

Converting sporting capacity to entrepreneurial capacity: A process perspective

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Abstract

Managing a personal sporting career and conducting an entrepreneurial initiative are two vitally connected processes. Most athletes require a second career and many engage in entrepreneurship. Research on the similarities and differences of the sports career management process and entrepreneurial process – with a special emphasis on the necessary capacities - will have a ready audience among practitioners. This study begins the task of closing a surprising gap. In entrepreneurship literature, there is (1) growing research on entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurial capacity as the key driver, (2) strong work in generic, descriptive and explanatory modelling of process as a whole and capacity as a sub-process, and (3) the presence of a generic model of entrepreneurial process based of what distinguishes entrepreneurial capacity from other human capacities. In sports management literature these research strands are virtually absent. The study indicates how the deficiency might be remedied.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial, sport, athlete, career, management, transition, process, capacity, human, professional

1. Introduction

Evidence highlights that nearly all professional athletes progress to a second career and a great many undertake entrepreneurship as that career option (Murphy, 1995). However, current work on the relationship between the phenomena of ‘sporting career management’¹ and entrepreneurship is unsatisfactory. Only recently, have academics sought to specifically explore this area (Ratten, 2011a; Ratten and Jones, 2018; Terjesen, 2008). The key problem in studying the nexus between sport and entrepreneurship - in particular, the processes and capacities necessary for both - is that any attempt to conduct a cross-disciplinary investigation is impeded by a surprising ontology mismatch. Entrepreneurship as a process and entrepreneurial capacity as the key component of that process are becoming increasingly well studied and well modelled (Pilegaard et al., 2010; Ucbasaran et al., 2001). There is a longstanding and recently burgeoning interest in entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurial capacity. Moroz and Hindle (2012) have examined the 32 entrepreneurial process models to be found in the entrepreneurship literature from which Hindle (2010a) (2010b) has developed a harmonized model of entrepreneurial process (MEP)².

Regarding sports management literature, there is a virtual absence of any generic, multi-faceted discussion and modelling of the process and capacities required for creating a successful sporting career. Ontological perspectives adopted and used are focused almost entirely on traits and cognitive issues that extend from the research domains of sports psychology (Goxe and Viala, 2010). This makes it difficult to investigate the integrative perspectives of process and capacity relevant to becoming a professional athlete that may also be important to transition into an entrepreneurial career.

Until the sports management literature catches up with entrepreneurship research, it is going to be very hard to systematically explore the relationship between the phenomena. The relationship is worth investigating because many athletes turn to entrepreneurial venturing as their initial attempt to create the second career that nearly all (especially semi-professional or short-term professional) athletes inevitably face (Jones et al., 2019). For example, Boston College has developed a program that emphasizes second career preparation for athletes. Kenny (2015) highlights that the transition to the business world through entrepreneurship and franchising is a route chosen by numerous professional athletes, and there is a growing literature that suggests athletes make effective business people. It is therefore an important, under-researched, global phenomenon and one where researchers have genuine potential to provide useful guidelines to practitioners.

Jean-François Astruc has effectively expressed this global problem. Astruc is an elite athlete and businessman. Previously, Astruc led the finance commission of Biarritz Olympique, is

¹ The logical order of this matched pair of studies is (1) ‘Entrepreneurship as a process: Toward harmonizing multiple perspectives’, (scheduled to be published in the journal *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, in 2012). This ‘prequel’ critiques the discord among the 32 extant models of entrepreneurial process found in the literature prior to Hindle’s ‘sequel’, which is entitled ‘Skillful dreaming: Testing a general model of entrepreneurial process with a specific narrative of venture creation’ (published in a ground-breaking book edited by renowned entrepreneurship scholar, William B. Gartner in late 2010). The sequel seeks to bring harmony to the prior discord in the form of universal model of entrepreneurial process, which embraces the best features of all its precursors, eliminates their worst features and adds new features. It is designed as a parsimonious generic process model capable of acting as a theoretical and analytical framework for focused research.

a former multiple Champion of France, vice-champion of Europe in rugby in 2006 and chairman of the Académie Basque du Sport. On the Academy's website Astruc articulated a universal issue informing the destiny of every professional athlete.

Good sportsmen are excited by their work. This excitement, which lies at the origin of their career, remains their 'engine' throughout their life. From a very young age, they commit and involve themselves in their teams and in their clubs. They concentrate their efforts on becoming the very best. But a career in sports is short and uncertain. Sportsmen may reach their [sporting] objectives. They learn how to endure hardship; but they also often find their career ended earlier than they expected. All this energy and self-denial has often left them little time to think about a future [second career]. (Astruc, 2010).³

The revelation may come suddenly and toward the end of a sports process, rather than being well considered throughout that hectic first career, but every astute athlete eventually recognizes the essential importance of moving to a second career. Moreover, that second career is often an attempt to try entrepreneurship. Currently, anecdote rules with regard to the sports-entrepreneurship relationship. Guidance would be particularly useful to establish a concept which offers more information regarding what the two processes – 'doing' sport and 'doing' entrepreneurship – had in common and where the distinctions lay. The purpose of this study is to initiate a systematic, comparative understanding of the relationship between the process of managing a professional sporting career and the process of entrepreneurship. We highlight the capacity component of the sports management process in particular since theory has modelled capacity as key driver of the entrepreneurial process. Thus, this study contributes to the entrepreneurship literature in the following ways. Firstly, by focusing on a specific form of entrepreneurship (i.e. sport entrepreneurship) that is a novel area of research in which more research is required (González-Serrano et al., 2019). Secondly, by analysing and comparing the similarities between high-level athletes and businesspeople we focus on social capital, and evaluating their activities with the existing literature. Finally, by explaining how sports capital of high-level athletes can be transfer to entrepreneurial capital, contributing in that way with the career transition of high-level athletes.

This study proceeds as follows. Salient features of the two relevant literatures are reviewed and compared. Overall, research on sports management (with emphasis on building a successful career) and entrepreneurship, and their relationship with one another to date, includes: a summary review of sports literature, a summary review of entrepreneurship literature, and the current interface. This leads to a more specific comparison of entrepreneurial and sports process. It emerges that entrepreneurial process is a key to understanding. Then, a first suggestion about the essential nature of the sports career management process is illustrated. The study concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study for current practice and future research.

2.0 Current interface of sports and entrepreneurship research

2.1 The sports management literature

³ All translations from French sources have been performed by Author A and Author B with a view to fluent transfer of complex ideas rather than stodgy, literal translation, word for word.

The sports management literature encompasses two main streams: (1) psychological development processes and (2) physical development processes. The former stream is mostly predominant and focuses on factors that are important to the athletic development process, such as coaching (Trninić et al., 2009) or multi-dimensional psychological factors (MacNamara et al., 2010). Yet, not much is known about the processes of managing an active sports career. However, the transition process from an active sports career to another is an emerging research field (Vilanova and Puig, 2016). There are intersections between the processes of transition and managing an active career. The transition to retirement needs prior preparation (Ek et al., 2005), which means the transition process starts while doing professional sports (Wylleman et al., 2004) and therefore is a part of managing an active sports career.

Sports management literature suggests a link between peak performance across different careers such as sports, the arts and business (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2019). In sports, athletes have learned valuable skills to overcome impediments which will be also valuable in other circumstances. To increase the success of a career transition, athletes should focus on their sport-related skills. Further, a successful second career needs forward thinking retirement planning (Alfermann and Stambulova, 2007), building up human capital during the sports career (Arthur et al., 1999), and an awareness of thinking about the future (Vilanova and Puig, 2016). In general, current research shows that being a professional athlete has a positive effect on the transition process to a successful second career (Conzelmann and Nagel, 2003; Jackson et al., 1998) and this second career is often an entrepreneurial one (Murphy, 1995).

2.2 Sports Entrepreneurship

During recent years, sports entrepreneurship has emerged as a concept in progress within sports management research (Bjärsholm, 2017). Most recently, sports entrepreneurship was defined as “developing new start-ups or ventures that engage with sport” (Ratten, 2018, p.13). A more refined definition of sports entrepreneurship is “the exploitation of opportunities within the sports sector to create change” (Ratten, 2018, p.13). Innovation may be called the driver of sports entrepreneurship (Ratten and Ferreira, 2016). However, the definition of sports entrepreneurship needs a more holistic approach. Hence, sports entrepreneurship can be defined as “the process by which individuals, acting in a sports environment, pursue opportunities without resources currently controlled” (Hammerschmidt et al., 2019, p.4). Entrepreneurships occur in different types and forms in sport such as community-based entrepreneurship, corporate entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship (Ratten, 2010). Sport has shown to be a rich bases for entrepreneurship to occur (Ratten, 2012). The sport inherent characteristics like ambition, a hands-on mentality and commitment are empowering factors for entrepreneurial activities (Hemme et al., 2017). Areas of tangencies with sports entrepreneurship include for example the cognitive and social orientations of sports celebrities and their impact upon the marketplace through endorsements and the potential for using their status in an entrepreneurial way to initiate their own products and entrepreneurial ventures (Hunter, 2009). Further, entrepreneurship is a useful tool to break down complexity of sports management and therefore to increase efficacy (Ball, 2005; Ratten and Ciletti, 2011). A closely aligned area of research is the study of the processes by which sports or athletic teams are managed (Ratten, 2011b). While

this area is nascent, it strives to use an entrepreneurial lens to more effectively understand sports management processes (Spilling, 1996; Klyver and Terjesen, 2007).

2.3 The entrepreneurship literature

Although academic discourse acknowledges the importance of entrepreneurial activity, the meaning of the term entrepreneurship suffers from different conceptualizations. A variety of definitions arose from different ways of how to tackle the concept of entrepreneurship (Lowe and Marriott, 2012). Aldrich (2005) highlights four main approaches: (1) the creation of innovative products and markets through transformation of resources (Schumpeter 1934) (2) the nature of high growth firms (Davidsson et al., 2006; Davidsson and Henrekson, 2002), (3) the emergence of new firms (Gartner, 1985, 1988; Low and MacMillan, 1988), and (4) opportunity pursuit through an alertness to asymmetric information and risk taking (Kirzner, 1997; Knight, 1921; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). A renewed and growing interest in the phenomenon of entrepreneurial process resulted in adding a fifth way of how to face entrepreneurship (Gartner, 1985; Hindle, 2010a; Moroz and Hindle, 2012; Steyaert, 2007). Further, a sixth approach of theorizing entrepreneurship has emerged. It stresses the vital importance of entrepreneurial context and is implicitly linked to process. For any model of entrepreneurial process to be meaningful, it is vital that the organizational, sociological and environmental study of context are both discursive and integrative (Phan, 2004; Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Ucbasaran et al., 2001). Entrepreneurship as a process is far more predominant in our society than entrepreneurial conceptualizations might suggest (Hindle, 2010b). Current theories of entrepreneurship are limited on business growth and value creation. However, this approach does not suit the sociological impact of entrepreneurial interaction taking place in society (Steyaert and Katz, 2004). Thus, entrepreneurial process is essentially embedded in a local context in which meaning and value are collectively decided (Audretsch et al., 2002). Hence, this study employs the processual-perspective definition of entrepreneurship from Hindle (2010a): “Entrepreneurship is the process of evaluating, committing to and achieving, under contextual constraints, the creation of new value from new knowledge for the benefit of defined stakeholders” (p.100). This recognizes that new venturing is only one of a huge range of activities that can qualify as entrepreneurial.

2.4 The current state of the interface

The link between creating, developing and managing a sporting career and the entrepreneurial process is scarcely studied. Viala and Goxe (2010), have provided a recent approach to tackle this underemphasized field of research by focusing on sports capital viz-a-viz entrepreneurial *capital*. Social capital is associated with resources that enhance performance (Bosma et al., 2004) and it is necessary to break down the constructs of entrepreneurial and sports capital to determine exactly how they are defined, measured and related.

2.5 Entrepreneurial capital

Social capital is an emerging conceptual attractor for management and entrepreneurship scholars (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Davidsson and Honig, 2003). As observed in (Fulkerson and Thompson, 2008), the paradigm of social capital developed by adhering to one of the two overarching categories (1) resource social capital and (2) normative social capital. Regarding recent years, the theorization tends to lean towards the direction of normative social capital, which empathizes on norms, values, trust, ad horizontal networks. In contrast, the resource perspective refers to relationships between individuals in groups and

networks. An associated term in literature and a sub domain of social capital, entrepreneurial capital, is defined as an extension of intellectual (human) capital specific to the domain of new venture creation (Erikson, 2002). Entrepreneurial activity is in general highly affected by the networking attributes. Both, the normative and the resource perspective of social capital are interacting when creating networks and therefore shaping entrepreneurial capital (Foley and O'Connor, 2013).

2.6 Sports capital

The treatment of sports capital in athletic performance literature is primarily drawn from psychological studies. Viala and Goxe (2010) break down the term into two main categories: (1) individual traits, personality, and behavior patterns and (2) the social context of sports performance. Viala and Goxe (2010) suggest it is the combination of an athlete's personality and social interaction that fosters performance. In this case, social interaction relates to a context of excellence and includes factors like the effects of good coaches, other skilled athletes, or a supportive family. Studies in the area of personality traits demonstrate that self-selection biases within the upper levels of competitive athletes provide a much more homogenous set of traits than lower levels (Silva and Weinberg, 1984). Process based studies tended to show two different contextual arrangements that foster higher performance in athletes: (1) emotional support from parents, coaches and peers leading to more motivation (Keegan et al., 2009), and (2) the presence of other champion athletes, mentors and the athlete's own notions on performance (Butler and Hardy, 1992; Green and Brock, 2005; Pensgaard and Roberts, 2002).

2.7 A currently instructive comparison

In general, it is observable that one form of social capital can be converted into another (Bourdieu, 1986). The particular ability to convert sports capital into entrepreneurial capital has been observed by several researchers in both the sports and entrepreneurship literatures (Light and Kirk, 2001; Ratten, 2010; Terjesen, 2008). As stated in Fulkerson and Thompson:

Professional athletes can convert symbolic capital into economic capital by way of corporate endorsements, or they may convert symbolic into social capital when they use their celebrity to persuade someone to hire a relative for a job.

(Fulkerson and Thompson, 2008, p.540)

Sports capital can be translated into success in other associated areas such as facilitating community development through empowerment, sustainable development and social change (Lawson, 2005). Hence, converting sports capital into entrepreneurial capital seems to be a promising approach to link the process of managing a sports career and the process of entrepreneurship. However, sports and entrepreneurial capital are fully articulated the outcome of a process. This leads to the suggestion that it is a more purposeful approach to examine the sources of the processes rather than the subsequent outcomes. As a result, a more detailed look on the underlying components influencing entrepreneurial process is necessary in order to break down complexity and identify key variables.

2.8 Comparing entrepreneurial and sports process

2.8.1 Entrepreneurial process

The language of change, action and novelty are hallmarks of a process orientation (Moroz and Hindle, 2012). Events are framed by terms like flow, creation and ‘becoming’ (Aldrich and Martinez, 2001; Steyaert, 2007; Van de Ven and Poole, 1990). This perspective is argued to comport well with the study of entrepreneurship; which is fundamentally an *action based* phenomenon that involves a highly interrelated set of creative, strategic and organizing processes (Bygrave, 2009). It differs from an ‘entitive’ worldview where an epistemological approach might be effectively aligned with atomistic snapshots of the world to allow for the study of ‘things’ (Thompson, 2011).

There has been renewed interest in the phenomenon of entrepreneurial process (Gartner, 1985; Hindle, 2010a; Moroz and Hindle, 2012; Steyaert, 2007). Moroz and Hindle (2012) examined the extant literature and provided evaluation of the 32 extant models of entrepreneurial process. Hindle (2010a) then harmonized the discord into a highly generic model of entrepreneurial process based on a key, philosophical question concerning the nature of the entrepreneurship research field. Due to the processes of academic publishing, the prequel work of Moroz and Hindle (2012) was published later than the subsequent paper of Hindle (2010a).

“What is both generic and distinct about entrepreneurship as a process? This is the ‘double-barreled’ question that Hindle (2007; 2010a) believes may hold the key to resolving many contentious issues about the nature of entrepreneurship as a field of both practice and theory. To determine whether entrepreneurship is genuinely different from any other extant and well-studied phenomenon (thinking particularly of management) this question penetrates many layers of interest, meaning, and approaches to understanding the nature of entrepreneurship by seeking to determine what always happens in every set of activities classifiable as constituting an ‘entrepreneurial’ process that never happens in any other type of process. Unless what we call ‘entrepreneurship’ involves a process that has at its core something simultaneously generic and distinct, we are either talking about an eclectic set of activities that have no mutual coherence or a coherently connected set of activities that could just as well be classified with a label other than ‘entrepreneurship’”

(Moroz and Hindle, 2012, pp.781–782)

With this question as its principal driver, Moroz and Hindle (2012) examined the set of peer-reviewed entrepreneurial process models. The aim was to discover generic core factors and relationships strongly supported by evidence and/or strongly believed by researchers to be (1) significant to the entrepreneurial process and (2) which one, if any, of these factors is distinct to entrepreneurship. Hindle went on to synthesize and extend this work by producing and testing a harmonized generic model of entrepreneurial process from which the above-mentioned process –based definition of entrepreneurship is derived. In response to the fragmentation demonstrated by Moroz and Hindle (2012), Hindle (2010a) has developed a generic model of entrepreneurial process (MEP) that claims to harmonize much of the discord displayed in extant theory of entrepreneurial process. The model conceptualizes the entrepreneurial process as a set of activities that takes the entrepreneur – or group of entrepreneurs – from a starting input of questioning whether an opportunity exists, to an output where some kind of value is actually achieved.

To process from input to output, the model distinguishes between three distinctive but inter-related domains of activity: the strategic, the personal and the tactical. Each domain requires the entrepreneur to utilize some specific skills or competencies. In the strategic domain, the distinctive core is entrepreneurial capacity, and the key activity is some form of *evaluation* of the potential opportunity, and the focal outcome is the development of an opportunity into some kind of a business model. In the personal domain, the distinctive core is psychological capacity, the key activities involve a range of psychologically driven behaviors and the focal outcome is the entrepreneur's personal commitment – or lack of commitment – to actually implement the business model. In the tactical domain, the distinctive core is managerial capacity, and the key activity is managing the appropriate exploitation activities. These activities are starting or running the business and the focal outcome is the achievement of value.

This study adopts the theoretical position that the entrepreneurial evaluation is at the heart of entrepreneurial process (Hindle, 2010a). The entrepreneurial evaluation is the transformation of a vague idea into a precise agenda, whether this be called a “business model”, a “venture design”, a “new means-ends framework”, or “a new value design” or something else. We will limit the majority of our focus to the first phase of the model, the strategic domain, where evaluation is the key activity. The MEP stresses that the broad generic concept of “evaluation” includes *any* regime whatsoever for assessment of merit, worth and significance, using *any* criteria via *any* set of standards whatsoever. It is vital to stress that, in this perspective, the term “evaluation” should not be confined to the particular kind of formal evaluation associated with “causist” logic (Shane, 2005) as against “effectual logic” (Sarasvathy, 2006) or “bricolage” logic (Baker and Nelson, 2005). Despite, some researchers (Mitchell et al., 2007) do use it in this limited way. Such scholars assume that “evaluation” is always teleological and directed to a given explicit endpoint that uses specific formal, often economic, assumptions and techniques to assess the viability of achieving that end. In contrast, “evaluation” in the MEP model can also embrace heuristic approaches and even unstructured assessment regimes made by some entrepreneurs. In the conception embodied in the MEP model, there are many kinds of assessment regimes, and all – including bricolage, effectuation and causation - can be classified as different *forms* of evaluation.

In a business situation and after a number of iterative cycles in the strategic domain, the result of combined generic and contextual evaluation activities will produce a business model. More generally, it can be classified as a ‘new value design’: a term more suited to non-business forms of entrepreneurship. Indeed, a business model is simply a special case of the larger theoretical concept of ‘new value design’. Returning to the business/new venturing arena, Hindle (2010a) argues that the result after all cycles that the entrepreneur wishes to perform is a business model that answers – to the entrepreneur's satisfaction - the fundamental question of whether an exploitable opportunity exists or not. Shane (2003) suggests the entrepreneur now believes that they have created a design for “a new means-end framework for recombining resources that the entrepreneur believes [Shane's emphasis] will yield a profit” (p.18). Thus, at this level of generality, a business model can be defined as an answer to the opportunity existence question wherein the entrepreneur has satisfied herself that she has created a design for how to proceed to implementation of the opportunity. A business model – a design for potentially how to do something feasible – should never be confused with a business plan: a larger schema embracing commitment of people and resources and full detailing of the implementation and management steps

needed to achieve, in reality, the potential inherent in the design (Hindle and Senderovitz, 2010; Morris et al., 2005). Thus, entrepreneurial capacity can be seen as the necessary but not sufficient ability to transform new knowledge into new value. Without the capacity there is no possibility. Without commitment and management there is no reality – only possibility.

2.8.2 Sports process

As framed within this paper, there exists a surprising gap in the sports management literature pertaining to process models aligned with the question: how does one create a successful athletic career? It is therefore difficult to clearly discern what constitutes the capacities that are necessary and sufficient to move from wanting success in sport to come up with a game plan or strategy for achievement. The study of entrepreneurial process may help those who have not considered entrepreneurship to proceed more confidently along a contextually well identified pathway to new value design. It appears that in sports domain, it is likely that the process for becoming an athlete has been completely overwhelmed by issues of debate such as ‘natural athleticism’ or the holistic social construction of sports careers as unmanaged life choices through limited pathways. This type of thinking, that entrepreneurs are ‘borne’ and not made, is still even a point of contention within the entrepreneurship literature. However, these views are declining due to contrary evidence acquired in the field. In the 1980’s, the detection of theory associated with traits and characteristics was questioned, while emphasis on situational factors linked with “borne champions” gave way to theory that focused on the sports capacities of those that had achieved excellence (Goxe and Viala, 2010). As a result, clarity was accomplished as to whether or not sports capacity was a construct that extended to only high-performance athletes. However, this led to further distance between psychological ontologies of cognitive capacities necessary for performance and the situational guided processes required to get to a well-defined goal. Constructs such as ‘risk’, ‘commitment’ and ‘networks’ appear scattered throughout the literature. Although, there is minimal structural foundation to these factors that can be found to align them with a proper process perspective of how sports capital may assist in the development of athletic careers.

The outcome of the literature review is that no meaningful comparison of entrepreneurial process and the process of managing a personal, professional sporting career can currently be made. Accordingly, current research lacks of appropriate and needed emphases on process and capacity.

3.0 Discussion

This paper has proceeded as follows. Salient features of the entirety of research on the process of managing a personal, professional, successful sports career and the process of conducting an entrepreneurial initiative have been articulated and compared. Especially the *capacity* component in each process was emphasized. Our study of the current relationship between both included: a summary review of the sports literature; a summary review of the entrepreneurship literature; and the current state of the interface. This led to a more specific comparison of entrepreneurial and sports process. It emerges that entrepreneurial process is a key and expanding theme in the entrepreneurship literature. The latest stage of theoretical abstraction and formal process modelling is Hindle’s harmonized model of entrepreneurial process, which features a succinct articulation of the essential nature of entrepreneurial capacity. In summary, the research in the entrepreneurship field is producing ever-increasing clarity about process and entrepreneurial capacity. In contrast, there is a lack of multi-component approaches concerning the process of developing a

sporting career with a special regard to the role of capacity. Hence, a comprehensive comparison is not possible and more research is needed to foster a clear, generic process model of the development of the professional sports career.

3.1 Illustrating a model of sporting capacity

This paper concludes with a first and tentative supposition about the essential nature of the capacity to manage a successful sporting career. We suggest the theoretical model to look like it does in figure 3. However, there is a lack of structured investigation, well-developed evidence and focused theorizing. Any unsystematic guess will remain as good as another. Hence, our suggested illustration is indicative rather than prescriptive. It is clear that more research is needed to form the basis for future testable hypotheses. What we do claim are two things. First, sports management researchers *ought* to turn some attention to developing *un-speculative* (i.e. systematically researched) process and capacity models to describe and explain the essential nature of the sports career management process. Second, the task needs to be performed or all commentary on the utilities and disabilities of a sporting career as the precursor to an entrepreneurial career will remain in the realm of anecdote. All processes whatsoever are going to involve the personal commitment and the tactical management components to turn potential into achievement - see the Hindle MEP model above (Hindle 2010a). We conclude by focusing on the modelling of sports career building capacity. Our guiding question is: What constitutes an athlete's capacity to move from *wanting* success in sport to coming up with a game-plan for achievement of that aspiration?

Figures 1, 2 and 3 are three theoretical models of the essential nature of three types of task-achievement capacity. In the brief illustrative argument that follows, figure 2, the *general* nature of any human task performing capacity, will be presented and illustrated with the familiar specific example of figure 1. That having been done, the suggested illustration of the essential nature of managing a successful, personal sporting career, is offered (see figure 3). It serves to foster the understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurial capital and sports capital from a capacity-perspective. At the heart of this study, the goal is to have a well-researched processual model of the sports career management process.

Figure 1 is taken from the harmonized model of entrepreneurial process discussed previously. Figure 1 is a meta-model of the essential nature of any human task-processual capacity. Extrapolating from the entrepreneurship-focused but generalizable argument developed by Hindle (2010a) the generic argument becomes that any human, task-performing capacity consists of three key processual ingredients: (1) a credible stimulus which is processed by (2) a core procedure to produce (3) a feasible agenda. For entrepreneurial performance, the stimulus is the *questioning of whether an opportunity exists*; the core procedure is *evaluation* and the feasible agenda is the production of a new value-creation design. In the commercial setting, new value creation would be a business model. Regarding managing a professional sporting career and based on our prequel examination, we illustrated a capacity-focused model of sports management process (figure 3). We suggest the stimulus to be a *credible (sporting) aspiration*. For example, suppose a young child has an innate and observable ability to swim faster than all girls of her age group at the local school. It is, *prima facie*, credible for her to want to become an Olympic swimmer one day. The core procedure might be theorized to be *iterative training*. This needs little amplification. Third and last, the feasible agenda here might be *winning potential*. It will take the other two capacities/components of the full process model (i.e. commitment and management) to achieve the desired valuable endpoint. At the baseline,

the athlete needs personal sports capacity. Then, commitment to follow-through his ambitious goals and overcome nascent obstacles. With managerial capacity the athlete then can perform analogous to the execution of an entrepreneurial process or any other human performance process.

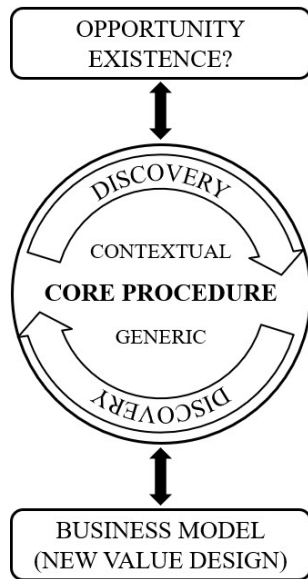


Figure 1. *The essential nature of entrepreneurial capacity*

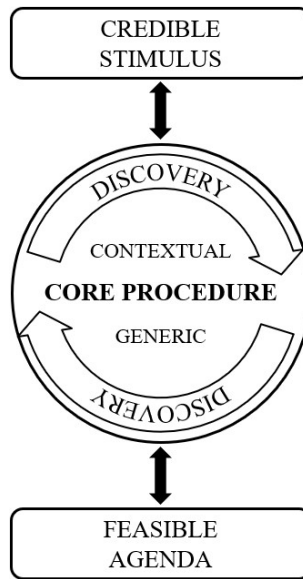


Figure 2. *The essential nature of any human task-performing capacity*



Figure 3. *The essential nature of the capacity to manage a successful, personal sporting career*

4. Conclusions

Viala and Goxe (2010) are among the first pioneers of systematic, research-based investigation of the relevance of a professional, sporting, first career to the selection, operation and success of a second, entrepreneurial career. They demonstrated that both researchers and practitioners require a different focus to understand the journey from the podium to a successful venture. Both could benefit significantly from taking a processual perspective and, from evidence analysis and theory building, postulating the essential nature of the capacity to manage that first career in the form of a process model.

In terms of policy implications, policy makers can employ the processual perspective, based on human capacities, as a guide to more effectively manage athlete careers. The baseline of the process is the sporting capacity. Credible aspiration, the discovery process (iterative training) and therefore the winning potential will determine the sporting capacity. Furthermore, in terms of managerial implications, the increased understanding of the capacity-based conceptualization of the process of sport and entrepreneurship will assist managers of sporting careers to derive theoretical implications for analyzing or developing sporting capacity.

In terms of future research opportunities whether the challenge laid down in this study will have future influence on the direction of sports management research is yet to be determined. However, the researchers will be embarking on an agenda to replace our formative, illustrative, broad supposition with a more refined evidenced-based model. A well-defined and generic model is the fundamental basis for understanding the vital relationship between the sporting and entrepreneurial process. There is certainly a requirement for further research exploring the nexus of sport and the entrepreneurial

process.

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