

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FIGHTING FOR A JOB:
THE ENFORCERS ROLE IN HOCKEY

by

Louis Svenningsen

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LOUIS SVENNINGSSEN

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Through the methods of qualitative, naturalistic inquiry, this study will examine the forces acting on fighting behavior in hockey and the people who take on the role of enforcer.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory is used to emphasize the actions of others, the interpretation by the individual of his environment, and the coding of these observations symbolically to guide his behavior.

A literature review was undertaken with a focus on grounded research theory. From this search, inductive analysis was performed to discover distinct categories of influence which are; 1) structures of the game, 2) morality, 3) honor, 4) social learning, 5) reactive aggression, 6) instrumental aggression, and 7) social rewards. These were then used as the foundation for the questionnaire in the semi-structured interviews with eight recognized enforcers in the NHL. The unstructured aspect of the research was the interviewer allowing the players to discuss and relate their personal experiences.

The results show that; 1) the social, penalty, and control structures provide environments and reasons for learning and reinforcing the enforcers role, 2) morality is based on a criteria of informal rules set up by the players, 3) honor is maintained by the formal structure and sense of fairness often attached to such action, 4) the parents, role models, media, and fans have less impact on fighting behavior while the coaches and teammates exert the greater control, 5) reactive aggression occurs because hockey allows this frustration to be acted upon by fighting, 6) instrumental fighting is used to effect the momentum and to and intimidate opponents, 7) fighting is viewed as a job when the players realize the high wages that accompany such a position and, 8) social rewards such as prestige and respect help to maintain and reward the enforcer role.

The social environment and a strong goal orientation of the player act together to influence taking on the enforcer role. This role is maintained in the game is 1) to protect teammates, 2) to control infractions, 3) for instrumental value, 4) in response to frustration and, 5) for excitement.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The occurrence of fights in hockey are expected and accepted events during the course of a game and have come to be recognized as part of the contest. The fight is not regarded by the combatants or observers as behavior that is reckless or delinquent. Rather, it is encouraged and pursued for multiple and interrelated reasons. For a general model of delinquent behavior Bandura (1977, p. 47) provides four reasons why people behave in reprehensible ways. These are for 1) "reciprocal obligations," 2) "social approval," 3) as "duty to the social order" or, 4) "reasons of principle." While these may explain deviant behavior socially, they also provide reasons for the behavior in the game of hockey.

To explain the occurrence of violence during hockey games and other sporting events previous research has studied the rule structure (Lefebvre, Leith, & Bredemeier, 1980), game morality (Bredemeier, & Shields, 1984; 1985; 1986), honor (Colburn, 1985), the influence of other people (Smith, 1974), frustration (Hughes, 1978; Nash, & Lerner, 1981), use as a game tactic (Messner, 1990; Nash, et al., 1981), and social rewards (Vaz, 1977).

The importance of the fight during a game has grown to a point where teams will employ or draft certain players not for their hockey skills but for their fighting skills. The team management

might not state that the reason they have a player on the team is to engage in fisticuffs. However, statements such as, "Troy Crowder, a fighter and occasional right wing" (Verigan, 1991) from other sources are made which disclose the primary reason for being retained by a hockey team.

The players themselves are aware of this type of recruiting when, as one player relates, "the Canucks drafted me because they were getting pushed around. ... If I want to play in the NHL, I've got to come up big in those kind of games. That's why they're paying me, and I know it" (Cariou, 1991). Another example of how this type of player is utilized occurred early in the 1990-91 hockey season when the New York Rangers engaged in a trade for a player best known for his fighting talents. The general opinion of this player was that "Kocur is the best goon in hockey. Not the best scorer. Not the best skater. Not the best checker. No, the best goon, meaning the best enforcer, the best tough guy, the best attack dog" (Anderson, 1991). The team felt they needed this type of player to help them win games and eventually the league championship.

This action is not an aberrant behavior but is, as Colburn (1986) states, "a form of deviance that represents an institutionalized means for dealing with diverse institutionalized ends, and not a form of anomie or innovative activity that represents the rejection of institutionalized norms."

Statement of the Problem

An analysis of the way the game is structured at the present time reveals that "the scope of violent activity appears to be structurally narrowed by specialization because it is delegated to certain players ... They are a strategic work resource for controlling the symbolic assailants on the other team" (Faulkner, 1974). From this observation it appears that teams will employ an enforcer whose role it is to fight an opposing player who also has been designated as an enforcer.

This arrangement is easily taken for granted without being fully understood. There has been little to provide an explanation of this phenomenon within the context of the game and those who play it. Furthermore, the literature lacks adequate explanation of why or how deviant behavior is accepted, praised and even rewarded by owners, coaches, and fans.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to:

1. Discover the nature of the antecedents which compel players to take part in what is normally a socially aversive behavior.

2. Gain an understanding from the players their reasons for taking on such a role and how they rationalize such behavior.
3. Discover how hockey players who are enforcers view their role and the influences and decisions they experienced as they proceeded through the hockey system.

Theoretical Orientation

Bandura's Social Learning theory will be used to frame this present study. In general, "Social learning theory emphasizes the prominent roles played by vicarious, symbolic, and self regulatory processes in psychological functioning" (Bandura, 1977 p. vii). This theory suggests that the actions of others, the interpretation by the individual and the coding of these observations, symbolically act as guides for an individuals own behavior. This observation, coding, and action, is not a linear relationship but one where there is a constant interaction between all three factors. That is, "Social learning theory approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants" (Bandura, 1977 p. vii).

There are several aspects of Social Learning Theory which will influence this research. The first of these is a player's awareness of "anticipated consequences." Hjelle points out that,

through verbal and imaginal representations we process and preserve experiences in ways that serve as guides for future behavior. Our ability to form images of desirable futures fosters behavioral strategies designed to lead us toward long range goals.
(1981, p. 241)

Based on the hockey players cognition, the style of play is frequently governed by how they view their future possibilities. This study will explore how players select behaviors which they consider appropriate and influential in shaping their careers in order to realize the achievement of reaching the NHL.

According to this theory, "anticipatory incentives increase the likelihood of the kind of behavior that is ultimately reinforced time and again" (Bandura, 1977 p. 23). A young player with an incentive to play in the NHL can engage in very physical styles of play to demonstrate that he can intimidate, enforce, and dominate other players in the firm belief that such behavior will provide recognition and the reward of being promoted to a higher league. Such a reward provides positive reinforcement for this behavior and in the context of social learning theory is consistent with the anticipated consequences which were identified by Bandura (1977).

It is important to remember that not all individuals will behave in the same manner or be attracted to similar reward schemes. For each individual "anticipated benefits can strengthen retention of what has been learned observationally by motivating people to code

and rehearse modeled behavior that they value highly" (Bandura, 1977 p. 37). Each persons values will differ from others and it is such a value system that will determine what an individual considers sufficiently important to incorporate into their own behavior patterns.

A second part of the theory which will influence this research is "reciprocal determinism." Monte suggests that a person is simply not an object that responds to stimuli and the environment but that,

human behavior is regulated in a reciprocally determined way as the persons behavior affects the environment, the environment in turn affects the persons behavior, the persons awareness of these interdependencies affects behavior, environment, and changed expectations.
(1987 p. 575)

Hockey players will react to and interpret their environment in a unique way based on their goals and behavior. It was anticipated that the subjects of this study (based on the pilot interviews) will have been exposed to similar experiences as they have succeeded in making their way through the hockey system in North America.

A third aspect of Social Learning Theory suggests that we do not learn entirely by trial and error but that we depend more on what we observe in others. According to Bandura, much of what we learn is acquired by symbolic modeling based on language and symbolic interaction.

There are four points to consider in regard to learning through the observation of models,

1. Attentional processes determine "what is selectively observed in the profusion of modeling influences to which one is exposed and what is extracted from such exposures" (Bandura, 1977 p. 24). There is a vast amount of stimuli for a person to consider every moment of their lives. What they choose to pay attention to is important in regard to their own behavior.
2. Retention processes is the symbolic form that the information taken in has been stored for future use, in this way, "transitory modeling experiences can be maintained in permanent memory" (Bandura, 1977 p. 25). This is the cognitive function of the individual for interpreting what they have paid attention to.
3. Motor reproduction processes is where the individual puts into action what they have stored in symbolic form. The person will convert the "symbolic representations into appropriate actions" (Bandura, 1977 p. 27). This is the process where the player learns if he can perform the modeled behavior.
4. Motivational processes assess the incentive once the behavior has been learned, stored, and performed, to continue the behavior. An individual will "express what they find self-satisfying and reject what they personally disapprove"

(Bandura, 1977 p.28). In regard to this research, learning from modeled behavior can play a vital part in a person taking on the role of enforcer but "the provision of models, even prominent ones, will not automatically create similar behaviors in others" (Bandura, 1977 p.29). There still has to be a cognitive function on behalf of the observer to attach meaning and goal oriented behavior from what they see to what they themselves do.

In the framework of Social Learning Theory, players as "observers acquire mainly symbolic representations of the modeled activities" (Hjelle, & Ziegler, 1981 p. 242). The opportunity to observe these modeled activities are the many hours of hockey action the athlete will watch of professional players on television or at the hockey arena. It is these players who will "serve as prototypes for both appropriate and inappropriate behavior" (Hjelle, & Ziegler, 1981 p. 242). As much as the observer will view the skating, scoring, and strategy, he will also observe the high sticking, slashing, and fighting. What will be retained, practised, and motivated will be up to each individual observer. The modeling function of the professional players is of primary importance in regard to other leagues that could be observed in that "those who have high status, competence, and power are more effective in prompting others to behave similarly than are models of lower standing" (Bandura, 1977 p.91).

What needs to be understood from this theory is that "cognitive factors partly determine which external events will be observed,

how they will be perceived, whether they leave any lasting effects, what valence and efficacy they have, and how the information they convey will be organized for future use" (Bandura, 1977 p.160).

What is likely to happen is that the observing young hockey player will select and code the behaviors he has observed for later adaptation and use.

Definitions

Terms that need to be clarified are;

1. Cheap shots; these "are assaults that are committed against others without warning and take advantage of an opponents lack of preparedness or expectation that such an assault is about to occur" (Colburn, 1985).
2. Aggression; "an overt act intended to psychologically or physically injure another person. Aggression always involves an intent to injure" (Bredemeier, & Shields, 1986). The intent to injure is the important aspect which distinguishes aggression from assertion.
3. Assertion; "the use of verbal or physical force that is task oriented, constitutively acceptable, and involves no intent to injure" (Bredemeier, et al., 1986).

4. Reactive aggression; "it's goal is the infliction of injury on another person, ... an emotional response" (Lefebvre, et al., 1980). This type of aggression is shown when an individual has no other goal but to specifically hurt the opposing player. This aggression can be as a response to an assault by an opponent, or a response of frustration to having some type of personal goal being blocked by this adversary.

5. Instrumental aggression; "it's goal is the attainment of some other reward" (Lefebvre, et al., 1980). Aggression is the tool used by the athlete to gain the reward which in this instance is usually the winning of the game. It could also be the scoring of a goal, which will in the long run help secure a win.

6. Enforcer; a person who "has demonstrated an inclination for moving into danger, controlling the intimidation of their colleagues by others. ... To forestall trouble and deflect threats of his team" (Faulkner, 1974). The deflection of the threats will be onto themselves away from the major goal scorers on the team, the smaller players and, the goal keeper. This is the person who will be the focus of this study.

Delimitations

The individuals involved as enforcers make up a very small proportion of the total hockey playing population. As stated earlier though, this is a unique, experienced population which has been exposed to the many influences that are going to have an impact on fighting behavior. Though never certain, it might be argued that eight veteran enforcers constitute a good representative sample. The players selected will be ones recognized for some time as an enforcer and that have a substantial penalty record which was accorded primarily for fighting.

Limitations

Although fighting would not be considered a behavior which is normally accepted in any other institution, it is accepted in the sport of hockey. Generalizing the findings to other settings would not be possible. Nevertheless, Lincoln and Guba suggest that "the naturalist cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry; he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985).

Significance

The information from these athletes could be useful in several ways.

1. If the league truly desires the cessation of fighting then understanding the players viewpoint and the forces acting on them will help in deciding what the appropriate intervention should be to achieve that goal.
2. The league officials might discover that fighting is such an entrenched rewarded behavior that the players, owners, and administrators will recognize its significance. Any intervention to ban fighting then will have to contend with these forces.
3. If people are dropping out or staying away from the game due to the violence and specifically the fighting, then knowing the social influences on this behavior and controlling for it could keep more people in the game and possibly raise the skill levels of all the players involved.
4. A more specific knowledge of the dynamics involved with fighting in hockey will help clear up the perceptions as to the necessity of this behavior. The more the people involved know about the reasons fighting occurs, the better will be their future decisions on fighting's usefulness or shortcomings.

5. Knowledge of this type of behavior and the forces behind it would aid in the comparison of the NHL with other hockey organizations or other sports groups.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Even though this behavior is a form of assault and is penalized by the referees the "players tend to distinguish the fist-fight from all other kinds of assault" (Colburn, 1985). The other types of assault that can occur during a game are for example, slashing, high-sticking, spearing, elbowing and charging. Some of these are done by the player using his hockey stick on an opposing player and all are considered by the referees, the players, and others involved in the game as first, serious infractions of the rules, and second, cheap and unsportsmanlike conduct. In this difference of distinction the "fist-fights, unlike stick assaults are viewed by the players as a legitimate, if formally prescribed form of assault" (Colburn, 1985). The fist-fight, though penalized as an infraction of the formal rules, is seen by the player as an action that has a viable situational necessity.

The recognition of such an event taking place has developed to the point where teams now have individuals on their roster whose primary asset to the club is being a fighter. The term most often used to designate this player is enforcer. These people are seen by others in contributing to "the smooth operation of his colleagues; his task is construed as one of forestalling trouble and deflecting threats to his team" (Faulkner, 1974).

There are a variety of reasons and influences for a player taking on this role. Previous research has found that "the weight of evidence supports the contention that most males are not comfortable committing acts of violence. Violent behavior is learned behavior, and some men learn it better than others" (Messner, 1990). For the purpose of this study various reasons that could be a source for learning to fight have been grouped into seven categories. These groups are: 1) the structure of the game, 2) game morality, 3) honor 4) social learning, 5) reactive aggression/frustration, 6) instrumental violence and, 7) social reward.

1. The Structure of the Game

The structure of the game can be separated into three parts. First, the social structure of player selection from when a player is first entering competitive leagues, up to the professional leagues, secondly, the penalty structure and third, the control structure during the game itself.

1.1 Social Structure

Hockey is a contact sport and like all contact sports has to deal with a certain level of violence. With hockey, "violence is an integral part of the occupational culture shared by players and others associated with the game" (Smith, 1975). From the young age groups

and increasing in prominence up to the professional level, the social organization of hockey "leads to the creation, maintenance and, promotion of the motivation to engage in violent behavior as well as a vocabulary of motives to justify and extoll that behavior" (Hughes, 1978).

What Smith (1979b) discovered is that the "structure of the system compels aspirants to conform increasingly to prevailing professional standards which include the necessity of employing at least a minimum of force-threat." This force-threat is the public testing of opposing players as to their willingness to take part in the violent aspects of the sport. It is where a player "tests inferences about the roles of others while making an implicit claim to be a person of a particular occupationally approved character" (Faulkner, 1974).

As a player strives to reach the professional ranks, he finds the number of teams that best provide the opportunity for these promotions decreases. If a player wants to be selected for one of the continually dwindling positions he will be compelled to perform the needed skills required of him set by the professional standard. This standard reveals itself in an "occupationally oriented sub-culture composed mainly of older players in highly competitive select, and junior leagues where professional criteria regarding the use of violence are in force" (Smith, 1979). Research has found that by "midget age, fifteen, coaches are looking for the ability to mete out and withstand illegal physical coercion. Some boys are upwardly

mobile primarily because they are good fighters" (Smith, 1979b). Players who have the skills of being a superior goal scorer or skater for that age group are not looked upon to also be fighters, but they must be willing to protect other teammates and get involved if the fight expands beyond the original two combatants. If players do not have the superior skills they can still be promoted "primarily because they can fight" (Smith, 1979a).

The right person, or person of approved character, is the one who will be ready to fight at all the necessary situations. A player who is not controlled in his behavior and fights at inappropriate times can be a threat to his team in regard to winning. This type of uncontrolled player is referred to as a goon, a player that has shown a "construed overinvolvement in the use of assault, as well as getting oneself into situations where others are continually called upon to protect the player 'for no good reason' " (Faulkner, 1974).

1.2 Penalty Structure

When a player engages in a fight he has to serve five minutes in the penalty box. This is lenient punishment with regard to the total time of a hockey game (60 minutes) and in comparison to other penalties that could be administered such as game misconducts or fines. If putting an end to or decreasing the occurrence of fights is the purpose of the penalties then imposed sanctions "have been relatively unsuccessful in quelling sports violence. This failure may

be due to the fact that league sanctions have, in practise, been neither certain nor severe" (Gulotta, 1980).

Even though a penalty has been administered to the offending person to show that this type of behavior is not tolerated, the game of hockey is "the only sport that alters a rule of the game during the game to favour the team which has just been penalized" (Neron, 1977). This reward for fighting is the opportunity for the penalized team to ice the puck. It is this change that allows the team that is short-handed to ease the pressure on them by being able to shoot the puck down the length of the ice without having to deal with a face-off in their end.

This amount of penalty time is calculated into the game plan by the teams management. "If a coach sends out a fighter, they are making that decision knowing an illegal act will be performed and that they will sacrifice an advantage in terms of penalty minutes" (Colburn, 1986). A certain amount of penalty time is acceptable in relation to the positive aspects of the overall functioning of the team to which this type of player contributes and the possibility of winning the game

1.3 Control Structures

The game of hockey has two methods of controlling and penalizing rule infractions. The first of these is the formal control which consists of the constitutive rules. These rules specify in advance the "major purpose, or goal of the contest, the means allowed or prohibited for achieving the goal, penalty system and methods for evaluation and determination of a victor" (Silva, 1981). The implementation of the formal control is the responsibility of the referee and to a lesser extent the linesmen while the game is in progress. The calling of penalty infractions is the referee's role, of which there is only one, to supervise the actions of twelve players. The speed, the close quarters action in front of the net, and in the corners, makes it possible for many infractions to go unnoticed by the referee (Colburn, 1985; Colburn, 1986).

The referee will also use a certain amount of discretion throughout a contest to "maintain a flow of the game at an acceptable level for players and fans alike" (Colburn, 1986). Both of these groups do not find a game enjoyable that is constantly being interrupted by penalties. Therefore, some infractions are not called even though they were seen by the referee. This discretion is also in evidence near the end of close games where it is argued that the contest should be won or lost by the players not by the official. This is usually the case except where the infraction interfered with a good scoring opportunity. According to Vaz (1977), the role of the referee is largely symbolic for two reasons: 1) it creates the impression that

the game is under the control of an impartial authority which helps perpetuate the legitimacy and responsibility of the game in the eyes of the public and, 2) it creates the impression that the players actually govern their actions according to the normative rules.

The second method of control is the informal system which is under the jurisdiction and regulation of the players. This system operates because the players are aware of the limitations of the referee and deputize themselves to assist him.

The fist-fight is a primary example of the punishment aspect of rule infractions in the informal system, while penalty time is the punishment for the formal control. In comparison of these two systems Vaz (1977) believes "it is the informal control system that is largely responsible for regulation of the game."

To make their actions legitimate to all people involved in the game, several reasons have been stated for the purpose of fighting. (1) It is physically impossible for an official or referee to be in a position to observe most illegal assaults. The players use the fist-fight to "bring the possible occurrences of a cheap shot to the attention of the referee" (Colburn, 1986). (2) If fighting were eliminated, "in the void left behind something even more violent, like the increased use of sticks to intimidate would take their place" (Nash, & Lerner, 1981). (3) It is used to "prevent illegal assaults from damaging players' careers" (Colburn, 1986). The fist-fight is viewed as a relatively harmless method of control in that nobody

ever gets seriously injured in a fight. If one combatant gains too much of an advantage the linesmen will step in and stop the fight. (4) A fight can be used to eliminate an opponent (Colburn, 1986). This can be done by getting the opponent in a position to receive a misconduct penalty or by injuring the player. (5) To "influence the amount and intensity of violence that occurs" (Vaz, 1977). (6) Fights "control the kinds of illegitimate skills that are employed" (Vaz, 1977). These last two reasons make the importance of the informal control evident in that the final say in the kind and amount of violence that occurs on the ice is not under the control of the referee but the players themselves.

2. Morality

A combination of two situations in hockey results in a relatively lower moral standard. This lower morality is a result of an individual becoming more egocentric in his goals and needs at the expense of all others. A higher moral standard would occur in a situation where an individual is aware of the needs of all participants and weighs each of these unique interests for the appropriate situation and arrives at a solution which is the fairest to all. In hockey however, as in a lot of sports "moral norms which prescribe equal consideration of all people are often suspended during competition in favour of a more egocentric moral perspective" (Bredemeier, et al., 1985). If an athlete wishes to win in any type of head to head competition this occurrence of a lower type of moral

standard would seem to be a natural occurrence. The main goal of competition, especially in professional sports is to win. This is reflected in the participants attitude where the people involved are "offered incentives to seek their own gain, or the gain of their team to the relative neglect of the interests and needs of opponents" (Bredemeier, & Shields, 1984). The powerful incentives for winning can be for example, trophies, money, parades and, public recognition.

The first of the situations that lowers the players morality is the rule structure which "serves to designate and delimit appropriate behavior and thereby removes from participants considerable responsibility for moral obligation" (Bredemeier, & Shields, 1986). A player will know that he will receive a penalty for fighting but the rule structure is very lenient in regards to punishing this behavior. The informal control and the rules to be followed regarding this control leaves open a case for the necessity of fighting. These are the rules that a player will adhere to, to justify his behavior.

The second situation which lowers a players morality in the game situation is the concentration of "responsibility in the roles of coaches and officials" (Bredemeier, et al., 1986). The hockey player is no longer the master of his own actions but is only doing what the people in more responsible positions either allow, or tell him to do. "Players are told to obey, not to think, too much thinking may lead a player to be labelled a 'problem athlete' or as 'uncoachable' " (Hughes, 1978). The game of hockey is played at a very fast pace, and the time to react to circumstances comes down, many times to a

split second. There is no time to consider either the situation in detail or any attributions on the part of the opponent that could be relevant in deciding whether or not to fight. In a sense it is act first, ask questions later. Challenging the opponent to fight immediately after an incident is the correct behavioral response. To challenge later in the game would lose to the player the basic function of the opponents infraction as a moral cause to fight.

Even though this type of morality is lower in a relative sense to the general morality of human interactions, in the specific world of the hockey team this type of morality is held in high esteem. It is while playing on a team that "group membership and personal evaluation come to be defined in moral terms, extreme forms of behavior may not only be encouraged, but they may be demanded in the name of loyalty" (Hughes, 1978).

This type of thinking and level of morality only work in the confines of the arena. Any action which has consequences beyond the game is not dealt with at this level. There are two situations which are not included in this area. The first involves any injury that is game transcending. This "involves an intended consequence that would impair a person in her or his everyday life functioning" (Bredemeier, et al., 1986). The second involves an act to injure that causes "less serious harm but occurring outside the rules or expectations of peers" (Bredemeier, et al., 1986).

3. Honor

Honor can be termed as sticking up for yourself, showing yourself, and saving face. It is also the gaining and maintaining of respect. The common factor between all of these is that fighting is an honorable action. In fact, "a player is expected - indeed morally required to fight if he wants respect. There's respect in losing, but there's no respect in just doing nothing" (Faulkner, 1974).

The fight itself has a ritual similar to a dual that sets it apart from all other forms of illegal behavior. There is the recognition of respect and honor between combatants from the start to finish of the fight. Most other infractions are done without any announcement or warning. The trip, elbow, or high stick are all done quickly and without a proper time frame for the opponent to prepare themselves for the assault. Therefore, "one who takes a cheap shot at another behind his back but not to his face, is in effect a coward" (Colburn, 1985). The player who wishes to fight faces his opponent and gives "respect, by providing advance notice and warning as to the existence of a grievance" (Colburn, 1985). This warning is given by the pre-fight ritual. First, the player has felt that an opponent has given him a cheap shot, and secondly, the referee has not called the infraction so matters must be taken into his own hands. The player giving notice to fight makes sure that his opponent is facing him. He will then drop his gloves and stick to communicate his intentions to fight. The opponent now has two choices, first, he can either reciprocate in kind, or secondly, he can skate away. It is not

important whether a cheap shot was done or not, the important point now is the second player's response to the challenge.

The ritual of the fight is performed in full view of the public and the players, most of whom are not aware of the preceding circumstances. They cannot judge whether a player has been rightly challenged or not. What they are aware of is the challenge, and their opinion of the player will rest on his reaction to that challenge. In regard to the alleged perpetrator of an infraction, "there is no dishonor in being accused of a cheap shot, but there is dishonor in not standing up to the accusation" (Colburn, 1985). To maintain his honor then, the challenged player will, in almost all cases also drop his stick and gloves to communicate his response to the challenge.

While responding in the correct manner allows the player to show he is an honorable person it is in winning that "players gain prestige" (Smith, 1971). It is these players who come to be known as the enforcers. An effective enforcer does not have to win every fight but he is expected to win most of them because "honor revolves around a players capacity to move into trouble and command deferential treatment (respect)" (Faulkner, 1974).

The league is constantly changing with new players coming in all the time. The quickest and best way for these rookies to gain respect around the league and from their teammates is to fight the toughest guys on the other teams. It is a character test to see how they stand up to the standards of the profession. The enforcers, because of this

constant influx of new players will be continually challenged throughout their careers. They are only as good as their last fight. It is in this type of situation that "one's moral worth must be established day after day, season after season" (Hughes, 1978).

The maintenance of honor is secured by the players in that fighting is done "with fists, not sticks, without gloves, on the ice, in the presence of referees, and as a consequence of something that happened in the course of the game" (Nash, et al., 1981). Otherwise, the honor of one or both is lost.

The fight must also be contained between the two original fighters. A third person in can only be acceptable by the players if his teammate is getting soundly beaten, even then it is questionable behavior. The league does not condone a third person getting involved with a fight. This is shown by the much stricter penalty of a game misconduct and a possible fine to the perpetrator. As long as the players maintain the informal protocol associated with the fight it will be seen as a "social ritual that highlights respect between competitors"(Colburn, 1985).

4. Social Learning

As the young hockey player advances through the hockey system he can be influenced by several significant types of individuals over the course of his career. The term that best describes these people

are the athlete's normative group. These are "groups, collectives, or persons that provide the actor with a guide to action by explicitly setting norms and espousing values" (Smith, 1971). These people can include parents, coaches, teammates, fans, role models, and the media. They provide what Cohen (1965) calls an "illegitimate opportunity structure" that encompasses "social concerns in the individual's milieu which provide opportunities to learn and to perform deviant actions and lend their moral support to the deviant when he breaks with conventional norms and goals." This type of social support allows the athlete to learn the use of violence which includes the fist-fight as acceptable behavior, rather than learning it is inappropriate. Smith (1975) has found that "much of the legal and illegal violence in sport is not aberrant, rather it is socially acquired normative behavior."

4.1 Parents

The learning that a player receives from his parents has the most influence during the early years of his career. This relationship wanes in regard to the game of hockey as more people come into the athlete's playing career and their input takes on a larger role. The research shows that parents do not openly condone violence, but there are parts to their character that shape an opinion that fighting is not that bad (Nash, et al., 1981; Smith, 1974; Smith, 1979d). The feeling is that "fisticuffs have a character building function in the eyes of some parents who see hockey as a training ground for later

life" (Smith, 1979d). Parents can also give glowing comparisons to fighters in the NHL after the game if the child has been involved in some altercation during the game.

Coupled with this attitude is the display of emotions that the child observes during the course of a game from his parents. As the game goes on "emotions run high, verbal encouragement of legal hitting spills over to encouragement of semi-legal assaults, and to fighting" (Smith, 1979d). In one particular instance this encouragement of fighting was put into practical use in that "three times a week, in sessions that lasted from ten to fifteen minutes at the rink, the parents of players of a minor league of the Montreal suburbs allowed a coach to teach their children how to fight" (Neron, 1977).

From this type of behavior the child soon learns from his parents the actions and language of what is appropriate behavior for a hockey player. Even though fighting is not normally encouraged during the course of a hockey game, what becomes apparent to the players are the situational expectancies for fighting.

4.2 Coaches and Management

The influence of the coaches and management can be through direct communication to the player to get involved in a fight. It can also be done through rewards of either greater playing time or promotion to a higher league. In Gallmeier's (1987) qualitative study

the coach felt that "if one of our guys is given a cheap shot, I call it to their attention so that they get angry, mad, and want to get even." This type of communication can be done throughout the game and in the pre-game lectures. Language is important in that its meaning can make quite an impression on players, especially young ones. The use of words such as " 'kill' by the coach is itself indicative of the deep-rooted nature of violence in hockey" (Smith, 1979a). This type of influence can be part of the game from the age of fifteen as the importance of fighting becomes increasingly predominant (Smith, 1979b).

The players also realize the importance of being able to fight. Smith (1974), found that players in the AHL (American Hockey League) "perceive toughness and fighting ability as important in impressing coaches and management." Fighting is seen as a means of promotion, a reward for correct behavior. If an athlete is big they will be labeled as an enforcer and other teams will test his fighting ability. If he comes out on top of most of these situations this player will soon find out that "controlled fighting ... seldom jeopardized a career. It helps it" (Vaz, 1977).

4.3 Teammates

Teammates have a very strong influence in the form of appraisal for a good fight, or in the form of punishment by looking down on someone who does not fight. According to Faulkner (1974);

Fighting, or challenging the person who has wronged him suggests to teammates that the individual can be depended upon to behave in a manner which will not bring disgrace to the team. ... Refusal to fight or reluctance to 'even the score' against an opposing team is viewed as disruptive of collective efforts and cowardly.

If a player is involved in a fight and if he wins it in a fair and honorable way this can give an "emotional uplift of the players, ... a morale booster" (Colburn, 1985). All the players gain some feeling of invincibility. The thinking goes that if we can beat them in a fight we can beat them in the game. There is a team connection to the player who has just fought and won.

Once a player is involved in a fight there is an expectation that he will receive support from his teammates if he gets into any serious trouble. This trouble can be for instance, having another player from the opposing team interfere with the fight if he is getting severely beaten up.

Whatever the situation is, "if an athlete fails to meet performance expectations, the failure is often interpreted as a violation of team trust" (Hughes, 1978). The team has to be secure in the knowledge that support will always be available otherwise suspicion and mistrust will invade the delicate team balance.

A teammate always being prepared to back up fellow players is part of the normative rules of the game. These reflect the value

systems of the people involved with the game and whose rules are usually quite different than the constitutive or formal rules of the game. Those "individuals not wishing to comply to the normative rules are often negatively labeled and may be ostracized from the team" (Silva, 1981). This is the punishment for not fighting meted out by a player's teammates. A player soon learns then if he fights he is an accepted member of the team while if he does not fight he is an outsider and a threat to the teams cohesiveness.

4.4 Fans

The line of thinking for fans is that fighting occurs because that is what people want to see. It has been found that "violent episodes in sports generally receive higher ratings of appreciation than for more benign play" (Russell, 1986). An extension of this kind of result for the game of hockey is that the "players know that fans like to watch fights. Fights are exciting. They punctuate the rhythm of the game. They focus attention on the game that even a goal does not" (Nash, et al., 1981). This is one of the basic arguments used by the people who condone fighting. To prove differently would be impossible since fighting has been around for such a long time that it is just accepted by most people involved with the game. The only way to prove this argument wrong would be to ban fighting and observe whether the attendance drops. There is a large amount of money at stake so doing an experiment of this type just to prove a point might be risky. However, a study by Russell (1986) has shown evidence to "suggest

that extreme player violence could be curtailed with no appreciable loss in revenues" .

Fighting has become so much a part of the game without one understanding whether it is in fact entertaining. The executives of the league feel that "insofar as it's part of the show, certainly we sell it... you don't change a successful formula" (Russell, 1986). This selling can be done only if they have the players who are willing to fight. The players learn that fights sell hockey. It is an important part of the game in terms of its interest to the fans. Therefore, to keep the fans coming to the games fighters are needed by the leagues to keep them functioning. This type of reasoning is made apparent to the player who in turn feels that "if he doesn't act like the toughest guy in the league the owners not going to want him. The owners believe this is the thing that sells the tickets and they're right. This is what everybody wants to see" (Smith, 1979d). With this line of logic then, the player comes to a conclusion that first, if he does not fight he does not play and second, if he does not fight, the fans won't come out to the game.

4.5 Role Models

A role model is "an individual who provides the actor with a frame of reference which serves to facilitate judgements about problematic issues" (Smith, 1974). This person is someone who shows another individual how to perform some role or behavior.

Young hockey players have the opportunity to watch at least two professional games per week on television during the regular season, and during the playoffs almost every night. This amount of exposure allows the behavior of the professional player to be well known to the viewers. Through this much opportunity to observe the NHL, the "chief source of amateur hockey violence ... is the professional game" (Smith, 1974). The viewing of this violent behavior Berkowitz (1970) feels can increase the chances an observer will act aggressively for two reasons, first, "the observer learns something" and secondly, by "showing that aggression pays off, or legitimizes violence" In regard to the second point Smith (1974) remarks that as role models "violent professional athletes are prestigious and highly rewarded materially and socially, thereby functioning also as legitimators."

By viewing the behavior of the athletes in the top league a picture of the way the game should be played is formed in the young athlete's mind and is translated into action as he goes through his career. This makes the occurrence of fighting and violence in hockey by the players a self perpetuating behavior. The young people watching the fights in hockey today and accepting its function in the game will be the role models of tomorrow. As evidence of the influence of the role models, Smith (1979) points out that "in a study of eighty-three high school players, those who perceived their favorite NHL performers ... as rough and tough received more assaultive penalties in a seasons play than those who chose less violent models."

4.6 Media

The media can play a vital role in conveying appropriate role behavior for a developing hockey player. Using the media as a source for hockey conduct has to be coupled with the knowledge that "the media do exploit violence to boost ratings and for economic gain" (Young, 1991). This exposure by the media affects young players in that it can "convey the idea that fighting and the like is acceptable, even desirable behavior" (Smith, 1979c). Smith (1979a) also reasons that "intense exposure to the mass media for many decades has helped stamp the professional imprint on virtually all of Canadian hockey."

Besides showing the action of the game the media will also highlight fights that occurred. The way these highlights are done sometimes takes away the seriousness of the infraction and puts this action in the realm of entertainment for its own sake with no connection to the game. "Fighting was never looked at critically, in terms of its place in the rules, in terms of injuries or its effects on the game" (Young, 1991). Sometimes the press is viewed as taking the stance that the big news about hockey is not the game but any violence that did occur making the game now secondary to the fights. In a recent newspaper article about a hockey series and a brawl that occurred an official stated "it seems we only get attention when something like this happens and not the good things that the league does. ... I'm a real believer that the more you publicize violence in hockey, the more violence you will have" (Dawkins, 1992).

The overall outlook and result of this type of reporting is that the "press frequently deal with illegal and potentially harmful behavior in a trivializing manner which ... facilitates legitimation" (Young, 1991). The reason for this type of reporting according to Horrow (1982) is that;

The sports establishment and the media seem to believe that violence enhances the marketability of professional sports. The sports establishment and the media are convinced the viewing public cannot appreciate the subtle skill and the finesse of talented players, but they can really grasp the concept of brawling.

After a game where two top enforcers of the league fought several times in a particular game, in its highlight package "the Sports Network started its lighthearted coverage of the pairs two fights with sound effects, including a ring-side bell and boxers' gloves graphics between rounds" (Cariou, 1991). To further entrench the acceptance of fighting, the media will also provide "attention grabbing newspaper pictures of fights, radio and television reminiscences about famous brawls of the past, and newspaper and magazine articles overtly or covertly glorifying tough guys" (Smith, 1979c). Added to this is a growing number of videos which show nothing but highlights of great fights of the past. The National Film Board is also in on this type of glorification in which their film " 'Blades and Brass,' its award winning short on pro-hockey, highlights bloody faces and body thumping (to rousing Tihuana Brass tunes)" (Smith, 1979c).

With all this attention to the extent and event of fighting the behavior and the role of the fighter becomes normal and legitimized to the people who are both participants and viewers of the game.

5. Reactive Aggression

Reactive aggression can be a result of frustration or as an act of revenge. Frustration is the feeling one gets when a desired goal is blocked in some way. "The form itself functions as an outlet for players' tensions and frustrations in the expression of an aggressive display" (Nash, et al., 1981). Frustration can stem from internal sources if the individual is not physically able to carry out some task. It can also come from external sources if, for example, an opponent is blocking the completion of some goal, or from receiving a penalty from the referee and therefore putting him out of the game for awhile. Through interviews with players Smith (1979b), found that:

they believe that fighting, ... and the like are inevitable byproducts of the 'speed,' 'body contact,' 'intensity,' and/or 'frustration' inherent in the game and that fist fighting is an 'outlet' or safety valve. Stop up this valve, they say and the result will be yet more vicious and dangerous behavior.

The argument for fighting to occur for these reasons goes all the way to the top of the league. Then president of the NHL, John Ziegler, stated that " 'I do not find it unacceptable, ... in a game where

frustration is constant, for men to drop their sticks and gloves and take swings at each other. I think that kind of outlet is important for players in our games' " (Smith, 1979a). The frustration can be resolved on the spot with aggressive action being taken by the player immediately after an incident or it can be maintained if this frustration is not readily satisfied with reciprocity occurring at a later time or, in another game. Russell (1983) found that "increases in the number of previous meetings between any two teams was accompanied by an increased incidence of aggression, ... a norm of reciprocity seems the most parsimonious." Transgressions are always remembered and paid back. In Ryan's study (1970), he found that in regard to an earlier anger provoking situation, "once these aggressive responses are elicited, the individuals tend to remain angry until the anger instigator is injured." Usually the "retaliation ... is incrementally of greater intensity and uninhibited by the threat of subsequent retaliation by the victim" (Russell, 1983). This leaves the players in a never-ending spiral of one-up-man-ship. Each response is taken as an insult that must be answered back, otherwise the athlete's reputation is given a negative casting by the league in general. "If you want to get kicked around, high sticked, and have the league running at you, all you have to do is get a reputation as someone who'll back down" (Faulkner, 1974).

The theory with frustration and aggression is that once an action has been taken due to the frustration, a person should be relieved of such feelings. Psychologically though, "if an individual has been frustrated in the past and has acted aggressively, ... learning theory

would predict that he would do so again in the future if the act served to lower his frustration" (Leith, 1982). Hockey is a game that will have similar circumstances repeat themselves for a player throughout his career. The use of fights to relieve frustration will remain an important ingredient for the game, and its players. However, the players can keep their frustrations and retaliations to a minimum if the situation warrants it such as at the end of important close games, in overtime periods and in important playoff games.

6. Instrumental Aggression

Instrumental aggression for hockey is the "recognition of intimidation as a strategy of play" (Nash, et al., 1981). Violence of this type does not regard the immediate results so much as the long-term effects and rewards. As Silva (1981) points out, "this calculated risk is situation specific and can often result in the offender whether caught or not gaining a tactical advantage over the offended." The intention of this behavior is to win the game, to eliminate an opponent, or to pick up the rest of the team emotionally and to get back into the contest. In regards to the emotional aspect, Petr Klima, an expected goal scorer for the Edmonton Oilers remarked about this type of occurrence in regard to his team's enforcer. " 'He did his job, now the goal-scorers, we've got to do our job.' Brown was kicked out of the game but the Oilers scored seven unanswered goals to beat the Canucks" (Cariou, 1991). Thinking of this type is evident through-out hockey leagues with the philosophy that to "be

successful most hockey teams need at least one or two tough guys who are always ready to fight" (Smith, 1979a).

This strategy is most useful if it is done early in a contest for two reasons. The first is that if the team ends up a man short due to penalties being handed out, the players will have more energy to successfully kill off the time they are at a disadvantage. The second reason is that the "aggressiveness could have a positive impact on the outcome of contests if this behavior injured or intimidated the opposition and thus weakened their resources" (Widmeyer, 1984). The earlier in the contest that this occurs the longer the opposition will have to play without these people, which in turn allows the instigating team more opportunity to win the game. If a team does find that an opposing outfit can not play as effectively without certain players then their use of an enforcer type of player has been rewarded.

This type of strategic violence is so much a part of the game that "as youngsters advance through the select hockey systems, instrumental violence becomes increasingly important" (Smith, 1979d). The start of this type of behavior is usually when the young player is around fifteen years of age and he is taught that "violence is justified if it is a means to a desired end" (Smith, 1975).

7. Social Rewards

For social rewards to have any influence, the enforcer has a role that is needed and accepted for the functioning of a successful hockey team. Also important is that the fans like to see fights at the game and that it is indeed an effective strategy for the control of the game. Overall then, "violence becomes the means through which a sense of personal adequacy is achieved and ones status, both inside and outside of the sport setting is preserved " (Hughes, 1978).

If these other aspects to the behavior were not evident then the rewards would not be in place. One reward can be monetary compensation (Hughes, 1978). As one player puts it, "if they're paying me eighty or one hundred thousand a year or whatever, it's pretty hard to turn that down" (Smith, 1979c). Other rewards are favorable public recognition and the "maintenance of professional status" (Silva, 1981). This "need for recognition leads some players to commit infractions solely to attain this written record of fame, ... the commentators lavish time on him (and) elaborate on his past record" (Neron, 1977).

The connection between these rewards and fighting in hockey will vary with each player and his overall hockey playing skill. If the recognized enforcer is also on the team because he is an asset for example, his defensive skills, or his penalty killing ability, then the connection of rewards for fighting will not be as strong. Also the public recognition of knowing the player only as a fighter will not be

as evident.

Summary

While this study has separated the influences on an individuals fighting behavior into seven distinct categories all of these can interact with each other. Depending on the situation, age, experience, and others involved at a particular time, one influence will have a more direct influence than the others. These influences will not affect the individual without input or from the others.

Fighting is argued to be an important aspect to the game of hockey and "as long as teams associate winning with a more aggressive style of play, discouraging and controlling aggression and violence in ice-hockey will be difficult" (Worrell, 1986). This coupling of winning with fist-fighting is strongly associated to how teams plan and select players. A player agent, (Bob Woolf) has found in dealing on behalf of clients with the NHL that "invariably, the interview would get around to how well my client could fight" (Horrow, 1982). The structure of the game, honor, social learning, reactive aggression, instrumental violence, and social rewards all play a part in bringing and maintaining the fights in hockey.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The methods of qualitative, naturalistic inquiry, will be followed. The qualitative data will be in the form of recorded text, field observation notes, and collaborative reports. In subscribing to this line of research, there are five axioms outlined in Lincoln and Guba (1985) that the researcher is made aware of;

1. "the nature of reality" (p. 37). For a naturalistic inquiry the "realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic" (p. 37). There are a variety of influences that will be a factor in a player developing into a specified role. Only through a qualitative study will this information emerge to discover the causes, the interplay of influences, and the unique individual understanding of these influences on behalf of the players involved in such a capacity. Also, "no phenomena can be understood out of relationship to the time and context that spawned, harbored, and supported it" (p. 189).
2. "the relationship of knower to known" (p. 37). In a study using this methodology there is an interactive relationship between the researcher and subject. There will be influences by and towards the researcher and informant when doing the interviews.

3. "the possibility of generalization" (p. 37). The purpose of this study is to develop as rich and accurate a description of the role of an enforcer in hockey as possible. It is only with this description that others explore the generalizability of conclusions. According to Lincoln and Guba, "the object of the game is not to focus on the similarities that can be developed into generalizations but to detail the many specifics that give the context it's unique flavour" (p. 201).
4. "the possibility of causal linkages" (p. 37). Lincoln and Guba's approach that "all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping" (p. 37) is similar to Bandura's idea of "reciprocal determinism" as stated in Chapter 1.
5. "the role of values in the inquiry" (p. 37). These values are; 1) personal values of the inquirer, 2) the choice of paradigm used, 3) the choice of theory used to frame the study and, 4) the values in the context of the study and interviews.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory is used to help understand these multiple realities and the effect of the person themselves in dealing with these influences.

A comprehensive literature search was accomplished to review what has been discovered and to understand the influences that could possibly affect the behavior of the hockey player throughout his career. This literature search provided background knowledge of

the area and along with pilot interviews provided the foundation that will be used for the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

Two instruments, a questionnaire and an interviewer were used for this study.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire for this research project was formed from several sources. First, in order to achieve a full understanding of the issues and problems surrounding both method and substance of the problem the related literature was searched. From this information categories were formed, broken down, then reformed. This method follows the research pattern of inductive analysis which means that the "patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis" (Patton, 1986, p. 306).

Two points to be aware of in making up the categories for the questionnaire are;

1. internal homogeneity, which is "the extent to which the data that belong in a certain category hold together" and,

2. external heterogeneity, "the extent to which differences among categories are bold and clear" (Patton, 1986 p. 311).

In accordance then to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 185), "knowledge gained from experience with objects and events," in addition to causal statements and assumptions from informants with a demonstrated knowledge of the sport were examined and selectively utilized.

From this work a set of pre-arranged questions were structured to form a research instrument with which several informants were interviewed. Four pilot interviews were completed in preparation for this proposal with three University of Manitoba hockey players. Of these three, one has professional experience, trying out for the Minnesota North Stars, and one was a recognized enforcer in the Western Hockey League. These interviews were done for the following reasons.

1. These people give the researcher further insight as to the world of the hockey enforcer
2. They help to recognize points of the research that should be explored.
3. They introduce other influences not brought out in the literature.

4. This experience helps the interviewer in becoming relaxed and skilled with the topic and to find a pace that is appropriate for the best communication during the interview.
5. They help in bringing to the attention of the interviewer any surprises that might happen in the course of an interview itself.

On the basis of these interviews the questions were reformulated until the questionnaire provided an effective research instrument. The instrument (in Appendix B), provided the semi-structure of the interview and allowed the researcher flexibility and the opportunity to clarify responses. The validity of these predetermined categories was evaluated throughout the study as a result of subject responses and new information.

The Interviewer as an Instrument

For the following reasons the interviewer is necessary and important.

1. The responsiveness of the interviewer is required to pick up cues that exist in the environment of the interview or from the player being interviewed (Lincoln, et al., 1985 p.193). Such cues include the attentiveness, concentration, boredom or interest of the informant.

2. The clarification or elaboration is provided when the researcher is the instrument.
3. The researcher can adapt a holistic approach where the responses can best be understood in relation to information from the whole interview. A player's responses may not be as well understood without prior knowledge of data obtained during the interview.
4. The opportunity to ensure complete understanding is provided. (Lincoln, et al., 1985, p. 193)
5. There is present the opportunity to explore atypical, or idiosyncratic responses. Answers which need further exploration can be sought through the necessary probes and cues (Lincoln, et al., 1985 p. 193).

The interviewer also has to be aware that "there is a delicate balance between adjusting a design to newly discovered knowledge and overreacting to "the loudest noise," or the "brightest light" (Lincoln, & Egon G. Guba, 1985 p. 211). Any new information has to be taken into consideration with an awareness to the whole data base of responses and knowledge.

Subjects

Purposive sampling was used to gather the informants necessary for this study. This is used to "increase the scope or range of data exposed as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered" (Lincoln, et al., 1985 p. 40).

The subjects to be used in this study will be eight professional hockey players in the NHL who are recognized as enforcers by their penalty statistics, teammates, and coaches. The number of points accumulated would preferably be less than ten at any point in the season while the penalty minutes would have to be noticeably different than other players on the team. By the end of the season this total should be at least above one hundred and fifty. Of course the more penalty time coupled with low points allows a stronger indication of this person being qualified for the study. If the player accumulates too many points that would indicate that the individual can also be an asset to the team other than being an enforcer. While a team would not employ an athlete who would be a detriment every time he is out on the ice, the enforcer must have at least a minimal amount of skill to be in the league but, the point totals coupled with a large amount of penalty time would indicate that this player is on the team primarily for their physical intervention skills. There are a select few individuals that do not fit this description. These are the players who originally did not score many points but, through their years in the NHL acquired the skills to be more effective as an offensive player.

Other people interviewed as supplementary to the study and to help understand the enforcers role would be referees, coaches, other players and, former professional players.

Recruitment

The recruitment of informants to be interviewed was accomplished in several ways.

1. Letters were sent to all the teams in the NHL in which the purpose of the study, and other pertinent information was described. A copy of the type of letter sent is in Appendix A.
2. A telephone contact was made to individuals who had not received letters. The study was explained and if the subject was willing to participate, a time was arranged for an interview.
3. Contacts made with employees of the NHL Winnipeg Jets enabled the researcher to gain entry to the organization. These people were able to introduce the researcher to the players on the team necessary for the study.

Assumptions

Several assumptions are made when interviewing informants.

1. The assumption that the questions have content validity. Are the questions being asked staying within the topic and are they relevant to the theme of fighting influences in hockey? To satisfy this assumption the use of pilot studies and the feedback from these informants increased the content validity of this research.
2. The assumption that the player will understand the questions. Without a full understanding the player will not be giving a response relative to the intent of the interviewer or may not answer at all. The use of the interviewer as an instrument and the strengths of such a tool as outlined earlier limits the possibility of such a problem occurring.
3. The assumption that the meaning of the questions and responses will be the same for the interviewer and the player. By using slang or words with double meanings a question can come across to the player with a meaning quite different than the one asked by the interviewer. Care has to be taken in that the language used is easily understandable, with little room for interpretation. Again the use of pilot studies, the interviewer strengths, plus a tacit knowledge gained from the literature search will support this assumption.

4. The assumption that the sample used is representative of the total population. The size of the sample will be small in comparison to the population of players in the NHL and even smaller relative to hockey players in all leagues. The players selected in the study however, are among those who have had the greatest overall experience in regard to influences on fighting behavior and it is because of this that generalizations can be made from this small population. If one wants to find out about fights in hockey, ask the people who are doing the fighting.

5. The assumption that the players will give honest and open answers. Depending on the players' views of the interview process, the interviewer, or other things that might be on their mind at the time, they might not feel like cooperating with the study. To lessen the probability of such an occurrence anonymity and confidentiality is emphasized in the initial letter and at the beginning of the interviews. The interviewer works to build trust and to probe for honest responses.

Organization Of The Data

The categories will be formed from inductive analysis which is the process of coding data whereby the "raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit precise description of relevant context characteristics" (Lincoln, et al., 1985

p. 203) Also, inductive data analysis is more likely to identify the mutual shaping influences that have interacted to explain the possible development of the role of an enforcer.

New data that will come to the attention of the researcher and will be compared with what has already been discovered up to that point. If this new data does not fit into the categories developed then "perhaps they ought not to be used to define the category, perhaps a subcategory is needed, or perhaps the category needs to be redefined" (Lincoln, et al., 1985 p. 342). To help insure the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the results a verification check will be made with an informant previously interviewed. It is through this check the player establishes that an acceptable representation of the role of an enforcer, in the opinion of an expert in that role, has been achieved.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to give a full and complete account of what is involved in being a hockey enforcer. This includes: 1) how the game develops this role, 2) what is expected of the enforcer, 3) personal influences and, 4) what motivates a person to take on this role. The categories developed in chapter two will provide the framework for the data uncovered in this research.

Information was obtained from eight semi-structured interviews using the questionnaire to guide the formal structure. During the interview it was also important to allow each individual the opportunity to emphasize their unique history and interest with regard to the different aspects of the questionnaire.

Throughout the chapter "he" will be used as the descriptor for statements and comparisons. This is done because the people interviewed were males and could only relate their personal bias.

Each person interviewed was aware that the information given for this thesis was done with confidentiality and anonymity. Therefore, pseudonyms will be used for each individual.

Martin - A Canadian with Junior and College hockey experience.

He has been in the NHL for three years.

Zach - A Canadian with Junior experience. He has been in the NHL

for four years.

Stefan - An American with Junior experience. He has been in the

NHL for four years.

Steve - A Canadian with Junior experience. He has been in the

NHL for two years.

Matt - A Canadian with Junior experience. He has been in the NHL

for six years.

Rob - An American with Junior experience. He has been in the

NHL for seven years.

Cory - A Canadian with Junior experience. He has been in the NHL

for ten years.

Kurt - A Canadian with Junior experience. He has been in the NHL

for six years.

1. STRUCTURES OF THE GAME

1.1 SOCIAL STRUCTURE .

A players on-ice behavior is learned and shaped over many years through observations and personal experiences. For fighting, the observations are: 1) the behaviors of the players just before a fight, 2) the action of the fight, 3) the reactions of others observing the fight, 4) penalties given out and, 5) the emotional effects after the fight. The personal experiences are what happens to the athlete while he is participating in the game of hockey.

Of importance for observers to this enforcer role is whether the players are given any type of reward. Social Learning Theory states that "when others are rewarded for certain conduct in one context, but ignored or punished for the same type of behavior in a different situation, observers gain information about the aspects of the environment that signify how similar behavior is to be received" (Bandura, 1977, p.125). Hockey does not formally reward fighting. It is in the informal acceptance by participants, team members, and fans that such action is rewarded. These behaviors are continually learned and reinforced as the player proceeds up the ranks of the hockey social system to the professional level.

As far as fighting is part of this learning process, the enforcers have expressed an acceptance for this as part of the game. They

acknowledge that fighting is "a long time accepted tradition within the hockey environment or the hockey game that has just come to be a fixture" (Martin), and that "fighting is a big part of the game, it has been for a long time" (Kurt)

The social structure allows certain players to improve their fighting skills which could enhance their goal of reaching the NHL. Several enforcers would agree with the statements;

Personally, when I was breaking in and if fighting was not part of our game, I don't think I'd be here now. I had to get in to the league somehow and fighting was a way I could do it. I was given the opportunity to do that. I won a job, became a regular, now I'm a more rounded player and improved my game to the point where I'm used in a lot of different situations. Like I said, if fighting wasn't there, I probably wouldn't be here.
(Kurt)

Also, "I didn't have as much skill as other guys and I wanted to compensate. I wanted to do anything to play hockey and that's how I did it" (Steve)

The enforcers judgement of why he is in the NHL is not clouded with unrealistic expectations of his own abilities. As Martin relates, "my physical attributes have always been my biggest asset and I would say quite honestly, if it weren't for my size and for my aggressive nature on the ice I probably wouldn't be at this level today." Fighting ability aids an enforcers career, Steve knows "it

helps, it allowed me to play Junior cause I was tough, and it's allowed me to play in the minors cause I was playing in the NHL."

Accepting this "tough guy" role is a choice each player has to make. He has to decide between playing hockey, with fighting as part of that decision, or other lifestyle choices. With this decision of pursuing a hockey career for as long as they can, the type of role they have to take on becomes one of personal pride. The players opinions reflect that "not a lot of people like to fight, I mean I don't either but I've always realized that it's a job that few people can do" (Martin).

This player can develop into the role of an enforcer as a combination of possessing a strong desire to reach the NHL and having the social environment to accept and nurture such a position.

When I got to Junior I was younger than all the rest of the guys. I was the youngest guy on the team so in order for me to stay, and I wanted to stay so bad, I had to add another dimension to my game. I wasn't ready to play Junior at that skill level maybe, when I started, so I had to add something else and, you know, I added the toughness part of it, so they kept me. Then when I got into that role it was like I never got out of it. It was like it got from doing it once in a while to doing it all the time to doing it the most out of anybody. That was my meal ticket. As far as points go that was a bonus, there was always somebody that was looking for a guy that would mix it up and play that physical role.
(Zach)

I went to (a top Junior team) and they had a lot of goal scorers. To actually play there, to be a regular, I think that they expected a little more from me than scoring goals. So I looked at the situation and realized they needed some more physical players and that's when I decided that to play, and play at that level I had to change my game a little bit. That's when the fighting came in to effect.
(Kurt)

As players get tougher and bigger, each individual will have to develop along with that competition to stand out and be seen as one of the better players at this role. The competition for the limited number of spots on the teams increases until only a few are left to play in the big league.

There's guys that are tougher than other guys, and then there's guys that are strong and can be the best fighters there is but, you know, there's guys that are better at it than others. It's a fact, you work on it,...I guess there's sort of a skill to it.
(Zach)

I think it's an acquired skill and, over time, through experience, and what have you. You know, certainly avoiding punches is as important as getting your share in. There are some things to be learned in that part of the game.
(Martin)

With the molding of players into the enforcer role, fighting skills as opposed to hockey skills becomes the predominant identification of a player, one of which he is fully aware.

1.2 PENALTY STRUCTURE

One of the products of calling a penalty is that it draws attention to the perpetrator of the act. The crowd, team, and media attention act as rewards for that individual in that "observed punishment raises rather than lowers the models social status" (Bandura, 1977, p. 127).

In regard to the penalty structure and starting a fight, these role players are aware that "well, the instigating rule, you know you don't want to get a penalty and hurt you're team in any way so, you got to watch that" (Steve). However, this instigating rule is not a deterrent. It is used as a strategic tool by the enforcer to both hurt his opponents, and to help his team.

There have been a couple of incidents where I have been in a situation where a player, an opposing player will drop his gloves with me and want to get involved. I'll back off or skate away and he's left standing there with his gloves on the ice and he receives a two minute unsporstmanlike conduct penalty and our teams able to go on the power play.
(Martin)

Knowledge of this penalty structure helps Cory decide the proper time he might back away from, or engage in such an encounter because;

Society accepts that you can do that now. You can turn and skate away from somebody and people accept that as a good hockey ploy. A lot of players use that to their advantage. Whatever society accepts, or the fans accept, or your teammates accept. If that was a good play to turn and skate away from it then you say, it's part of the game and I can do that now and nobody's going to criticize me for that. It's part of the game.

The effectiveness of the punishment is heavily dependent on the players impression on how the ensuing penalties will affect his team.

I've seen lots of guys throw off the gloves and other guys will just back away. Usually that should be a penalty. You're the instigator, you got at least two minutes for instigating. Oh definitely ... they walk away, like if it's an advantage to the team then they'll say, they'll probably say to them, 'I'll get you.'

(Matt)

In many instances the fight is not an emotional reaction but a strategic ploy taking into account the game situation. One such situation stated by Kurt is "with the new rules now, some guys take advantage of that fact and try to steer a guy into a fight, get him to start it. With our new rules, if that guys declared the instigator he's out of the game and you get the power play." In this way the players show they have control of their emotions and use this situation to gain an advantage for their team.

This penalty system only delays the natural outcome as viewed by the players. For any instigation Matt believes that "everybody

knows that the matter will be straightened out, if it's that game or the next game."

Well a penalty, if we have an advantage. Let's just say a guy cross checked me, or speared me, that's a five minute major. That's five minutes we're going to be on the power play. It can change the whole game around. We can win it, we can get an even bigger lead. In this situation you just take what happened, take it in stride. If you want to get it straightened out you can straighten it out on your time not on his time.
(Matt)

If there is a decision by the league executives to get rid of fighting all together Steve noted;

What would happen if you ever eliminated it, and attendance did fall? Do you bring it back? Then you're condoning it. So, they're in a very fine, like once you eliminate something, you can't say, 'well next year, we got a new rule change, we're bringing back fighting.'

The difficult choice of eliminating fighting is that the executives will have to realize there will be no going back on that decision.

1.3 CONTROL STRUCTURES

1.31 FORMAL CONTROL

The enforcers feel that fights are natural events within a hockey game but that “a lot of referees I guess are threatened by a fight happening or a fight breaking out and they want to take every possible measure to prevent that. I guess because they probably see it as a poor reflection on the game they've called or the job they've done” (Martin). Even with this tight control fights will break out. “It might not be the referee's fault, sometimes it might be. Maybe he didn't call penalties early but, it's a rough game and things are bound to happen” (Rob).

The referee is the primary individual on the ice who controls the formal aspects of the rule structure. It is this person the players use to gauge whether a game is in, or out of control.

If your team gets behind, or gets in a situation where we are shafted by the referee or we feel we're getting the raw end of a referee, and we get down a few goals, I'm sure the stickwork's gonna get up. Guys are gonna start getting upset and that's exactly how it's gonna work. They're gonna get on each other and they're gonna start getting on. That's when the altercations start.
(Zach)

There is an assumption by the players that the referee is keeping an eye out for certain players and instead of taking each penalty situation as a specific incident he will already have in mind who will be getting the penalties. They have an opinion that the referees will call a biased game, giving these enforcers penalties without fully realizing the complete picture of a situation. This assumption decreases respect for the referee in calling a game fairly and strengthens the idea that the players have to take some of the control.

The referees know each individual. They know that Marty McSorley likes to use his stick, Mike Hartman likes to do a lot of hitting, Stu Grimson's a tough guy, and they look for this. These referees know about each player. You watch the playoff games and I see some guys grabbing guys in the face that aren't really tough players, they don't get penalties. But watch when you see a tough guy does it and right away he's going to get a two minute penalty. I mean, that's inevitable.
(Rob)

No No, referees nowadays especially you notice, referees like to get out of a game calling even amounts of penalties on either team and if the ruckus starts going on and there's a couple of guys that fight out there, those are going to be the two guys that get sent off the ice. I mean, it doesn't matter if they're in the skirmish or their not in the skirmish, those are the guys that are going to pay the price. That's just the way it is.
(Zach)

The referee is seen as a symbol of the formal control structure and is there to ensure that the game is played within the rules. The true nature of the game of hockey as seen through the enforcers eyes however is that fights are going to occur no matter what kind of game the referee calls.

1.32 INFORMAL CONTROL

The players can allow the formal rules to take care of a situation but many times the only choice is to take matters into their own hands. This situation occurs “if the referee starts letting the game get carried away and he starts letting the other team get away with murder, definitely you have to step in and control it yourself” (Matt). Or when “the game gets out of hand, that’s when the aggressive players and the fighters tend to get a little bit more involved in the game” (Kurt).

An aspect of this informal system is that fighting should be left to the people who know what they are doing. “Here's a guy who scores us goals, we're gonna protect him. It's kind of like whether he can or can't, he shouldn't be doing the fighting” (Matt). It is believed that with fighting left to these role players the occurrence of injuries will be lessened.

The real problem I have is with the out and out brawls. The altercations where both benches empty or even five on five, that's when people get hurt. There are a lot of skates and sticks and other objects flying around, that's when people really get injured. That's when the skilled people or the people that are inexperienced in that role you know, tend to get injured.

(Martin)

I've seen a lot of times in the past when it's one experienced fighter and one inexperienced fighter, or better yet two inexperienced fighters. The gloves drop, there'll be a fight but then they'll hit the ice and there'll be a lot of trying to get the extra shot in. Or the skates are flailing around and, I've seen you know, a lot of wrists lacerated in situations like that. That's an uncontrolled situation and people get hurt in those uncontrolled situations.

(Martin)

These role players are well aware of their position on the team and have pride in what they do. They know that "if there are physical liberties being taken against my teammates, some of the smaller skilled players on our team, it's been my responsibility to respond to that or to get into a scrap or something like that" (Martin).

The enforcer is the protector for his teammates. "He'd be there straightening out the situation" (Matt). Showing the other team that "you just don't do that to our star player" (Matt). When he avenges one impropriety against a teammate "it'll show the other team that

they can't go and do things like that. The whole team, they can't go around being stupid" (Steve).

This type of player can also stop the tactics of opposing players before anything happens. "That's why we have the Shawn Cronins, and the Bob Proberts, for that reason I think. It's to keep these people in line" (Rob). Sometimes the enforcer's reputation is feared enough so that "the option or the threat of a fight occurring is something that often times keeps players in check or keeps players honest" (Martin). This type of behavior is effective when opponents are fully aware of an enforcers reputation borne from previous altercations.

Yeah I think it does a lot. Like tonight, they didn't dress Shawn Cronin and there was a lot of crap going on like their good players getting hit. A lot of rough stuff that probably could have been avoided if he was in the lineup cause everybody would have known that if they were stupid he was there to take care of it so, I think it does help a lot.
(Steve)

While hockey is a team game and players will step in to avenge actions of the opposing team, the enforcer is always expected to perform this function and to perform it to the satisfaction that a wrong has been successfully righted. When Steve executes his role properly the opponents will be in a situation where "just knowing if they do something stupid that there are going to be players there that will take care of them."

2. MORALITY

According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, in "displacing responsibility people do not see themselves as personally accountable for their actions and are thus spared self-prohibiting reactions" (Bandura, 1977, p 156). This displacement can be passed on in the following ways.

1. To the referee where, "sometimes a lot of what the referee does brings a lot of it on" (Zach).
2. To the opponent, as is the case where "usually when I know the other persons trying to hurt me, a tough guy, and they don't care if they hurt me so, I don't care if I hurt them" (Rob).
3. To the nature of the game. In this regard Rob relates, "I broke a guy's jaw a couple of years ago and I felt bad. He's got a wife and kids. On the ice it's part of the game but you have to. I have a soft heart at times and you don't want to see anybody hurt"

In a game such as hockey injuries will occur. Despite a player's best intentions there still has to be a regard that the odds of such a situation occurring are greater than in other walks of life. The compensation for the player is to realize and make other people realize that game transcending injuries are not their intent, they are "not that kind of person" (Rob).

A focus on carrying out the role of enforcer is to deal with the moral and ethical questions which come up if first, there is a game transcending injury or secondly, that the fight has proceeded beyond the informally accepted rules of the game between the players. The players realize that in maintaining their role the consensus is in agreement with Steve's statement that "I never try to hurt anybody. I just try to do my job as best I can and hopefully I'll never hurt anybody over my career." You can hit and even hurt someone within the context of the game but you cannot take away the opportunity for that player to continue his lifestyle away from the game. As Matt pointed out, "hockey is body contact, but there's just a few things you just don't do cause like, you also have to respect one another that you're making a living. You don't go and take his livelihood away."

To lessen the harmful impact of the fight it is often compared to other violent acts

Violent things are like Samuelsson in Pittsburgh. He's a violent guy cause he tries to hurt you. Craig Muni in Edmonton cause he cheap shots you. He tries to take your knees out. He's hurt a lot of guys over a long period of time. Not too many guys get hurt fighting.
(Steve)

Social Learning Theory states that an act is "made righteous by contrasting them with more flagrant inhumanities. The more outrageous the comparison practices, the more likely are one's own reprehensible acts appear to be trifling" (Bandura, 1977, p. 156).

The variable that is used for comparing fighting with other acts in hockey is how often a person can get hurt from the penalized action.

3. HONOR/RESPECT

The enforcer must be acutely aware of the rules that pertain to the fairness of the fight. In obeying these rules, the player is showing himself to be a person of honor. The belief is to “try to be as fair as possible because you have a job to do and the other guy has a job to do” (Steve). The main proponent of this fairness is that the start of the fight is preceded by the awareness of both players to what is about to occur.

I can't say that in any of the fights I've had in the recent past that the individual wasn't aware that he and I would engage. That's, I guess, that's a prerequisite to never take on someone by surprise or who is unaware of my intentions.

(Martin)

As opposed to other infractions which normally occur without any prior warning, the fighters are well aware of the intentions of their opponent. Both players recognize the honor of the fight in saying, “I'm giving you the same opportunity as you're giving me, turn around and we'll drop our gloves and we're gonna fight” (Zach).

The informal rules of a fight are rigid enough such that knowledgeable avoidance of the pre-fight routine will delay a matchup. Such a situation for Steve is when "the eyes catch. A lot of guys that don't want to fight skate around with their eyes like that, (looking down). As soon as their eyes catch, then there might be a problem."

There are two steps to the proper carrying out of the start of the fight. First, that you are aware that a fight could start and have signalled to your opponent that you are ready and secondly, that you are satisfied your opponent is also ready for the upcoming encounter.

A good percentage of the time eye contact between the two individuals, especially if they haven't played against each other during the game a lot. Two players that have been all of a sudden placed on the ice together will assume that they're out there for that specific reason. A lot of the times it doesn't even take physical contact or verbal communication, it'll just happen, they assume that.
(Martin)

There is a repertory of hints and gestures used to demonstrate your intentions. The more subtle method is when "all it is is a look in each others eyes and you know that a fights going to come about" (Kurt). If that method is somehow not communicated properly or ignored, progressively more overt methods could be used.

There are generally two ways that you're capable of communicating to the other individual that you're wanting to get into a fight. Usually if you're lined up against them right at the draw you can give them a good bump or, directly, verbally you can speak to them. You can communicate to them verbally what your intentions are.

(Martin)

On this specific occasion I believe I asked the individual if he would like to take an early shower? He said no, but with some further goading he eventually, we eventually got into a fight.

(Martin)

This formality makes the challenge and acceptance public which in turn increases the likelihood that the players will fight. For Rob, "it makes me look bad if I back down. If a guy challenges me, I don't care if I instigated it or not, I would have to be there and step in."

An enforcer always has to be prepared "because there's always the threat of being beaten within that weight class" (Martin). To do the best in a situation that requires his type of skill, he cannot be caught off guard or unawares of situations which might occur over the course of a game. For Steve, "I always try to know which hand he throws, left or right. How he does, does he get tired easy, can he take a punch and stuff like that. I always, like, without asking anybody through fight tapes and stuff like that I like to know what the guy does." At other times;

You find yourself you know, mentally going over some things and making sure you're prepared. I like to see myself in a lot of different situations with these two individuals just to insure that I'm prepared. I know I can predict what I'm going to do in that situation rather than responding at the time.

(Martin)

The reputation of these players always precedes them. The enforcers know who they are dealing with and what skills they possess. In this regard "the guys respect each other. Everybody's got a job to do and they know it. Sometimes a lot of nights they just respect each other enough not to bother each other" (Steve). In this situation then it's "mostly respect, more than intimidation now with all the rules being changed" (Steve).

A player who commands respect can control situations merely by being on the bench or the ice. Eventually though this player will have to be challenged just to see if his actions and skill are still ones to be respected.

If I haven't fought for three or four games I start to think about it. You don't really have to do it. Everybody knows you're going to do it if something stupid happens. It's just when something stupid happens that you go out and do it.

(Steve)

A player will only gain respect by fighting people who are also recognized as enforcers. "You see them come in and challenge the established 'big guys.' Try and gain some respectability" (Kurt). As part of that role Zach realizes that "you know, I worked my way into the league fighting guys that were respectable fighters."

Kurt believes that fighting other enforcers will "impress the coaches, get the respect from my own teammates, and get a reputation around the league that you're a hard nosed guy and that you're not afraid. That you'll stand up for anything." In any of the professional leagues "that's important to every athlete as much as they say I want to win, you want respect" (Cory).

4. SOCIAL INFLUENCES

4.1 PARENTS

There is an acceptance on behalf of the parents that fighting is part of hockey. Fighting is not over-emphasized but given a quiet validation as part of the game. The focus of the parents is that they supported their sons playing hockey but that they did not like the fighting aspect. As Steve noted, "I think my parents never ever wanted me to fight. They wanted me to play hockey all the time." What can not be forgotten in this is that the parents are aware fighting occurs in hockey yet still allow their sons to play the game.

If the parents are not actively against fighting, young hockey players come to accept fisticuffs as a legitimate action in the game. The important aspects of the parents action are first, that they did not reject the idea of fighting and secondly, that they did accept the idea that if their child was to play the game they were aware that fights were going to occur.

The action of the fight in a hockey game can be seen by the parents as a legitimate situation for observing their son's character. For them, hockey provides an acceptable environment to observe behaviors that otherwise would not be socially acceptable. As Matt points out, "they wanted us to have pride, they didn't like fighting, but, if it came to it, they also wanted to have the assurance that we could handle ourselves. It was part of the game. Not that they didn't agree with it, but you shouldn't go looking for fights."

The parents view about how their son handles situations on the ice can be extended to behavior outside the arena. The game of hockey allows the parents to view their child in aggressive situations from which they make general life comparisons.

My dad was proud that I didn't start the fight. He was proud that I could take care of myself and he could relax because he was always a little bit nervous. Can I be intimidated, can I handle myself, did I teach my son how to take care of himself, physical part of life. Whether it's on a hockey rink or if someone all of a sudden on this back street, can I handle this.

(Matt)

4.2 COACHES/MANAGEMENT

The coach is a model for the developing player. His opinions and instructions are important for establishing knowledge on how the game should be played. He also conveys information on how to act and respond at critical times in a hockey game. This is vitally important because as Bandura (1977, p. 91) states, "most rules of action are conveyed by instruction rather than discovered by direct experience."

I was sixteen years old. I went to Canada, played Tier 2 hockey in Toronto. Coach said, 'guy hit me from behind and you didn't do anything, how come you didn't do anything?' I said, 'what do you want me to do?' He said, 'you drop your gloves and you hit him.' So I started fighting.

(Rob)

A lot of times it was communicated to me directly. Similar situation where I hadn't played a great deal. A player, a teammate of mine was involved in two fights with another specific individual on the other team so, if that player gets in another fight he's automatically ejected. It was communicated to me directly that when that player gets out of the penalty box you're gonna be on the ice to get him into his third major for fighting and get him thrown out of the game.

(Martin)

Fighting can be seen by the management of teams at several levels of hockey as a test situation for a player. The test is to see if

the player is tough enough to play in the NHL. He must show that he can maintain a certain skill level under duress and intimidating situations.

I was fourteen years old, in Junior A tier two. We were playing back to back games. Saturday night game was a total brawl but I didn't fight. I held a guy and the brawls going on but I just, I never fought before. I just held a guy. I was a big guy when I was fourteen. I was a hundred and ninety one pounds, five-eleven. The next day, it's a Sunday game, the place is just packed. They expected a fight. Their tough guy they picked up, the guy punched me and I was so scared I just lost it. Like I didn't know what I did, I just beat him up. Okay, I go to the dressing room, I was kicked out of the game. I went to the dressing room and the Edmonton Oil Kings scout was there. The next day I was up cause that was the only thing they worried about, can I handle myself or can I be intimidated.
(Matt)

A player will enter training camps knowing why he has been selected for that team. Rob was aware that "you have to show that you can play and fight." The situation for them is to make the management aware of their skills and the way to do this is by fighting people. As Steve pointed out, "Some guys in training camp will come in and want to make the team and I don't blame them if they do it." The experience for Rob was;

Training camps have. I had a guy who played in the minors for seven years. I was twenty years old and had already played in the NHL. He never played an NHL game. He had a wife, two kids, and he was making X amount of dollars in the minors. We fought six times in training camp one year and he instigated six of them, or maybe five and I got mad the last time.

The enforcers have to prove themselves to management if they want to get into the NHL. The best way to get recognized is to take on the people who are already known as the toughest and then measure yourself directly with them in a fight.

Like he thought I took his job. He was a tough guy but he was older. He was twenty eight years old, never played, he figures that this young guy came in and took my job. He wanted to prove something to the management. It's all part of the game.

(Rob)

A similar situation would be after a trade. Rob felt that "you come to a new city you have to prove yourself all over again." There is also the knowledge of the enforcer as to why he has been traded.

What I knew was that I was brought there for a reason. I could try to be a goal scorer and checker but I knew that hey, I'm here because they fit me into that type of line. I wasn't on the one or two line, I was on the number three line which is the best checking line and also a line that was going to be physical.

(Cory)

Once the player has made it to the NHL he is well aware of what is expected of him. Communication takes place between the coach and the player about his role before a game or season and what is expected of him in certain situations. Come game time though the communication from the coach is now in the form of hints. Matt noted; "I kind of, I've seen it, like the nod to go out there" or, "I've never seen one guy say go fight him. It's a bit like an eye contact" (Matt). Other situations would be, "somebody's been running around and you've been playing left wing all night, and all of a sudden you're playing right wing, that's a hint" (Steve). Or when "the coach puts you out on the ice with somebody else's fighter" (Kurt).

Just being placed out on the ice with certain people a lot of times you can just assume. During line changes you can often assume or understand when you're out there to set some physical tempo, especially at home. If someone's running around a little bit or taking some liberties with our skilled players and then all of a sudden we get the last line change at home and if I'm placed out on the ice against someone? I understand that to be a message to me kind of thing. I've had it communicated to me directly, verbally, you know maybe a handful of times each year.
(Martin)

There is no time for explanations to the player, "you pretty much know that the coach wants you to do something" (Kurt). He realizes that "if someone's taken a real deliberate cheap shot at a teammate or something like that, often times the coach would probably like to see me get involved in an altercation with a player" (Martin).

The result of all these instructions, hints, and situational playing time is that as Steve realizes, "if you're going to be playing in the NHL the coach doesn't have to tell you or expect this from you. You're supposed to be smart enough to do it yourself. You're supposed to know. If you want to play in the NHL you better know cause they're not going to tell you to do it."

While other players can have the option to shy away from violent or aggressive situations the enforcer is expected to be in the middle of, if not the initiator of, such action. He is there for one job. If he has other skills and the coach allows him opportunities to hone those skills, that is a bonus. The bottom line for Steve is that he has to be able and willing to fight.

They'll never drop a guy because he's not ready to fight. They'll drop a guy if he's scared to go into the corners and scared to get hit but, if somebody calls him on it and he doesn't want to fight, that's his option. Unless he's an enforcer, then he's there to show up.

Then there is the business side of having an enforcer on the team. The executives or owners have made an investment in a player and to insure this investment they will hire someone to protect him.

What if they run a guy like Gretzky and there's no fighting? What's the purpose? That's a big investment for a team. A guy like Gretzky, A couple of million dollars a year. Think the owners want that? I don't believe that. If you've got some tough guys around said hey, if you touch one of our superstars we're going to have to counteract.

(Rob)

Teams in the NHL are well aware of the necessity of having an enforcer or at least someone who gets into a lot of fights and so they will recruit or trade for that specific role player.

Every teams got to have one or two enforcers and if they don't, they try real hard to try and get one. I don't know many teams that don't. I know Pittsburgh didn't really have any but they had one guy and he wasn't doing it too well, so they went out and got a couple of guys. Every teams got em.

(Steve)

The initial and final decisions on how the team is made up belongs to the management of the team. These decisions are not lost on the players. They are well aware of why they are on the team and what is expected of them during the course of a game or season.

4.3 TEAMMATES

In many of the interviews the enforcers pointed out that the respect of his teammates was vital in maintaining his role. "I seem to get the respect of my teammates from that and that's encouraging.

It makes me feel like a valued member of the team, like I'm providing a necessary role or position" (Martin). Of importance to Martin is that "I've always had a good deal of respect from my teammates for the type of job that I do because not a lot of people do my job and they feel it is a very difficult job." This respect and acknowledgement from his teammates helps the player to maintain the motivation to carry out a role that few others are willing to do.

Steve realizes his teammates "expect me to show up all the time if somebody's picking on them" and to "come and play hard and hit and intimidate guys." Matt knows that he has to be willing to fight at every opportunity available to him.

I think if you show up for the battle and you don't back away it shows that you're willing to stand. That maybe puts you even more like we're backing him whether he had the best of it but he stood right in there, right to the end. That also is a good motivator. Our men are standing up for us so let's wake up here and start join the party type thing.

There is pressure on the player to come out on top both for his own physical well-being and for the mental well-being of the team. "When they see me out there doing it, it seems to give them a boost. Especially when you are the one who prevails in the fight or seems to do better" (Martin).

A player will execute what is expected of him for the reason of doing what is best for the team. For Matt, "there's a split decision

what you have to decide but you always, in the back of the mind, it's always for the team. What's best for the team.”

This emphasis on the team is important for every enforcer. “Where fighting comes in a team sport, it all makes sense to you. We all have to do what we have to do. Then you’re all rewarded after, whether by fun, or compliments, or just feeling good about things” (Cory). “Each guy has to do their job. We realize that you go out there to help the team win. It motivates the team. You need to fight for a certain reason. (Rob).

4.4 FANS

One reason that Martin feels fighting will always be a part of the game is that it is the type of action that the paying public like to see.

There are two times during a hockey game that you will see the fans actually come out of their seats. One is for a goal, the second has always been a fight. Everyone's wrenching their necks and trying to get the best view they can for a hockey fight. So you can't tell me that the fans don't appreciate it or have a real intrigue for it.

It adds an extra dimension and excitement to the game that makes the whole package more worthwhile to the fan. As Kurt noted, “it’s a small minority of people that come to a hockey game that don’t enjoy seeing a fight.”

Fights are something that the fans have come to accept and enjoy as part of the game. For some fans the possibility of a fight occurring is what brings them to the arena. The thoughts of Martin on this point is that "a lot of people come to the games and like to see that happen." Matt agrees, saying that the "majority of the fans, they don't mind seeing a good fight."

The fans can be an influence to guide the actions of a player before, during, and after a fight. Before the fight the enforcer makes a knowledgeable assumption of what is expected from the fans of the home crowd.

The home crowd is a motivating factor. When one of their players or teammates are knocked down or abused or pushed around probably in a way that they feel that some sort of revenge has to occur. They seem to get more involved when the hometown crowd encourages them.

(Stefan)

Let's just say there are two intimidators on the ice. One intimidator hit one of the good players on the ice. Probably the player knows he should have to go after him and maybe he's thinking, maybe, maybe, maybe, and then the fans say, and then he'll say, well shit, I don't have a choice, I got to.

(Matt)

The first game I played was against against a guy (who had) played for the New York Rangers and he just decked me. He came back to New York and he was kind of like a god cause he was a great fighter. He ran right over top of me and the New York fans cheered, and I was a New York player. They cheered for him. So I knew I had to do something, so I took a run at him and I put him over the boards. I knew mentally, I got to do something to get these people on my side.

(Cory)

For an away game, the emphasis would be on taking the fans emotionally out of the game. As an enforcer on that visiting team, "if someone hit your player and the fans went absolutely nuts, your an enforcer, you would go after that guy cause you want to shut the fans up" (Matt).

During a fight the fans are an influence by standing up and showing a lot of interest and attention to the proceedings on the ice which is not seen in other parts of the game except for a goal scoring play. As Zach noted, "ever see a game when there's a fight going and there isn't seventeen thousand fans standing up? The only time you see that is when there's sixteen thousand in the arena."

After the fight the influence is noticed through the cheers, comments, and close attention to the combatants that again is rare in other aspects of the game.

You're playing for a city, you're playing for a town, and the fans are in that building. People want to share that feeling. They go to work the next day and they say 'hey, we're doing okay.' Then if somebody steps in to our territory and starts to push us around or run over our best players, I can't get on the ice but somebody does it on the ice, 'way to go,' I'm part of it.

(Cory)

A part of the hockey crowd consists of people who cannot really be classified as fans but more accurately could be described as the curious onlooker. These people have a limited knowledge of the game however, they do know that fighting is an element of the game. It could be this type of person who "went for a fight, looking for a fight. It was the second game they ever watched, they wanted to see a fight" (Matt).

From the players point of view there is not that much difference between Canadian and American fans. This is important in that people who want to expand the viewing audience via television feel fighting is a deterrent to expansion because Americans do not approve of fighting. The general opinion of the players point out that if "you go to Philadelphia, or Boston, or Chicago and they love it. A good fight once in a while and they love it" (Matt)

4.5 ROLE MODELS

Professional athletes in the NHL are considered to be role models for young athletes. It would be these players who would show that "high status, competence, and power, are more effective in prompting others to behave similarly than are models of lower standing" (Bandura, p. 88.).

All the players interviewed did not make any mention that fighting influenced the way they played. An example of this is;

When I was growing up there was more fighting going on in the NHL than in any other time in the league. The Broad Street Bullies and the penalty minutes were unbelievable but it had no effect on us. I mean, we didn't go out and try and play like the Philadelphia Flyers, we went out and played like the guys in the NHL, like every kid does now.

(Zach)

What is predominant is that these players "respected most the people that could play tough and play the game at the same time" (Martin). A player of this type was "Stan Jonathan. He was my biggest role model. He was tough as nails" (Steve). The majority of those interviewed had role models who used the skills they had to the best of their abilities. These players were not the most skilled on the teams but were perceived as the ones who worked the hardest, and always gave their best effort.

John Tonelli to me is a fellow that was never blessed with a lot of skill but you know, really worked himself through a great NHL career just on sheer desire and determination. He's a fellow you just see give a hundred and ten percent every night. He was probably the one person that I respected most of all through the days that I was growing up, just for that reason.

(Martin)

Some players have looked to others to help them maintain their role as an enforcer. These are the role models who provide verbal instruction such as, "I've listened to a lot of advise from Ron Delorme who was an ex tough guy from Vancouver. He's given me a lot of advise that I like to use" (Steve).

4.6 MEDIA

The media has an influence on how a game is approached because "perceptions of social reality are heavily influenced by vicarious experiences, what they see, hear, and read in the mass media" (Bandura, 1977, p. 40). By what is highlighted, the public becomes aware of what the media considers important aspects of an upcoming game. In this way, "sometimes if the hype and the paper and all, it's gonna be a tough game, reporters kind of make, have a lot to do with what goes on" (Matt). However, a more general view among the enforcers is;

Most players also know when things are talked about very highly, this is going to be a rough, tough game, nothing ever happens so many times. People will go to a game and expect to see the next war and nothing happens. The players just know, hey, it's just not going to happen. Just the ingredients aren't there.

(Cory)

In essence then, the media "builds things up. They can make things bigger than they actually are" (Kurt).

5. REACTIVE AGGRESSION

Reactive aggression occurs when a player fights due to his emotion in regard to the action of the moment. "It's a way to get your frustrations out" (Kurt). It is not planned, nor used to affect other aspects of the game. It is the act of someone who wishes to aggress against the opponent for the sole reason of wanting to physically attack that individual.

There are rules which punish this behavior, however, the players feel that fighting is a legitimate outlet when they are frustrated by the way the game is going or their personal play.

Once in a while, you know if you're losing and the teams losing a couple of games. Like tonight let's say, I was on the ice, I got a bad penalty, they scored, and I went out for my second shift and they scored again, somebody

beat me. I was a little frustrated. So I went after Mike Hartman out of frustration which you're not supposed to do, but sometimes it happens.
(Steve)

Reactive aggression can also take its form in delayed revenge. In this case the player will hold a grudge to get back at an opponent at some later date. As Cory noted, "sure, well sometimes they do. It hurts. Some guys hurt you on the ice, especially if it was a cheap shot or, sticks you, or something like that. Definitely, you remember it."

Anger has to be sustained for a period of time for such a reaction to occur. Again the game situation has no importance for such an act of aggression rather, the fight is carried out solely due to the emotional reaction of the player. Martin relayed, "I'm sure that's a valid statement, that some people carry grudges around for certain individuals."

What seems closer to the general belief among the enforcers is that "it's tough to carry a grudge. Lot's of times maybe I'll think about certain guys and I'll think about who we're playing and about what's happened previously but, I don't get, you know, I don't really hold a grudge" (Zach). "Life's too short to carry grudges. You got to realize people are doing their job, the same as I am" (Kurt).

6. INSTRUMENTAL VIOLENCE

From the players point of view, fighting is a valuable strategic ingredient of the game. To be able to perform in this role of an enforcer Zach has to "focus on what I have to do and I just go out and do it. I'm not necessarily upset, or mad, or whatever."

The fight many times, is not something that occurs without a second thought but is weighed against other factors that are occurring within the game. Zach is well aware that "there's certain times in the game where you should do it and times in the game when you shouldn't do it." It is a job that has to be done with skill and knowledge if fights are to be a tactic for the team. For instance, "when a game is close like two-two or, third period when a game's close, I feel better off not doing it" (Steve)

In instrumental aggression, players fight for secondary reasons. In hockey, there are essentially two reasons, both of which are seen as tactics to win a game. First, to change the momentum or, secondly, to intimidate opponents.

Boosting a team emotionally will work if the player at least has made a good effort in the fight. That is, if "the teams kind of flat it's always sometimes good to go out and maybe give your team a lift or, you know, get into a scrap and get to wake the guys up" (Zach). It works best if the player comes out on top of the contest. It is least effective if he loses and especially so if he loses badly.

Stefan realizes a fight “can change the momentum when a teams sluggish and don't seem to be very productive or, things aren't moving their way. They need a spark or something to get them into it.” What happens is that;

all of a sudden something happens that shakes you out of the doldrums or gives you that psychological lift to get you out of that trance. That's what fights will do some times. Guy's are just sitting there kind of dead and dull and everything else, all of a sudden the fight, the adrenalin gets going again.
(Cory)

Using fights for the sake of momentum is “if you know a teams up a couple of goals it's time to fight or, time to go out and add something to the game” (Zach). The importance of this type of strategy is closely tied into the score and the teams reaction to that situation. For example;

Our team was down two to nothing, we had obviously come very flat out of the gates. I was given a lot of ice time on a regular basis in the early stages of the game. I saw it as part of my role at that point to well, exert myself and try to get into an altercation or at least to provide some good physical contact to kind of switch our tempo around a bit.
(Martin)

He also has to be aware when his actions could hurt the team. Situations of this type would be;

If we're down by a couple of goals and we have to score goals. It's not advisable to go out there and get into a fight. It doesn't make any sense unless we have to get the team going. Maybe that might make the team get going a little bit but, certain times. Or we're up by a couple of goals, there's no reason to fight because if I do lose a fight it might make the other team get going.

(Rob)

The players are well aware of the uses of momentum in gaining the upper hand on an opponent. Making the decision to fight, albeit very quickly some times, the enforcer has to be aware that the outcome is still unpredictable. Of importance is that "regardless of the outcome of the fight, a lot of times just the fact it happened, momentum can shift either way" (Martin).

Intimidation is strategic if it does not allow your opponents to play to the best of their abilities. Zach feels that "intimidation's a big factor and some of the guys are bigger and stronger and they don't have to do it as much because there isn't quite as much problem when they're out there on the ice."

The strategy of using a respected enforcer can cause the opponents to change their style of play enough to take them off their game. An example of this would be where "as soon as Shawn Cronin went out in the ice people just scattered. One big guy can change the tempo of the game." (Rob) In such a case the enforcer has done his job so well that with his reputation, the need to fight someone is not as important as just his presence on the ice.

All the enforcers would agree with Matt in that “at the NHL, intimidation's a huge part.” The strategy for using such a tactic is “to be able to intimidate other people and to punish them to a point where you're throwing them off their game” (Martin).

For either momentum or intimidation purposes, anger does not necessarily have to be a proponent of such action. What happens is that “lots of times I find myself if I'm in an altercation or whatever, I'm not mad. I'm doin it for the simple fact that I know the job has to be done” (Zach). The fight is used as a strategy to somehow gain an upper hand on their opponents. Martin's approach to his action would be that “I don't do anything with hatred or with some kind of personal grudge against the other member of the team so, either I'm able to play an aggressive sport or I'm not able to play an aggressive sport.”

7. JOB

Observing others receive desirable outcomes can act as a motivation to carry on their own aggressive tactics to receive the same rewards. As Bandura points out, (1977, p. 18) "by representing foreseeable outcomes symbolically, people can convert future consequences into current motivators of behavior."

One of the rewards that holds a lot of influence is money, which is “used on a deferred basis as a powerful generalized incentive”

(Bandura, 1977, p. 103). This is evident for Rob and fighting when he says "I don't believe in it and I don't like it but, I'm one of those guys that have to do it or I won't be making this money, and I won't be playing in the National Hockey League."

They basically know what they're there for. They try and work on their game of hockey. Some guys aren't blessed with a lot of talent, but they're tough, and they just know what they got to do. Also, they have to look at what else can I do. I got a family to feed.

(Matt)

Then when I got to NHL I was playing in the minors. I had a wife and I had a child, and it was more so to give them a good life. I think that's what really pushed me. It makes you work hard in the summertime, it makes you work hard during the season. We got to realize this business doesn't last forever. We're well paid for what we do, and you better take advantage of it now cause it doesn't last forever. I think more so than anything else, it's giving my wife and my two kids now, the security and a chance for a good life.

(Kurt)

An opinion voiced by many players in the study is that "I don't like fighting but, it's something that I have to do" (Rob). It is something that is keeping them in the NHL. "It's a job, and that's the only way you can explain it" (Zach).

The role of having to fight for a career can take it's toll on this type of player.

I think there are certain times when you don't maybe feel like it as much but, you know, it's your job and you either do it or they're going to hire somebody else to do it I don't score eighty-six goals like the Hulls or, the Gretzky's or the guys like that so. You know, I got to do my job. Earn my money some way else.
(Zach)

The next goal they wish to achieve is to play in the league without having to resort to fighting as the mainstay of their employment. To develop the skills of a well rounded hockey player and maintain their position as a professional player using those talents and not their fighting skills.

8. SOCIAL REWARDS

For many of the players there was not just one thing that kept them in pursuit of reaching the NHL. It was because "being at the NHL level I think is reward enough for the job that they do for a lot of people. ... It's a pretty good lifestyle" (Martin). There are tangible rewards that can be very powerful in maintaining a goal. Once Cory made it to the NHL he found that "I like it up here, I spent two or three years down in the minors riding buses and making x amount of dollars, now I'm up here being treated like royalty." Also;

The biggest thing of why I went that way was the ego and the stroking. That I was going to do something special that other people never had a chance to do. Not everybody could do that. A lot of people could be a lawyer, doctor, teacher, but not too many people could be a professional athlete. I wanted that credibility, that respect.
(Cory)

The social reward of just being in the NHL is enough for the majority of these players. "You play the game cause you love to play it. It's the pride of being in the NHL" (Steve).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION.

The information obtained from the interviews and subsequent analysis suggested a variety of influences and reasons that cause an individual to take on the role of a hockey enforcer. With each fight that occurs several reasons would have to be used to fully explain why that particular event occurred. In summary, these are: 1) the structure of the sport which plays a large part in the learning and continuation of this behavior, 2) the morality associated with the game in regard to following the informal rules, primarily that the fights actions and consequences are maintained within the game structure, 3) the maintainence of honor among the players through the formality and fairness of the fight, 4) the social influences of which the parents, media, role models, and fans have a minor influnce while the coach and teammates have the major control, 5) the situation of reactive aggression where hockey provides an environment for frustration to be acted upon by informally allowing players to fight an opponent who has crossed him, 6) the use of instrumental fighting to affect the momentum of the game and to try and intimidate opponents, 7) a job opportunity with relatively high wages that accompany such a position and, 8) social rewards such as prestige and respect that accompany being a professional athlete.

The data from the above results produced a breakdown of information into two distinct categories, first, the influences on a

player to first take on this role and, secondly, the reasons why this role is maintained in hockey today.

INFLUENCES

Two sources of influence provide the foundation for a person taking on this role and the development of a unique situation in sport.

The most influential of these variables is that the player grows up learning from others that it always has been a part of the game. Aspiring players see the pictures, read, and hear the stories that show fighting as a legitimate occurrence in the game of hockey.

The social structure provides the necessary environment to observe appropriate game behaviors. They watch how the game is played and have discussed with others the necessity of having to fight.

It is when they are sixteen or seventeen that the size difference or skill level becomes apparent. The coaches provide instruction on the way to play the game and what is needed for that player to enjoy success at a hockey career. The social structure provides an option for the player to increase his aggressiveness and fighting skills as a way to reach his goal of playing professional hockey.

The social structure also provides reinforcement from the fans and the media for being a recognized athlete. Somebody that people identify with and talk about. Other reinforcements are respect from teammates, monetary rewards, and the positive feeling of being sought after, drafted, and praised for your abilities.

What was a strong influence in the players pursuing careers as hockey players but having little influence in becoming enforcers were parents and professional role models. The parents were fully supportive of their sons playing hockey but did not in any way emphasize the need to fight.

Not one of the players had a role model who was an enforcer, fighter, or heavy accumulator of penalty minutes. Their role models were usually someone who did well, worked hard, and gave their best efforts every time they played. The majority also did not have role models who were the stars of the team, the high scorer, or highly skilled player.

The second major influence for a player to take on this role was the desire to maintain a position on a team. These people view this role as a job that allows them the opportunity to play in the NHL. The game provides the necessity for this type of player and they provide the incentive to be that kind of player. There is a strong motivation within these players to compete at the highest level possible. To do what ever they need to do to reach the NHL.

Other players might see the competition getting beyond their skill level and drop out. These players, however, would recognize the situation and adapt their style to develop into this role or to emphasize a size and strength advantage to keep their dream alive.

REASONS

Once the player has established himself as an enforcer, he now provides the reasons why it is necessary to carry on this role. These are game related and apply to the function of having an enforcer on the team.

The most important reason to have an enforcer on the team is to protect his teammates. Challenging and fighting players has to be done to show the other team that if they try any intimidation tactics there will be an immediate answer from the enforcer. The teammates play a strong role in maintaining the enforcer's behavior by providing respect and comraderie.

This protection also comes into play when there is the perception that the referee has lost control of the game. He can not see all the infractions that occur on the ice, therefore, it is up to the players to help in this regard and deal with the perpetrator of such behavior in an honorable way.

The fight is viewed as a different type of infraction as compared

to spearing, high-sticking, or slashing. These are seen as aggressive actions where people are hurt more often and more seriously.

Fighting is also done with a mutual agreement between the players that the action will take place. Through the informal rule structure a sense of fairness is in place and, if the fight is carried out "properly," the risk of injury is minimized.

The second reason an enforcer is needed is to use fighting for its instrumental value as a tactic to win games. The first of these tactics is to use a fight to change the momentum of the game or to spark a rush of adrenalin to his teammates. When the team is not playing well the enforcer will step on the ice and through his efforts show the other players that he is involved in the game and has a desire to win that contest.

Intimidation is the second instrumental tactic. This is used primarily against the skilled players on the opposing team. The enforcer will try and physically take this type of player off of their game so that they are no longer effective. They will not necessarily engage this player in a fight, but by pursuing such an action there is a realization that the opposing teams enforcer will respond to any extreme intimidation tactics.

A third reason an enforcer would fight is the perception that the speed and contact of the game makes fighting inevitable. Frustration plays a minor role in the occurrence of fights in a game. The players

made comments in regard to this but there was not an emphasis on frustration as a reason to fight. What has to be considered is that while all athletes in all sports can feel frustration, hockey provides an atmosphere, reasons, and players to act on this frustration by fighting. The people that do the majority of the fighting are not players who get frustrated easier or more often than other players. This behavior, rather, is a function of the role these players carry out while a member of a hockey team.

Also a function of the fight is to add excitement to the game. The majority of fans appear to enjoy watching a fight. The players are aware of this and while they don't fight for the fans benefit they do know that it is accepted and cheered by the fans. Fighting brings people to their feet.

FUTURE OF FIGHTING

PLAYERS PERSPECTIVE

If there is going to be any serious efforts made to eliminate fighting from hockey the executives of the league will have to consider all of the above influences and reasons. For example, the existing penalty system will not stop the players from fighting. The instigator penalty that was thought to be an effective rule change to curb fighting is now used as a weapon by the enforcers to get an opponent to sit out for a length of time while the non-penalized team

goes on the power play. Trying to put a stop to reactive aggression only increased the influence of the instrumental aspect to fighting. Therefore, the elimination of one source will not lead to the stoppage of fighting without consideration of the global mix of influences on this role.

These players view fighting as part of hockey. For them, the positive aspects of its instrumental value, personal rewards, and fan interest far outweigh the negative aspect of it being viewed as a violent act. Fighting has its place in hockey and the players are aware of and follow the informal rules associated with such action.

It is the players perception that fighting would be difficult to remove from the sport due to its entertainment and strategic value. For them, the outcome of a fight can change the team in a positive way which in turn can help secure a win. Players feel that fighting has always been a part of hockey and has not affected the popularity of the sport.

RESEARCHERS PERSPECTIVE

People might feel that fighting should be taken out of the game but this is in regards to future marketing possibilities and/or viewing it as a social action outside the arena. There is a situational excitement and perceived importance to the fight that hockey currently allows. The acceptance of such an action is based on the

assumption that nobody really gets hurt from fighting. However, enforcement if left to the participants may have some moral and physical risk if incentives to succeed are immense and a "win despite all cost" mentality surfaces.

The way the game is played now, the enforcers provide a role that is believed necessary for the successful functioning of teammates and the enjoyment of fans. The enforcers do not play hockey to fight. Professional hockey provides enforcers with the opportunity to test their abilities. It provides a measure of success. What sets enforcers apart from other aspiring players is that they have adapted their style of playing to achieve the lifestyle of a professional hockey player. For these players the ultimate goal is to compete in the NHL and play in the same arenas as their hockey idols.

These players are not born fighters but are perceived as "character" players who bring qualities such as confidence, mental toughness, teamwork, and a good work ethic to any sport or team that they are a part of. For the future, the desirable attributes of this type of player should be emphasized, while the fighting aspect should be minimized. However, initiatives to make these changes must respect the many forces that have influenced and are influencing enforcers in hockey today.

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APPENDIX A

First letter to the players

Louis Svenningsen
Graduate Student
University Of Manitoba
Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Studies

Dear _____;

I am a graduate student at the University Of Manitoba doing a thesis on player roles in professional hockey. The type of player I am specifically interested in is the athlete who is recognized as the "enforcer" on the team. The enforcer, (policeman,) type of player is indicated as such by public recognition and, by the type and amount of penalties the athlete receives. Also, this person is responsible for being involved in the physical aspects of the game and the majority of altercations which would occur during a game over the course of a season.

The purpose of this research is to find out from you and other players in the NHL like yourself, what has influenced, and is still influencing you in regards to taking on this role as an enforcer. Some possible influences previous research has found could be the coach, parents, role models, teammates, referees, the rule structure of the game, the media, and the fans.

The question I hope to answer is, what people or events shape a particular athletes behavior and how does the individual respond to these different influences in regards to shaping their own on-ice behavior?

My interest in this research is not to discuss the pros and cons of fighting in hockey, nor whether or not it is necessary for fights to occur. My research will concentrate on the individual athlete and the interactions and influences which have occurred to him over time in pursuing a professional career.

To complete this research for my Masters Degree, I would like to interview you when your team plays in Winnipeg. Recognizing that there is little time to spare for players travelling on the road, the structured interview would take approximately twenty minutes to complete, depending on the length of the answers. The time and place of the interview will be up to you as to what would be the most convenient. Possible situations suggested to me could be immediately after a practice, at the hotel you are staying at, or at the airport waiting for a flight.

The _____ next play in Winnipeg _____. I will try and contact you at the _____ Hotel or, I would appreciate it if you could phone me at _____ while you are in the city.

In the final thesis all information given in the interviews will be kept confidential and the respondents will remain anonymous.

Thank-you for your time, and hopefully your participation.

Sincerely

Louis Svenningsen

Follow up letter

Louis Svenningsen
Graduate Student
University Of Manitoba
Faculty Of Physical Education And Recreation

Dear Mr. _____,

When your team was in Winnipeg for a game _____ there was very little opportunity for an interview to take place since you had played a game the previous night. I realize in situations such as those that your time is at a premium and that most of the day in Winnipeg would have been spent preparing for the game that evening. Therefore, I did not pursue you for an interview at that time.

The _____ play their next and also their last game in Winnipeg on _____. I hope that there will be some time then that I would be able to get a short interview with you during that stopover..

To remind you of the information I sent in a previous letter, I am a graduate student at the University Of Manitoba doing a thesis on player roles in professional hockey. The type of player I am specifically interested in is the athlete who is recognized as the "enforcer" on the team. The person responsible for being involved in the physical aspects of the game and the majority of altercations which would occur during a game over the course of a season.

The purpose of this research is to find out from you and other players in the NHL like yourself, what your view is on what has influenced and, is still influencing you in regards to taking on this role as an enforcer.

The question I hope to answer is, what people or events shape a particular athletes behavior and how does the individual respond to these different influences in regards to shaping their own on-ice behavior?

My interest in this research is not to discuss the pros and cons of fighting in hockey, nor whether or not it is necessary for fights to occur. My research will concentrate on the individual athlete and the

interactions and influences which have occurred to him over time in pursuing a professional career.

I will try and contact you while you are in the city or, I would appreciate it if you could phone me at _____ while you are in town.

I would also like to stress that in the final thesis all information given in the interviews will be kept confidential and the respondents will remain anonymous. At no time will your name be connected to anything said in the interview.

Thank-you for your time, and hopefully your participation.

Sincerely

Louis Svenningsen

Letter to the team representative

Louis Svenningsen
University Of Manitoba
Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Studies

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student at the University Of Manitoba doing a thesis on player roles in professional hockey. The type of player I am specifically interested in is the athlete who is recognized as the "enforcer" on the team. The enforcer, or policeman type of player is indicated as such by public recognition and, by the type and amount of penalties the athlete receives. This person is also expected to be involved in the more physical aspects of the game and, the majority of altercations which would occur during a game over the course of a season.

The purpose of this research is to interview these types of players in the NHL and find out from them what has influenced, and is still influencing them in regards to taking on the role of an enforcer. Some possible influences previous research has found could be the coach, parents, role models, teammates, referees, the rule structure of the game, the media, and the fans.

My interest in this research is not to discuss the pros and cons of fighting in hockey, nor whether or not it is necessary for fights to occur. My research will concentrate on the individual athlete and the interactions and influences which have occurred to him over time in pursuing a professional career.

The significance of this study is to primarily discover the types and the relative strengths of these particular influences on an athlete as they proceed up to, and play at the professional level in hockey. The question I hope to answer is, what people or events shape a particular athletes behavior and how does the individual respond to these different influences in regards to shaping their own on-ice behavior?

To complete this research project for my Masters Degree, I would need to interview the players who best fit the description stated earlier when your team plays in Winnipeg. The player I feel that takes on this role for your team is, Mr. _____. Recognizing that there is little time to spare for players travelling on the road, the structured interview would take approximately twenty minutes to complete, depending on the length of the answers given by the individual. The time and place of the interview will be up to the player as to the most convenient time for them.

The _____next game in Winnipeg is _____. Would you please inform me by _____, on how to contact the team or the players to set up the arrangements necessary for the interview. The phone number I can be reached at is (204) _____. Or a response can be faxed, Attention Louis Svenningsen, Graduate Student, _____.

In the thesis all information given in the interviews will be kept confidential and the respondents will remain anonymous.

I will be also sending letters to the players to inform them of my research.

Thank-you for your time, and hopefully your participation.

Sincerely

Louis Svenningsen

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE.

INTRODUCTION

- 1) What would be your definition of an enforcer?

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- 1) Is fighting a skill?
- 2) What were the circumstances when you first start fighting?
- 3) Have your fighting skills helped your career?

PENALTIES

- 1) Does it make a difference if you play at home or away?
- 2) Is there any rule now that would make you think twice about being in a fight?

CONTROL OF THE GAME

- 1) Can a referee see most of the infractions that occur during a game?
- 3) Do referees use discretion when calling a game?
- 4) Have you ever been in a fight because the referee has lost control of the game and, therefore it was because of the referee's poor

judgement that a fight had to happen?

MORALITY

- 1) Have other players challenged you, just to show others how tough they might be? Rookies on other teams or, during training camps.
- 2) Have you ever felt guilty after a fight?

HONOR

- 1) Is there respect among the enforcers in the league?
- 2) What kinds of behavior would you expect of the other player in an altercation?
- 3) Would you ever come from behind on someone? Has that ever happened to you?
- 4) Is it still honorable to lose a fight?
- 5) Has anyone you know, ever backed down from a challenge?

SOCIAL LEARNING, INTRODUCTION

- 1) Have you ever taken boxing lessons, martial arts?

PARENTS

- 1) Did your parents or, other parents feel that fighting helped build character in their young hockey players?

- 2) Did your father accept that fighting was part of the game

COACHES AND MANAGEMENT

- 1) Does the coach expect you to fight in certain situations?
- 2) Can fights be a part of a game plan?

TEAMMATES

- 1) Are you expected to protect other teammates?
- 2) Can a team be inspired by the outcome of a fight? What difference, if any, does the outcome of the fight have, (win, lose), on the team?
- 3) Do you have to fight every so often to show to people that you still can be counted on to carry out that role?

FANS

- 1) Have you ever been in an altercation simply because you felt the fans expected it from you?
- 2) Do people come to games to specifically see a fight?
- 3) Are American fans different than Canadian fans in regards to fighting?

ROLE MODELS

- 1) Who were your role models?

MEDIA

- 1) Does the media glorify violence and fighting in hockey?
- 2) Do you enjoy the attention and/or notoriety you get from the media?

REACTIVE AGGRESSION

- 1) What kind of frustrating situation would make you or your teammates get into an altercation?
- 2) Do you carry any grudges from game to game?
- 3) Do fights help control the occurrence of other types of infractions?
Would these other infractions increase if fighting was no longer allowed in the league?
- 5) Are there times in a game where you feel you shouldn't fight?

INSTRUMENTAL VIOLENCE

- 1) Can fighting help win games?
- 2) Can players or teams be intimidated?
- 3) Can teams win without enforcers in their lineups?

SOCIAL REWARDS

- 1) How much of an influence is the money/rewards in you taking on this role?
- 2) How do you think people view you in public?