call that fucking defence are you tripping or what, too much fucking juice 'Shifty' and too much blow, you're a fucking liberty." Following the goal, he said "Fucking hell [goalie[44]] watch out for the fucking five hole you've got more fucking holes than a fucking fuck", he then snapped his stick across the bench, breaking it into two and charged off to the locker room mid-game. As he stormed towards the locker room he punched the wall with his fist and slammed the door open just inches from the physiotherapist, who emerged from the locker room to the relative solace of the team bench stating "I'm not going in there again til he's calmed down." Snoop's physical reaction was understandable in terms of frustration and aggression in real life, it is not something specific to sport, but what interests me is the way that this behaviour is never mentioned in hockey accounts. Snoop has mentioned to me many times about how his violence only ever stays on the ice and is entirely there to help the game. But this act was clearly not functional to the game; rather it was an ordinary human aggressive reaction. His violent language and violent acts could not serve as functional to the team, they did not fit in with 'The Code' and did not benefit the team in any way.

In both journalistic accounts and in many of the player interviews, incidents like this are always glossed-over by players who were reticent to discuss these incidents that they felt were outside of the physicality of the game itself. I spoke to Snoop after

[44] Name removed for anonymity

the game and he was very angry still, when I asked about his behaviour, he told me in no uncertain terms to *"mind your own fucking business, it's nothing about you being here for"*. Snoop clearly feels that this demonstration has nothing to do with the function of the game and therefore he does not wish to discuss it with me. This made me realise that the players are tolerant of my role in being a 'cheerleader' for their accounts of their behaviour, rather than an impartial observer of all their behaviour, whether or not it fits into the function of the game. [45]

Locker Room:

After allowing three goals in close succession [goalie] is really angry. He is shouting from the crease over to the bench at the defencemen and asking whether they are awake. He is frustrated with Elroy and Trenter out injured and shouts to them on the end of the bench *"Enjoying your fucking beer boys? watching us get fucked right in the ass.* " Elroy and Trenter are visibly upset as they have been vocal in not enjoying being able to take a role on the ice. The whistle blows for the end of the period and [goalie] is one of the first off the ice. About one foot away from me, he baseball swings his goalie stick into the stick wall and shouts *"fucking fucking bastards"* as he repeatedly smacks his broken stuck before throwing it to the side where it grazes my arm as it flies past me. I remain silent and walk around the corner to write

[45] Incidences such as this reminded me that despite the time spent with players in their own social environments and their acceptance of me both at the rink and socially, they still perceived the focus of my research as being specifically about the violence during the game and were not keen for me to understand or observe their other incidents. While I was accepted backstage, I was not expected to make note of backstage behaviour or question them on this. While this was disheartening in many ways as it made me question how I would uncover 'real' behaviour (like I might have done if my research were covert), it also reminded me that I had still observed backstage behaviour that had not been seen by other researchers and despite Snoop being unwilling to discuss this with me, I was still able to observe and analyse this behaviour due to the access that I had gained.

fieldnotes out of sight and hearing of the players. I'm fearful that if I go into the locker room when they are reacting like this, I will be restricted from the access I already have. This behaviour is not in the view of the majority of the fans and is completely at odds with player accounts that violence is functional and retains a purpose restricted to the ice surface.

On the Ice Surface:

I've noticed a pattern that every time Sherman tries a skill move and fails that he immediately reacts in an aggressive manner. It has been easier to spot over recent games and I have noticed that he often over-reacts to his frustration in such an extreme manner that the referees have been calling him on each infringement. Today he got lucky on exiting the sin bin and received a tape to tape pass, catching the Blades on a line change. Heading over to their goal and with plenty of opportunity to score he loses his footing and slips on the ice. The Blades fans all cheer, jeering at him and the Bears fans make disappointed sounds. On leaving the ice, Sherman instigates a fight with one of the Blades players who was leaving the ice. Stopping short of a full fight with an unwilling opponent, Sherman shoves him a few times and ends up straight back in the sin bin on a roughing call. He smashes his stick on the plexi glass in the sin bin and Bubba delivers a fresh stick over to the penalty box for him and tells him to '*calm the fuck down.*' This is just one example as with the others it seems that Sherman does not want to lose face when he does not execute a skill play and feels the need to compensate for this by demonstrating his physical prowess in another form. What function does this serve for him? Or is he even aware of it?

These three examples are just some of hundreds that I recorded in my fieldnotes and observed during games. I spoke to Bullet about aggression and violence in the sport:

> *You know, we all stick with this idea that we are only violent for the cause of the game and we are the softest guys on the ice, but I can tell you that despite being the softest person off the ice, I've punched my fair share of locker walls, fair share of doors and I'm stupid for that. When I'm frustrated and pumped on the adrenaline of the game, it's just not a good mix for me. I punched a wall switch once and had to have nine stitches in my hand, I got pissed at the aggressive role they wanted me to play and I'm not into that, but I dealt with it by punching something, how fucked up is that? It gets you though, the whole feeling, it's maddening. I also had to have five stitches because I snapped my stick in half and threw it and it hit me in my ear. It's because I get frustrated and don't want to take it out on other people, just on inanimate objects, it's pretty stupid. It gets frustrating on your body and you want to take that frustration out. I don't feel good about it though. I'm beyond embarrassed and ashamed when my wife sees me perform like that it's not acceptable outside of the hockey context. Never, ever acceptable. I'm a better man than that.*
> Bullet – Interview.

Bullet's candid response about his aggressive displays of violence is interesting. As a family man with a wife and child, he demonstrates awareness that violence is not acceptable outside of the hockey context but was honest enough to admit to losing his temper and injuring himself. It is also interesting in the way that he frames this behaviour as not being the example of masculinity that he would wish to show his wife. In saying that '*I'm a better man than that*', it appears that Bullet is saying that a better man can control these violent outbursts. While some players frame their

masculinity in terms of violent behaviour, or tolerating injuries but continuing to play the game, Bullet frames his masculinity in terms of being able to control his temper and minimise any aggression off the ice surface.

Red Mist and The Switch

Extreme levels of anger and feelings of aggression are often referred to among players by two distinct terms; 'Red Mist' and 'The Switch'. The concept of a 'red mist' is a term which dates back to the 1800s and can signal either the effects of a rush of blood to the head clouding vision and feeling of anger, or the enjoyment that spectators feel of watching blood mist into the air during a tough fight. The switch relates to pressing a light switch - the idea that violence and aggression can be turned on or off like a simple switch. Many players who consider themselves to be fighters explain that in order to use violence they need to flip a switch before they 'go'. Many explain that their tolerance for the switch changes over time and over the course of their career. Players give repeated accounts of the concepts of both red mist and the switch and of the need of these emotional elements in order to perform the physical act of fighting as part of their role on the ice. While some players felt that dressing for a match in uniform was part of their preparation for that violent role or psyching themselves up with angry and aggressive music[46] prior to the game, others mentioned that they needed to be angry with another player in order to flip that switch and react in of a physical manner. 'Red mist' is also a pervasive

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[46] See accounts earlier in this chapter of the role of dressing in a uniform as preparation for violent behaviour and in particular Bandit's accounts of putting on a role and flicking the switch.

justification for over-stepping the boundaries, being used by players in an attempt to neutralise the high levels of violence in one of the video excerpts I showed them a fight that continued after the initial five minute fighting penalty was given and the players exited the penalty box to fight a second time:

> *…the red mist was there and he didn't get a chance to get his release on the ice and hurt him so it carried over and once they were out of the bin they needed to go, they needed to find some release for that tension and knew that if they slugged it out on the ice then they would get it out of their systems.*
> Donny – Visual Interview

Neither 'red mist' nor a 'switch' had been referred to explicitly as justification or neutralisation of a fight in the manner that the other elements of 'the code' discussed in the previous chapter had been. This in part is due to the non-functional nature of this form of violence compared to the relatively neat neutralisations given by 'The Code'. If one accepts this level of violence purely in terms of the release it gives the players, how then can it be considered to be beneficial for the game? This is an interesting point that highlights one of the ways that the code falls apart in terms of providing an all-encompassing excuse for the level of violence in the game. In this and many other ways, as demonstrated throughout this chapter, players are keen to talk about justifications that are seen as functional or financial and are listed in the code; however, they are often reticent to discuss anger, aggression if it has an emotional context. The indication being that losing control must be seen as being a rational and a functional act which would make it noble and strong, rather than 'emotional' which might make it seem weak, or un-masculine. Players seem to be happy to talk about a "controlled loss of control" such as that discussed by Hayward (2002), but less willing to talk about uncontrolled losses of control.

Coping Mechanisms

It is here that attention must be paid to the work outlined in Chapter Five, on the culture of the hockey community. The behaviour outlined in the earlier chapter giving an account of the drug, alcohol, sexual and competitive behaviour of players is not only of use in describing the culture, but it is important in terms of the ways in which it may provide a way of coping with the stresses of the job of performing hockey. These mechanisms of coping are not unusual to hockey, and there is a great deal of literature, such as that discussed in Chapter Three in relation to other occupational subcultures such as the police (See Brown, 1996; Reiner, 2000 and Chan, 1997) as well as other athletic subcultures where hegemonic forms of masculinity are valued (Including Brown *et* al, 1996; Collinson, 1988; Dunning 1999; Endreson & Olweus, 2005; Muir & Seitz, 2004; and Pappas *et al* 2004).

Despite players' eagerness to talk about the beneficial elements of their physical role in the team, once one establishes the opportunity for discussions on the negative aspects of the sport on a one-to-one basis, In these situations, players admitted to being more honest in terms of the negative aspects of the role and the way that they use a series of coping mechanisms to deal with the pressure. As discussed in my earlier research (2009), several enforcers in the EIHL discussed what they now perceived to be 'grooming' for their physical role by coaches acting 'in loco parentis' which often went beyond the limits of legality. This story is echoed in the account of sexual and physical abuse in North American junior hockey of Laura Robinson (1987) as well as the biographies of several high profile players such as Theo Fleury (2010). The negative effects of fighting in terms of the physical damage to the body may be partially dealt with in terms of prescription or illegal drug use, the numbing

of pain with alcohol or the desire to be successful in other areas of their life, through competition between team mates in other sports, or with women.

Drug use is a major issue in the professional sport field globally. Along with biographic accounts of dependence and addiction there are also numerous media accounts of the over-dependence on forms of prescription pain-killers. As I write up this research, a lawsuit has been filed against the New York Rangers organisation following the death by an overdose of their infamous enforcer Derek Boogaard in 2011 (Branch, 2013). Boogaard, who came under fire from some of the media for running a summer training camp for junior hockey players in how to fight on the ice (see Canada.com, accessed 2009), had been treated for an addiction to Oxycodone or 'hillbilly heroin' which had continually been prescribed by the Rangers' medical team. His father has been vocal in demanding that the hockey culture be held to account for the damage it does to the bodies of players, leading to them being prescribed high doses of medication and at the same time (Branch 2014), being encouraged to continue with playing their part on the team and continually putting their bodies in the line of fire. During my observation of the team, a high amount of seemingly-legitimate prescribing of painkillers and other drugs was observed, as well as several hushed conversations and rapidly closed doors of a large amount of additional medication given by the team doctors or obtained by other means. The situation in the UK's EIHL is far less severe than that of certain other leagues such as the NHL; however, there remains a dependence on medication to deal with the injuries caused by the nature of the physical role. As mentioned in Chapter Five and with reference to Monaghan (2006) and Hughes and Coakley (1991), athletes tend to differentiate between the good use of drugs and use that is damaging.

Also prevalent is the use of alcohol, both as a celebrant of a win and an anaesthetic to a loss or to pain. As mentioned in Chapter Five, alcohol use is prevalent in the aptly nicknamed 'beer-league', with games, team-bonding sessions, fan contact and sponsor events revolving around the consumption of large amounts of alcohol. The binge drinking culture often consistent in young adults, similar in age to the players, is also prevalent among the players, who will often drink to excess at least three or four times a week. There are beers of celebration after a win, beers of commiseration after a loss, beers to make a long road trip home more bearable and beers to give courage before social events. There is also a culture of competitive drinking; as with 'juice-bitch' (see Chapter Five), competition is everywhere in this team sport. Goal scoring is seen as a competition, fighting is a competition, drinking is a competition and success with members of the opposite success is seen as a competition. It was not unusual for players to keep tabs of the number of women who they had performed certain sexual acts with and award points for the perceived attractiveness and unlikeliness of their behaviour, along with points for the most extreme sexual acts. Stories abound in the locker room as to who can evidence particular behaviour, with whom and in what way. A culture that is highly competitive encourages other forms of competition as a way of bonding as a team and in order to demonstrate the dominant forms of masculinity, such as alcohol use, physical prowess and success with the opposite sex. Competition can thus be seen as a coping mechanism albeit one which has the potential to be further damaging to the players themselves.

It is also apparent that many of the players are addicted to the fun aspects of the game; this is in part a coping mechanism of the tougher parts of the role and in part a realisation of the shortness of this celebrity aspect of their culture. Players often justify their over-reliance on alcohol, drugs, women and the VIP treatment that they

receive at local bars and clubs on the basis of the benefit of being able to get away with often deviant behaviour that they would not get away with when they are working as a hod-carrier back in Canada over the summer, or if their girlfriends or parents were around. There is an emphasis on the time-limited nature of this culture, with players aware that once they have retired they will not get VIP access, free drinks and offers of the company of many women as their cultural capital will diminish as their ability to demonstrate physical prowess on the ice expires. This addiction to 'fun' or to the drug of competitiveness is all the more sacred as players have been 'let off the leash' and are allowed an interruption to normal civilised behaviour for the period of time that they can maintain a role. Several players have expressed concern over the limited time that they have to enjoy the culture. As Cody explained *"nobody says your name and cheers in the office"* and as echoed by Elroy *"I'm a fucking nobody back in Canada, here, I get to be a God for a few months."* Others put it a little more simply "*chicks – good; hockey – good; fighting – good; beer-good"* (Sherman). Being a big fish in a little pond by being local celebrities may have an impact on the perceived fun of their role on the ice.

The Myth of Fun

'Fun' is an element of the culture that is enjoyed; it is in part a reward for behaviour, in part a coping mechanism for the difficulties of the physical and competitive nature of the occupational culture. It is a way in which the players can cope with the fears of particular fights, particular games, or the limited nature of their career, a way to forget for a while. It can also be seen as a bit of a myth, as became apparent in one of my interviews with Bandit. He explained that his on-ice bravado and his social character as a party guy was actually his way of dealing with what he considered to

be his inadequacies in other areas of his life, such as academic success, business-sense and his relationship with his parents and immediate family. He expressed constantly feeling like he was a disappointment to people and said that he dealt with this by building up a character as a team-guy, a protector and a true character on and off the ice. He was the most successful with women on the team partly due to his appearance but also due to his dominant yet flirtatious character, he prided himself on being a ladies' man and on the scores of women who he slept with each season and the adoration of his fans. Bandit increasingly opened-up his emotions over the course of many long interviews as the season progressed. He expressed concerns over his abilities, the root of these in terms of his perceived lack of parental affection and the abuse that he suffered in junior hockey.

> *It's not just hedonism you realise, you could look at all the chicks and drugs and beer and shit and think I only want to enjoy all I can get away with before I retire or get injured, but that's not it. When I'm drunk, or when I'm telling a story of a great fight or a filthy lay then it's not about enjoyment, it's my way of forgetting about all my other inadequacies. I get to pretend to be some kind of filthy deviant dominant lothario but in reality I'm still some shit-scared kid who thinks someone's going to catch me out on it and call me on all this shit soon.*
> Bandit – Interview.

Bandit admitted to regularly using not only prescription drugs, but also illegal drugs such as speed, amyl nitrate, cocaine and ketamine. In part, he explained, this was to numb the pain of his broken knuckles from punching, his constant headaches caused by repeated concussions as a fighter in junior hockey and the recurring knee injury he suffered; but also in part to forget who he really was and convince himself that all the culture was real and that he was to be respected and worshipped.

I didn't even enjoy all the drinking, the parties the women, I'd be doing stuff because I was meant to be doing it, meant to be enjoying it, but I was numb. Yeah sure, the sex, the partying they reward your success as a player, but that's not what I'm actually seeking. I'm seeking the approval I'll never get for being me.
Bandit – Interview.

It was relatively unusual for a player to be as frank with me about their own emotions as Bandit was. Bandit in particular, showed an interest in my research and was keen for me to understand the real nature of hockey culture, beyond that merely displayed on the ice, unlike Snoop, earlier this chapter. Being closer to retirement than many players and with a developing interest in the negative aspects of hockey, such as abuse in minor hockey and brain injuries from repeat concussions; he was keen on all aspects of academic research into the subject area, already communicating with Boston University to register his interest to donate his own brain for study after his death. Bandit, who admitted to one time being very positive about the cultural aspects of the sport such as the perks he received from his role in the form of alcohol, women, drugs and minor-celebrity status, admitted to becoming increasingly 'depressed' at the state of the sport and concerned for his future once he retired from the sport. This was a matter of concern to me, following the high profile suicides of several recently-retired NHL players, mentioned earlier in the thesis. This attitude to the positive deviance of sports is not limited to hockey, with Hughes and Coakley (1991) finding similar accounts in other sporting environments.

It was in considering the stories of Bandit, that I realised how close I had become close to many of the players, particularly those who were particularly forthcoming with their life stories and how difficult I would find it to leave the field. In practice, this was easier than I had expected, with the natural cut-off point of the end of a

hockey season, the majority of import players travelled back to North America and the majority of British players gained work elsewhere or travelled for the summer, making the end point far more natural than I had expected. I have maintained email contact with many of my participants and look forward to hearing their thoughts on this thesis once published. It is not only the emotions of the players that I had to analyse here, but also those of myself as a researcher who became friends with many of the participants. I felt many of the roller-coaster emotions of the wins, the losses, the injuries, the highs and the lows that they did, which has become increasingly apparent in reanalysing my fieldnotes after the events.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the emotion of playing hockey and of the culture. In doing so it highlights the importance of not simply accepting the function of 'The Code' as outlined in journalistic accounts and discussed in Chapter Six. The limitations of the 'The Code' are dealt with for their ignorance of the agency of hockey players, for the involvement of emotions and individual actions on the violent nature of the sport.

By discussing the mimetic spectacle of the sport, the enjoyment of working on the edges of deviance, the deification of the celebrity of hockey fighters and the various positive and negative emotions involved in not only the playing of the sport, but in the culture that supports sport at this level, it is possible to see beyond the excuses and neutralisations provided by players in reference to 'The Code' and to discover some of the broader elements involved.

The breadth of data that has been collected allows not only player accounts to be uncovered, but also actual behaviour, individual biographies, emotions, agency and structure to be uncovered and analysed in a manner that would not have been possible without combining the variety of methods undertaken. The discussion chapter which follows will attempt to draw on the similarities and differences of these three findings chapters in order to make sense of the themes and patterns that have emerged from the date represented here.

Chapter Eight

Discussion

> "Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting."
> George Orwell, 1945.

Summary of the thesis

The research aims of the thesis focussed on the broad understanding of the occupational culture of professional hockey players. Through the three findings chapters presented the following aims have been considered.

- To describe and analyse key dimensions of the occupational culture(s) of professional hockey players.
- To explore the sources and social processes by which such cultures emerge and are sustained.
- To elicit retrospective accounts of motives for violent behaviour and justifications for its use.
- To examine the relationship of cultural traits with players behaviour on and off the ice

This thesis presents a cultural analysis of violence within the professional sport of hockey. The importance of the use of ethnography in understanding cultural accounts has been explained throughout the thesis in regards to the different types of understanding gained from each type of observation, conversation or interview. As the first ethnography of the sport to gain full unrestricted access to the sanctuary of the locker room as well as the team bench during games, I was able to engage in the culture of hockey players in a unique way.

Professional hockey has been presented as a sport in which high levels of violence are displayed. Hockey is unique in its legitimisation of the fist-fight within the game and this has been justified by players, as well as previous literature, as serving the purpose of reducing other incidences of violence in the game. Although there is no doubt that bare-knuckle fist-fights are neither legal outside of the game, nor within the game, they remain 'tacitly permitted' by the imposition of only a small team penalty and in terms how both the news and fictional media present fighting as being a part of the game. The social and legal aspects of this have changed in other contact sports. Rugby Union, for example, has largely eradicated fist fights between players through the impositions of penalties and punishments which deter their use. While other sports have attempted to clean-up the violent nature of the game, this has not occurred in hockey to date, making it a unique field of study.

The unique nature of violence in hockey is such that it is important to consider whether this behaviour is labelled as being 'criminal', 'deviant', or otherwise by participants as well as those who observe the game. This study demonstrates that violent behaviour is not labelled as criminal by those who use it, but it is inherently deviant in the sense that it is labelled as thus by its punishment within the rules of the game. This thesis has therefore drawn on both sociological and criminological

traditions in developing an understanding of this behaviour. An understanding of the social interaction of those engaged in the sport, and of the ways in which the sport is socially constructed has therefore been an ongoing focus.

With deliberately broad research themes and questions, this thesis has been able to allow themes to emerge from the data and has given an account of the culture, the cultural codes contained in the sport and of the emotions experienced by players in three findings chapters. For this discussion, these themes are expanded upon and discussed in relation to one another to provide a full account of the research field which will be discussed in four sections. The first section develops an understanding of the numerous types of hockey violence and how players account for its continuance in the sport, addressing the broad themes of 'function' and 'finance' that underlie the many elements of the code. The second section focuses on the wider culture of the sport and discusses some of the other accounts of violence that do not form part of 'The Code'. Emotion and cultural solidarity are key concepts here incorporating a wide ranging discussion of the culture of the sport. The third section examines the usefulness of ethnographic methods in understanding culture and the extent to which the conceptual scaffold that was presented in Chapter Two enables us to understand the culture of the sport. A final section takes a brief look at future avenues for research in this area as well as potential implications of this research.

What is hockey violence and in what ways do players justify violent behaviour on the ice?

As this thesis has demonstrated, the concepts of legality and deviance are blurred in this sport where acts have thus far avoided official labelling. It is important to

question whether hockey players actually are to be considered as criminal, or deviant, or whether they are simply conforming to the culture as it is, regardless of the legitimacy of that group. The presence of large amounts of alcohol, both legal and illicit drug-taking and womanising may attract a deviant label and there is a clear thrill, as demonstrated above, in getting away with deviant acts away from the ice as well as during the game. The deviant thrill in getting away with things socially and at work can be likened to that experienced by school boys looking to expand the boundaries of behaviour in the eye of their teacher. During the game, players do this with referees, trying to avoid detection for acts when the referee has his gaze elsewhere, and it could also be considered to be deviant to retaliate or to incite violence during a game. Players have made it clear, as stated above, that there is little joy in a fight that is pre-arranged and prescribed, which is similar to the opinions of spectators in my MSc research (2010) and in sham fights in wrestling and other contact sports (Barthes, 1972; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). The enjoyment of fighting and violence is at its highest when it serves some purpose, involves a range of emotions and feelings and when it is not accepted as part of the game. This has much in common with the concept of positive deviance as named by Hughes and Coakley (1991) in that the levels of deviance displayed serve a purpose for the team. There are of course similarities here with other accounts of occupational cultures, such as that of the police referenced in Chapter Three.

The typology of violence as presented in Chapter Five considerably broadens that provided by Smith (1983) that has been cited by others. In particular, it acknowledges forms of violence that some (particularly some of the predominantly male hockey writers) may not count as violence. According to the typology I have presented, the wider culture of the sport and verbal aggression also constitute

violence. Even without the aggression that signifies intent, it is argued that much 'acting-out' of masculine culture can be seen, on some level, as violent or potentially inciting of violent acts. The five-part typology incorporates many forms of violence from those which are seen to be commonplace to more seriously defined acts of criminal violence:

1. Verbal aggression and physical horseplay.
2. Legitimate violence during the game.
3. The Sanctioned violence of the fist fight.
4. Illegal or unacceptable violence
5. Criminal violence

Players, both in this study and in wider media, refer to the unwritten rules that both govern and justify the use of violence on the ice simply as 'The Code'. In Chapter Six, I divided the concept of the code into two meta-themes, those pertaining to the *function* of the sport, and those driven by financial imperatives to attract spectators to a marginalised sport. This section examines the effectiveness of these two meta-excuses in legitimising the use of violence in the sport.

'Function' as a neutralisation of violence

The use of the excuse of function is prevalent not only in existing academic literature, as explained in Chapter Three, but also in the media accounts of violence in the sport. As this ethnographic account has demonstrated, players are keen to offer first-hand accounts, couching their explanations for violence using terms such as function, the code and pressure-valve, presenting a pervasive account that violent acts, specifically the fist fight, are actually beneficial to the game. These excuses of functionality are explained in terms such as retaliation, intimidation, and protection

of skill players. The use of visual tools of elicitation in interviews with players encouraged explanations of these kinds of 'learned excuses' (Sykes and Matza, 1957) that emerged from their description of behaviour and, in the case of videos of their own behaviour, as retrospective accounts of motive. For example, the account of a fight in Chapter Six where Trigger was checked from behind by Barnaby who remained unpunished by the referee for the incident, players were keen to explain that the fight was entirely due to retaliation from Sherman towards Barnaby. In addition to retaliation, this was also explained as being an important way to protect skill players. Trigger is not a designated fighter, and at that point was the highest scoring player on the team, had he been injured by the check from Barnaby then the entire team would have suffered. The fist fight instigated by Sherman was retaliatory, in order to protect a skill player, and was a way of sending a message to Barnaby and others that it is not appropriate to behave in this manner towards a skill player. This is the kind of response you might expect from players accounting for their actions and certainly something that I heard a great deal from the players. What the visual interviews would not have given me without the use of ethnographic observation was an understanding of other issues at play such as honour, respect, the importance of winning, masculinity and pride.

Many of the 'learned excuses' of the code such as fighting being a pressure-valve, to deter illegal play, protect skill players, retaliate, and enact retribution, can be seen, as both proactive and retrospective defences of behaviour. These can be seen as denial of injury, victims, and responsibility (Sykes and Matza, 1957) and are often explained in defence of necessity or normality (Klenowski, 2012). These neutralisations are learned from shared interactions with a group (Cressey, 1953), and are not unique to each player. The code is therefore pervasive in providing

players with a language of justifications for the violence. Even in the unwritten form, ignoring books, the media and hockey films that reference this supposedly unwritten code, players are aware of the existence of these rationalisations through their proximity to one another and the shared interactions involved in the sport.

A unique contribution of this thesis is that, rather than simply explaining the code in the words of the players (which in itself has not been undertaken in other academic research), it also examines other aspects of the culture that explain or rationalise the occupational culture and violent behaviour of players. This research documents motives, rationalisations and neutralisations of players, in addition to addressing where the validity of these arguments has been questioned. One of the most clear of these is in relation to the above mentioned excuses that the fist fight in hockey prevents other violent incidents. If the genuine reason for engaging in a fist fight is in order to deter other forms of violent play, then why does this need to be done with the threat or use of violence? In a similar pattern to understanding the concept of self-defence in other forms of violence, both sporting and otherwise, it is important to clarify at what point *defensive* behaviour becomes *offensive*. This is very much in the eyes of those who are involved and while this ethnography has been able to uncover what players from one team understand and experience, it is not able to explain these actions from the viewpoint of those from the opposing team. If each action has a reaction from the opposition, at what point do players learn to stop retaliating from earlier infringements of the code? This emerged in the discussion with players in relation to the game against the Knights where Sherman and Jefferson were reacting to challenges by the Knights' enforcer on Vern, who had previously instigated an original attack on the Knights' key player but had turtled when challenged to a fight. It is easy to understand here that in the midst of a game, it can

be difficult to pull-apart different actions and reactions and explain these in the clear terms that players try to after the event and in interviews. Players admit to seeing events differently in video feedback during the visual interviews than they did during the event and acknowledge the usefulness of the overarching concept of 'The Code' in excusing a wide variety of behaviour that in another light would not be acceptable.

The Code's defences of intimidation and sending a message can thus be seen to be an offensive form of defence and show clear similarities to other sporting and non-sporting violent contests, as explained by the need to demonstrate emotional dominance (Collins, 2008; Jackson-Jacobs, 2013). As explained in Chapter Five, the threat of violence as a form of intimidation is just as likely to cause a fracas as it is to deter potential violence. This leads to the acceptance that intimidation cannot be viewed as a violence reduction tool, despite players' claims to the contrary, a point emerging from their repeated conversations and the viewing of audio-visual material after the event. In a similar manner, the justifications of the use of violence to draw a reaction penalty, or to swing the momentum of the game, given as justifications for violent acts by players, similarly incite retaliation and the attention of the referees. While these acts may still serve a function as game playing – as one team's desire to win the game - it cannot be seen as functional in reducing violence or preventing harm. It is important therefore to acknowledge that while some of the justifications of the code have a clear harm-reduction role, others remain in the code in order to legitimise violence with a clear aim of winning the game and exerting dominance over the opposition. This has similarities with the emotional dominance discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Collins (2008) and Jackson-Jacobs (2013).

This study of one team is not able, and is certainly does not intend, to examine whether the fist fight is functional as a way of reducing other forms of illegal

violence such as stick assaults, as no empirical comparison has been made between leagues that tolerate or criminalise fighting. What is clear is that players rely on the justifications or neutralisation of 'The Code' in order to explain violent contact after its commission. The focus of this thesis is not to ascertain whether the code can be empirically analysed, but rather to note that the code is an enduring language of justification among players. The issue of neutralisation is more appropriately applied to the question of to what degree hockey players are committed to and embedded within their subculture of violence, which has been a key point of discussion throughout the thesis. Neutralisation of violent conduct enables players to avoid a criminal label and allows them to drift in and out of 'deviant' behaviour, as described by Matza (1964), and this provides a less deterministic analysis of subcultural traits.

Players themselves, as well as the wider culture of the sport defend the existence of fist-fights and of dedicated enforcers who police the game due to the fact that referees are unable to deal with every infringement that occurs on the ice. The inability of referees to police every incident leads to players taking responsibility for retaliation that might have otherwise been dealt with by the imposition of a time penalty on the offender. With a typical game observed in the EIHL already imposing 25 stoppages in play for penalty calling, there may be an inability to accept this among spectators if there were more interruptions for the referees to punish each infringement of the rules. A key legitimisation of the continuation of the fist fight in the sport is that players skate around an enclosed rink at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour, shooting pucks at up to 100 miles per hour, carrying weapons in the form of sticks and skates. Under these conditions it is clear to see the potential for violent altercations - deliberate or otherwise. Referees as human actors are not able to effectively call each infringement of the rules in these circumstances which have led

to their tacit acceptance of the role of the enforcer and of the fist-fight as being a tool of punishment. Coaches, players and referees all acknowledge this, as evidenced earlier in the thesis and in the pilot research, with referees often encouraging players to fight as a pressure-valve and pre-calling five minute penalties to players if they engage in a fight at that point.

In sport then, violence that is viewed as functional can often be seen as dysfunctional on closer examination (Gruneau, 1975). Of course, this is the case with many other forms of criminality or deviance and the pervasiveness of the code in justifying violence has much in common with earlier subcultural work (see Cohen, 1955; as well as Collins, 2008; and Jackson-Jacobs, 2013).

'Finance' as a neutralisation of violence

As discussed in Chapter Five, a structural explanation of violence is that of the financial imperative of a professional spectator sport. Violence in the sport, specifically the fist-fight, is seen as financially functional both to team owners, keen to increase their revenue from attendance at games and players who were keen to ensure their future financial stability by satisfying those that pay their wages. Hockey is a marginal sport in the UK and essential to its continuance as a financial entity is broadening the potential spectator pool. One of the ways that this has been done traditionally has been to advertise the use of violence and fighting in the game (see appendix 5, figures 2-5 for examples). If these initiatives are successful in attracting a broader group of spectators who are keen to observe 'red mist' then it is important that the product on the ice demonstrates this behaviour.

Players uniformly acknowledge the role that violence, and specifically fist fights play in attracting an audience, however, they often maintain a personal distaste for what

some have termed ‘sideshow’ violence - the carnivalesque demonstrations of planned fist-fights. Players were publicly critical of particular enforcers from other teams, explaining that they did not view this kind of behaviour as necessary violence. When fights were clearly staged - whilst spectators applauded and cheered, it was noticeably quiet on the bench, the hitting of sticks on the board and fist-bumps usually associated with appreciation of a team member were absent. In interviews players explained their shame that violence for entertainment purposes draws attention away from what they feel is justified violence that serves a function for the game. There are clear issues for players here as demonstrated by Bandit who was clearly ashamed of some injuries caused by stage fights, in sharp contrast to the pride he demonstrated over his injuries sustained in righteous fights to protect a team-mate. However, while players acknowledge that unplanned fights within the game (for example the fight between Barnaby and Sherman detailed in Chapter Five) would not be necessary if referees policed the game effectively, they still acknowledge the importance of these kinds of fights in keeping spectators happy.

Players thus accept the occurrence of the fist-fight in particular as serving a functional or financial purpose for the team or the club and express most satisfaction when both of these criteria are met. Commodification of players and of the sport in the UK at this level is therefore integral to the issue of fighting. It is essential to address the issue of power imbalance here and question who is gaining status in the form of money or power from players’ use of violence on the ice. Of particular interest to the players (and as outlined in Chapter Three to the anti-fighting brigade such as Proteau, 2011), is the issue of who is held responsible for punishments received for engaging in violent behaviour. As Chapters Five and Six explain, violence in the form of borderline-illegal hits, checks and fist-fights is often

encouraged, or explicitly ordered by not the player himself but the coach, management of owners of the team. However, punishments for these rule infringements are almost universally personal to the individual players in the form of suspensions or financial penalties. Players express their distaste of this situation but did not see any other viable alternative to this process. Attention has been given to this, most particularly in the NHL in North America (Ingham, 1975; Proteau, 2011) where some have challenged this unequal relationship. What ultimately seems to stop players seeking an alternative for this process is the fact that it would be impossible to ascertain whether a player himself had decided to act, or whether that act had been tacitly or explicitly ordered by a superior. Furthermore, there can be seen a form of social stratification of the players in relation to their use of violence and the eventual attention that this behaviour receives from rule-makers and referees. Those whose role it is to engage their physical attributes in the form of fist-fights, the enforcers, can be viewed as blue-collar workers, whereas those who demonstrate skills in goal-scoring or keeping avoid the gaze of the referees and pay no penalty for their actions. If it is only the blue-collar players that receive a penalty for their actions because of the role in which they are cast, even when their behaviour is used for the protection of the other players, then there is a further economic stratification within the team.

As already explained, the period in which I conducted my ethnographic observation was a time of great change for the sport, with an increased awareness of the potential damage caused by contact sports in the form of concussions specifically. The awareness of CTE had a clear impact on how players viewed the effect of the sport on their bodies, signalling a change in their acceptance of this. Hockey is a small global community and many of the players were acquainted with the various high-

profile NHL players who committed suicide, or who were later diagnosed with CTE (Branch, 2011). It will be interesting to revisit the participants in the future to establish whether their opinions have changed as an understanding of the consequences of concussion increases and the players themselves age and retire.

If fighting remains in the sport purely for financial reasons, discounting any claims of it serving a different function in the game, then the existence of injuries during fights becomes more critical. If we accept not only immediate physical injuries, but also long term injuries and psychological consequences for that behaviour, specifically when that behaviour has been explicitly encouraged by their employers then we must ensure we critique the unequal structural dimensions of power and money in the sport. My pilot MSc study with spectators demonstrates that fans are beginning to question whether they should be cheering and supporting this behaviour if it has such a strong negative impact on those who engage in it. The contrasting accounts of Don Cherry and Adam Proteau as outlined in Chapters Two and Six demonstrates some of the broader discussions in the media in this changing environment and particular leagues such as the NHL have responded with a more cautious approach to fighting in the game.

Beyond 'The Code' – examining other explanations of violence within the sport.

If one is to accept the accounts of the pro-fighting media such as Don Cherry and Bernstein (2006) then analysis of fighting in the sport would stop at the point where the code was outlined and would not engage with any examination of the boundaries and limitations of the code discussed above. This thesis has outlined several other dimensions to the continuation of violence and deviance in the occupational culture

of the sport. These can be seen to fall into two categories: those involving emotions; and those that relate to the culture of the sport itself.

Emotions

The role of emotion in understanding the seductive nature of crime, deviance and physical play is clear from the cultural criminological literature examined in Chapter Three as well as that demonstrated throughout the thesis in the behaviour of players. Physical thrills are apparent throughout the ethnographic account, in the excitement of the game and of winning, as well as in the physical dominance of an opponent. As explained by Elias and Dunning (1986), Gruneau and Whitson (1993) and Duquin (2000) and others, there can be seen to be clear cathartic effects of physical game play. The mimetic experience of war and battle was apparent in accounts of 'powder-games' with the strong support of fans white-out of the rink and the drumming and cheering of their support along with the winner-takes-all nature of particular games. Players' demonstrated particular enjoyment when they had somehow avoided the gaze of the referee, as evidenced in Chapter Seven by Bullet's 'butt-check' which not only led to no negative punishment but also contributed to his goal scoring and the eventual winning of the game. It is stories such as this that gain legendary status in the locker room for many months after the event.

As one would expect, there are heightened senses of excitement and enjoyment when one adds in the presence of an audience. Players spoke of the electric effect of a large and vocal crowd in building up their emotions before and during games. In fact, even negative attention from opposition fans, as experienced by Sherman in Chapter Six, serves to excite players and encourage particular forms of behaviour. White-outs of rink, the rousing effect of music played in the rink, the celebrations of fireworks, lasers and congratulatory music when there is a win, each affect those who

view the game as well as the players themselves. Players physically demonstrate their excitement with loud whooping, the banging of sticks on the ice, fist-pumps, jumping in the air when they score and group hugs. Even the borderline violent behaviour of ass-slapping, knuckle-rubbing and face-washing are seen as positive congratulatory behaviour that incites a feeling of wellbeing and success. While juice-bitch and game-playing in practice sessions is of course fun, there would be a very different form of fun throughout the game if spectators were no longer present. Being a minor celebrity within the sport attracts a great deal of perks which are enjoyable for players. In particular, the perks attributed to fighters or enforcers on the team acts as positive reinforcement for the physical part of their job.

Emotions experienced by players and told out in stories and interviews are not all positive however, a great deal of fear, anxiety and depression is experienced by players, despite their initial reticence to admit to this. As stated in Chapter Four, players often openly ridicule security arrangements intended to protect them during the game, such as the NHL five-step precautions to eliminate the harm of head-shots. Despite this open ridicule, players personally acknowledged to me their fear in relation to serious injuries in interviews and conversations. Despite the front of fearlessness displayed by players in public, they often display anxious or fearful behaviour when confronted by unexpected outbursts of violent behaviour. The fight that occurred in the training session as well as the stick-swinging and wall-punching that accompanied frustrating games in the period breaks were particularly noticeable, with players retreating to private areas away from the team in order to avoid the wrath of a player. Violence as displayed in these circumstances has a very different feel to it than the violence exhibited on the ice against an opposing team and this is further evidenced by the players' general reticence to discuss these actions with me.

While a spectator of the sport may only view the elements of fun and excitement demonstrated on the ice, the understanding that you gain from observing players in other areas opens up an entirely different viewpoint. Fun in the sport, can be seen if not as a myth, then definitely as something that it exaggerated in the retrospective telling of player accounts. While players in media accounts are keen to explain that violence always remains on the ice and is necessary for the game, the evidence from the observation is that this is not always the case. Players engage in acts of violence in the locker room and away from the rink, but these are never discussed as being a part of the game and tend to be glossed-over or flat-out denied. There were times when it was evident that some of the less physically strong players were scared of enforcers on the team themselves, specifically Sherman - as evidenced by the space he is given in the locker room and team bench. In interviews with the media, these same players will proclaim that Sherman is a ‘teddy-bear’ off the ice and that violence is all part of the game, despite clearly having evidence to the contrary. The impression management (see Goffman, 1961) role of the team is thus maintained by all the players, despite their experience of negative behaviour.

The apparent need for coping mechanisms such as alcohol, drug use and womanising is also evident. The use of these is not simply a way of maintaining cultural solidarity, or the thrill of being able to get away with this form of deviant behaviour, rather they can act as tools to help forget the negative aspects of the profession, as evidenced in Chapter Seven. There are similarities here with functional analyses of cop culture as outlined in Chapter Three (De Hann and Loader, 2002; Reiner, 2000; Waddington, 1999). This sees the telling of war stories, the exaggeration of claims and the use of emotive language as doing important work in helping police officers make sense of the more mundane and depressing aspects of their occupation. In

doing so, it provides a mutually-constructed 'veneer' of enjoyment. The banter, game-playing and team-identification behaviour which could be labelled as deviant is seen to those involved in the culture of the sport as being positive in that it reinforces the hegemonic ideology of the culture (Cressey, 1953).

It is clear that many types of emotional labour are being conducted by the players. The usually-perceived negative emotions of anger, aggression and hatred for an opponent are often rewarded by spectators and coaches which can be seen as emotional labour akin to that observed by Hochschild (1983) outlined in Chapter Two and with reference to chapters Six and Seven. In media interviews players often talk of their hatred of a particular opposition player, when in fact five minutes later they are sharing a beer behind the rink, players clearly being aware of what the fans would like to hear. The emotional work conducted with spectators after the game and during social engagements is also clear and was partly addressed by some of the players during conversations. It is when the team is losing and morale is at its lowest that this kind of emotional labour is most evident. By observing not only the games played, but also the practice games of 'shinny' in training the differences in behaviour among players due to an audience of spectators were apparent. While Goffman's account of front and backstage behaviour was of use in understanding this, it is perhaps more helpful to think of there being an infinite number of different, and often conflicting, levels of front and backstage environments for the players.

Cultural Solidarity

The culture of hockey maintains strong feeling of solidarity, similarly to that of other close occupations or in teams. The cultural traits discussed in Chapter Five specifically can be seen as a form of maintaining this social solidarity and the primary focus of working as a team with unified goals. This is maintained by players

often staying in shared accommodation, attending daily meetings and training, team talks, and social bonding sessions. There is a 'team first' ideology, an agreement to have each other's backs and to maintain the solidarity of the culture, encouraging the idea of 'one for all and all for one'. Many of the 'excuses' of violence provided by the code as examined earlier can be seen as positive to the team in terms of maintaining a group spirit and solidarity (Cressey, 1953). The role of loyalty in maintaining cultural solidarity is clear; players are expected to align their objectives with that of fans and the team management. As Ingham (1975) has noted, this culture is hegemonic for the sport.

Cultural solidarity is further maintained by the sanctification of the team space of the locker room. Austin's reinforcement that "*what goes on in the room stays in the room*" (which shares similarities with the work of Allain, 2013) is further expanded to player-only social events, which is why I was cautious only to attend those events to which I was explicitly invited. Players are cautious of outsiders and of anything that might challenge their culture and I was keen to ensure that I did not directly challenge any behaviour during my fieldwork in order to maintain my access.

A strong culture of hegemonic masculinity is evident in the sport; alcohol, sex and drugs serve a role in maintaining that masculine culture with notions of success in their use bringing status amongst the team. Solidarity within the team is framed as a masculine thing, where the importance of banter, of bonding and an ethos of protection of team mates integral to the culture. The atavistic form of masculinity whereby the team feels like an army or platoon is also evident in other intensely masculine cultures such as policing, security and the military, as well as other team sports (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993; Klein, 1989) and other groups of men (Treadwell and Garland, 2011; Winlow and Hall, 2009).

The issues of banter, or being a ‘lad’ are evident both on the ice and away from it. The derision of women and the perceived ineffectiveness of effeminate men in the game of ‘Juice-Bitch’, or by naming players as pussy, or girls is commonplace in the culture. Demonstrative masculinity requires not only being male, but also the ability to catcall, criticise and banter with other players in relation to their lack of success physically or socially. Women are placed in an inferior role and are derogated as objects. During the season I observed, many of the players kept a tally of women who they had engaged with sexually, with increased points awarded to difficult to obtain women (such as the team-owners wife or the girlfriend of another player) and for the most extreme, often deviant, sexual acts.

The development of a hyper-masculine persona, particularly for enforcers as an almost super-human hero or villain, is integral to success within the culture. The highest status is often attributed to whom demonstrates the most extreme forms of masculinity whether that is in physical behaviour on the ice, or sexual or deviant behaviour away from the rink. Showboating in particular is linked to masculinity and dominance as well as the notion of ‘risk-taking’ behaviour (See Chapter Seven).

Competitiveness does not just require a fair win, it often needs the winning of the game, by whatever means necessary - legitimate or otherwise. This contrasts directly with the justification of the code as being a fair fight and the resulting notions of honour and respect. While players might maintain the rules of engagement as outlined in the code, such as only fighting other willing combatants, and stopping when indicated by the referee; the cause of the fight does not always need to be fair in itself. Fairness if often overruled by competitiveness in sport, as indicated by George Orwell in the quote that heads this chapter.

How ethnographic methods and the conceptual framework aided my understanding of culture.

It is clear from the section above that concepts of cultural solidarity and a variety of emotional reactions to the game have an effect the prevalence of violence in the sport. This stands in contrast to player accounts of all violence in the sport being ruled by and limited to 'the code'. Throughout this thesis I have extolled the virtues of ethnographic observation in understanding particular cultures and its use is demonstrated here. By combining observation with extensive interviews and the use of visual elicitation I have been able to understand the limitations of qualitative interviews alone in examining social behaviour. Even more so have I been reminded of the limitations of the existing empirical research, whether that involves quantitative secondary statistical analysis or qualitative interviews. It is clear that had I used any of the methods so far utilised in existing empirical research then I would not have been able to gain the data that I collected. Ethnography is of huge importance in establishing cultural reasoning, coupled with visual elicitation interviews which give some understanding of retrospective accounts of motive, I have been able to examine the culture of the sport in a way that has not been undertaken in any previous empirical study.

An eight month period of intensive participant observation as well as the numerous oral history and visually-elicited interviews yielded a great deal of data. The main challenge of this has been in analysing this data and drawing out the themes and issues that have arisen and I feel that there are several more papers and avenues for publication that can be explored in the future from my existing data alone. As I have reflected on my period of data collection since completion, I have often considered

whether the data that I obtained would have been different had the research been conducted by someone other than myself. As I raised in Chapter Four, the researcher is irrevocably intertwined with the data that they collect and I have no doubt that my access to participants and continued involvement in the club was specific to my 'self'. I am sure that I would have obtained a very different understanding of the game had I been a male professional hockey player myself and was truly able to immerse myself in the culture and the game, however, I do not see this as a failing in my research. I am very aware that the access that I was granted by the club and the team was immensely privileged and that, coupled with the inevitable distance I had from the sport as a non-hockey playing woman have, I believe, been incredibly fruitful. I contend that much of the information shared with me by players, specifically in relation to their emotions and feelings, was given explicitly because I was a female and cast in a supportive and encouraging role. The value of this is clear to me in terms of enabling me to understand the culture of the sport beyond the prescribed limitations of the code. I am indebted to all those who allowed me to access this field and particularly to those who allowed me to probe into their lives and who shared their stories with me. It has been a position of great honour to me.

In Chapter Two, I mentioned that I was keen for the gazes of cultural criminology to allow me to understand the culture but not to romanticise the situation or generate pathology. As I have reflected upon not only my fieldwork but also the analysis of data and the presentation of the thesis in written form I believe that I have neither romanticised the culture nor generated pathology. This is largely due to the mixing of qualitative methods which allow me to observe behaviour as well as elicit responses, giving a broader understanding of the culture.

This understanding of the culture of professional hockey has been assisted by the conceptual scaffold detailed in Chapter Two of this thesis. The framework, which combines sociological and criminological disciplines provided a base understanding of culture and human behaviour which allowed a broad inter-disciplinary understanding of the sport.

The interactionist gaze of Goffman and Collins reminded me to focus on the micro-detail of culture and behaviour in the culture and of the importance of understanding space and group interaction. The insight of early subcultural accounts of deviance was useful in establishing group norms and accounts. In particular, the critique of these studies as offered by Sykes and Matza (1957), Klenowski (2012) and Cressey (1953) in terms of how groups neutralise their behaviour became important when players justified or provided motives for their behaviour. The reminder that neutralisation is in the eye of the beholder, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, reminds us that often social actors do not take into account other opinions that may contradict theirs.

The micro-gaze of Goffman and Collins has much to offer the understanding of social interaction of the team both on the ice and away from the arena. This chapter has outlined the suitability of its gaze as well as expressing the opinion that there are wider issues to consider in this ethnography. The somewhat historical account of subcultural studies of deviance has been paired with the lens of cultural criminology, which rests on an understanding of earlier subcultural work bringing the discussion of the cultural back into an increasingly administrative criminological sphere. In a manner not dissimilar to that which places cultural criminology back in the discipline of criminology, this thesis similarly locates the social world of hockey into the

criminological sphere, where boundaries of deviance and the critical gaze of law-makers is understood.

Cultural criminology explicitly reminds us of the importance of understanding the foreground of human action, the emotions, the rebellion and the decisive action. It reminds us that even behaviour that is perceived as destructive, or deviant, can be seen as creative, as highlighted by the quote from Bakunin which opens Chapter One. It allows us to understand the desire to operate on the edges of acceptability, or to intentionally break rules and social norms. While, we have heard that cultural criminology's focus on deep ethnographic enquiry can potentially limit any nomothetic claims it is able to make, this has to an extent been addressed by the broader issues that have arisen from this research. A form of cultural realism, such as that advocated by Matthews (2014) could be a useful foundation for future research in this area. As Matthews states: "While realism concentrates on the form of social interaction, cultural criminology focuses on the substance, and that what is required is a criminology that does both." (Matthews, 2014:107). This will be addressed further in the following section.

Together, the three broad concepts, and the many narrow concepts that are encompassed within these, allow us to view human beings as social actors, who exist explicitly in interaction with one another, presenting a range of 'selves' and constructing their self-image in relation to others. As with any research, the theoretical framework to some extent shapes the direction of investigation. Had I chosen to frame this research from the gaze of feminist sociology, or the sociology of sport, then the resulting thesis would have been immeasurably different. The gaze of cultural and critical criminology is integral to the understanding of the particularities and intricacies of violence in professional hockey and enable us to place the social

actor centrally in their justifications of their behaviour and to understand the culture that shapes, reinforces and limits their actions. A critical criminological account broadens somewhat the limitations of edgework accounts in a traditional sense by not only taking account of the players' opinions, but also situating these in a wider social, legal and cultural investigation that exists beyond the accounts of individual players.

Looking to the future – further research and potential implications of the study.

It has never been the intention of this ethnography to unearth some great hidden cure for violence in hockey - to design a policy that will somehow either 'cure' violence in the sport or explain why it is necessary and functional. The aim has always been to give a full and truthful account of the lived realities of those who are engaged in the culture of the sport. While there is a current focus on reducing violence in the game, with the NHL focussed on reducing head injuries (see Chapter Three), the aim of this research has been to seek to uncover how those involved in the sport engage in violent behaviour and how this is both encouraged and dealt with by the culture of the sport. If there are any policy implications to make from this research, then it is that an understanding of the culture of the sport is essential and that policy makers and game-rulers need to be aware of this when deciding on appropriate sanctions or the legality of physical acts on the ice. It is clear that this understanding has not been prioritised to date, with an absence of other research in this area.

This research also brings to light an interesting moral situation in terms of the implications of viewing this level of interpersonal violence and neutralising it as being positive in the presence of such a broad and diverse range of spectators. As

has become apparent, there is some evidence to suggest that the very behaviour spectators most enjoy in the sport, that of body contact and fist fights, causes a physical change to the brain of the players which later impacts their mental and physical health. The focus of the media on this concept has filtered down to spectators who have demonstrated increased concern for the potential damage that a player is inflicting on another while they, as fans, are cheering and encouraging the behaviour. This thesis represents a snapshot of one season (while also being informed by several years of observation and analysis) and it is likely that the existence of violence in professional hockey will change a great deal over the years, giving this research a historical place in the changing nature of the sport. As has been explained in earlier chapters, if hockey has similarities with other contact sports, notably professional American football, then this change will stem from legislation from above which has been partly put in place by league owners who are concerned about the legal implications of player injuries. Changes in the culture will take longer to effect and professional hockey leagues should take note of this when considering the future direction of violent conduct on the ice.

As one might expect following extensive immersion in the culture of the sport for the last seven years, two pilot studies and a thesis, I have a great deal of ideas for potential future research in this area. In terms of the dissemination of this research, given the paucity of other cultural accounts, there needs to be a focus on a public sociology or criminology of the sport and I maintain that there is a great interest from those who play and spectate in a sociological/criminological understanding of the sport. At present player biographies and journalist monographs provide the only written understanding of the sport, lacking the scrutiny of an academic empirical account. As the traditional dissemination methods of academia have changed as

technology advances, there are many opportunities for new frontiers in disseminating information to a broader audience, such as blogs, websites and film. As a contributor to several academic blogs which reach a wider audience than scholars, the opportunity to engage a non-academic audience in this research is enticing. Many of those interested in this subject may never pick up my thesis, may struggle with the linear way in which an academic paper is presented but may be keen to engage with ideas in the format of a blog or a visual learning environment. The technological possibilities allowing a combination of video and images of the sport, along with interview accounts, analysis and opinion on a multimedia format is something that I would relish the opportunity to engage with. In particular I would like to investigate the potential to produce an ethnographic hypermedia environment (Dicks *et al,* 2005) in which spectators, players and academics could engage with the research area. This could broaden the potential of research to include both popular and academic criminology to "complement one another, each contributing in its own way to understandings of crime." (Rafter 2007:415).

It is integral here to consider the usefulness of an understanding of the media and of images, with much consumption of the sport taking place away from the arena from the gaze of video cameras and fictitious movies. Ferrell and van de Voorde (2010) remind us, it is not possible to divide the concepts of real crime and an image of the same, cultural understandings are inherently connected to visual images. As Carrabine states: "cultural texts are not produced in isolation, and a great deal of social work goes into their creation, reception and reputation." (2012:464).

This thesis has located the use of violence in the culture of hockey in the sphere of sociological study, but also, importantly in the subject of criminology. As cultural criminologists have placed a somewhat sociological understanding of deviance and

edgework back into the criminological sphere, so to, this thesis draws on a range of sociological and criminological concepts and imaginations. Presdee talks about cultural and visual criminology as being "the perspectives of conventional criminology beyond its horizon" (2000:16) this opens up exciting and broad ranges of potential ideas for future study as outlined above.

As stated at the commencement of this thesis, there were a myriad of ways in which I could have conducted this research. This thesis, together with the two pilot studies that involve other key agents in the game, such as referees, rule-makers and team-owners can give a broad image of violence in the sport. While the sheer amount of ethnographic data collected in a season of ethnography encouraged the focus of this thesis to be the players themselves, further research could be fruitful in understanding the triad of agents involved in the maintenance of violence in the sport. The triad of the players, spectators, and rule-makers and officials, would provide a broad understanding of the continuance of violence within the sport and of its socio-legal structure. Further, it would be theoretically fruitful to compare attitudes towards the cultures of violence in different leagues globally to understand the relationship between violence allowed in each league and the way that is understood by players.

If one is to address the criticism of cultural criminology and ethnography for their inherent limitations in establishing nomothetic rules, it has been suggested by Tsoukas (1989) that the movement from ideographic cases to nomothetic explanations can be achieved in three stages:

> This involves moving from an examination of actions and motives to that of reasons and rules and finally to that of structures and causal powers. Thus the investigation begins by theoretically identifying the inner constitution of

> those under study, then moves on to identify the reasons and rules by which actions are adopted and finally examines the associated structures and causal powers behind them and how these are exercised in particular contexts. (Matthews, 2014:111)

A potentially fruitful avenue for future investigation then would be to consider a form of cultural realism in broadening the focus of the research to other agents involved, as stated in the previous chapter. As Bourgois (2002) states the usefulness of ethnography is "to provide a bridge between decontextualized theory and the reality of urban street life" (Matthews, 2014:113).

This research, as has been highlighted from the outset, does not only speak of hockey culture and violence, rather it engages with broader sociological and criminological issues which have much in common with other occupational cultures, masculine environments and users of legitimate violence. Further, it provides an understanding of the complexities of cultures and the usefulness of qualitative ethnographic methods in seeking to understand particular environments. Through undertaking this research I have been able to collaborate with a range of other researchers in a global criminological and research methods environment which I am sure will open up a wealth of potential research avenues in the future.

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Index of Appendices

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Appendix 1

Ice-Hockey Penalties

A full list of ice-hockey penalties is available in the IIHF rule book, which runs to 56 pages. This list comprises the relevant sections of the official IIHF rules as relevant to this thesis. For a full list of IIHF Rules visit http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/sport/iihf-rule-book.html.

Types of penalties

Minor Penalties

The least serious offences are punished by two minutes to be served in the penalty box, this is deemed served early if the opposing team scores a goal.

Major Penalties

Used for more serious or violent offences and punished by five minutes in the penalty box.

Misconduct Penalties

Punished by ten minutes in the penalty box, usually for abuse of an official or unsportsmanlike conduct.

Game Penalties

Reserved for serious offences, such as repeat fighting. The player is ejected from the game and must return to the locker room.

Match Penalties

The most serious penalty that can be imposed by the game night referee, it prevents the player from playing any part in not only the current game, but the following game too. All match penalties are assessed in the EIHL by the Director of Discipline.

List of relevant penalties

Abuse of officials
Includes arguing with, insulting, using obscene gestures or language to or about an

on-ice or off-ice official, or deliberate violent contact with an official. Punished by a misconduct penalty or by ejection from the game as a game or match penalty.

Attempt to injure
Deliberately attempting to harm an opponent. This carries an automatic match penalty.

Boarding
Pushing an opponent violently into the boards while the player is facing the boards. A minor penalty.

Butt-ending
Jabbing an opponent with the shaft end of the stick. This is punished by an automatic major penalty and game misconduct.

Charging
Taking more than three strides or jumping before hitting an opponent. A minor penalty.

Checking from behind
Hitting an opponent from behind carries an automatic minor penalty and misconduct, or a major penalty and game misconduct if it results in injury.

Cross-checking
Hitting an opponent with the stick when it is held with two hands and no part of the stick is on the ice. A minor penalty.

Elbowing
Hitting an opponent with the elbow. A minor penalty.

Fighting
Engaging in a physical altercation with a player from the opposing team, this usually involves the throwing of punches with gloves removed. A major penalty with coincidental five minute punishments for both players.

High sticking
Touching an opponent with the stick above shoulder level. A minor penalty is assessed to the player but if blood is drawn, a double-minor (2+2 minutes) is usually called.

Holding
Grabbing an opponent's body, equipment or clothing with the hands or stick. A minor penalty.

Holding the stick
Grabbing and holding an opponent's stick, a minor penalty.

Hooking
Using a stick as a hook to slow an opponent, a minor penalty.

Instigator penalty
Being the obvious instigator in a fight. Called in addition to the five minute major for fighting. In the EIHL, this is punished by 2+5+10 minutes (a total of 17 minutes).

Interference
Impeding an opponent who does not have the puck, or impeding any player from the bench, a minor penalty.

Joining a fight
Also called the "3rd man in" rule, the first person who was not part of a fight when it broke out but participates in the fight once it has started for any reason. A misconduct penalty is often called in addition to the major penalty for fighting.

Kicking
Kicking an opponent with the skate or skate blade. It carries a major penalty and a game misconduct.

Kneeing
Hitting an opponent with the knee. A minor penalty.

Roughing
Pushing and shoving or throwing punches that are not severe enough to be considered fighting. A minor penalty.

Slashing
Swinging a stick at an opponent. Can be considered a minor or a major penalty depending on the severity of the incident.

Spearing
Stabbing an opponent with the stick blade which carries an automatic major penalty and game misconduct (5+game).

Tripping
Using a stick or one's body to trip an opponent, a minor penalty.

Unsportsmanlike conduct
Using illegal playing equipment; arguing with or abusing an official; making obscene gestures; insulting an opponent or teammate. Punishments for Unsportsmanlike Conduct can vary from a minor penalty through to a match penalty depending on the severity of the incident.

Appendix 2.

Glossary of Terms

+/-	When an even-strength or shorthanded goal is scored, every player on the ice for the team scoring the goal is credited with a "plus." Every player on the ice for the team scored against gets a "minus." A player's overall +/- total is calculated by subtracting the minuses from the pluses.
AHL	American Hockey League – A second tier professional North American League which acts as a feeder-league for the NHL.
Blocker	A blocker is a piece of equipment worn on a goaltender's arm that contains a large rectangular hard block designed to deflect pucks.
Crease	A crease is an area of the rink in front of a goaltender's net designed to protect him from interference from players. Opposing players are not allowed to enter this area, which is marked by a pale blue semi-circle. A second crease which is less obviously marked is given to referees allowing them space to communicate with off-ice officials without the interference of players.
ECHL	East Coast Hockey League. A third tier professional hockey league in North America which acts as a feeder league for the AHL, and eventually the NHL. UK EIHL hockey is said to operate at around the same level of skill as the ECHL.
EIHL	Elite Ice Hockey League in the UK. The highest level fully professional hockey league in the country.
Enforcer	The role of enforcer is an unofficial role on the hockey team. The term is sometimes used to signify a "fighter", "tough guy", or "goon". The job of an enforcer is to deter through the threat of violence, and respond to dirty or violent play by the opposition. This is usually done by the enforcer engaging in a fist fight, or other dominant display of violence. Enforcers are often seen as protectors to star skill-players and goaltenders.
EPL	English Premier League Ice hockey league. The level of this league is lower than EIHL and it operates at a semi-professional

	level with one or two import players and a large number of British-born players, some of whom are paid.
Face-off	The face-off is the official start, or re-start of a game after a stoppage in play. Opposing players line up in formation behind the centre, whose job it is to try and 'win' possession of the puck after it is dropped by the referee or lineman.
Face Wash	A derogatory act where a player rubs his gloved hand in the face of another player. Whilst this is not usually injurious, it is often seen as insulting and as an incitement to fighting.
Fight Strap	The fight-strap is a piece of strapping attached to the hockey jersey which is designed to be attached (by way of poppers or Velcro) to the player's shorts, thereby preventing the jersey from being pulled over the head by an opposing player during an altercation. In EIHL rules, there is a penalty of 'illegal equipment' imposed if a player's fight strap is not attached correctly.
Fist-pump	A fist pump is a celebratory action performed by individuals in a similar manner to that of a high five. A clenched fist is placed against another's clenched fist as a sign of celebration or reward.
Goon	Goon is a derogatory term used to describe enforcers, or those whose main role is to engage in fights. The origins of the term are used to describe stupidity, or a hired hand to engage in the dirty work of another person.
Handbags	Handbags is a term used to describe a largely ineffective fight or altercation. There may be some punches thrown in but often it is pushing and shoving. The term is used to criticise behaviour that does not develop into a proper 'manly' fight, the term handbags being used to determine the play as feminine and ineffective.
Helicoptering	Helicoptering is the act of swinging and rotating one's flacid penis in a way that is reminiscent of the blades of helicopter. It is a demonstration of masculinity and used in a humorous manner or as a way of gaining attention.
High-five	A celebratory action whereby an individual raises their hand and hits the hand of another in an act of celebration.
Hip-check	Performing a hip-check involves leaning or bending the knees to check an opponent using one's hips. It is used most often in defensive situations in order to separate an attacker from the puck they are carrying on their stick.
Icing	A call of 'Icing' by the blowing of a whistle by the referee brings about a stoppage in play. It occurs when a player shoots a puck the full length of the ice into the opposing team's end, past their goal line and is touched by an opposing player before a teammate. Once the puck is retrieved the referee will then call for a face-off

	at the opposing end of the ice where the original player was when he iced the puck.
Import	In hockey, an 'import' is used to describe a player whose nationality is not that of the league in which they play. In the EIHL, 10-12 import players from non-British countries may be employed by each team. In the EIHL these players are usually from North America, but a minority will be from other European and Scandinavian countries.
Juice	Juice is a slang term that refers to steroids which enhance athletic ability. (See also Roids)
Juice-Bitch	Juice-Bitch is a derogatory term used to describe the player who is the last in the team to score a penalty shot in practice. In its original form the 'juice boy' would have to serve drinks to players for the remainder of that day. The use of the term bitch is intentionally derisory, implying that the player has also failed as being a man.
LNAH	The Ligue Nord-Américaine de Hockey (North American Hockey League) is a low-level professional hockey league, predominantly in Quebec, Canada. The league is unusual its endorsement of the fist fight and it is perceived as being the most violent league in the world.
MoM	MoM is a shortened version of Man of the Match. After a game off-ice officials vote for the player from each team who they believe has performed the best in that game. A ceremonial handshake and photo is taken of the player with a sponsor and they are presented with a crate of beer as a prize.
Mugged	Mugging derives its definition from the act of robbery. In hockey it is used to describe either a puck being unexpectedly stolen from a stick, or the act of assaulting a player when they are not expecting it.
NHL	National Hockey League in North America. The highest level of professional sport. The NHL has feeder-leagues in the form of the AHL, EIHL and CHL.
Offside	An offside call in hockey differs from that in football. In hockey, a play is offside if a player on the attacking team enters the offensive zone before the puck, unless the puck is sent or carried there by a defending player. When an offside violation occurs, a linesman will stop play by blowing his whistle.
One-timer	A one-timer is a shot in which a player meets a pass with an immediate slap-shot with no attempt to control the puck on his stick.
Penalty Kill	A penalty kill occurs when your team is playing short-handed as a player is in the penalty box. The opposite of a Power play.

Plexi	Plexi is the slang name for Plexiglas which is a brand name for the transparent glass that sits above the 4-foot high boards of the rink. It reaches 10-14 feet and provides a window to the action on the ice. More commonly made of acrylic it acts as a barrier between the ice and off-ice surface.
Powerplay	A powerplay occurs when the opposing team has a player sitting out a penalty in the penalty box. The opposite of penalty kill.
Puck Bunny	Puck bunny is derogatory term given usually (but not exclusively) to female hockey fans who are drawn to the game, not for the sport itself but due to the sexual attractiveness of the players. Both male and female puck bunnies will tend to favour one particular player above all others and be derided by other fans as being a 'bunny' rather than a true fan.
Puck Slut	A puck slut is a female who has moved beyond puck bunny status and actively engages players in sexual behaviour with the players outside of a committed relationship. Puck sluts often work their way through several players of a team, or league and enjoy the public attention they receive from sharing stories of acts performed with players. In the EIHL one particular girl operated a blog where she shared pictures and stories of players who she had sexual contact with, a kind of tabloid kiss-and-tell activity.
Rink Rat	A rink rat is usually a young person who spends time hanging around a rink. They will often engage in work-activities unpaid in order to maintain their access to the rink and to hockey players.
Roids	Roids is a slang term to describe anabolic steroids. A 'roid head' is one whose use of steroids has had a negative effect on their tempter, making them hot headed and prone to angry outbursts.
Sin-bin	The sin-bin is a colloquial term for the penalty box. It is an enclosed area attached to the rink containing a bench where players serving their penalties must sit out of the game for the proscribed length of time before returning to the ice.
Snowing	Snowing is the term used to describe the deliberate breaking up of the ice surface with a players blade and the movement to send this towards the face of an opposing player, usually the goaltender whose face is closer to the ice when defending their goal. It is also termed as slushing and is frowned upon by opposing players who will often respond with a physical altercation in an act of protecting their goaltender. If this action is deemed to be deliberate then a penalty may be called by the referee.
Sucker Punch	A sucker punch is a deliberate punch or blow given to an opposing player when it is not expected.
Tape-to-tape	Tape refers to the adhesive material that players wind around the blades of their sticks. A tape to tape pass is one which

	successfully arrives on the blade of another player.
Top Shelf	Top Shelf is a term used to describe a goal that hits the upper part of the net. It is often seen as a skill shot as it requires the lifting of the puck from the ice surface. Commentators use terms such as "top shelf – that's where momma keeps the cookie jar" to describe these successful shots.
Turtling	An unwritten rule of hockey fights is that if a player is lying on the ice, then the fight must stop. If a player does not wish to fight when set upon by an opposing player, they may take on the form of a turtle, by crouching on their knees on the ice and protecting their head and face from blows. Turtling can be seen as being an uncourageous act, with ridicule given to those who refuse to fight in this manner.
WAG	WAG is a term well known in many sports and stands for Wife and Girlfriend. It is the name given to the partner of a player, in part to acknowledge their importance and in part to limit their role as a supporter of that player rather than being a person in their own right.
Zamboni	Zamboni is the brand name of a popular ice-clearing machine. Although many rinks no longer use the brand Zamboni, it is universally the term for these machines that clear or lay ice between periods of hockey.
Zero-Tolerance	Zero-tolerance or ZT is s style of play that acknowledges that all potential penalties will be called without exception. The referees are encouraged to show zero tolerance for any rule infringement and to punish all acts outside the rules of the game.

Appendix 3

Information Sheet for Participants

Information for participants

A socio-legal case-study into the culture of sanctioned violence within the sport of ice hockey

Background to the study

Some of you may know me from my previous involvement with an EIHL hockey club as a writer, or from my previous MSc research into the sport. I am currently conducting a PhD at Cardiff University.

My main area of interest is in the legitimisation of violence in ice hockey, I am keen particularly to explore the experiences of ice hockey players and others involved in the sport.

How this study will be conducted

A large part of my research focuses on really understanding your experiences and attitudes and I hope to achieve this by spending time with you while you train and play hockey, during the games and around the rink. I may make some notes for myself while I do this and I may sometimes ask you to look at some photos or video of a game and ask for your opinions. I may sometimes, with your permission, use a voice recorder when I talk to you.

The work that I am doing is for a study at Cardiff University, I am not connected with any particular hockey club, the league, the police, or any other institution. I want my work to provide something that has not yet been heard in the academic field in this subject area, and that is a voice in terms of how you view your life within the sport. My objective is to not only produce research for other academics, but also for the wider hockey community to better understand the experiences and attitudes of those involved in the sport. This work may appear in journal articles and books and will also be discussed at conferences, but no research participants would be identified (or identifiable) in these outputs.

Your safety

I hope that by now, many of you know me well from my past research and from the interviews I have done with you before and I hope that you realise that I am trustworthy and reliable.
As participants in my research it is important that at no time do you feel threatened, compromised or concerned about my presence or any questions I ask of you. All information that you disclose to me is completely confidential. All names and places will be changed to pseudonyms (false names). All data that I collect (e.g. notes, voice recordings, video clips, photos), will be stored in a locked cabinet and all my fieldnotes and transcripts will be anonymised. I will ask you for written consent of your involvement in this study and you can withdraw your involvement at any time without giving a reason.

My responsibilities as a researcher:

Your identity, location and any other information you provide will only be known to me. All data will be anonymised through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information (such as which team you play for, or how many penalty minutes you received) to protect your interests. I am also bound by the ethical guidance of Cardiff University, and the Economic and Social Research Council who have funded my research. I can give you further information on this if you would like to see it.

If you need any other information you can contact me:
Victoria Silverwood
Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, 2nd Floor, 1-3 Museum Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BD
E-mail: silverwoodvs@cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: 07952 202777

Appendix 4

Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

A socio-legal case-study into the culture of sanctioned violence within the sport of ice hockey.

Participant Identification Number for this study:

Name of Researcher: Victoria Silverwood

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered .

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I understand that in giving my consent that the results of the study might be published in academic or sporting journals, publications or reports.

I agree to take part in this study

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Researcher	Date	Signature

When completed, one copy for participant signed by both parties; one copy for researcher site file.

Appendix 5

Examples of advertised hockey fights

Figure 2 – Advertisement for an EIHL team featuring an image of a fist fight.

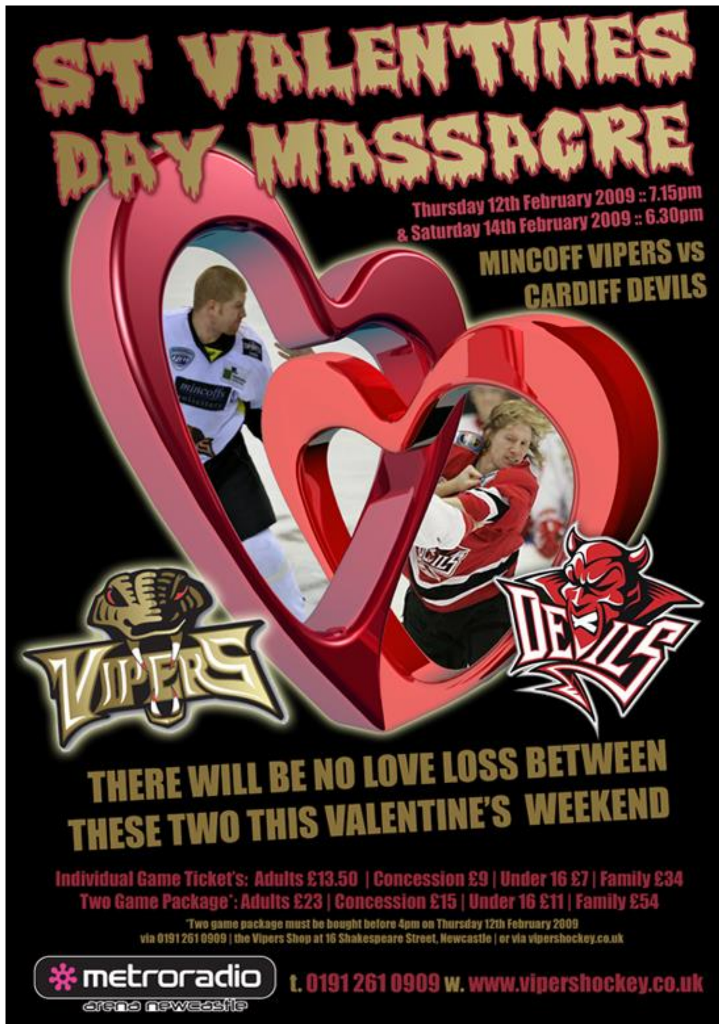

Figure 3 – Advertisement for an EIHL game entitled “St Valentine’s Day Massacre.”

Figure 4 – Advertisement for an EIHL game featuring the concept of a fist fight.

Figure 5 – An image from an online game in which no hockey is played, players engage only in fist fights and win points and prizes for fights won.

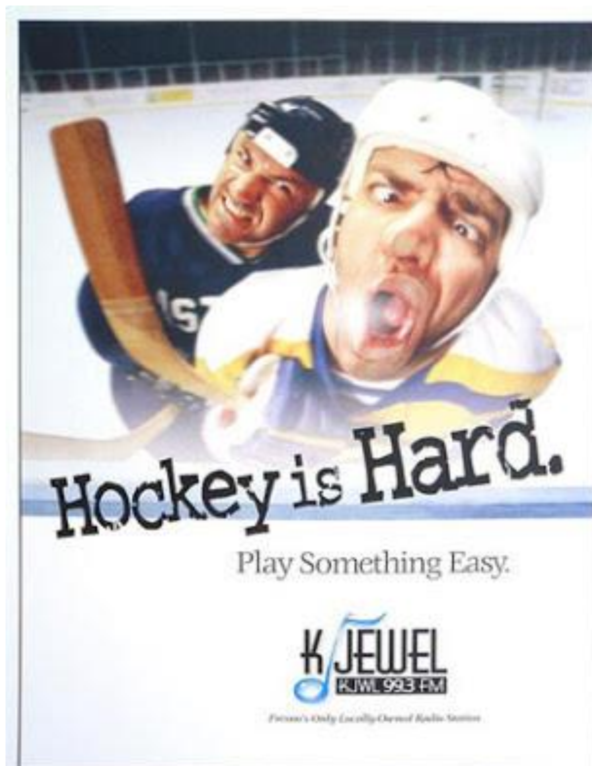

Figure 6 – Violence in hockey is used to advertise an easy listening radio station in North America.

Figure 7 – The movie Slapshot (1977) featured three brothers known as the Hanson Brothers, whose only aim was to engage in extreme acts of violence on the ice. This image has legendary status in the world of hockey.

Figure 8 – An advertisement for the 2012 Hollywood blockbuster "Goon" which featured a doorman who was taught to skate in order that he could win fights for his team.

Figure 9 – Another advertisement for the 2012 film Goon. "They need me to bleed, I bleed."