

“Yo! You Can’t Say That!”: Understandings of Gender and Sexuality and  
Attitudes Towards Homosexuality Among Male Major Midget AAA Ice  
Hockey Players in Canada

Cheryl MacDonald

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By: Cheryl A. MacDonald

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Signed by the final examining committee:

Chair: Dr. Susan Cahill (Assistant Professor, School of Canadian Irish Studies)

External Examiner: Dr. Andrew Holman (Director of Canadian Studies, Bridgewater State University)

External to Program: Dr. Kimberley Manning (Principal, Simone de Beauvoir Institute)

Examiner: Dr. Amy Swiffen (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology)

Examiner: Dr. Anthony Synnott (Professor Emeritus, Department of Sociology and Anthropology)

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Marc Lafrance (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology)

Approved by:

Dr. Meir Amor  
Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

Dr. André Roy  
Dean of Faculty

## ABSTRACT

### **“Yo! You Can’t Say That!”: Understandings of Gender and Sexuality and Attitudes Towards Homosexuality Among Male Major Midget AAA Ice Hockey Players in Canada**

**Cheryl MacDonald, Ph.D.**  
**Concordia University, 2016**

This doctoral research examines male Major Midget AAA ice hockey in Canada as a site for the changing perceptions of, and attitudes towards, homosexuality in boys’ and men’s hockey. Qualitative and quantitative surveys, interviews, and a social media content analysis were used to identify and analyze the ways in which gender and sexuality are understood amongst the players as well as how their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality are shaped and presented in their interactions with teammates and the individuals closest to them. Major Midget AAA is the most elite level at which youth between the ages of fifteen and eighteen can play before moving on to Junior hockey in Canada. This level is a unique site for an investigation of this nature because the players occupy a unique nexus through which they participate in a sport where homosexuality has been historically unacceptable, yet they are also considered members of a generation that is understood to be much more accepting of homosexuality than its predecessors because it is increasingly visible to them on television, the internet, and perhaps even amongst their families and friends.

The study situates itself within a contemporary body of literature that is divided regarding the current status of homophobia in sport. On the one hand, boys’ and men’s ice hockey in Canada is characterized in academic literature as encouraging stereotypically or traditionally masculine traits such as aggression, mental and physical toughness, defiance of authority, and anti-femininity. On the other hand, there is evidence that sport is not fully responsible for this kind of socialization and some scholars have begun to argue that male athletes are becoming increasingly open to other presentations of masculinity that diverge from the stereotypical and traditional ones, including a higher rate of acceptance of gay male athletes. The findings of the study occupy a position between these two camps, suggesting that although young male ice hockey players may not be entirely averse to the idea of homosexuality in ice hockey, some have reservations about the potential of having an openly gay teammate.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Justine, my uncles, Rhéal and Dennis, and my father, Richard, all of whom passed away over the course of my doctoral degree. My father, in particular, ignited my passion for hockey and inspired me to follow in his footsteps and become a goaltender. He was my date to our local Major Junior hockey games for over fifteen years. He introduced me to Montreal and the Forum and the Bell Centre. He taught me that Ken Dryden was the best goaltender of all time, not only for his athletic talent, but because he pursued a career beyond hockey and possessed a rare ability to reflexively remove himself from his role as a hockey player and critically examine the patterns and customs around him. My Daddy showed me how to love music, old cars, and Jamaican culture. He was my editor. He was sure of himself. And he never missed an opportunity to tell me that he was proud of me.

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CHAPTER ONE  
THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF SEXUALITY IN BOYS' AND MEN'S SPORTS

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*I'm a 34-year-old NBA center. I'm Black. And I'm gay. I didn't set out to be the first openly gay athlete playing in a major American team sport. But since I am, I'm happy to start the conversation. I wish I wasn't the kid in the classroom raising his hand and saying, "I'm different." If I had my way, someone else would have already done this. Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand. – **Jason Collins, former player in the National Basketball Association** (Collins & Lidz, 2013, ¶ 1)*

*I am not the only gay person in the [National Football League]. ...The players who have reached out to me and told me about their sexual orientation, it just means a lot. ...But I will never say anything about who they are, what teams they are [on]. I'm just saying there's some famous people, and I'm not the only one. – **Michael Sam, professional football player, most recently in the Canadian Football League** (Dubin, 2015, ¶ 1)*

*There was that stereotype stuck in my head that there would never be a gay player on a team. I was thinking that once [my teammates] found out, they would shut me out or treat me different. ...It started to affect my game because I was so caught up in trying to hide it. I was so concerned about how they would feel. I was pushing my feelings aside. Finally, I came to terms with this is who I am and not everybody is going to accept it. Once you do that, it's a blessing in itself. – **David Denson, Major League Baseball affiliate** (Haudricourt, 2015, ¶34)*

*It's surprising. We felt that the work the league was doing, the culture that the league had, the way our guys responded not just to [the You Can Play] initiative, but to the LGBTQ community in general, I think we thought for sure by now there would be an out player in the [National Hockey League]. I don't want to say it's disappointing because everyone is on their own timeline and when the first guy is ready he's going to do it. – **Patrick Burke, Director of National Hockey League Player Safety and co-founder of the You Can Play Project**<sup>1</sup> (Lebrun, 2015, ¶ 3)*

Since approximately 2009, the landscape of the big four professional men's sporting organizations in North America has changed immensely in terms of athlete attitudes towards homosexuality. As the above quotations suggest, three of the four leagues now house or have housed an openly gay player or affiliate. This is despite a wealth of scholarship demonstrating that one of the main places homosexuality is unwelcome is in men's sports (Adams, 2011;

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<sup>1</sup> The *You Can Play Project* is an athlete sexuality acceptance initiative that will be discussed at length later in the Introduction.

Bullingham, Magrath, & Anderson, 2014; Burstyn, 2000; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Messner, 1992, 2007). The game changed in North America when former member of the National Basketball Association (NBA), Jason Collins, came out<sup>2</sup> in 2013 and retired eighteen months later (Collins, 2014). In 2014, Michael Sam became the first openly gay player on a National Football League (NFL) practice roster. He, too, has since stepped away from the game (Stone, 2015). Lastly, David Denson, an affiliate to Major League Baseball (MLB), announced publicly in 2015 that he is gay and plans to continue to make his mark on professional baseball (Haudricourt, 2015).<sup>3</sup>

It is quite apparent, however, that the fourth and final quotation presented above does not resemble the others; there are no openly gay men playing in the National Hockey League (NHL) nor have there ever been (Lebrun, 2015). With this said, 2009 marked the NHL's first public brush with homosexuality. Despite having informed his family in 2007, Brendan Burke, son of the President of Hockey Operations for the NHL's Calgary Flames (he was with Anaheim at the time), announced to the world at the age of twenty-one that he had been a gay ice hockey player (Buccigross, 2009). This news left the public waiting intently for the reaction of the senior Burke, who had made his name in Canada as the General Manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs and had been known for his tough, relentless, and unapologetic personality, even referred to by some as 'Mr. Testosterone' (Buccigross, 2009). In other words, the public waited to see how one of the pundits of hockey masculinity was going to react to having a gay son. In 2015, Brian Burke reflected on that experience, saying that he told Brendan, "You've given me a million reasons to love you—this doesn't change any of that." He added, "I was very proud of my son. I never had a clue, but when my son told me he was gay, it was an event of no significance in my household. But I see the terrible toll it takes on some" (Francis, 2015).

The evident question, then, is what is it about ice hockey that makes boys and men feel that homosexuality is still proscribed for them? Is it only at the professional ranks or do players at other levels feel this way as well? Does the presence of openly gay athletes in professional leagues necessarily mean that homosexuality is indeed less taboo in this context? And how do

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<sup>2</sup> I find the turn of phrase 'coming out' to be problematic because it implies having something to hide and, ideally, this should not be the case. I continue to use it, though I try to use other formulations as well and encourage others to do the same.

<sup>3</sup> Although the introduction focuses on the NHL, MLB, NBA, and NFL, other gay male professional athletes who came out while still active on rosters should not be overlooked, including Welsh rugby player Gareth Thomas (Hartley, 2015), American soccer player Robbie Rogers (Rogers, 2015), and American baseball player Sean Conroy (Gleeson, 2015).

scholarly accounts of the subject compare to the present climate in boys' and men's ice hockey where homosexuality is concerned?

\* \* \*

This doctoral research examines male Major Midget AAA ice hockey in Canada as a site for the changing perceptions of, and attitudes towards, homosexuality in boys' and men's hockey. Using deductive research involving mixed methods procedures and guided by theories of masculinity and sport, it enquires into micro-level experiences and expressions of gender and sexuality within the boys' and men's ice hockey context. Specifically, I have identified and analyzed the ways in which gender and sexuality are understood amongst the players and have also examined how their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality are shaped and presented in their interactions with teammates and the individuals closest to them.

The study is the first of its kind and size in Canada and is both timely and valuable for four key reasons. First, since approximately 2009, 'homophobia' has become a catchword in North American mainstream sports media with recent accounts of athletes either coming out or making anti-gay statements or slurs, indicating a tension in the sporting sphere where sexuality is concerned (Bella 2012; Buccigross, 2009; Newberry 2013; Ward 2014). Second, governmental policy in Canada is beginning to include initiatives to combat homophobia in sport, which demonstrates that the subject has become a public concern and that sport could or should be a vehicle for social change (Justice Quebec, 2011). Third, my study is situated within a contemporary body of literature that is divided regarding the current status of homophobia in sport. On the one hand, boys' and men's ice hockey in Canada is characterized in academic literature as encouraging stereotypically or traditionally masculine traits such as aggression, heterosexism, mental and physical toughness, and anti-femininity to the point that they become mentally and physically unsafe for players and society at large (Adams, 2006; Allain, 2008; Atkinson, 2010). On the other hand, there is evidence that sport is not fully responsible for this kind of socialization (Coakley 2011; Eitzen 2012) and some scholars have begun to argue that male athletes are becoming increasingly open to other presentations of masculinity that diverge from the stereotypical and traditional ones, and this includes a higher acceptance rate of gay male athletes. Fourth and last, much like there is a lack of answers regarding the absence of openly gay

hockey players in the NHL, empirical research and scholarly literature specifically centered on gender and sexuality in men's ice hockey has been limited (Adams, 2006; Allain, 2008, 2010, 2012; Atkinson, 2010; Gee, 2009; MacDonald, 2012; Shogan, 2012).

Male Major Midget AAA (hereafter referred to as 'Midget AAA') is a worthwhile site for scholarly investigation of changing social attitudes towards homosexuality for two reasons. First, as part of the broader hockey culture in Canada, it can provide meaningful commentary on social life in the country. Ice hockey in general is highly valued as a Canadian pastime (it is the country's national winter sport) with thousands of participants at nearly every level, Midget AAA included. Relevant academic literature demonstrates that the construction of the identity of the hockey player is closely tied to nationalism in Canada (Bélanger 1999; Dyck 2012) and that the sport has gone from a pastime to a lifestyle in the sense that hockey is now closely tied to family, education, government, economics, and health and fitness in Canada, among other institutions (Adams 2006; Allain, 2008; Robidoux, 2001, 2002).

Based on the results of the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS), a national survey that can be used to determine how Canadians spend their time, ice hockey is the second most popular sport after golf with 1.3 million participants, but it is the most popular sport among Canadian men in particular (Canadian Heritage, 2013). According to the GSS, "the biggest [gender] gap in participation rates is found in ice hockey where 23% of men were active participants in 2010 compared to only 4% of women" (Canadian Heritage, 2013, p. 31). These numbers include Midget AAA-aged athletes, who are typically between fifteen and eighteen, because the GSS defines adulthood as beginning at age fifteen, although they are also identified as youth in other sources (Dyck, 2012). Additionally, the GSS does not track the competition levels or kinds of leagues in which respondents participate.

Midget AAA is the most elite level at which teenage males can play before moving on to Junior hockey, which typically houses players up to twenty or twenty-one years of age. With that said, according to the website that oversees news and standings for male Midget AAA ice hockey in Canada, [Midgetaaacanada.com](http://Midgetaaacanada.com), there are approximately 163 teams across the country as of 2015. With roughly twenty players on each team, depending on cuts and call-ups, this totals an estimated 3,260 participants (Midget AAA Canada, 2015). What can be taken from these participation rates is that ice hockey is an important pastime for many Canadian males and it undoubtedly plays a key role in their socialization by virtue of the time they spend participating,

especially at young ages since participation declines into adulthood (Dyck, 2012).

The second reason that male Midget AAA makes for fruitful scholarly engagement is because its associated age range and level of play encompass a unique nexus between a generation that is understood to be accepting of homosexuality (Anderson, 2011) and a sport that is still understood to be unaccepting of it at elite levels (Eitzen, 2012). More precisely, they participate in a sport where homosexuality has essentially been historically unacceptable (Allain, 2008), but they are also considered members of a generation that is understood to be much more accepting of homosexuality than its predecessors because it is increasingly visible to them on television, the internet, and perhaps even amongst their families and friends (Anderson, 2011; McCormack, 2012). Midget AAA hockey thus seemed like a sound place in which to step back from the NHL and examine the perceptions of gender and sexuality before some of these individuals become professionals. Indeed, if we are to consider that 49.7% of NHL players are Canadian (TSN, 2015), it is likely that a sizeable group of current Midget AAA players will eventually have an opportunity to join professional ranks, be it in the NHL, its affiliate leagues, or in Europe. With this in view, their attitudes towards gender and sexuality may very well be those that scholars encounter in the next five or ten years when studying professional ice hockey.

The following is an overview of current issues and events related to homosexuality in professional men's ice hockey. It will be followed by a review of academic literature on masculinity, homosexuality, and youth sport in Canada. Together, the two sets of accounts contextualize and underpin my research.

### **Current Issues and Events Surrounding Homosexuality in Men's Ice Hockey**

In 2009, while working for a National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) hockey team, Brendan Burke made a statement about having come out to his friends, family, and co-workers:

Imagine if I was in the opposite situation, with a family that wouldn't accept me, working for a sports team where I knew I couldn't come out because I'd be fired or ostracized. People in that situation deserve to know that they can feel safe, that sports isn't all homophobic and that there are plenty of people in sports who accept people for who they are. (Buccigross, 2009)

It appeared that Burke's announcement was well-received and the people around him had accepted him for who he was. This part of his story came to an end in 2010 when Brendan was killed in a car accident (Boesveld & Mirtle, 2010). From that moment, both his father Brian and his older brother Patrick have taken it upon themselves to advocate for the rights of LGBTQ<sup>4</sup> athletes in all sports (You Can Play, 2012).

It appeared for the first time that the anti-gay climate in men's ice hockey had begun to change. This change continued to make itself felt when, in 2011, Wayne Simmonds of the NHL's Philadelphia Flyers was accused of uttering a homophobic slur on the ice. The case was abandoned due to a lack of evidence, however, the event shed some light on the fact that sexist language, which had long been tolerated in men's ice hockey, was no longer as acceptable as it once was. Indeed, the message became clearer when, following the incident, the league released a formal statement indicating that "all players, coaches, and officials in the National Hockey League deserve the respect of their peers, and have the absolute right to function in a work environment that is free from racially or sexually-based innuendo or derision" (Johnston, 2011, ¶ 3).

In 2012, the subject of sexuality in men's ice hockey continued to gain ground when it was taken up by journalist Timothy Bella in the liberal American magazine *The Atlantic*. Bella's piece, titled "Hockey's New Battle Against Homophobia," discussed (now retired) NHL player Sean Avery's public announcement in 2011 that he supported gay marriage. The announcement drew criticism given Avery's questionable reputation after having been reprimanded for disrespectful comments related to women in the past. Most notably, in 2008, he sought out a news reporter to insincerely remark on another NHL player dating Avery's ex-girlfriend, stating, "I just want to comment on how it's become like a common thing in the NHL for guys to fall in love with my sloppy seconds." Avery was immediately suspended for his behaviour (Marche, 2008). Nonetheless, Bella (2012) suggested that perhaps Avery's public support of gay marriage was exactly what gay hockey activists needed to move forward—someone in the league who was finally willing to speak up. Since that time, the pursuit of acceptance of homosexuality in ice

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<sup>4</sup> LGBTQ refers to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and queer or questioning. I also include under this umbrella individuals who identify as intersex, asexual, kinky, two-spirited, and pansexual. The terminology can change quickly and I want to be as inclusive as possible, however I have chosen to follow the recommended terminology of Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians (PFLAG) Canada, who suggest the continued use of LGBTQ as a general reference. PFLAG is a national non-profit organization that offers support and education on issues relating to gender and identity in society. Further information can be located at [www.pflagcanada.ca](http://www.pflagcanada.ca).

hockey has moved at lightning speed, but not without Avery being accused of being gay himself (Wyshynski, 2013). Avery also joined the board of directors of Athlete Ally in 2012. Athlete Ally is a non-profit organization inaugurated by former American college athlete Hudson Taylor that challenges homophobia in sports. Taylor is quoted as stating hopefully that, “with a few athletes feeling comfortable or safe enough to come out, a professional athlete ally like Sean Avery can make all the difference. . . . We look forward to working with Sean to make sport a space for everyone and empowering athletes everywhere to start using their voice as athlete allies” (Athlete Ally, 2012, ¶ 1). With this, it was unmistakable that many had set out to change attitudes towards sexuality in ice hockey.

Perhaps the most forceful push for LGBTQ acceptance in ice hockey also came in 2012 when Brian and Patrick Burke and their colleagues launched the *You Can Play Project*. The mission of the Project is to ensure “equality, respect, and safety for all athletes without regard to sexual orientation” (You Can Play, 2013, ¶ 1). As of 2013, openly gay former football player Wade Davis is the new Executive Director of the Project and Patrick remains the President of the organization (You Can Play, 2013). By the beginning of 2013, *You Can Play* was working alongside sixty NHL players, eighteen Canadian colleges and universities, ten American Hockey League (AHL) teams, and The Sports Network’s (TSN) hockey panel, among others. In fact, the NHL established a formal partnership with the Project in April 2013 as part of a “long-standing commitment to make the NHL the most inclusive professional sports league in the world” (You Can Play, 2013, ¶ 1). NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman was also quoted as stating that “Hockey is for everyone and our partnership with You Can Play certifies that position in a clear and unequivocal way” (You Can Play, 2013, ¶ 3). Despite this promising start, the big four professional men’s sports in North America (plus the Canadian Football League) have all welcomed an openly gay player or affiliate to their rank: except the NHL.

Further evidence that hockey is becoming a safer place for gay men in Canada lies in the existence of gay hockey leagues such as the Ottawa-Gatineau Gay Hockey Association and the Toronto Gay Hockey Association, the latter of which has been in operation for twenty-one years and is one of the largest gay hockey leagues in the world.<sup>5</sup> In a *Fab Magazine* article, journalist Andrew Robertson interviewed a goaltender in the Toronto league, which at the time, contained

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<sup>5</sup> Prominent gay ice hockey leagues in the United States that are worth mentioning include the Chicago Gay Ice Hockey Association ([chicagogayhockey.org](http://chicagogayhockey.org)), the New York City Gay Ice Hockey Association ([www.nycgha.org](http://www.nycgha.org)), and Gay Hockey Ohio ([www.gayhockeyohio.com](http://www.gayhockeyohio.com)).

ten teams consisting of players of an average age of twenty-nine. The goaltender was quoted as saying “my argument is that hockey has the best chance to accept a gay player out of the five major sports on the continent because it has its roots in our liberal Canadian society. We are a very accepting of people, and more than fifty percent of NHL players are Canadian. In Canada we preach acceptance, and I think that our players would be welcoming of a gay player because of how they were raised” (Robertson, 2013, ¶ 6). While the nature of Canadian society may be up for debate, Robertson (2013) does point out that a poll conducted by American sports broadcaster ESPN in 2012 indicated that ninety-two percent of professional hockey players support gay marriage. Combined with the force of *You Can Play* and the development of tolerance and acceptance in other professional sports, gay hockey leagues in Canada demonstrate the changing trend towards LGBTQ athlete inclusion. Such a claim should be qualified, in this case, with the recognition that gay hockey leagues could be seen as a form of segregation of homosexual athletes (Book & Eskilsson 2010; Rand 2012; Symons 2013), however, I hold that the visibility of gay hockey players does indeed contribute to their growing acceptance in a broader social context.<sup>6</sup>

The promise of changing attitudes towards sexuality in ice hockey has not come without its challenges, however. For instance, soon after Jason Collins announced that he was gay, Patrick Burke reminded the public that the battle had not yet been won. In the Opinions section of *The Washington Post*, Burke wrote:

In the same week that much of the country was congratulating Washington Wizards center Jason Collins for coming out as the first openly gay male athlete on a major league sports team, I met with a National Hockey League player about why [posting] “no homo” [on social media sites such as Twitter] is unacceptable, and I addressed a Major League Soccer team whose player had taunted an opponent with an anti-gay slur. ...While many sports fans were shocked by the ignorance of Miami Dolphin Mike Wallace [of the National Football League], who questioned, right after Collins came out, why any man would be gay when there are “all these beautiful women in the world,” I just sighed. (2013)

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<sup>6</sup> The Gay Games and World Outgames, adult athletic competitions modeled after the Olympics, also provide a formal site for LGBTQ athletes to compete in sport, including ice hockey (Rand 2012).

Challenges were also posed on a global scale. The 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia were plagued with debates over anti-gay laws that had been enacted in the country (Ellen, 2014; Lally, 2013). This prompted NHL players to speak (or not speak) on the issue. While some athletes chose to boycott the games entirely, NHL players such as Henrik Lundqvist of the New York Rangers, who is a known *You Can Play* advocate, received negative publicity when they declined to comment on the matter.

In Lundqvist's case, he stated in an interview following the Olympics that the Olympic Federation in his native country of Sweden had decided that the Olympics should not be politicized and the focus should remain on competition. He added, "As a private person, sitting here now, I do not have a problem saying that I do not agree with the laws and that they are not correct," however, he was not willing to make such statements prior to or during the Games (Brooks, 2014, ¶ 2). Of course, the Swedish position on politicization disrupts the fact that the Olympics have been highly politicized and were intended as such by the founder of the Modern Games, Pierre de Coubertin, who recognized the event's potential as a site for world-wide discussions that have grown to include human rights and globalization, among others (Grix, 2013; Guttman, 2002; Horne & Whannel, 2012; Roche, 2000). Nonetheless, the 2014 Winter Games did indeed function as yet another catalyst for discussions of LGBTQ acceptance and inclusion in sport.

Lastly, in light of the controversy over Russian anti-gay laws during the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Canadian sports broadcaster TSN released a three-part television series titled *reOrientation* that addressed athlete homosexuality and featured an in-depth discussion of ice hockey with current and former NHL players, as well as league commissioner Gary Bettman (Ward, 2014). The description that accompanies the series on the TSN website reads, "Having the athletic world push the acceptance of homosexuality is a powerful visual, for perhaps no other segment of society has been closed to gays more than the sporting area" (Ward, 2014, ¶ 3). The inception of this series indicates the continued and growing acknowledgement on the part of mainstream media and the NHL that ice hockey lags behind both society at large and its professional sport counterparts in terms of welcoming homosexual players, yet none can place their fingers on why exactly that is.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> One media-related event that occurred, but was not considered to merit a place in the dissertation itself was the 2015-2016 NHL/NHL Players' Association (NHLPA) Media Tour in Toronto. The Tour is a two-day event during which NHL players make themselves available to major North American media outlets prior to the hockey season.

These accounts of efforts aimed at making men's ice hockey a safe space for homosexual athletes lead us to 2015 and back to the fourth quotation presented at the beginning of the chapter: Patrick Burke attempting to make sense of the fact that no one in the NHL has come out. Burke does have a few hypotheses regarding why it is taking so long. He posits that the experiences of Jason Collins and Michael Sam, who left professional sport shortly after having made their announcements, might discourage gay players in the NHL from making their situations public and perhaps succumbing to the same fate. He has also wondered if the development of shared values and attitudes that results from a team-first attitude in men's ice hockey might deter gay players from wanting to stand out in a world where it is expected that everyone should be the same (Lebrun, 2015). There is evidence that ice hockey can homogenize male participants (Pappas, McKenry & Catlett, 2004; Robidoux, 2001), however this raises concerns about normative stereotyping when an entire group is both perceived and treated the same way (Kimmel, 2010). In the case of men's ice hockey, this suggests inaccurate assumptions regarding the sexuality of those who participate in it and also extends to the commonly held perception that all male hockey players are tough, aggressive, competitive, and anti-feminine to a fault (Allain, 2008; Atkinson, 2010).

Having conducted research on masculinity and ice hockey since 2009 when Brendan Burke came out publically, I followed these issues closely in the media and decided in 2012 that I was unsatisfied with the lack of understanding in discussions of gender and sexuality in professional ice hockey. I recognized that the inception of the *You Can Play Project* signified some kind of change in the sport, however I write this dissertation three years later still unable to decipher what exactly is happening in ice hockey via the lens of information shared through media accounts of the phenomenon. I thus turned to academic literature on masculinity and sport

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More information on the 2015-2016 event can be accessed on the NHLPA website at [www.nhlpa.com](http://www.nhlpa.com). At this event, American media outlet USA Today (2015) surveyed thirty-five NHL players regarding the possibility of having a homosexual teammate, among other things. Question number one on the survey was "Would you be accepting of an openly gay teammate?" According to USA Today, all but one NHL player surveyed answered that yes, they would be comfortable having a gay teammate. Although this was a promising response, the validity of the question is debatable from a methods perspective because the question stood alone amidst the remainder of the survey, which focused mainly on on-ice statistics and accomplishments. A question on homosexuality was thus very much out of place given the magnitude of a contemporary and highly scrutinized subject such as LGBTQ athletes in professional sport. In any case, the survey did suggest that NHL players would welcome a gay teammate.

with the hope that it would provide me with a deeper understanding of the cultural politics of gender and sexuality in hockey. The following is a review of relevant literature on masculinity, homosexuality, and ice hockey that frames my undertaking of research on gender and sexuality at the Midget AAA level in Canada.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MAPPING OUT SCHOLARLY ACCOUNTS OF HYPERMASCULINITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN MALE SPORTING CONTEXTS

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Historian Andrew Holman and sport researcher Julie Stevens note that very few scholars examined ice hockey as a site for rigorous scholarly consideration before the publication of Richard Gruneau and David Whitson's book, *Hockey Night in Canada*, in the early 1990s. The book is considered to be the first true engagement with hockey's role in Canadian society from a social science perspective. Holman and Stevens state that most academic work on hockey has been conducted by historians and literary scholars and they suggest that "the field of hockey studies would benefit from getting closer to the game, from making connections with those who experience the sport daily or weekly at rinkside (Stevens & Holman, 2013, p. 251). However, given the already limited empirical research in the field, it should come as no surprise that work on homosexuality in men's ice hockey is all but non-existent. Comparatively, however, there is an abundance of work on masculinity and sport more generally, as well as on youth sport. The review of literature will thus begin by establishing a macro-level discussion of masculinity, homosexuality, and sport (including youth sport) and will then carry over to a deeper engagement with scholarship on ice hockey specifically. The review will conclude by mapping out gaps in the literature and identifying the culminating research question that guides the study.

#### **Masculinity, Homosexuality, and Sport**

Sport is intricately associated with dominant ideals of masculinity (Adams, 2011; Katz, 2010; Messner, 2007, 2012; Whitson, 1990). Although there is evidence that sport can contribute to positive youth development (Dyck, 2012; Coakley, 2002; Holt, 2008), gender and sport scholars have largely been in agreement that sports, especially team sports, teach boys and men to be hypermasculine (Anderson, 2005; Lucyk, 2011; Eitzen, 2012; Messner, 1990, 2007; Pronger, 1990). Hypermasculinity represents an extreme version of masculinity to which male athletes are often expected to adhere (Adams, 2006; Anderson, 2010; Atkinson, 2011; Messner, 2012; Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt, 2012)<sup>8</sup>. It is perhaps best summarized by the early work of sex role

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<sup>8</sup> 'Hypermasculinity' is often used interchangeably with Australian sociologist R.W. Connell's concept of 'hegemonic masculinity.' This will be discussed further in the dissertation's theoretical framework.

researcher Robert Brannon (1976), in which he proposes four rules that boys and men are often expected to follow. The first rule, 'No Sissy Stuff,' calls for the rejection of all that is feminine; this includes traits such as openness and vulnerability. The second rule, 'The Big Wheel,' requires striving endlessly for fame, success, and social status by all possible means. The third, 'The Sturdy Oak,' encourages independence, confidence, strength, and toughness. The fourth and final rule, 'Give 'Em Hell,' denotes violence, aggression, bravado, and a willingness to defy authority. For athletes, this is more of a life code than a set of rules and they are expected to live by it intensely. Although Brannon's work is dated, it has been seminal in describing the kind of masculinity that is expected in team sports, including contemporary scholarship that situates team sports, such as ice hockey, in the process of "encourage[ing] values of dominance, physical strength, and aggression" among boys and men (Lucyk, 2011, p. 71). The final necessary component of hypermasculinity, and perhaps the most crucial, is heterosexuality (Atkinson, 2010; Connell, 2005; Messner, 2007; Wellard, 2012). American sport sociologist Eric Anderson (2010, p. 106) qualified this necessity in his work on high school and college athletes when he wrote that, at the very beginning of the twenty-first century, hypermasculinity "not only require[d] that a male maintain 100 percent heterosexual desires and behaviours, but that he must continually prove that he is heterosexual". Anderson now states that this is no longer always the case, however, this kind of masculinity is said to be most common among male athletes and scholars hold that male youth who participate in sport are consistently encouraged by parents, coaches, and teammates to embody it (Anderson, 2010; Bannon & Parent, 2012; Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt, 2012; Overman, 2010).

Heterosexuality has been so compulsory with respect to hypermasculine identity that boys and men do a lot of work to police it amongst one another. Recent scholarship states that within a male sporting context, this compulsive need to assert heterosexuality can turn into homophobia because boys and men fear being gay or being associated with homosexuality at all (Eitzen, 2012; Messner, 2012). American education researcher Brandon Sternod (2011, p.99) writes that "whether it is heterosexual locker room banter by boys and men, homophobia as a means to justify homoeroticism in the locker room and playing field, or individual and/or institutional compliance with notions of masculinity, gender and sexuality are intricately linked in and through sports." Sport sociologist Mary Louise Adams (2011), who conducts extensive research on sport, gender, sexuality, and culture in Canada, argues in her work on figure skating and

masculinity that although women's participation in sport has increased, sport remains a site that privileges men and their bodies, in turn reinforcing cultural expressions of sexism and homophobia. Indeed, homophobia has become an important term as both the mainstream media and the academy continue to analyze the possible trend of professional male athletes publically announcing that they are gay in the face of a sporting sphere that has lagged behind the rest of society in its acceptance of the LGBTQ community (Anderson, 2005; Griffin, 1998).

Aside from concerns about sport promoting hypermasculinity, the most common theme in the literature is hypermasculinity's pointed ability to breed homophobia (Adams, 2011; Eitzen, 2012; Lenskyj, 2012; Lucyk, 2011; Pascoe, 2013; Sternod, 2011). But what is homophobia exactly? Within academia, there is a lack of consensus where the definition of homophobia is concerned. The term was coined by American psychotherapist George Weinberg in 1972. He referred to it as both a disease and an attitude characterized by "the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals—and in the case of homosexuals, self-loathing" (Weinberg, 1972, p. 4). From a contemporary masculinity studies perspective, American sociologist Michael Kimmel took up the word and broadened its definition, referring to it as men's fear that other men will think of them as homosexual. In his widely-cited paper on the subject, Kimmel wrote:

This, then, is the great secret of American manhood: we are afraid of other men. Homophobia is a central organizing principle in our cultural definition of manhood. Homophobia is more than the irrational fear of gay men, more than the fear that we might be perceived as gay... Homophobia is the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men. We are afraid to let other men see that fear. Fear makes us ashamed, because the recognition of fear in ourselves is proof to ourselves that we are not as manly as we pretend...Our fear is the fear of humiliation. We are ashamed to be afraid. (Kimmel, 1994, p. 119-120)

For Kimmel, masculinity is decidedly built on homophobia. Gender studies researcher Erica Rand (2012, p. 144) cautions us to be vigilant when using the word homophobia, however, suggesting that it may excuse anti-gay sentiments as irrational fears. She comments further on her interpretation of the word in her work on figure skating and ice hockey, adding that the word stem "'phobia' can excuse, soften, or mischaracterize hostility and violence (physical, verbal, mental, emotional) as fear—and as an illogical psychological problem of individuals." Similarly, American sport sociologist Melanie Sartore-Baldwin (2013) claims that the term 'homophobia' is now less relevant and that theorists and researchers have begun to avoid using it because it is

limited to the individual and does not properly reflect societal patterns, including anti-LGBTQ sentiments and not just anti-gay ones, as the word stem ‘homo’ implies. Despite this, scholars and mainstream media alike continue to use the word to describe sport’s current battle with changing attitudes towards sexuality (Adams, 2011; Bella, 2012; Francis, 2015; Pascoe, 2013).

As part of the increased attention to homophobia in boys’ and men’s sports, scholars have begun honing in on the use of homophobic language in sport that is meant to homosexualize opponents or teammates as either a joke or an insult (Anderson, 2011; Lucyk, 2011; Poteat, Kimmel, & Wilchins 2010; Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt 2012;). American sociologist C.J. Pascoe (2005, 2013) found in her research on teenage males that they establish masculinity among themselves through what she refers to as ‘fag discourse.’ She argues that when male adolescents homosexualize one another, it is not a purposeful aim at their sexuality as much as a situational and contextualized jab. She writes, “When a boy calls another boy a fag, it means he is not a man, not necessarily that he is a homosexual. The boys in this study know that they are not supposed to call homosexual boys ‘fags’ because that is mean” (Pascoe, 2005, p. 342). Pascoe’s research is not on male athletes, however, her work has been relied on heavily by masculinity and sport scholars who agree that ‘fag discourse’ both exists and should be addressed in sports since, despite its use to denounce something unfavourable, the vocabulary still relies on and gives rise to negative connotations of homosexuality (Adams, 2011; Anderson, 2011).

Alongside scholars’ rising concerns over homophobia in sport, a body of literature on decreasing homophobia in sports has surfaced and it is precisely within the divide that my study is situated. One of the leaders of this academic trajectory has been Eric Anderson (2002, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2015). Anderson is a former openly gay high school basketball coach and was among the first scholars to conduct research with openly gay male athletes. He conducted a study of gay male high school and college athletes and concluded that they were slowly being accepted amongst their peers as long as they performed well within their sport and participated in the culture of hypermasculinity that sport breeds. In a book on homophobia in sport written in 2005, Anderson wrote:

It is clear that sport lags behind whatever cultural gains are made in the population at large... Still, young athletes are raised in a culture that is much more understanding of homosexuality. Thus perhaps the cultural lag between the popular culture and sport will shorten. (2005, p. 177).

Anderson attributes this increased openness in sport to the visibility of homosexuality and alternative forms of masculinity (i.e. not hypermasculinity) among male youth athletes on television and the internet, which has made them less homophobic than their fathers and grandfathers. In order to assess this, Anderson also conducted a comparative study of college athletes in 2002 and 2008-2010. His results indicated that “gay athletes felt more comfortable coming out and they also reported being able to speak openly with their heterosexual teammates about their sexuality” (Anderson, 2011, p. 265).

Aside from Anderson, several other scholars have observed a newfound openness to difference in sport, specifically around homosexuality, which may circumstantially support the notion that attitudes towards sexuality in ice hockey are changing as well (Adams, 2011; Anderson, 2011; Anderson, McCormack, & Ripley, 2013; Jarvis, 2015; Kauer & Krane, 2013; Lenskyj, 2012; Overman, 2010; Sternod, 2011). Regarding youth sport, sociologist Mark McCormack (2012) notes a decrease in homophobia among high school aged males in the United Kingdom. Sternod (2011) echoes Anderson, stating that the message is becoming clearer in locker rooms across North America that hypermasculinity is no longer as valued as it once was in sport. Events such as the NHL banning homophobic language on the ice are evidence of this. Sport sociologist Michael Messner (2012) warns against celebrating the newfound progress just yet, however. Just as Patrick Burke wrote in the *Washington Post*, Messner contends that the fact that several professional male athletes and sports teams have made pro-gay marriage statements encourages a culture of acceptance in sport, but this does not mean that homophobia and hypermasculinity have gone away. Evidently, then, there is a lack of consensus regarding the exact status of homophobia in male sports at the moment.

Stationed between the camps that argue that hypermasculinity in sport is a rampant social problem and those that argue that it is in decline is a body of literature that hypothesizes the reasons why the amount of public homosexuality announcements in professional sport are few and far between. Some scholars suggest that there are very few gay male athletes in elite sports to begin with because homosexual boys tend to drop out or shy away from competitive sports as they age (Ogawa, 2014; Zipp, 2011). Moreover, the few who do continue on then choose to conceal their homosexuality in order to not have attention drawn to them in hypermasculine sporting atmospheres (McCormack & Anderson, 2010). According to McCormack & Anderson, “although gay boys (presumably) join sport at the same rate as straight boys (because sport is

made near compulsory in education), they do not come out in proportionate numbers compared to high school and university non-athletes. And, although there is a growing number of openly gay athletes at these levels, their absence in professional sport is stark” (2010, p. 959). Those who do continue on in sport tend to only come out once their careers are over (Eitzen, 2012; Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). McCormack & Anderson (2010) also attribute athletes’ decision to stay mute to the oppression of homosexual males in society, which sport sociologist Stanley Eitzen (2012) describes as being homophobic in nature, but is amplified in sport. Eric Anderson (2011), however, has begun to challenge the argument that homosexuals are oppressed in his aforementioned contention that the openly gay high school and university athletes he studied reported quite positive experiences with being openly gay, even citing an openly gay male high school hockey player. He noted that prior to 2011, most of them found themselves in situations where their sexuality was not up for discussion and they were accepted as long as they performed athletically and accepted the heteronormative nature of the athletic sphere (Anderson, McCormack, & Ripley, 2013). This suggests that homosexuality was only accepted as long as the individual could still function as hypermasculine.

Economist and sport researcher Scott Ogawa (2014) diverges from McCormack & Anderson’s (2010) suggestion that homosexual boys and men drop out of sport early on. While Ogawa also argues that there are likely very few gay men in professional sport, he contends that, according to his math on the number of current and former openly gay male professional athletes compared to the percentage of gay men in society at large, there should be approximately one hundred gay men in the four major professional North American male sports. He suggests that the discrepancy in proportions of homosexual males between sport and the rest of society may occur for two main reasons: either gay male athletes do play professional sports and are remaining silent or they have chosen different sports and are less likely to achieve professional status. To the latter point, he adds that no known professional gay male athletes have achieved all-star status to date and this is evidenced by cases such as Jason Collins and Michael Sam. Based on these suggestions, he posits that homophobia is not as prominent as has been implied because there are not that many athletes who are gay and facing the pressures associated with homophobia. He concludes by stating “The recent public declarations of support for Jason Collins by fellow athletes shows that like the rest of us, athletes have progressed a long way towards tolerance; there have simply not been many gay teammates to prove it” (Ogawa, 2014, p.

299). Ogawa's use of 'the rest of us' and 'tolerance' could be interpreted as a sweeping claim that not only lumps all non-athletes together, but also implies that homosexuality is tolerated in society and not accepted, let alone included in the sphere of normalized sexuality.

To summarise what is known and unknown about masculinity, homosexuality, and sport to date, I propose the following four statements: (1) Although sport can contribute to positive youth development, it can also encourage hypermasculinity, especially in team sports like ice hockey. (2) One of the cornerstone of hypermasculinity is compulsory heterosexuality, however there is evidence that it is becoming less compulsory than it once was, especially amongst youth and young adults, even if the extent to which this is the case is unclear. (3) In conjunction with a decrease in compulsory heterosexuality, anti-gay sentiments appear to be less of a social problem in boys' and men's sport as evidenced by the research of Eric Anderson and others and the fact that professional athletes on active rosters have begun to publicly announce that they are gay. (4) While anti-gay sentiments may have decreased, the use of anti-gay language, or 'fag discourse,' remains common among young male athletes, however it is not aimed at sexuality as much as a reference to something that is unfavourable or inferior. What remains to be determined, however, is if and why boys' and men's ice hockey culture lags behind other sports in terms of the acceptance and inclusion of homosexual athletes. As McCormack & Anderson (2010) and Ogawa (2014) suggest, there is a strong possibility that there are fewer homosexual male professional athletes than some might expect, however that does not answer questions regarding the current nature of attitudes towards gender and sexuality amongst men's ice hockey players. I will, therefore, now turn to literature specifically on ice hockey in order to determine the extent to which it correlates with the accounts of masculinity and homosexuality in sport discussed so far.

### **Scholarly Accounts of Masculinity, Homosexuality, and Ice Hockey**

To date, there is no research on masculinity and homosexuality among male Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada. With that said, the limited literature that does exist on gender and sexuality within a boys' and men's ice hockey context resonates highly with the more general literature on hypermasculinity and sport (Allain, 2008, 2010; Bélanger, 1999; Crawford & Gosling, 2004; Gee, 2009; Ingham, Dewar, Coakley & Donnelly, 1999; Robidoux, 2001) as Lucyk (2011) claimed it would in her contention that team sports such as hockey are the most

likely to encourage this form of extreme masculinity. This suggested that perhaps I should expect to arrive at similar conclusions in my own work. Indeed, masculinity theorist and researcher Michael Atkinson also states that “the message is perhaps most clear to hockey players; the philosophy of dangerous masculinity is a privileging but brutalizing code of conduct within the world of professional sport” (2010, p. 27). The following is an overview of explanations regarding why hockey might be this way.

The most similar study to mine is Alan Ingham et. al’s (1999) research on male PeeWee ice hockey (ages thirteen and fourteen) in the United States. Although they were more concerned with acts of violence in the sport, they did observe through ethnographic interviews that hypermasculinity was learned from other men involved in ice hockey (fathers, coaches, professionals), that it bred homophobia, and legitimized the sexual objectification of girls and women. Regarding whether or not I could expect the same results, this study took place over fifteen years before mine when homosexuality was still undergoing a transformative process towards acceptance (or more so than it is in 2016), therefore, one might expect that the views on homosexuality in my study would differ.

Gruneau & Whitson’s (1993) *Hockey Night in Canada*, as mentioned in the introduction to the review of literature, was monumental in tackling social issues associated with hockey and this includes masculinity. Echoing the other masculinity and sports literature, they write that “Organized hockey developed as a distinctive masculine sub-culture, a game played almost exclusively by men and boys, and a game whose dominant practices and values have been those of a very specific model of aggressive masculinity” (1993, p. 191-2). Here, Gruneau & Whitson (1993) are pointing to the othering of women, as well as the tough nature of male athletes, both of which are associated with hypermasculinity. The book did not prioritize gender much more than this; however, given its status as pioneering literature in the field, evidently masculinity has been an important subject within ice hockey studies for quite some time.

Drawing on Gruneau & Whitson’s (1993) claim, scholars have recognized a particular kind of tough masculinity, which they associate with Canadian ice hockey (Allain, 2008; Bélanger, 1999; Robidoux, 2001). Canadian sociologists Kristi Allain (2008) and Anouk Bélanger (1999) remind us that it is not hockey that creates this masculinity as much as those within it who maintain and negotiate its nature. Sport management scholar Sarah Gee (2009) makes the same argument based on her media analysis of the NHL’s ‘Inside the Warrior’

campaign (created by the NHL and aired on NBC in 2005). Gee refers to the campaign as a message about masculine identity construction that the NHL is reflecting back to its fans regarding what it means to be a man in hockey. She argues that the campaign suggests that it takes a particular type of aggressive, brave, proud, and driven man to play hockey and points out that this campaign was produced in spite of the increase in women's participation in hockey. In other words, Gee (2009) contends that the NHL is one of the entities that construct, negotiate, and police masculinity within ice hockey culture, as described by Allain (2008) and Bélanger (1999).

Following Allain's (2008) study of masculinity in male Major Junior ice hockey and Bélanger's (1999) interpretation of hockey masculinity in Québec, both scholars concluded that Canadian-style hockey masculinity is known to be aggressive and to privilege hypermasculinity through the players' performances of masculinity, the ways in which the game is structured and governed, and through media portrayals of the sport (Allain 2010; Bélanger 1999). These conclusions support the argument made by scholars such as Overman (2010) and Bannon & Parent (2012) that hypermasculinity is transmitted not necessarily by hockey itself, but by exposure to other individuals who exhibit or expect this particular kind of masculinity. Indeed, a study of youth hockey parents in Alberta concluded that the overall attitude of the group "articulates the politics of gender and informs legitimate conventions and standards of behaviour predefined by traditional, antiquated masculine formulas" (Robidoux & Bocksnick, 2010, p. 58), which further supports the idea that it is not just hockey, or just the players, that are responsible for this kind of masculinity.

Allain (2010) also analyzed the ways in which hockey masculinity is policed using images of professional players who do not always fit the hypermasculine mould. She cites NHL player Sidney Crosby who is often criticized for not being tough or manly enough and suggests that while Crosby might represent an alternative kind of masculinity from which other players can model their own identities, other individuals in hockey culture stop this from happening by belittling players like Crosby. In her words, her work challenges "the notion that masculinity is a natural quality and that masculinities are constructed from institutional sources and readily absorbed by the public. Instead, it shows that masculinity must be cultivated within national celebrities...and even then, it may not withstand public re-interpretation" (Allain, 2010, p. 18).

Drawing on this idea that hockey masculinity does not have to be essentialized, sport

media analyst Kelsey Lucyk (2011) notes that Wayne Gretzky, one of the most iconic Canadian hockey players of all time, refuted notions of hypermasculinity by choosing not to fight during his career. Granted, Gretzky had other players to stick up for him when necessary and the game has changed in such a way that players are now expected to be both physical and talented. Lucyk (2011) and Allain (2010) both cite famous Canadian ice hockey commentator Don Cherry as an individual who maintains hypermasculinity in sport. Lucyk, in particular, states that, “Don Cherry relates non-fighting and non-dominating behaviour to homosexuality, and implies that homosexuality is something that is both humorous and incompatible” (2011, p. 72). Canadian sport scholar Michael Robidoux (2001), who conducted an ethnography of a professional hockey team, confirms that homosexuality is used amongst players to diminish or mock one another linguistically in a way not unlike Don Cherry (Lucyk, 2011). Indeed, Anderson (2011) and Pascoe (2005) described this phenomenon in the same manner. Allain (2008, 2010), Bélanger (1999), Gee (2009), and Lucyk (2011), then, have demonstrated that people are highly implicated in the construction of hockey masculinity and that interactions with family, coaches, teammates, and role models are crucial in its maintenance. Bélanger comments on these relations more broadly, stating that gender is a relational performance of identity that requires scholars “to explore the links between gender, symbolic processes, and social structures” (1999, p. 306). These symbolic processes and social structures have been so well-documented in the literature that it seemed relevant that I investigate the case of Midget AAA, therefore I shaped a portion of my study so as to determine how their attitudes towards masculinity and homophobia are both shaped and presented in their interactions with those closest to them, such as their families, teammates, and significant others.

Very little scholarship on ice hockey supports the claims in the literature that youth participation can encourage positive development. Physical education professor Doug Gleddie (2013) attempts to balance out accounts of hypermasculine socialization in ice hockey, reminding critics that although it is not perfect, ice hockey does still provide young people with opportunities for personal betterment and growth. Gleddie conducted individual and small group interviews with eight PeeWee<sup>9</sup> players in Canada and, much like Dyck (2012), Holt (2008), and Coakley (2002), his findings related more to the fun and play associated with sports as well as the skill sets and values that can be acquired through participation in them. With that said, however,

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<sup>9</sup> The players in Gleddie’s study of PeeWee hockey were eleven and twelve whereas Ingham et. al’s (1999) PeeWee participants were thirteen and fourteen.

Gleddie's (2013) work makes no mention of gender or sexuality, therefore his account of socialization through ice hockey, which could either mean that he did not believe that it was a social issue or that his analysis substantially lacked a crucial aspect of boys' and men's ice hockey culture.

Before summarizing the literature on ice hockey, it should be noted that there is no recent scholarship on how male ice hockey players actually feel about homosexuality beyond their use of it to deride others and their fear of being or being perceived as gay.<sup>10</sup> Put differently, there are no recent accounts of how the players truly feel about other people being gay and whether or not there is a difference between people external to hockey being gay compared to a coach or teammate. Overall, then, the three main messages that could be deduced from the literature are as follows: (1) Hypermasculinity is common among male ice hockey players, much like other boys' and men's team sports (including homophobic language that is not actually leveled at sexuality), and it is learned from coaches, parents, teammates, and celebrities or other media portrayals and performances that demand that players be mentally and physically tough, heterosexual, and anti-feminine. This is especially the case in Canada, where, more than any other sport, 'Canadian hockey masculinity' can be equated with hypermasculinity. (2) One of the main ways that heterosexuality is asserted and homosexuality is denounced amongst hockey players is through their sexualization, or sexual objectification, of girls and women. (3) Because ice hockey has historically been a fast and tough male sport (and largely remains so today based on gendered GSS participation statistics), it can sometimes be seen as one of few enclaves that prioritize traditional and perhaps stereotypical portrayals of masculinity.

Although scholarship is more limited on the acceptance of homosexual male athletes, both recent media accounts of the NHL confronting homophobia and Anderson's work with high school aged male athletes (including one hockey player) demonstrate that anti-LGBTQ rhetoric is becoming less acceptable and players should feel more comfortable coming out than they might have ten or fifteen years ago. While these efforts to combat homophobia do point in the direction of answers regarding why ice hockey seems to be one of the last places to accept and include homosexual athletes, it does not do much to privilege the voices of youth regarding their first-

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<sup>10</sup> Two years after I had begun my research, the You Can Play Project and the University of Alberta announced in 2014 that they had established a post-doctoral position meant to investigate homophobia in sport from an academic perspective. This likely means that scholarship on homophobia and ice hockey will surface shortly if it has not done so already. More information on the partnership is available at [www.ismss.ualberta.ca/SportsPostdoc](http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/SportsPostdoc) News.

hand opinions of homosexuality. It is here that I locate my study. The following section is devoted to organizing the gaps in the literature and synthesizing them with calls for future research in order to situate my research question in the context of the existing scholarship.

### **Divergences and Voids in the Literature, Calls for Future Research**

Although the literature on masculinity and sport has offered hockey as an example of a site that produces homophobic and hypermasculine characteristics (Adams, 2011; Anderson, 2010; Atkinson, 2010; Eitzen, 2012; Lucyk, 2011; Rahman, 2011; Rand, 2012), accounts of the specific intersection of ice hockey and contemporary views of homosexuality that privilege players' voices are all but absent in recent scholarly literature as compared to media accounts of the two (Bella, 2012; Brooks, 2014; Buccigross, 2009; Johnston, 2011; Lebrun, 2015; Marche, 2008; Ward, 2014). Specifically, there has yet to be any contemporary scholarly accounts of non-professional male ice hockey player awareness regarding LGBTQ issues in sport, the changing nature of masculinity, and whether it is participation in hockey or the social structures and interactions that frame hockey that contribute most to hypermasculinity. These voids can begin to be filled by taking heed of suggestions made in the literature for moving forward.

As Messner (2012) warned and as Patrick Burke (2013) noted in his editorial piece, there is still work to be done in terms of accepting and including male homosexual athletes, particularly in ice hockey. In Canada, that work is evidently necessary for two reasons. First, regardless of whether it is accurate or not, Canada is largely understood to house an empathetic and multicultural society that is modern and advanced enough to successfully combat homophobia and should thus take advantage of that image (King, 2012; Kinsman, 2012; Rail & Ravel, 2011; Robertson, 2013). Second, ice hockey is highly connected to notions of Canadian identity (Allain, 2010, 2012) and is thus used as a common tool for the socialization of young people—not only boys—across the country (Dyck, 2012; Atkinson, 2010). This makes the sport a viable site to either instill or bring out socially accepted values, depending on how one interprets hockey's ability to socialize people. Despite this, because hockey is the country's most influential combative and male-dominated sport, it is one of the most likely to enable hypermasculinity (Atkinson, 2010; Lucyk, 2011; Messner, 2012; Pronger, 2012). These matters make ice hockey

worthy of sociological investigation as the climate of LGBTQ acceptance in North America continues to proliferate.

To begin, scholars believe that future research must take place with individuals who are actually involved in hockey in order to obtain representative accounts of life around the game in order to grasp contemporary social issues associated with the sport (Allain, 2012; Holman & Stevens, 2013; White & Young, 2007). This means conducting surveys, interviews, ethnographies—any methodology that involves first-hand accounts from players, coaches, families, and others who are directly involved with the sport and can report on their experiences. With that said, however, there are well-documented limitations to self-reporting because, without delving too much into what constitutes truth or authentic information, it can be beneficial to triangulate research methods—to use different forms of data collection in order to compare and contrast them with the first-hand accounts (Rhind, Cook, & Dorsch, 2013). These could include content analyses, collecting data about the players from coaches or other people involved in ice hockey culture, conducting other non-obtrusive methods that do not require input from the individuals themselves.

The major goal of obtaining these first-hand accounts is to understand the meaning of homosexuality in male youth ice hockey culture and address the problematic nature of masculinity in ice hockey (Allain, 2012; Atkinson, 2011) as well as the structural perpetuation of hypermasculinity in sport (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2008; Lucyk, 2011; Messner, 1990). This includes determining if ice hockey does indeed continue to encourage hypermasculinity and if there are consequences in celebrating a sport that is so closely tied to dominance, roughness, and misogyny (Atkinson, 2011). Moreover, while hypermasculinity is an issue at all ages, it is especially necessary to attend to male child and youth athletes, as most work focuses on men (Kimmel et. al, 2011). Finally, academics are encouraged to work with the press not only to provide mainstream accounts of masculinity in sport, but also in an effort to ensure that media portrayals of male athletes are accurate and worthy of being used as images of role models for young athletes (Allain, 2010; Holman & Stevens, 2013; Lucyk, 2011; Messner, 2012).

In the way of a culmination of these divergences, voids, and suggestions for future research, I prepared a list of questions which, when taken together under the umbrella of my main research question, guided my analysis with precision regarding what remains to be identified and analyzed based on the review of literature. The main research question asks: **Within the context**

**of a sport understood to encourage hypermasculinity and homophobia, how do male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada understand gender and sexuality and how are their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality both shaped and presented in their interactions with teammates and the individuals closest to them?** This question surfaced from six smaller, more pointed, questions that guided the research and were informed by specific claims and questions that resulted from the review of the literature. They are as follows:

- (1) Is there evidence of hypermasculinity among the players?
- (2) How do the players perceive or treat girls and women?
- (3) To what extent is heterosexuality compulsory for performances of hypermasculinity in ice hockey?
- (4) Are players familiar with contemporary public discourse surrounding the LGBTQ community, including media accounts of homosexual professional athletes?
- (5) What are players' opinions of homosexuality?
- (6) How do their interactions with others figure in to the formation and presentations of their opinions on homosexuality (including 'fag discourse' and are those more important for socialization than actually participating in hockey?

The approach to and operationalization of the research questions will be discussed next in the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the dissertation.

CHAPTER THREE  
**APPLYING THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF  
HYPERMASCULINITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF MALE  
MAJOR MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY**

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If placed on a spectrum between inductive and deductive reasoning, my study is situated somewhere between the two, although closer to the deductive end. Deductive analysis typically encompasses a process of formulating a hypothesis based on theoretical conceptions of a social phenomenon that can then be assessed through data collection (Gratton & Jones, 2010). American methodologist W. Lawrence Neuman (2006) states that a deductive approach to theory “requires you to begin with a clearly thought-out theoretical picture” while the opposite of deductive reasoning, inductive analysis, begins “with a general topic and some vague ideas that you then refine and elaborate into more exact theoretical concepts” (2006, p. 60).

Due to the debates in the literature regarding both the nature and reach of homophobia in sport as well as the ways in which hockey can produce or encourage hypermasculinity, a range of theories could be applied to the subject. It was thus unnecessary to form my own and more appropriate theories to respond to those theories that already exist. Additionally, where my goal was to determine the usefulness of the theories and add to debates in the literature instead of making finite conclusions about them, using more than one theory allowed for some inductive exploration in between the approaches without exact adherence to their parameters. In other words, although there were theories that applied directly to my study, the research is better described as guided by them rather than married to them and was not conducted with the expectation of confirming or disproving them as much as situating Midget AAA ice hockey within them in order to best understand my findings. This approach to theory effectively makes the study deductive with inductive possibilities.

The theories I selected have been informed by symbolic interactionism and feminism as well as what has been known since approximately the 1980s as men and masculinity studies, which, in many cases, grew out of feminist perspectives on gender. They include Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman’s (1959, 1967, 1976) performance theories of impression management and demeanour as well as Connell’s (1987, 2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity and Anderson’s (2009, 2011) theory of inclusive masculinity. Goffman’s work will be used to contextualize the ways in which gender is learned and presented through social interaction,

whereas Connell comments specifically on masculinity, and Anderson adds a deeper engagement with alternative forms of masculine identity and sexuality within the sporting context.

### **Goffman's Theories of Performance, Deference and Demeanour**

Performance theory is rooted in Goffman's (1959) work on impression management and self-presentation. He proposed that human social interaction resembles a staged scene with actors since thoughts, feelings, and self-images must be projected on to others using words, gestures, props, and personal appearance. Put differently, humans engage in 'performances' in order to create and maintain a desired impression for others that are informed by their interactions with one another. Goffman fashioned this theory in part by drawing on American sociologist and philosopher George Herbert Mead's (1934) contention that the self and mind derive from symbolic communication and gestures—our interactions. What could be taken from this is that hypermasculinity and attitudes towards homosexuality might be developed amongst hockey players through their interactions with others and may be motivated by desires to please other individuals in their environments such as teammates, coaches, and parents. It could also imply that these performances are connected to the development of young male identity and sense of masculine self; Through performances and seeing the self reflected through interactions, one's own self emerges.

Goffman (1956) ethical implications to his claims about performances that please other people by stating that human behaviour is judged according to social interaction with others and that those who do not conduct themselves within accepted societal norms are seen as socially deviant or unfavourable. Regarding gender, in particular, he wrote that it, too, is a socially constructed performance based on social expectations typically determined by popular culture at the time (Goffman, 1976), which could include politics, religion, media content, or otherwise that have been deemed popular or favourable by individuals with power in society. Goffman's (1963) description of the contemporary socially acceptable man is a young, attractive, white, heterosexual male with post-secondary education, a career, and athletic abilities, which does not sound entirely unlike the portrayals of masculinity in the literature on sport (Anderson, 2009; Messner, 2007), although Goffman's depiction is less extreme. Here, Goffman's work successfully problematizes the tension between Midget AAA players being members of a

generation that is more accepting of homosexuality on a public level, yet participates in a sport that typically does not. That is, when it comes to attitudes towards gender and sexuality, it appears that hockey culture and society at large could have differing norms of desirable conduct and worldviews, so how do the players negotiate that tension and situate themselves in terms of favourable conduct?

Goffman's (1956) concepts of deference and demeanour are a good fit within his discussions of what constitutes favourable conduct. For Goffman, an individual's demeanour is measured through indicators of character—courage, gameness, integrity, and poise. He argues that by giving deference (or compliance) to others during their interactions through elevated levels of these character traits, we are able to determine if an individual's demeanour is favourable or not. Goffman cites both religion and people of power as the stakeholders who determine what is considered favourable in this case as well, just as with his ideas of performance. Character figured prominently in my study as I used it to formulate a list of traits to determine the extent to which Midget AAA players exhibit tenets of hypermasculinity or otherwise, and included a discussion of how both Connell (1987, 2005) and Anderson's (2009, 2011) concepts of masculinity address what it means to be a good person—or what constitutes favourable conduct or makes a male athlete well-demeanoured in different social contexts amongst teammates, friends, family, and significant others.

Using Goffman's work in sport sociology is not new. Scholars have relied heavily on Goffman's theories of performance and deference and demeanour when approaching athlete masculinity and although Goffman himself commented very little on sport, his views have been highly applicable (Birrell, 1981; Birrell & Donnelly, 2004; Ingham, 1975). For example, sport scholars Susan Birrell and Peter Donnelly (2004) invoked Goffman in an attempt to explain sport as a gendered performance affected by social interaction, much like my study aimed to do. According to Birrell & Donnelly, "sport clearly takes place in both the 'on stage' areas of the baseball diamond, basketball court, and soccer pitch, and the 'backstage' locker room and practice field. The locker room's sanctity as a male, private staging area defines it as a quintessentially male space for the performance of male identities" (2004, p. 53). Ingham's (1975) study of athlete subcultures also uses these theories and Ingham comments on the pull between expectations of conduct when he writes the following:

The athlete is often confronted with a fundamental dilemma, whether to conform to the expectations of his peers [teammates], the expectations of

the management, or the expectations of the public. Since each of these audiences may use different criteria for evaluation, the athlete becomes adept at the art of impression management. He is 'cool' for his peers, demeaned for the management, and dramatic for the fans. (1975, p. 369)

Birrell & Donnelly and Ingham's work might provide two suggestions regarding both the self-presentation of Midget AAA ice hockey players as well as their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality. First, I would argue that hockey players have a number of 'backstages' because although hockey occupies a lot of their lives, the expected forms of conduct may or may not be different in the dressing room than they are at home or at school. For instance, perhaps it is more important to assert one's heterosexuality in the locker room than it is with parents or teachers; the literature on masculinity and sport indirectly supports this, however it is accounted for more concretely in my study.

Lastly, Birrell (1981) also examined athlete demeanour through Goffman's (1956) four indicators of character by analyzing media portrayals of athletes to demonstrate the ways in which these four characteristics determine whether or not athletes are viable role models since the characteristics represent contemporary socially valued attributes. Indeed, Goffman (1976) did argue that social expectations, including social codes of gender, are made visible through popular culture and this includes the media. Birrell concluded the following:

Sport has ritual significance when character based on valued social attributes is demonstrated. In such situations, the athlete is an exemplary figure who embodies the moral values of the community and thus serves as a symbol of those values. The salience of the incidents recounted here is evidenced by the very fact that they were reported by the mass media for the benefit of those who were not fortunate enough to witness the demonstrations in person. Publication of such deeds serves as institutionalized recognition that demonstration of character should be greeted with admiration, respect, and perhaps, worship. (1981, p. 373)

Here, Birrell is saying that the media uses athletes to show audiences who or what they should strive to be and, by using the term 'worship,' is associating sport with religion as a vehicle for disseminating dominant ideals of favourable conduct and demeanour. Goffman and Birrell's use of media portrayals coincides with Anderson's (2011) claim that societal acceptance of homosexuality has increased due to its visibility in the media. It also coincides with the call from scholars for more respectable media portrayals of athletes as role models (Allain, 2010; Holman & Stevens, 2013; Lucyk, 2011; Messner, 2012). This continuous mention of the media motivated

me as a researcher to consider how current media developments such as those listed at the beginning of the dissertation are translating into the lived experiences of current ice hockey players. I was especially interested in how Midget AAA players use social media, as this is a contemporary way for their generation to interact with one another as well as produce and consume content such as photos and videos. This will be revisited in the methodology section.

Goffman's work, which will be referred to collectively as 'acceptable manhood' from here on out, was used to determine exactly how important dressing room or teammate interaction is compared to other family and social settings for the players where masculinity and homosexuality are concerned. Additionally, an analysis of interactions contributes to shedding light on debates regarding whether it is ice hockey that encourages hypermasculinity or rather the people who participate in and around it who have expectations regarding what it means to be a male hockey player and what constitutes favourable conduct. As Messner (2002) indicates, hockey players spend a great deal of time with their teammates and very much have a team-first attitude, thereby suggesting that these social ties take precedence in shaping the players' attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality.

### **Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity**

'Hegemonic masculinity' is often, if not always, equated with hypermasculinity in literature on gender and sport because the label is reserved for men who are mentally and physically tough, risk-taking, and anti-feminine, as hypermasculinity also implies. In this sense, it invokes the narratives in the review of literature of Messner (1990, 1992, 2002, 2007, 2012), Kimmel et. al (2010), Allain (2008, 2010), Gee (2009), Bélanger (1999), and even Connell (1990) herself who all argue that male athletes are expected by society, their peers, and families to be hegemonically masculine. In this sense, the image of the male athlete stands in for hegemonic masculinity and so actual male athletes must negotiate this meaning in their interactions with teammates and others. Allain's work on ice hockey in Canada has especially been relevant as she takes hegemonic masculinity as one of her main objects of enquiry and observes that, "a hegemonically desirable Canadian hockey masculinity predicated on a hard-hitting, physically aggressive game has been ascendant in Canadian hockey practice for at least 50 years" (2008, p. 476). With these accounts of athlete masculinity in view, it would be difficult

to argue that this kind of masculinity is not relevant to my study.

Hegemonic masculinity is one of Connell's (2005) four types of masculinity used to signify the socially constructed hierarchical classification of masculinities in the Western world. Specifically, as the type at the top of the hierarchy, it refers to a normalizing ideology of gender relations involving the production, negotiation, and reproduction of male domination over women and other men (Levy, 2007). She proposes a classification system or ordering of gender into different versions of masculinity. These classifications were meant to be an update of 'sex roles' theory, which relied too heavily on biological sex as an indicator of gender when researchers had begun to determine that gender is more of an ideology and that masculinity is more learned than something one possesses inherently (Connell 1987; see also Butler, 2004; Kessler & MacKenna, 1978). These more recent classifications were also broad enough to include race and class on a large scale applicable to regional and global discussions of masculinity. She posits that images of masculinity can change over time and place, and argues that hegemonic masculinity is currently touted in the modern West as ideal, although not always the form of masculinity that is embodied. Examples of television and film personalities who would fall into the category of hegemonic masculinity include Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne, and Sylvester Stallone.<sup>11</sup> Most importantly, and much like hypermasculinity, heterosexuality is the main component of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). Given these ties to hypermasculinity, Connell's theoretical concept of hegemonic masculinity is in a strong position to underpin a study of masculine identity as well as attitudes towards homosexuality because it lays out a concise definition or equivalent to hypermasculinity and provides researchers with specific character traits for which to search when conducting fieldwork. With that said, Connell (2005) suggests that we must move beyond trait based models of masculinity even if, in actuality, few researchers do.

Connell's other three types are complicit, subordinated, and marginalized (Connell, 2005). Most men actually compose the complicit type of masculinity, striving to attain the traits of hegemonic masculinity in order to benefit from the domination of others. Individuals in the subordinated category—namely homosexuals—are seen as maintaining practices and ideologies that are not consistent with the hegemonic category (Levy, 2007). The marginalized category is reserved for non-Caucasians and the disabled, who are seen as having no hope of ever attaining

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<sup>11</sup> The fictional character and alpha male Don Draper from AMC's television show *Mad Men* also applies.

hegemony (Connell, 1987, 2005). What is most relevant to my study here is the way Connell has set up homosexuality in opposition to hegemonic masculinity, which may suggest that the more attitudes towards homosexuality improve among athletes, the less relevant hegemonic masculinity will be as a way of describing the kind or kinds of masculinity that Midget AAA players embody. Where this leaves practices of domination over women, however, is unclear. The entire structure of hegemonic masculinity is premised on the domination of women as a means of defining masculine identity. Homosexuality is at the bottom because it most approximates the social position of women (i.e. male as a sexual object) and the other forms of masculinity represent different relations to the rejection of the social position of woman, with the masculine hegemon being the furthest away from women. This, then, begs the question: is homophobia among males really a manifestation of misogyny as they are trying to distance themselves from the symbolic position of woman through performances of masculinity?

Connell (1987, 2005) maintains that boys and men who do embody hegemonic masculinity are highly valued in the modern West. Using Gramsci's (1975) term 'hegemony,' she indicates the ways in which the characteristics in question are ideologically and institutionally perpetuated and celebrated. She begins by stating the following:

'Hegemony' means a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes. Ascendancy of one group of men over another achieved at the point of a gun, or by the threat of unemployment, is not hegemony. Ascendancy which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies and so forth, is." (Connell, 1987, p. 184)

She states that although hegemony is not based on force, the two are related because masculinity is policed. Gender can be policed through socialization (as well as ridicule and shame), which resonates highly with both the literature on how hypermasculinity is maintained in sport (Anderson, 2005, Atkinson, 2011; Kimmel et. Al, 2010; Messner, 2012) as well as Goffman's (1959, 1956, 1967, 1976) discussion of how popular culture and societal expectations shape what it means to conduct one's self favourably in social interactions. Thus, hegemony does not necessarily imply physical force or a set of formal rules; however, it is highly monitored and managed through social norms.

Similarly, hegemonic masculinity does not hold total control over other types of

masculinity to the point of extinguishing them, leaving a population of solely hegemonically masculine men; there are always other categories that legitimize hegemonic masculinity by consenting to its existence as well as their own status in the hierarchy. From a sports perspective, this legitimization of hegemonic masculinity would take place as athletes negotiate their own agency in ‘backstage’ social interactions. For example, if an athlete learned from his family that it is unacceptable to sexually objectify girls and women, but does not express this to his teammates who use such objectification as part of their hypermasculine identities, he is facilitating the existence of hegemonic masculinity by remaining silent or perhaps even joining his teammates despite thinking that such activities are morally wrong. Then again, scholars also argue that athletes’ social and family environments or ‘backstages’ are filled with hypermasculinity and this is how it is perpetuated. Anderson (2009, 2011) evidently argues differently, citing a change in homophobia in male sports, which would imply a decrease in the stronghold of hegemonic masculinity; however, his work problematizes the question of whether or not hypermasculinity still staunchly requires heterosexuality, as my study also aims to do. Connell does recognize a shift in what is considered ideal and hegemonic masculinity; in 2005, she and criminologist James Messerschmidt responded to criticisms of the concept (Anderson, 2002; Demetriou, 2001; Donaldson, 1993; Miller, 1998; Moller, 2007), agreeing that the dynamics of masculinity are indeed changing and that scholars should be open to the possibility of positive forms of hegemony that move away from aggression, bravado, and misogyny. It is amidst this shift in societal constructions of dominant masculine ideology that my work is situated. That is, the study occupies a space between the arguments for and against the relevance of hegemonic masculinity in a sporting context.

### **Anderson’s Theory of Inclusive Masculinity**

Eric Anderson developed inclusive masculinity theory (2009, 2011) as a structured way to qualify his observations of the changing nature of hegemonic masculinity and homophobia in the Western world. His theory posits that homophobia is declining in boys’ and men’s sporting contexts in the United States and United Kingdom and that non-normative representations of masculinity are becoming increasingly acceptable among white, middle-class, high school and college-aged males. Anderson’s theory, unlike Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity,

creates space for alternative representations of masculinity and does not hierarchize them in terms of societal ideals. The existence of this space in which the destabilization of dominant ideals takes place suggests that, if put into Goffman's terms, social expectations have shifted so as to demand the acceptance of a range of gendered and sexual identities aside from those associated with from hegemonic masculinity.

Regarding why these expectations have shifted, Anderson (2015) draws connections between cultural life and men's sport since the beginning of the twentieth century. This is when it became evident that the inception of industrialization did not require the physical skill and abilities of agrarian life and sport became way to pass the time that mirrored the values and practices of agricultural and rural society (Anderson, 2015). Citing the work of historian Clifford Putney (2001), Anderson attributes the development of homophobia in the West to a long history of Freud's (1905) work inciting moral panic over homosexuality since Freud argued that heterosexuality was associated with the fully developed person and that homosexuality suggested underdevelopment. Anderson writes, "sport became part of the project of muscular Christianity to provide the requisite male and moral vapours to assure heterosexuality among male youth (Putney, 2001). Thus, a significant use of Western sport in the 20th century has been to reproduce what Connell (1995) describes as hegemonic masculinity" (2015, p. 364). He then goes on to cite the AIDS crisis, which led to homosexuality being perceived as unsafe, and adds that gatekeepers of homophobia, such as proponents of right wing politics, led the public to believe that it was morally wrong. At the same time, the activism of gay men surrounding stereotypes associated with the AIDS crisis also made them more visible, which in turn familiarized the public with homosexuality and slowly began to legitimize it (Anderson, 2009). Here we have an explicit connection between Connell and Anderson in which Anderson recognizes that hegemonic masculinity is a useful term to describe gender ideals ascribed to men as well as to demonstrate how homophobia is operationalized amongst them. Anderson chose to use the word 'homohysteria' or "the fear of being homosexualized" (Anderson, 2009, p. 7) to describe the nature of public concerns (and social expectations) over homosexuality.

Anderson's longitudinal research, which involved a comparison of ethnographies and telephone interviews conducted with male high school and college athletes in the United Kingdom and United States over approximately ten years, revealed that, although sport is a male-dominated institution that can encourage hegemonic masculinity, cultural homohysteria in

general is declining. In addition to LGBTQ activism and the debunking of myths during the AIDS crisis, this decline, he argues, can be attributed to the increasing visibility of homosexuality in popular culture such as on television and on the internet, which the younger, more open-minded population can access. Hard-line expressions of heterosexism and homophobia are thus tolerated less and less by young men and heterosexual men are less afraid of being perceived as gay. For Anderson, during periods of decreased homophobia, power relations with regards to gender and sexuality become more fluid to the extent that activities such as physical intimacy between heterosexual men are no longer stigmatized. He writes, “inclusive masculinities are increasingly dominating university settings, and that the homophobia, misogyny, violence and homosocial separation associated with orthodox masculinity is increasingly unfashionable” (Anderson, 2009, p. 153), which indicates that, in response to Goffman, social expectations of favourable conduct and demeanour are indeed changing.

It is precisely within this claim that I situate my research for three reasons. First, since the Midget AAA players (who are the same age as some of Anderson’s participants) are ostensibly part of this generation that has been exposed to positive attitudes towards homosexuality, this theory will be useful for identifying the ways in which their participation in ice hockey shapes their attitudes towards homosexuality given this alleged decrease in homophobia. Second, Anderson (2011) claims that media outlets such as television and internet have and continue to contribute to a decrease in homophobia, which further supports my decision to conduct an analysis of players’ social media profiles since all signs point to the media as a site where gendered and sexualized messages are created and transmitted. Third and last, Anderson, like Goffman (1956) and Connell (1987), asks pointed questions about who has the power to determine what is favourable conduct or what constitutes dominant ideals of masculinity. Within my own work, I sought to determine who might play those roles in the more immediate lives of the players in their ‘backstages’—coaches, teammates, family, significant others?

Although the usefulness of Goffman, Connell, and Anderson’s work was woven together throughout this chapter, a more concise overview will be presented in the following chapter on methodology. It will connect the theories and literature more closely to the six micro questions and main research question and then demonstrate how I devised a research design that would address these connections among Midget AAA hockey players.

CHAPTER FOUR  
**METHODOLOGICAL DELIBERATIONS FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT  
CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDINGS OF AND  
ATTITUDES TOWARDS HYPERMASCULINITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN  
MALE MAJOR MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY**

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The goal of the research was to investigate how male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada understand gender and sexuality and how their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality are shaped and presented in their interactions with teammates and the individuals closest to them. To do so, mixed methods procedures were used as a way to approach the research from different perspectives. Mixed methods procedures are relatively new in the way of formal approaches to research methods. They were developed in the 1980s and 1990s and have also been referred to as integration, synthesis, and multimethod, among others (Creswell, 2014). They involve the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods—that is to say a coalescence of open- and closed-ended questions—ideally to achieve saturation and verification, which many methodologists agree is more attainable than if one were to use quantitative or qualitative methods only (Creswell, 2014; Gratton & Jones, 2010; Neuman, 2006). Mixed methods procedures provided an extra layer to the research as a way to add depth to the findings and to cross check them against the results of other methods in the event that conflicting findings would add another layer of complexity to the analysis.

The specific name for the procedure I used is convergent parallel mixed methods. Creswell (2014, p. 221) describes the technique as one in which “a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other”. He explains that the challenge of using this approach is the actual merging of the data, which can be done through a range of strategies such as comparison, data transformation, or joint display. I will communicate my findings through joint display; I will keep the quantitative and qualitative data separate, but will present them simultaneously, commenting on how they compare and contrast and collectively paint a picture of my findings as a whole. I will elaborate further on how this procedure will be used after having presented my research population and recruitment strategies.

## **Sampling and Recruitment**

Methodologist John W. Creswell (2014) asserts that research of this nature should consist of a sample of at least fifty participants in order to allow several opportunities to obtain new information, but also to ensure saturation, which occurs when no substantial new information is being collected. The sample population for this study was a cross-sectional group consisting of six Canadian male Major Midget AAA ice hockey teams and their respective head coaches, meaning I had access to a possible total of 112 players and six coaches. Cross-sectional research involves obtaining a smaller group within a larger population, collecting data from them, and using the findings to make generalized claims about the larger population (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This method is useful for researchers such as myself who would not have the time or resources to study all 163 Midget AAA teams in Canada.

Given the challenges associated with accessing hockey players who are typically characterised as difficult to access (to be discussed further in the next chapter), I relied on my personal contacts in the hockey community to identify coaches who would be willing to participate in my study as well as put me into contact with players and their parents or guardians to request their participation as well. This recruitment process is best described as opportunistic sampling because I went with the population that was available to me and did not select them using any sort of system (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This form of sampling limited the claims I was able to make regarding Midget AAA players in general because my study took place in various locations and my population represented less than 5% of the entire population nationwide, which makes for very few cases from which to make broad generalizable claims. My ability to make claims was also limited by anonymity and confidentiality agreements, which do not allow me to disclose the geographic location of each team or the nature of any possible relationships between them. This is discussed further in the next chapter.

## **Research Objectives and Conceptual Framework**

Part of answering the research question involves designating clearly formulated research objectives and a relevant conceptual framework based on the review of literature and theory that will inform the design of research materials (Creswell, 2014). It is here that my overarching research question is deployed through the six micro questions and they are then operationalized

by attaching them to clearly defined concepts and data collection methods. Put differently, I have selected data collection tools that will answer each of the micro questions and, in turn, answer the main research question. The three research objectives that I set out for myself in order to guide that process are as follows:

- (1) Investigate the ways in which male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada define gender and sexuality (including LGBTQ and homophobia). The aim of this objective is to establish how the players understand the concepts and to assess the players' general level of education on these subjects.
- (2) Identify male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players' thoughts and opinions on masculinity and homosexuality as well as the ways that both are constructed and presented in interactions with teammates and other close individuals such as friends, family, and partners. The aim of this objective is to address claims in the literature regarding the prominence of hypermasculinity in sport, where and how it is learned and reproduced, and whether or not homophobia in sport is indeed declining.
- (3) Analyze the players' attitudes towards homosexuality in ice hockey in order to create an updated account of contemporary hypermasculinity and homosexuality in male sports within a generation that is understood to be more accepting of homosexuality, but participates in a sport that traditionally is not.

In what follows, I demonstrate below how the main research question can be broken down into three separate areas of analysis. Next, I categorized the six micro questions within the corresponding areas of analysis from which they surfaced. Lastly, I provided a discussion of how the literature and theory have informed the six questions and will assist me in operationalizing them in my data collection materials. This process unfolded as follows:

#### Main Research Question:

Within the context of a sport understood to encourage hypermasculinity and homophobia, how do male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada understand gender and sexuality and how are their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality shaped and presented in their interactions with teammates and the individuals closest to them?

Research Question broken down into three corresponding areas of analysis along with six relevant micro questions established in the review of literature:

- (1) *“Within the context of a sport understood to foster hypermasculinity and homophobia...”*
  - Is there evidence of hypermasculinity among the players?
  - How do the players perceive or treat girls and women?
  - To what extent is heterosexuality compulsory for performances of hypermasculinity in ice hockey?
  
- (2) *“...how do male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada understand gender and sexuality...”*
  - Are the players familiar with contemporary the surrounding LGBTQ community, including media accounts of homosexual professional athletes?
  
- (3) *“...and how are their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality shaped and presented in their interactions with teammates and the individuals closest to them?”*
  - What are the players’ opinions of homosexuality?
  - How do the players’ interactions with others figure in the formation and presentations of their opinions on homosexuality (including ‘fag discourse’)?  
Are those more important for socialization than actually participating in hockey?

Discussion of how the literature and theory inform the six micro questions:

The first question asked if there was evidence of hypermasculinity among the players. This question was situated within the tension between the problematic nature of hegemonic masculinity that Connell (1987) identified and the decreasing homophobia that Anderson (2011) identified. In order to respond to this query, I assembled a list of character traits adapted from the tenets of hegemonic masculinity and Goffman’s (1956) four indicators of character in order to assess the extent to which ‘hypermasculinity’ is a relevant term when describing the demeanour or self-presentations of the players. Second, as part of a further investigation into hypermasculinity, one of the micro questions asked how the players perceive or treat girls and women. This question was developed more from claims in the literature that misogyny continues to be a problem among male athletes, however, it also falls under Connell’s umbrella of how hegemonically masculine men must reject femininity.

The third question asked to what extent is heterosexuality compulsory for performances of hypermasculinity in ice hockey? Although this question, like the first one, enquired into homophobia, it was mainly aimed at determining which characteristics of masculinity are

changing and whether or not male hockey players are more inclusive—to use Anderson’s term—of alternative expressions of gender and sexuality from those set out by the tenets of hegemonic masculinity.

The fourth question was meant to obtain a preliminary canvassing of the players’ knowledge about, or familiarity with, homosexuality in sport. It asked if they are familiar with contemporary discourse surrounding LGBTQ athletes, including media accounts of homosexual professional athletes. By answering this question, I was able to assess the players’ understandings of gender and sexuality, determine where they learned information relevant to the subject, and address the claims in both the literature and theories that established that the media plays a key role in conveying information, as has been the case with media accounts of homosexuality in professional sport discussed at the beginning of the dissertation. After having established players’ knowledge of gender and sexuality, the fifth question asked what their opinions were of homosexuality both in and out of an ice hockey context. This question was deployed to obtain direct accounts of their thoughts and opinions on the subject and fill the void in academic literature on it as well.

The sixth and final question asked how the players’ interactions with others figure in to the formation and presentations of their opinions on homosexuality (including ‘fag discourse’) and are those more important for socialization than actually participating in hockey? This question is by far the most vague and loaded of the six questions; however, it was purposely framed this way to allow for a more inductive approach to the players’ interactions involving gender and sexuality. This includes where and how hypermasculinity and attitudes towards homosexuality might be learned, as well as how social media might occupy a space in those interactions. To invoke Goffman, this question was used to investigate the players’ ‘backstages,’ however they defined them, and to determine how they negotiated possibly competing social expectations regarding favourable conduct and demeanour within those contexts.

### **Three Phases of Data Collection and Analysis**

In order to answer the research questions, I conducted qualitative and quantitative surveys, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and a social media content analysis of the players’ publicly available Twitter profiles. I travelled to each of the teams’ six locations and spent

approximately a week with each of them. All data collection materials administered to participants gave the option of completing them in French or English (interviews included) as participants' first languages varied between the two and I function fluently in both. This choice was made mostly so that participants would feel comfortable in their understandings of the questions and the shaping of their responses.

The first phase of data collection involved administering a qualitative and quantitative survey to each willing player and coach. According to survey methodologists Neil Guppy and George Gray (2008), surveys and questionnaires constitute a form of data collection that involves asking each participant to answer a specific list of questions and then systematically categorizing and analyzing their responses. Common ways to administer surveys include written paper questionnaires, telephone surveys, or internet surveys. I selected paper questionnaires because I felt that internet questionnaires were too impersonal and that phone or spoken questionnaires might make participants feel self-conscious or worried that their identities would be less concealed within the context of our anonymity and confidentiality agreements. The surveys were administered privately to each willing participant. The player survey took approximately twenty minutes to fill out and the coach survey took between five and ten minutes (the two had different content). A survey was the most appropriate method for this phase of the research because it was inexpensive, allowed me to quickly get access to a range of information, and aimed to make the participants feel comfortable in answering the questions anonymously.

The player surveys were meant to be a preliminary and mass canvassing of five subjects related to gender, sexuality, ice hockey, and demographics that used open- and closed-ended questions (see Appendix A1). First, they were asked how they define the words gender, sexuality, homophobia, and LGBTQ in order to provide me with an assessment of their level of education and understanding when considering further responses throughout the study. The definitions in the theory and literature as well as those set out by PFLAG Canada were used as guidelines for comparison; as long as the players had written something along the lines of these definitions, I considered them to be familiar with the relevant terminology.

Second, I formulated a list of character traits that corresponded to Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, Goffman's indicators of character and description of a socially acceptable man, Anderson's theory of inclusivity, and other common traits that might be used to describe an individual. The full list of traits is available in Chapter Six, however the traits that

corresponded directly to the theoretical frameworks are as follows: indicators of hegemonic masculinity included aggressive, competitive, heterosexual/straight, masculine/manly, mentally strong, and risk-taking; Goffman's four indicators of character (1956) as well as his description of a socially acceptable man in (1963) society were categorized as intelligent, skillful, high-achieving, ambitious, confident, honest, loyal, dependable, responsible, trustworthy, calm, and heterosexual; inclusive masculinity could be quite broad in scope, therefore all 40 traits in the survey were used as indicators of inclusive masculinity. The players were provided with a Lickert Scale and asked to rate, on a scale of 1-5, the extent to which their best friend on the team demonstrates each characteristic and then to also provide a general score for the team in general (where 1 signified no demonstration and 5 signified full demonstration of the trait). This section was meant to determine the relevance of the theories by quantifying evidence of different kinds of masculinity or favourable conduct amongst the players, including a comparative perspective of how players perceive their best friends on the team versus the team as a whole. I chose not to ask the players to respond for themselves in this section because I was concerned that it may be overwhelming to have to be so self-reflexive at the onset of participation in a study. In terms of an analysis, I used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to input the traits and then create indexes based on the three theories in order to quantify the extent to which players embodied them and the extent to which the traits associated with each theory are inter-related (meaning they make reliable scales from which to analyze masculinity).

The third section of the survey asked the players to consider their own opinions of homosexuality in ice hockey and to predict how most of their teammates might feel as well. This discussion will appear in the analysis as the fourth section of Chapter Six, however, because it became evident over the course of the analysis that this discussion of homosexuality and ice hockey should come later because the original fourth became an extension of discussions of hegemonic masculinity. Using a Lickert Scale of 1-5, the players were asked to rate the extent to which they and their teammates (presumably) agree or disagree with the following ten statements (where 1 signified strongly disagree and 5 signified strongly agree):

- (1) It's important to know whether or not your teammates are heterosexual/straight
- (2) Having a gay teammate would be uncomfortable
- (3) There is nothing wrong with being a gay hockey player

- (4) Having a gay teammate would negatively affect the team's success
- (5) It's okay for a coach to be gay
- (6) It would be upsetting if a close teammate turned out to be gay
- (7) It's common to make jokes about being gay
- (8) It's common to make jokes about being feminine/girly
- (9) It would be okay if a gay ice hockey player tried to flirt with a teammate
- (10) It's okay to be gay, but not in ice hockey

The responses to these statements indicated the players' level of comfort with or acceptance of the idea of homosexuality in an ice hockey context and by having a split response again (comparing self and team as a whole), additional information on how the players perceive themselves and others added to the analysis. The responses to each statement were entered into SPSS in order to quantify their opinions and then the data was cross-tabulated in order to compare the players' attitudes to those presumably belonging to their teammates. It should be noted that questions 3, 5, 9, and 10 had to be recoded in SPSS so as to keep consistent directions among the questions. In other words, a score of 5 on the scale indicated negative attitudes towards homosexuality in some questions and positive feelings towards it in others; therefore, the scores were flipped during the data entry so as to cohesively reflect the nature of responses. This was done so that the section would not consist entirely of positive or negative questions that might lead a participant to answer a certain way.

The fourth section of the survey (presented in Chapter Six as the third section) was geared specifically towards hypermasculinity and asked the players to use a Lickert Scale to rate themselves and most of their teammates according to the extent to which they embodied nine of the more prominent aspects of hypermasculinity (as informed by hegemonic masculinity), including the place of 'fag discourse', as well as girls and women in their conversations.<sup>12</sup> The nine aspects included trying to look muscular or physically fit, using verbal aggression off the ice, using verbal aggression on the ice, discussing topics related to girls/women and sex, making jokes about a teammate's sexuality, discussing topics related to dating/relationships, discussing

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<sup>12</sup> This section originally contained ten aspects of hypermasculinity, however it was discovered after the survey had been administered that, as a result of human error, one statement read "Trying hard to look homosexual/straight" when it should have read "Trying hard to look heterosexual/straight." I decided that although many players had responded, the statement was contradictory and was thus not included in the analysis.

emotions, trying hard to look masculine/manly, and making serious comments about a teammates' sexuality. As with the section on traits of masculinity, the responses were entered into SPSS and an index was created to examine how the players rate their own displays of hypermasculinity as well as how they rate the same comportment amongst their teammates.

The fifth and last section of the player survey collected demographic information on the players, mostly in order to assemble a general image of who they were, but also as a possible additional form of analysis should the opportunity present itself throughout the remainder of the data collection. They were asked to provide their age, which grade they are in, their academic average and favourite subject, their ethnic background, information about who they live with (parents, billet families, etc.), whether or not they think they come from a family that is highly implicated into hockey, what they plan on doing after high school, whether or not they feel that they spend a lot of time with teammates outside of hockey, and whether or not they have heard of the *You Can Play Project*. These questions describe my population, but also delve very superficially into how they spend their time, how much hockey figures into their social and family relationships, and their level of awareness of LGBTQ athlete issues. These responses were also entered into SPSS in order to obtain frequencies and then used to create cross-tabulations with other frequencies when relevant throughout the remainder of the analysis.

The coach survey was much shorter than the player survey (five questions). Its objective was to determine how the coaches view themselves as leaders and individuals potentially responsible for the socialization of young people or the creators of social expectations within the hockey context of the players' lives (see Appendix A2). In order to assess this, the coaches were asked how long they had been coaching boys' and men's hockey, how long they had been coaching their current team, whether or not they play or have played organized hockey themselves, their three main goals in directing their team, whether or not they think there is room in ice hockey to educate boys and men on gender and sexuality, and how often they hear players discussing sex or sexuality. They were also asked to provide their age, level of education, and employment in case those were somehow relevant to the analysis. These survey questions worked to determine how implicated the coaches were in hockey culture, how they viewed their role as potential socializers of masculinity, how gender and sexuality fit into the players' lives from a coach's perspective, and how open they were to the idea of using hockey as a site for conversations and education on gender and sexuality. There was a possibility that the coaches'

responses might indicate both evidence of hypermasculinity among their players as well as evidence of hypermasculinity within their coaching philosophies or methods. It was also useful to have the coaches comment on the players as another alternative to the players' self-reporting (Rhind et. al, 2013); I was able to compare how much the players think they discuss sex and sexuality to how often the coaches hear them discussing it.

The third stage of the data collection process—and the final stage that required the participation of the players—was a thirty-minute semi-structured qualitative interview, which I held with five players from each team, totalling thirty respondents. I opted for thirty participants because Gratton & Jones (2010) indicate that basic descriptive studies should include at least thirty participants, although qualitative studies require more consideration of this number because they can be more costly and time-consuming. With this in view, I determined that the interviews were meant to complement the surveys and social media analysis and thirty would suffice. Had interviews been my only method of data collection, I may have opted for more. Semi-structured interviews make use of a list questions or an interview guide, however, the interviewee can offer broad answers, questions may not follow a particular order, and the interviewer has the freedom to add unplanned questions based on the interviewee's responses (Bryman & Teevan, 2005).

The interviews were more inductive than the survey or social media analysis as I wanted to consider the literature and theoretical framework, but not have them constrain my conversations with players. The three main goals of the interview were as follows: to follow up on the players' awareness of LGBTQ issues (especially in the media) and get a sense of what they knew about gender and sexuality more generally prior to entering the study; to get a more personalized and substantial idea of their thoughts regarding homosexuality and homosexuality in ice hockey; and to establish the most important people in their lives, the role discussions of gender and sexuality play in their relationships with them (if any), and how those relationships might be indicative of how the players' attitudes towards homosexuality are shaped. I chose a semi-structured qualitative approach in order to privilege the players' voices and to allow for topics to come up that I perhaps had not foreseen as being important parts of their accounts of gender and sexuality (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). This proved to be useful as many of them communicated very different levels of familiarity where LGBTQ individuals and social issues were concerned.

The interview was structured around five themes including five main questions and lists of relevant probes depending on how the conversation unfolded (see Appendix B1). The first question asked the respondent to speak about his hockey career leading up to the present. This was intended less to learn about the player's career than to open the conversation with a topic that the respondent knew well and would hopefully be able to discuss comfortably. It also acted as an opportunity for me to respond with some of my own hockey knowledge in order to demonstrate my ease with the subject.<sup>13</sup> Prompts meant to move the conversation along included "What motivated you to begin playing hockey?" and "How long have you been playing on your current team?" The second question asked the player to describe himself. This question was meant to act as a transition between speaking about a subject that the participant knows well and moving on to getting a sense of whether or not his self-presentation aligned with any of the character traits from the survey and, by extension, those discussed in the literature and theoretical framework. Some responses related to gender and sexuality because one prompt asked if they were in a relationship and thus provided an opportunity to expand on the players' personal romantic lives.

The third question asked the participant about his thoughts on the experience of having me around the team and completing the survey. Examples of supporting prompts included "How much would you say you knew about gender or sexuality before this experience?", "Have you felt uncomfortable at all?" and "How do you think your teammates have reacted to this experience?" This question and its prompts were used for two purposes. First, it allowed me to assess the players' comfort level with the subject and elicited relevant personal anecdotes and commentaries regarding how they and their teammates felt about homosexuality. Second, the responses also provided further insight into how they understood gender and sexuality as well as their level of awareness of relevant issues because they often used this opportunity to list everything they knew about the subject, including stories in the media. For instance, one of my probes, then, was "Are you familiar with the openly gay professional football player, Michael Sam?"

The fourth question asked what the players thought it is like or might be like to have a gay teammate. This question was used to qualify the survey responses on the same topic and to obtain further insight. Useful probes for this question included "What might be challenging about having a gay teammate?" and "Do you have any concerns about showering with a gay teammate?" I often

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<sup>13</sup> My identity as a researcher will be discussed at length in the next chapter on study limitations, ethical considerations, and methodological implications.

referenced Michael Sam's experiences and tried to use him as an example when the conversation needed to be pushed forward.

The fifth and final interview question was geared towards addressing the final portion of the research question regarding how the players' interactions with others shape both their presentations of and attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality. I had participants choose three people that they considered most important to them at the time and had them describe those people. I designated prompts to ask if the participant knew anything about their sexual orientations, if he felt comfortable discussing sexuality with them, and if he considered any of them homophobic. I asked these questions because I suspected that the relationships the players consider the most important to them would be the most telling about how they learn about gender and sexuality and in which context this learning might occur (with teammates, friends, family, partners, etc.).

The third and final phase of data collection was a content analysis of players' publicly available social media accounts on Twitter. I examined them in search of content that might reveal any self-presentations or other interactions that could be associated with hypermasculinity, hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity, homosexuality or homophobia. Launched in 2006, Twitter is the world's leading form of microblog that allows users to post 140-character messages on their profiles, interact with other Twitter users, share content such as photos and videos or news stories, and search popular or trending topics with the use of a number or pound sign in front of the subject, which has become known both on and off social media and within popular culture as a hashtag (Van Dijck, 2013). I chose Twitter as opposed to other sites such as Facebook or Instagram because professional athletes are very active on Twitter and where it is the leading form of social media, I suspected that my study population may likely be on it in higher numbers than other social media platforms. Furthermore, Twitter's common public access made searching for and analyzing the players' accounts both easier and more ethical because I was unobtrusively analyzing public content.<sup>14</sup> Much can be learned about participants' self-presentations by examining their social media accounts because they are typically publicly accessible (with no age restrictions) and the players in this study often used them to share thoughts and opinions and to interact with others.

A content analysis involves identifying and analyzing texts through systematic description

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<sup>14</sup> The ethics of social media research will be addressed in the next chapter.

and interpretation (Gratton & Jones, 2010). These texts can include written documents, audio recordings, and visual material, to name a few. Examples might include newspaper articles, radio shows, print advertisements, television shows, or social media posts. The analysis takes place through determining the possible messages, meanings, and implications of the texts being examined, including the patterns and relationships forged in the content of the texts. This method was appropriate because Midget AAA players are considered digital natives (they grew up with digital communication) and because the method incorporated the role of the media in the players' lives from an alternative perspective to the surveys and interviews. It also provided insight on how the players use social media to consume and produce messages about gender and sexuality. The method is advantageous in the sense that it is inexpensive and unobtrusive, meaning it did not require me to notify the players that I would be looking at their profiles prior to their participation in the study (Gratton & Jones, 2010). In addition, like the coach survey, the content analysis also provided an opportunity to collect data that was not obtained through self-reporting. Although it could be argued that social media activity is a form of self-reporting, I would argue that this method still satisfied the call in the literature to move beyond self-reporting (Rhind et. al, 2013) because I, the researcher, had no bearing on the players' self-expression in this case. Put differently, and at the risk of implying that there is some sort of universal truth or untouched natural research setting, the social media posts were created in a context that was not based on the players' perceived notions of my expectations as a researcher, also known as researcher bias (Creswell, 2014). Disadvantages of content analysis in this case included interpretive narrowness because there was only one researcher (although this also contributed to consistency in the analysis) and the limitations associated with interpreting content without having an account of the intended message from the creator (Creswell, 2014).

I chose the month prior to the beginning of my study as a timeframe and examined each of the players' Twitter profiles and posts (including their own content as well as that of other users which they interacted with or shared with others) in search of any content related to gender and sexuality. Examples could include sharing news about Michael Sam, making comments to others regarding their gender or sexuality—whether serious or in jest—or sharing sexist photos of women, to name a few. Although scholarship on social media analysis makes several suggestions for data collection, I chose to describe and categorize the Twitter posts manually because both the size of the study population and nature of the information for which I was searching was not

compatible with any of the research software available to me. For instance, studies of content on Twitter commonly use application program interfaces (APIs) to study the content of tweets (Gaffney & Puschmann, 2014), but none of them allowed me to search through specific Twitter accounts. In response to this problem, scholars suggest using a program called The Archivist (TA) for saving and analyzing tweets, however they also recommend verifying the program's output manually (Garrfey & Puschmann, 2014), so I settled on conducting the entire analysis manually and foregoing technology. A more elaborate discussion of how research design can and should evolve to better accommodate analyses of digital communication will take place in the next chapter.

Although my goal was to identify and analyze tweets containing evidence of hypermasculinity, hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity, homosexuality, and homophobia, I chose to broaden the parameters of my search in order to situate gender and sexuality quite generally within the full spectrum of content that players posted or with which they interacted. In order to create coding categories, I adapted a system from that implemented by sport management scholar Katie Lebel and kinesiologist Karen Danylchuk in their study of professional athletes' self-presentation on Twitter (Lebel & Danylchuk, 2014). Although their framework was useful, it included elements of professional athletes' Twitter activity that would be less relevant to Midget AAA players, such as interactions with other celebrities and information relating to major endorsement deals. What especially made Lebel & Danylchuk's (2014) work relevant to my study was the fact that they relied heavily on Goffman's theories of performance and self-presentation and used his concepts of 'frontstage' and 'backstage' to describe the nature of athletes' social media posts. I have also adapted my use of these terms because, as stated in the theoretical framework, I view the various off-ice contexts of hockey players' lives as a multitude of 'backstages' that cannot be reduced to one context. With this in view, I used the same terminology as Lebel & Danylchuk (2014) for organizational purposes, but I defined them differently. This will become clearer in the next paragraph where I describe my adaptation of their methods.

In order to analyze audience interpretations of athletes' posts on Twitter, Lebel & Danylchuk (2014) categorized the posts according to frontstage and backstage performances. The former signified interactions such as 'sharing athlete promotional information,' 'provision of formal acknowledgements,' and 'checking in with followers.' Examples of backstage

performances included interacting with others, providing updates on one's own sport participation, discussing personal interests and opinions, and providing glimpses into personal life. They then counted and categorized the tweets according to these labels and analyzed audience's interpretations of them. These categories were also consistent with social media researcher Jimmy Sanderson's (2013) findings, which indicated that professional athletes (including NHL players) on Twitter were likely to present themselves as hard workers, interested in popular culture, consumers of sports media, in search of knowledge, and as regular people with ordinary lives. I was not interested in audience reception, however their coding categories were appropriate for dividing up the different kinds of tweets an athlete might produce. The only layer of analysis I required that was missing from Lebel & Danylchuk's (2014) framework was an overarching classification for whether or not the tweets were related to gender and sexuality. With this in view, I added a column to my coding list where I could indicate whether or not the tweet was at all relevant to gender and sexuality and makes notes about the content of the tweets. I defined content related to gender and sexuality as anything related to masculinity, femininity, the experience of being a man or woman, male or female, any references to the LGBTQ community, any references to dating and relationships or romance, and romantic and sexual attraction. I kept the definition quite broad so as to cast a wide net in the event that content that was only somewhat relevant at the time might prove to be more useful later on in the analysis.

I did not use frontstage and backstage to divide the different categories of tweets as I had conceptualized 'backstage' as any context in the players' lives that was off the ice, thus Lebel & Danylchuk's (2014) contrast of personal or intimate tweets versus those that reached out publicly was not relevant to my study. Instead, I chose to have one list of possible tweet content (see Appendix D2 for coding sheet), the labels of which are also adapted from Lebel & Danylchuk (2014). The categories were the following:

***The Conversationalist:*** Interaction with friends, family, and teammates

***The Insider:*** Sharing otherwise unavailable information about the athlete's life including reporting on what he is doing at the moment

***The Fan Himself:*** Sharing information about personal sport interests such as other athletes or teams that the individual favours in any sport

***The Informer:*** Sharing information that the athlete deems important or informative

***The Analyst:*** Sharing opinions or commentary on a range of topics

***The Comedian:*** Sharing or creating information that the athlete finds comical or amusing

***The Brand Manager:*** Promoting information about the individual's own sporting career such as encouraging people to attend events, acknowledging community support, and sharing standings or game results

***The Engager:*** Any attempts to reach out to the public, specifically with questions aimed at no one in particular

***The Appreciator:*** Expressing thanks or appreciation for support, gestures, gifts, etc.

***Other:*** Anything that could not be described by the other categories

The tweets were coded according to how they fit into each of these categories and then were classified as relevant or not relevant to gender and sexuality along with descriptions for those that were in order to form an image of how gender and sexuality are operationalized in the players' tweets and how much weight they held against other forms of content. Next, they were put into SPSS in order to create frequencies and cross-tabulations for the purposes of communicating findings and establishing possible relationships.

It should also be noted that Twitter uses three forms of interaction: users can create their own content (tweet), share that of others (retweet), or add other users' content to their personal list of things they like or appreciate (likes, formally known as favourites). The three modes of interaction were not separated in the analysis because no matter which one the user chooses, the post becomes a reflection of him in some way. It could be argued that content the players produce themselves is more telling or meaningful than that which they retweet or like, however I hold that all three are forms of self-presentation and interaction and therefore should all be considered equally. Additionally, it should be noted that what exactly constituted humour posed a challenge since I could not always tell if something was posted because it was funny or if it was posted

sarcastically or ironically. Without knowledge of the intended message, these decisions were left up to my interpretation of the content.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Given the small cross-sectional study population and resulting limited ability to make generalizable claims about the wider population, it would be challenging to determine the precise accuracy of my research results. With that said, however, I could still ensure that my application of methods was purposive and consistent and that the study did paint an accurate picture of the cross-section that was analyzed. I built a triangulation strategy into the study so as to ensure credible and well-founded results within the parameters of the research itself. Gratton & Jones (2010, p. 288) define triangulation as “the use of multiple methods, sources of data, theories, or researchers to enhance the validity of the research”. The claims in the literature review, the relevant theories, the mixed methods procedures, and the use of one researcher to eliminate intercoder bias worked to secure the validity of my conclusions as they will have been held up against different forms of enquiry and evaluation. I also shared my methodology section with trained qualitative and quantitative methodologists in order to ensure that they also believed that the study materials were methodologically sound. I did encounter some obstacles once the data analysis process began (including the recoding mentioned in the section on homosexuality in ice hockey), however they did not create any substantial limitations in the study and will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

As an additional measure, I also conducted a pilot study with three former members of my study population who had moved on to higher levels the year before in order to obtain their input on the experience of participating. The pilot study was useful for three reasons. First, the players suggested that some of my vocabulary and language in the research materials was a bit too elevated for teenagers to understand (which was likely true given that I am used to writing academically), so they pointed out places where I could make questions and instructions clearer and more accessible. Second, one of them shared a story with me about one of his former teammates in another league announcing the he was gay, which provided me with a sense of both the possible setting and the reaction when these events occur. I was able to use this knowledge and conduct the study knowing that there was a possibility that some players might indeed be gay

because others at that level had come out. Thirdly, the pilot study participants were also peripherally useful because they were able to tell me a lot about when teams practiced, what their schedules looked like on game days, and other useful information that helped direct my decisions regarding when to contact coaches, when to schedule interviews, and, quite frankly, when not to be in the way so as not to inconvenience anyone. The fact that I positioned the study as secondary to school and hockey in their schedules helped build my rapport with coaches and managers, especially. I am thus thankful that my pilot study participants shared these small details with me.

According to Creswell (2014), validity is also determined by the extent to which all parties—including the researcher, the study population, and other audiences—feel that the study paints an accurate image of both the research process and the study population. Although it would be practically impossible to please every single reader, I did offer participants full access to the written results section prior to the initial submission of the dissertation, however no one took advantage of the offer, which suggested to me that they were not overly concerned with how I had portrayed them. Creswell (2014) defines reliability as a consistent approach to the research such that different researchers and different projects will yield the same results. Within the constraints of my own study, I was the only researcher, so my application of the methods and interpretation of the results was consistent. Having one researcher can lead to the possibility of interpretive narrowness without the input of a second researcher, however being that this is a dissertation, it was imperative that I conduct it myself. Regarding the study's applicability to the broader population, given the qualitative and opinion-based nature of much of the study's subject matter, it would be difficult to claim that researchers elsewhere would yield the same results. Nonetheless, the methodology and research materials are available within the dissertation and could be administered to other populations of Midget AAA players, which would at least ensure that the methodology is consistent. Additionally, although I am not in a position to make broad claims, the fact that the debates in the literature review were not heavily polarized suggests that the same study conducted with other participants may not yield immensely different results from my own. Of course, the personalized accounts might differ, but I suspect that the overall, similarities could be traced between studies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### REFLECTING ON INTELLECTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

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Before presenting the findings and analysis, the study will be contextualized according to its inner workings, challenges and limitations. By reflecting on my own identity, personal and ethical decision-making, and other experiences that shaped the research, I am able to provide a more thorough and all-encompassing account of the settings in which the research was conducted as well as the conclusions I reached as a result. In total, I grappled with five sets of intellectual and methodological challenges or study limitations. These included the process of obtaining ethical and informed consent from players, the experience of being a woman in a male-dominated environment, addressing the informal yet highly policed code of silence in male ice hockey culture, difficulties associated with conducting social media research, and deciding the limits of the scope of the research in view of other relevant subjects that should be studied.

#### **On Giving Informed Consent: Research Ethics Boards and Gatekeepers**

Conducting responsible and ethical research with minors, especially on the subject of sexuality, can pose ethical challenges from the standpoints of University Research Ethics Boards (REBs) as well as parents or guardians and coaches. In their work on why children and youth are understudied in the sociology of sport, Messner and Musto (2014) speculate that one reason for this dearth of research could be the challenges associated with gatekeepers (such as REBs and parents or guardians) who limit access to children and youth. Gatekeepers have particularly been pertinent in discussions of accessing male ice hockey players, regardless of age, because they tend to be closed off and tight-knit groups (Allain, 2014; Robinson, 1998). Gatekeepers are concerned with keeping participants safe from social or psychological harm and, in the case of minors, both gatekeepers and scholars pose questions about whether or not minors are able to give informed consent prior to participation in research (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Coyne, 2010). To address these concerns, I will discuss my own experiences dealing with my institutional ethics approval process, as well as the means by which I was able to get (most) coaches, parents, and players on board with my research.

Aspects of the institutional ethics application that required special attention were how I

would minimize risk<sup>15</sup> over the course of the research (and deal with heinous discoveries) and how I would access participants' social media profiles unobtrusively while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. The study population was considered vulnerable because many participants were under the age of 18 and not considered able to give informed consent on their own (I will discuss this later in the chapter), but also because male hockey players deal with the widespread expectation that they be hypermasculine or heteronormative (Allain, 2008; Allain, 2014; Atkinson, 2011; Bélanger, 1999) which might make them uncomfortable speaking about gender and sexuality or lead to troubling discoveries on my part. Especially in the case of hypermasculinity and heteronormativity, the REB asked me to consider how I defined a heinous discovery. I was asked to account for the possibility of finding out that a player had perpetrated or been the victim of extreme violence or sexual assault or perhaps even something as simple as having a player divulge that he is gay. None of these events occurred, however, researchers should be prepared in the event that they do and remind participants that they can discontinue participation at any time should it become a challenge to continue doing so. Related concerns in this situation would include whether or not to break confidentiality for legal matters and to which point the researcher's obligation to the participant extends in terms of getting help since it is not the researcher's obligation (and likely not their field of expertise) to provide physical or mental health assistance.

As a result of all of these possible concerns, I had to take the following steps to minimize social and psychological harm to participants: participants under the age of 18 required the permission of a parent or legal guardian in order to participate; participants reserved the right to discontinue participation in the study at any time; I included contact information for the local community mental health centres in the participant feedback letters (see Appendix C2) and had relevant pamphlets on mental and physical health on hand. While the mental health contact information and pamphlets were meant to assist in addressing the risk associated with the study, it was also necessary that I exercise caution and remain intuitive throughout the interview process in order to detect any discomfort or apprehension among participants because it may not be

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<sup>15</sup> REBs use the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS) to determine whether or not study populations are at risk of harm if or when they participate in research. The TCPS defines minimal risk as “research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research” (TCPS, 2014, p. 22) and includes individuals under the age of 18 in that category as they are perceived as incapable of consenting to participation without the permission of a parent or guardian.

explicitly evident that the participant had become troubled.

Although there were no heinous discoveries and it was never necessary for me to use the mental and physical health resources, I did detect some discomfort among participants as I asked questions about what it would be like to have a gay teammate. Ten or twelve interviewees' composure changed noticeably as they began to do things like fidget in their seats or with their hands, repeatedly said "I don't know" after having otherwise offered coherent responses, or began to avoid my gaze. These were all signs that the nature of the interview had shifted. I thus chose to change the subject because I did not want to lose rapport with participants or force the situation to escalate. This immediate change of subject resulted in me not knowing why the participants reacted this way, although it would not be unreasonable to suspect that they did not want to say anything offensive or that they felt self-conscious about their opinions or own identities. At least eight of them said that they had never really thought about it before, which may have also contributed to them having to think on their feet at the time. In each of those moments, I decided that I was satisfied with the information they did divulge and that it was best to move on. In each case, the interview regained its original tempo once I changed the subject. This could be viewed as a study limitation, however I would argue that where my study is the first of its kind and where hockey players' discomfort with the subject of homosexuality is well-established, it still offers a solid entry point to the discussion that can be built upon in the future. I hold that simply starting the conversation is likely the most difficult part of changing attitudes towards homosexuality in ice hockey and I have done that in my research. The goal now should be to continue having this conversation so that it eventually becomes less uncomfortable and something that the players have indeed considered before.

Obtaining ethical approval from my institution's REB to conduct my content analysis of social media profiles also proved to be challenging for three reasons. First, although a content analysis is considered non-obtrusive (which does not require ethical approval), because it was part of a broader study that did implicate the humans whose Twitter profiles I was viewing, it was considered to possibly elevate the level of risk associated with the study. Second, REBs do not all have a set of formal, detailed, and all-encompassing tools for assessing risk on the internet alongside of which they could have compared my proposed study.<sup>16</sup> Third, because my

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<sup>16</sup> While the TCPS has no forthright guidelines for studying social media (aside from policies on public content), a useful and relevant discussion of Twitter ethics from a journalism standpoint is James Benjamin's (2012) book chapter on ethical approaches to 21<sup>st</sup> century communication technology.

participants were supposed to remain anonymous—insofar as I would know, but not disclose their identities—it begged the question of whether or not it was ethical to search for their names on Twitter without their consent (as mentioned in Chapter Four, the content of the profiles was publicly available and I wanted to use Twitter as an alternative to self-reporting without the possibility of researcher bias, meaning it would have been best not to inform participants that I had looked at their profiles). After some guidance from my institution’s Committee, I was able to obtain approval based on the following: the content analysis posed less than minimal risk because it did not directly involve human contact; it was unlikely to adversely affect the welfare of the participant because he would not know I am examining the content at the time and it was his choice to make his Twitter account public despite having the option to keep it private; I would not disclose any words or phrases in my dissertation that would make players identifiable, and participants had to be informed following the content analysis in order to be given the opportunity to have their Twitter information removed from the study, as stipulated in the agreement in the consent form that participants could withdraw from the study at any time before the data was compiled for anonymity purposes.<sup>17</sup>

The next ethical challenge, aside from institutional approval, pertained to accessing study participants through coaches and parents and then obtaining consent for participation, which has raised questions regarding the ability of youth to give informed consent. My personal contacts in the hockey world led me to the coaches, so I was able to approach them to ask if they would speak to their players and parents or guardians about participating in the study. Three coaches responded immediately that they would be willing to act as a liaison and, after many failed attempts to contact the other three coaches, they also agreed to assist me. One coach and one team manager informed me that the other three coaches who were more difficult to reach were ‘old fashioned’ (inferring that perhaps the subject made them uneasy) and that they expressed concerns about the study interfering with their season or that I would present the players as misogynists and somehow give them a bad name. Although I do not know the exact circumstances under which they agreed to participate, I made sure to divulge all research materials in advance and made clear in my consent form that all possible measures would be taken to ensure participants’ confidentiality and anonymity, which I think made the coaches more comfortable with possibly bringing me into the team environment because, in the end, all six

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<sup>17</sup> These procedures conformed to Articles 3.7a and 3.7b: Alteration of Consent in the TCPS (TCPS, 2014, p. 35-40).

agreed to take the coach survey and assist me to the best of their abilities.

The coaches spoke to the players and contacted parents or guardians through e-mail or team meetings. They were provided with my contact information should they have any questions, as well as a consent form to sign in the event that the player wanted to participate and his parents or guardians agreed (see Appendix C1). One team manager told me that during a team meeting with parents, one mother said that she had no problem consenting to her son's participation because homosexuality 'wasn't an issue' in their home. The manager said that, at that point, another parent responded that homosexuality should never be considered 'an issue' and that parents might never really know if their son is gay and that is why this kind of research is important. The same manager also told me that parents who were teachers or healthcare professionals were the ones to acknowledge the importance of participation and said that they would try to lay out the benefits of participation to their sons. He suspected that these individuals had likely spent time with LGBTQ individuals or were more educated on them and were thus more open to giving consent.

In other cases, I heard of two players who asked their parents not to sign the consent form because they did not want to participate in the research and one player returned the form, on which a parent had written that her son was too busy focusing on school and hockey and would not have time to participate (even though all activities had largely been scheduled during hockey practice and were not likely to take much more than an hour outside of it). I had one team of the six with low participation and heard from the team's assistant captain that one player had decided the study was "stupid" and that he would not be participating, which led others to follow suit.<sup>18</sup> I flesh this out more in Chapter Seven when I present my interview data and ask the players why they think their teammates chose not to participate, however I never received substantial answers to the question. In any case, I was left with questions regarding who exactly consented to participation and why it was or was not given. On one hand, why was it left up to parents and guardians to decide whether or not the player should participate and were there cases in which the player wanted to participate and the parent or guardian declined? On the other hand, had players

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<sup>18</sup> This situation could possibly be explained by Connell's (1987) model of hegemonic masculinity, in which one player who holds a particular kind of power in the dressing room makes a decision and many others follow suit in silence to maintain the status quo and fit in (making them part of the complicit category of Connell's model). Another relevant explanation can be found in Messner's (2002) theory of athletic male peer group dynamics, in which he suggests that a marginal group of male athletes silently supports the leaders by going along with their actions or ideas, much like Connell's model also suggests.

been forced by parents or guardians and coaches to sign the form and participate? I did stipulate in the outline of my research that such should not be the case, but I will never really know the details of how consent came to be given or not given. Child health and rights researcher Imelda Coyne (2010) notes in her work on parental consent for youth participation in research that power dynamics between parents and children might make children feel that they cannot decline participation and that children must come first in the decision-making process. I do not know how relevant these power dynamics were to my research, partially because my interview results spun a tangled web of both players and their parents having different views of homosexuality, so I could not use this as a clear indicator of how consent was given.

My experience of not knowing who exactly had the last word on consent or why and why not led me to consider youth agency more broadly. Indeed, REBs consider individuals under the age of 18 to lack the autonomy to give informed consent (see TCPS, 2014, p. 7). While I took no issue with the age of consent, I became curious about youth participation in adult-organized activities. After all, the players participated in a sport organized by adults, the literature claimed that adults such as parents and coaches had a hand in shaping the players' personalities and attitudes (Anderson, 2010; Bannon & Parent, 2012; Overman, 2010; Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt, 2012), and I was an adult conducting research with them that required another adult to give the final word on whether or not players could participate in the study. There is a body of scholarship that discusses the ways in which youth athletes negotiate their own decisions and social worlds outside of adult constraints, which largely argues that youth are very much capable of making their own decisions and can be aware of the implications of those decisions (Dyck, 2012; Eitzen, 2012; Messner & Musto, 2014). This left me with two questions: first, how much did being in the presence of an adult affect the ways the players presented themselves around me? Put differently, did they treat me a certain way or act differently than they normally would because they interpreted me as an adult with certain expectations of their comportment?; and second, how much did the possible expectations of the adults involved in their lives shape the way they presented themselves? That is to say, to what extent do their interactions with adults actually shape their self-presentations? For example, we know from the literature that parents and coaches are responsible for the socialization of young ice hockey players, but to what extent exactly? And does it have any bearing on their attitudes towards homosexuality? These questions were practically impossible to answer, but they are important questions to ask in the context of youth

participating in both sports and research organized by adults.

Where the primary focus of my study was gender and sexuality and not youth-adult relations, I chose not to investigate this topic any further. Nonetheless, it remains quite relevant and would indeed add to conversations regarding how much adult supervision and guidance contributes to the socialization of youth through sport and the extent to which they feel capable of making their own decisions and speaking freely for themselves.

### **On Being a Woman: Conducting Research in a Male-Dominated Environment**

My identity as a woman played a significant role throughout the data collection process. My own gender rarely came to mind while out in the field conducting research, however its relevance became quite palpable as the study continued. Kristi Allain (2014) asserts that there are implications associated with being a woman working in and around male ice hockey players. In her experience interviewing them, Allain recounts that she was sometimes perceived by friends, colleagues, and research participants as having a sexual or romantic interest in the players. She also felt that she was subjected to a particular code of silence and was denied access to both participants and information on the basis of her being a woman and an outsider.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, a faction of scholars agree that gender and gender performance affect the research process (Jachyra, Atkinson & Gibson, 2014; Schacht, 1997) and that women face particular challenges when interviewing boys and men (Hearn, 2013; Pini, 2005; Poulton, 2012). Specific concerns for women interviewing men include developing rapport as an outsider, how to dress appropriately, and being subjected to a male-dominated environment. I will discuss my experiences with all of these.

The label of ‘outsider’ elicits a line that I have constantly toed in both my personal life and my life as a researcher where boys’ and men’s ice hockey is concerned. Although my status as a woman automatically made me an outsider in the context of this study, I do have prior experience that helped me develop rapport with the population and better understand their experiences as ice hockey players. I played competitive girls’ high school hockey (and played co-ed recreationally afterwards), I have been in long-term monogamous romantic relationships with

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<sup>19</sup> A solid mainstream media example of other challenges faced by women working in and around male-dominated sports is media personality Julie DiCaro’s (2015) Sports Illustrated article on women’s experiences, including her own, of being harassed on social media in response to their participation in discussions of men’s sports.

elite male ice hockey players in the past, I have maintained working relationships with key informants from other studies (MacDonald, 2010; MacDonald, 2012) and several of my male family members have played and coached hockey at various levels (one of them was the personal contact who obtained access to the coaches in this study for me). This means that I have first-hand knowledge of the sport and I have been afforded limited access to male ice hockey player culture on some level at different times in my life through my relationships with boys and men who have participated in the sport. I have been able to bring these experiences to my interactions with participants and I believe that this has helped build my rapport with them since I am able to function, albeit minimally, in their environment and speak to them with some prior knowledge of what their lives might be like.

My relationships with male ice hockey players and experience as a player have two important implications for the study. First, and most importantly, my access to male ice hockey culture has been completely monitored and determined by males in my life who participate in that culture and have acted as gatekeepers. We may not like to think of our friends and family as gatekeepers, however it is undeniable that my likelihood of accessing information has depended on how much they were willing to divulge to me and my access to research participants for this study was linked directly to a male family member vouching for my legitimacy as a woman who was capable of functioning in the male ice hockey player environment. This implies that women are still largely incapable of gaining access themselves and reinforces the literature that claims that gatekeepers in men's sport are highly selective, if not entirely preventative, when it comes to letting women in to their worlds (Allain, 2008; Poulton, 2012). Second, my knowledge of the sport and limited glimpses into male ice hockey culture mean that this study would have been conducted completely differently by a researcher who had no prior knowledge of how the sport works or what it means to be a male ice hockey player. For example, there is a chance that I took some aspects of the male ice hockey player experience for granted over the course of the research because I focused more on what I did know than what I did not know. I would argue that my prior knowledge actually expedited and enriched the research process because I was able to accomplish more in my interactions by being fluent and the players seemed to feel more comfortable once they knew I was familiar with their sport.

How to dress appropriately was a concern of mine prior to entering the field because I was torn between looking professional and looking athletic and comfortable, both of which are

styles I commonly brandish. I decided that I would be able to demonstrate my professionalism through my interactions, such as communicating my research expertise and being respectful and well-spoken, and that wearing athletic clothing might make me seem more familiar or approachable to coaches, managers, and participants since that was what they would likely also be wearing because the research mostly took place in hockey arenas. I also felt more physically comfortable in athletic clothing, which was the tipping point for my decision. I decided that I would present myself the way I would around anyone else because presenting myself differently than usual seemed deceptive and I had no idea how I would begin defining my intentions and accounting for them in the analysis. I opted for women's athletic clothing that I already owned, mostly yoga pants, hoodies, and running shoes. My hair styles (my hair reached my waist at the time) were anything from a messy bun to straight and down to curly and strategically coiffed, which reflects my usual hairstyles on a regular basis since I like to do different things with my hair on any given day. Lastly, I consistently wore neutral makeup with black eyeliner and mascara, which also reflects my usual make-up routine. It is safe to say that I appeared quite feminine and as though I had put time into my appearance on occasion, but I did not feel that I had done anything to overtly put myself on display and I did not want to enter the research environment under the immediate assumption that I would be perceived a certain way.

The way I dressed only came up once throughout the course of the research and the remark was tangential in nature. One of my key informants, in my very last conversation with him, was talking about how his teammates discussed girls and women and mentioned, amidst a long list of topics, that his teammates considered girls and women in Lululemon yoga pants attractive because the pants are form-fitting. As he said so, he pointed to my legs—clad in Lululemon yoga pants—which suggested that perhaps my pants had been discussed or were at least relevant. This led me to wonder if the yoga pants were a poor decision on my part as some of them were quite form-fitting and perhaps I had over-sexualized myself. In comparison, Allain (2014) chose loose-fitting clothes so as not to sexualize her body. I have no evidence that the yoga pants I wore directly affected how the players perceived me aside from this remark, although some interview participants and key informants did communicate to me that the players sexualized me in their conversations about me, but they did not provide the motivation for the conversations, nor their content.

Additionally, some took advantage of the comments section of their surveys, leaving notes such as ‘you’re cute’ and ‘I love you’, some even put phone numbers, but I have no evidence that these comments were prompted by my appearance. In fact, when I asked my two key informants about it, they responded that no matter who the woman was, no matter how old she was, how attractive she was, or what she wore, the players would sexualize her. This speaks volumes about the way they treat girls and women and suggests that there is not much a woman researcher can do in a similar situation to affect how participants perceive her. With this in view, I am left undecided regarding how I should have or could have dressed and how to advise others on the matter, although I remain comfortable with my decision to be myself because I believe that I established good rapport with my participants and collected compelling data, so I did something correctly.

The experience of being a woman in a male-dominated environment left me with two particular anecdotes. First, although I cannot pinpoint the exact reason, the players shared a lot of personal and emotional information they were willing to divulge to me. This included anything from rehashing a former romantic relationship, to special moments spent with grandparents, to fears associated with family members having cancer, to quite honestly expressing that they were apprehensive of homosexuality in an ice hockey context because it was new to them. Many of them were willing to share so much of their lives with me, something I had frankly not expected given that the interviews would mostly take place at their arenas and possibly not far from teammates. I expected that they would censor themselves quite a bit and perhaps only provide me with the bare minimum, but I often received more information than I had asked for, which enriched my data and also worked to oppose the idea that emotions are not welcome in hypermasculine environments. With that said, however, I was a woman in that environment, which may suggest that it is acceptable to show emotions to women only. Perhaps the players considered me nurturing in some way and that made them feel comfortable sharing with me—I have no way of knowing this for sure.

The second way that being a woman in a male-dominated environment had an effect on me was the fact that I felt motivated to suspend some of my values and expectations. This essentially meant that I chose to overlook certain words or jokes used in relation to me. For example, one coach made a joke about how I must not drive very well because I am a woman and one team manager introduced me to a team staff member as his future ex-wife. Another coach

said ‘don’t worry, no one thinks you’re a puck bunny’ when I clarified that it was okay for me to be around the dressing room during a game. Frankly, none of these comments truly bothered me; they did speak to how these men treat women and evidently several common stereotypes were at play here, but I never felt insulted and chose not to pursue them for four reasons. First, I felt that because I was in their space, it was not my place to dictate how they behave themselves, especially if I wanted an authentic research experience. It would have been counterproductive to study male ice hockey culture after having set out my own expectations of how they should or should not act around me. I wanted to know how the coaches and players normally act and if speaking to me this way was how they normally act, that was exactly the data I wanted to collect.

Third, all potentially sexist comments were made by coaches and managers with whom I had become close and built good rapport, so I believe they felt that they were in a position to make jokes around me without me having a negative reaction and they were right. These individuals had spent a lot of time with me asking about my research, providing me with their own opinions on homosexuality in ice hockey, discussing the players, and doing their best to help me accomplish my research goals in a timely and organized fashion. They were professional, respectful, and thoughtful, and in my view those qualities reflected the kind of people they were more than the borderline inappropriate comments. I hold that there is room for some humour in this process and that it is more acceptable around those with whom we have built rapport and are comfortable, so again, I chose to set my own values aside because I decided that the circumstances under which the comments were made did not merit a reaction on my part. In fact, I would argue that this situation attested to the fact that I had built rapport with a notoriously difficult group of respondents because they perceived me as non-threatening and, as a result, I was able to collect substantial data.

Fourth and last, the players were the ones I was there to investigate first and foremost and, with the exception of the comments on the survey, they did not infuse their interactions with me with any kind of sexism whatsoever. They were all courteous and polite towards me. I think that since they were my true study subjects and the coaches were secondary, I would have felt differently about sexist behaviour from them. This is not to say that I have dismissed their survey comments and conversations about me behind closed doors (which, I suspect, they did not think would get back to me). While I think those events are telling, I hold that the research would have turned out differently if they had explicitly directed sexism at me in our face-to-face interactions.

The only incident that could have been considered inappropriate was when a key informant told me in a text message that he wanted to be honest and inform me that he had participated in sexual discussions about me with his teammates and that he would not have felt right moving forward as an informant without telling me.<sup>20</sup> I opted to thank him for his honesty and move on to another subject. I will discuss this division of how women are treated in person compared to behind closed doors in the following section on what is often known as the Code of Silence.

### **On the Code of Silence: Formal and Informal Confidentiality and Anonymity**

A certain code of silence or selective process of information sharing characterizes tight-knit groups of boys and men such as those on athletic teams (Allain, 2014; Horn, 1997; Kimmel, 2008; Pollack, 1998). Allain (2014) experienced this in her own research with ice hockey players in Canada, noting that her interviewees offered her censored and diplomatic accounts of life in hockey culture, making sure to avoid stories of questionable conduct or disagreement. Indeed, Kimmel (2008) calls this the Code of Silence and psychologist William Pollack (1998) refers to it as the Mask of Masculinity: the unwritten rule that what happens between boys and men stays between them. Male ice hockey players have learned to compartmentalize the problematic behaviour associated with hypermasculinity in order to hide it from the public—dangerous hazing practices, homoerotic activity, sexism, not discussing emotions outside of winning or losing. They are taught to be silent. Allain (2014) claims that her interviewees problematized this in their different accounts of the same situation, such as an altercation between teammates that took place despite Allain having been told that the players all got along famously all the time.

While I had two similar experiences to Allain's in the sense that I received differing accounts of a situation, I do not feel that I experienced the Code of Silence in the same way because I rarely felt that I was subjected to the omission of information as much as subjected to a diplomatic shaping of it in order for the players to not sound too disrespectful or guilty of unpopular opinions or sexist behaviour. My first similar experience revolved around the team that had lower participation (five participants instead of 14-19 on the other five teams). The coach

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<sup>20</sup> I initially had concerns about using text messages to contact players because, having taught at the university level, I would have considered it inappropriate to exchange text messages with my students. I felt equally uneasy about being an adult female texting adolescent males as this can have connotations of inappropriate sexual relationships and criminal activity. In the end, the coaches and managers said this was the best way to contact some of the players and I obliged.

told me that my arrival had crept up on him time-wise and the players had short notice, however he was not sure why no one wanted to participate. Of the five players I interviewed on the team, one told me he had no idea why I received a low participation rate, another told me that the short notice was to blame, one told me that the subject makes people uncomfortable and therefore they did not want to discuss it, and one said, as mentioned previously, that a team ring-leader had determined that the study was stupid and the majority of the team then took on his perspective. These alternating accounts of one event demonstrate that although the players may have had different perspectives, there was likely certain refusal amongst some of them to share the nature of their discussions about the study with me.

Another solid example of diverse accounts of the same event came when I asked interviewees how they thought their teammates had reacted to the experience of having me around and completing the survey. Answers across all six teams ranged from ‘fine’ to varying accounts of anti-gay statements made in the dressing room, jokes about my project, inappropriate sexual comments about me and other girls and women, who in the dressing room would be least likely to accept a gay teammates, and their reactions to new information they had received from me in discussing why I had chosen to study hockey. There is a possibility that those who responded briefly with ‘fine’ or ‘I don’t think it was a big deal’ were unobservant and thus really had not noticed any of their teammates’ reactions, however the robust accounts I received from some players indicated to me that there was a chance some players had remained tight-lipped when asked to speak about their teammates and possibly say something that would tarnish their image or reputation.

While these examples of a code of silence resonated with the literature (Allain, 2014; Horn, 1997; Kimmel, 2008; Pollack, 1998), I experienced it on a structural level in such a way that my ethical protocol became a tool that teams could use to not take responsibility for homophobia, heterosexism, and other questionable conduct such as underage alcohol consumption and racism (I will elaborate on the latter two in Chapter Eight). To be clear, no teams were willing to participate without confidentiality and anonymity agreements and I was forced to eliminate aspects of my analysis (such as rural-urban comparisons) in order to insure that my study population was in no way identifiable. By offering teams confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process, my ability to ensure my claims about hypermasculinity was stifled because I could share an abundance of information, but could not

indicate the specifics of the population. By agreeing to participate in the study anonymously and confidentially, participants could assist in the process of investigating problematic expressions of gender and sexuality, but could not be blamed for them should they have been the perpetrators of these particular expressions. While I believe that these agreements are the first step in at least getting male athletes to speak freely about their experiences, I also recognize that anonymity and confidentiality agreements work to help male athletes maintain the code of silence by not making anyone specific accountable for publically renounceable attitudes and conduct. This is not to say that I recommend some sort of sacrificial lamb or that someone should be made an example of, but it can be easier to excuse homophobia and heterosexism when there is no name or face associated with it, hence the functionality of the code of silence. In this way, both the REB regulations and the people involved in hockey culture create and maintain the code of silence. This is a significant finding in and of itself, given that the literature appears to suggest that members of hockey culture alone are responsible for this state of affairs.

### **On Analyzing Social Media: Obstructions to Access for Research Purposes**

Aside from the ethical obstacle produced by the lack of formal regulations for social media research and the special exception of obtaining consent after the research had been conducted, the study encountered a road block when I discovered that Twitter may not have been the best place to access the players' self-presentations in terms of hypermasculinity and homosexuality. While Twitter has produced a fruitful extra avenue for studying athlete self-presentation (Lebel & Danylchuk, 2014; Sanderson, 2013), this typically assumes that a professional athlete's Twitter account will be publically available whereas lower level athletes might be more selective about sharing their tweets with the public because they do not have a fan base like professional athletes do and thus feel less need to allow others to view their tweets. Although only four players had locked accounts, I did not find much in the way of hypermasculine or homophobic self-presentations on Twitter. I will elaborate on this in Chapter Eight, however I will point out for now that when I asked one of my key informants if social media was a place where gender and sexuality are played out among his teammates, he responded that although they use Twitter most, I would likely find more about gender and sexuality on applications called Ask.fm and Tinder.

It had just so happened that my other key informant provided a link to his Ask.fm page on his Twitter account, so I was familiar with it. Founded in 2010, Ask.fm is a social network built on questions and answers meant to promote self-expression and understanding. Users can anonymously or non-anonymously ask one another questions and receive answers (Ask.fm, 2015). Upon scrolling through my participant's profile, I discovered several anonymous questions about his girlfriend, about his sexual history, about who and what he found attractive, and about other seemingly personal matters that had not been contextualized. I began to look around for other participants' Ask.fm accounts, however they were not easily retrievable and the original key informant who told me about it explained that it had been banned in some schools because the application was beginning to be used for cyber bullying purposes. He asserted that Tinder was where his peers would be most likely to express anything about gender and sexuality at the moment, so I left the Ask.fm idea behind. Indeed, two Junior hockey players in Ontario were suspended for fifteen games each in 2014 after screen shots from Tinder were leaked to the public showing that they had vulgar and abusive communications with women via the dating application (Nolan, 2014).

Tinder was launched in 2012 and is a location-based dating application that generates matches between people based on who is nearby and has them select potential mates through photos and a profile description. If two people choose each other as a match (the common terminology is to 'swipe right' on smart phone screens to agree to a match and 'swipe left' to decline), they can establish contact. As of 2015, the application was being used in almost 200 countries and had generated over nine billion matches (Tinder, n.d.). Upon hearing from my key informant that some of my participants were on Tinder, I immediately searched for the parameters of using the application and, as I suspected, one must be at least eighteen years of age to use it. This struck me because several of my participants were not yet eighteen. My informant said that players lie about their ages if they are not yet eighteen and use the application on road trips to other cities to meet girls and women who would not otherwise know their true ages (or to meet other underage users who have also lied about their ages). He said that their profiles would sometimes indicate their romantic interests and expectations.

The question, then, was should I set up a Tinder account myself and see who would appear as a potential match while I was at the rink? It quickly became apparent that this would be both immoral and unethical for three reasons: First, I would have been seeking out teenagers

knowingly in a romantic setting, which is grounds for legal sanction. Second, because Tinder accounts are linked to Facebook profiles, it would have been both time-consuming and deceptive to create a fraudulent Facebook account in order to conceal my identity to avoid linking myself with the research. Third and last, I am married and was uncomfortable in making myself appear available for extra-marital relationships, no matter how insincere and research-related the process may have been. It may have been difficult to maintain confidentiality and anonymity while having to possibly explain to mutual friends who discovered my Tinder profile why exactly I was using a dating application when I was in a decidedly monogamous relationship.

As a personal anecdote, I did obtain access to one player's Tinder profile when a family member who uses the application unknowingly showed me that one of my participants was one of her matches. Knowing that I studied hockey players, she commented on the fact that his photo implied that he was underage based on the jersey he wore and the inscriptions on the trophies he proudly stood behind (and the fact that he did not look to be older than 15 or 16 at best). His profile said that he was 28 whereas he had told me that he was 15. It was impossible to pursue his profile without agreeing to the match, but my family member opted not to swipe right as she understandably did not want to face any potential legal repercussions for the sake of my interest.

The Junior hockey case in Ontario mentioned earlier and the fact that my participants are using the dating application underage indicates that Tinder can tell us a lot about the gendered performances and sexual attitudes and preferences of hockey players. Being unable to access these sites of social interaction (unless someone shares their own private interactions) poses a challenge for research of this nature. Does using Tinder for social research invade users' privacy? Would it have been more acceptable for me to use Tinder for research if I was single? Or if I was the same age as the players? I am not sure that either would have been acceptable. There exists a growing plethora of scholarly accounts of the benefits of social media research, as well as guidelines for how to conduct it (Benjamin, 2012; Gaffney & Puschmann, 2014; Lebel & Danylchuk, 2014; Sanderson, 2013). Tinder is still relatively new and it can be difficult to keep up with ethical approaches to the constantly evolving world of digital communications (Benjamin, 2012). This is especially the case with Tinder because it uses possibly private Facebook information in order to facilitate private communication, therefore it toes the line between public and private from ethical and methodological standpoints, which could make it less appealing to researchers. With that said, these challenges should not stop researchers from

finding appropriate ways to study Tinder as it is evidently becoming an important part of contemporary social life, including hockey culture.

### **On the Paths Not Traveled: Suggestions for Alternate Research**

The suggestions for future research based on the study results will be presented in the dissertation's conclusion. At present, the final step before presenting the analysis is to discuss what the study does not do and that which other scholars might consider doing. Both time and resources required that a number of useful approaches to and sub-topics within gender and sexuality among Midget AAA ice hockey players be cast aside, however this does not mean that they are not important and should not be undertaken in the future. These include, but are not limited to, homoeroticism in boys' and men's ice hockey, experiences of sexual abuse within the sport, and theories of male athletic team dynamics and intersectionality.

Homoeroticism—in this case, seemingly homosexual activity between otherwise heterosexual male athletes—is by far the most important subject missing from this discussion of gender and sexuality in boys' and men's ice hockey and its omission could be considered one of the study's most substantial limitations. It was eliminated from the research design once it became clear that both the literature and my own curiosity had produced enough questions about homosexuality to support an entire dissertation and that the analysis had to be contained somehow. I chose to only study homosexuality and not the entire LGBTQ community for the same reason. In any case, homoeroticism is undoubtedly a critical component of homosocial bonding within the confines of hypermasculinity in locker rooms and its connection to homosexuality cannot be overlooked (Burstyn, 2000; Pronger, 1990; Pronger, 2012; Pryer, 2002). Put simply, there is a curious tension between the players' refusal of homosexuality and their use of nudity and sexual touching in the showers or during initiation rituals and goal celebrations. On the one hand, in Robidoux's (2001) ethnography of professional hockey, he notes that these rituals increase group unity and have very little to do with homosexual desires but rather to a very secure sense of identity and comfort among players. On the other hand, sexuality and sport researcher Brian Pronger (1990, 1999, 2000, 2012) argues that homoeroticism in sport constitutes a place where men fulfill their homosexual desires and, in these situations, hypermasculinity and homophobia become policing agents between masculinity and femininity that allow male

intimacy without the fear of losing one's place in the masculine hierarchy. These two approaches to homoeroticism in sport would have been well-placed to generate questions about whether or not the players see differences between engaging in seemingly sexual activity with one another versus having an openly gay teammate in the dressing room and how the team dynamics might change as a result. I touch briefly on this when I discuss the players' reaction to the idea of showering with a gay teammate, however this subject merits a whole other dissertation on its own and I do not feel that I could have done it justice as an aside to this study.

The relationship between homophobia and sexual abuse and assault in ice hockey culture is another subject I decided to jettison, but which also would have fit in to this dissertation in two ways. First, in terms of socialization and relationships with parents and coaches in authoritative positions over players, homophobia is closely tied to the language used to degrade and coerce athletes (Fraser, 2015), as well as fears of sexual abuse. Stories such as that of former NHL player Theoren Fleury, who was sexually abused by his male coach, suggest that players develop hypermasculine and homophobic tendencies to repress their memories of abuse and feelings of possibly being homosexual (Fleury & McLellan Day, 2009). I chose to leave such discussions out of the study because bringing up both homosexuality and sexual abuse would likely have increased the psychological and emotional risk associated with the study and I was most concerned with attitudes towards homosexuality, but the subject remains on the forefront of crucial topics requiring investigation in the context of gender and sexuality among male ice hockey players.

The second aspect of sexual abuse and assault linked to ice hockey that merits consistent scholarly attention within a gender and sexuality framework is the nature of sexual relations between male ice hockey players and other girls and women because young male ice hockey players have been characterized in the media as rampant perpetrators of sexual assault. The most recent example has been 26-year old NHL player Patrick Kane, who faced allegations of having raped a woman in 2015 and eventually had the case against him dropped following a long line of delayed proceedings over evidence having been tampered with, lawyers terminating their involvement in the case, and the purported victim being accused of the entire situation being a hoax. Kane faced no repercussions from the NHL (Schultz & Rios, 2015). A year prior, in 2014, the NHL did suspend player Slava Voynov during a domestic violence investigation, which resulted in him pleading no contest and serving 90 days in prison (Schultz & Rios, 2015). At the

Junior level, two former players in the United States pleaded guilty in 2015 to child pornography charges after one engaged in sexual intercourse with a 15-year old female while the other videotaped and the footage was then shared among peers (Kennedy, 2015). Meanwhile in Canada, a small group of Major Junior players avoided gross indecency charges in 2015 after receiving sexual advances from a young woman in a restaurant, which ended with her and the players being found in the restaurant's washroom engaged in some sort of sexual activity while one player stood guard outside (Hempstead, 2015). These and other similar events have led prominent media personalities such as *The Hockey News*' Ryan Kennedy to comment on the seriousness sex-related crimes in male ice-hockey culture. In a piece on the child pornography case, Kennedy wrote the following:

It's up to the players to recognize the weight of their actions and adjust their behavior accordingly. I've spoken to junior kids in the past about teammates who have gotten in trouble and there always seems to be an excuse for their buddies; it's never the player's fault – it's the girl. Is this a matter of foxhole camaraderie, of strong bonds between teens who believe they have 20 brothers in the dressing room with them? I'm sure that's a big part of it, but it helps no one. Lives are being potentially ruined by these incidents and if the perpetrators can't muster any respect for the victims, they should at least stop and think about the criminal implications for themselves, as an act of self-preservation. (Kennedy, 2015, para. 16)

Kennedy asks a meaningful question here regarding the team-first mentality and homogenization of male ice hockey players discussed in the literature, which possibly creates a blanket effect of hypermasculinity, namely in the form of homophobia and misogyny (Pappas, McKenry, & Catlett, 2004; Robidoux, 2001). Much like homoeroticism, this issue merits more attention than I was able to give it within the constraints of the study, however it indisputably requires scholarly attention as this issue continues to proliferate.

From a theoretical perspective, two useful approaches that could have been used in the analysis were an adaptation of American critical race theorist and legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) intersectional analysis and Messner's (2002) theory of athletic team dynamics. At its inception, intersectional theory constituted a feminist approach chiefly concerned with the complexity of lived experiences of Black women in the United States who embodied multiple identities and consequently faced a multitude of related forms of racism, sexism, and classism. Crenshaw (1991) argued that the legal system—and, to some extent,

feminist theory—could not address multiple aspects of identity. Intersectionality, therefore, challenges us to not take the following for granted: that gender and race and ethnicity are not individual traits unaffected by socioeconomic status, modes of embodiment, and other categories (Ferber, 1999; Omi and Winant, 1994; Harding, 1991). It suggests that inequality is multifaceted and cannot be understood apart from broader social discourses of race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other aspects of identity (Lutz, Herrera, Vivar, & Supik, 2011; Collins, 2003, 2000, 1999, 1998).

The application of intersectional analysis to masculinity studies would require a revision of the approach's most fundamental aspects because the theory may not apply to boys' and men's lives in the same way it has been applied to women; women's experiences of inequality are altogether different. A primary example is the fact that men typically do not face gender-based restriction to sport participation like women (Beaubier et. al, 2008; Hoeber, 2007). My proposed way of addressing athlete gender hierarchies and their intersection with sexuality and other identities from an intersectional analysis perspective is to draw on Messner's (2002) theory of male athletic team dynamics. Messner posits that male sport teams are structured according to various types of masculine identity with the traditionally brawny and tough leader-types at the core of the group and others, such as racial minorities, homosexuals, or anyone else not fitting the leader category on the peripheries of the core group. This theory lends itself well to intersectional analysis because it recognizes that male identity in sport is not homogenous and accounts for intersecting identifiers such as sexuality and race. It is also reminiscent of Connell's (1987) masculinity types, only it takes the types and applies them specifically to athletes, which adds a more relevant layer to the analysis. This intersectional approach could be applied to masculinity and ice hockey in order to better understand how the complexities of identity may contribute to the disparate narratives of being an athlete living according to various codes of masculine conduct within a sporting context. My study did not take race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other forms of sexual and gender orientation into account on deep levels, which would likely have strengthened the quality and clarity of the image of life among Midget AAA ice hockey players that I have tried to create. Empirical approaches to intersectional analysis are challenging because they require the time, resources, and expertise associated with studying several subjects at once and somehow identifying their interconnections (Choo & Feree, 2010; McCall, 2005), which is why I chose not to undertake a study of this nature for this particular

project. Ways of conducting this kind of research should be explored in order to gain a better and more complete understanding of a player's social life.

CHAPTER SIX  
**SURVEYING UNDERSTANDINGS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY,  
DEMONSTRATIONS OF HYPERMASCULINITY, AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
HOMOSEXUALITY IN ICE HOCKEY**

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My study population consisted of 95 players 6 coaches. This means that I had an 85% participation rate overall amongst players and 100% amongst the coaches. I also asked for and received 30 interview volunteers (five players from each team) from the same group of 95 participants. In order to better describe the participants, I collected demographic information that would create an image of who they are and that might also inform the findings later on. Any relevant information will be shared within the text or in Appendices. The players were all between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, 80% of them identified as being of North American descent (others of Asian, Caribbean, and European descent), and 90.5% of them lived at home with their parents while the rest lived with billet families or did not specify their living situations. I asked if they considered themselves to come from families that were highly involved in hockey and 83% responded that they did. Regarding education, I asked for their academic averages at the end of the last school year and asked what their favourite subjects were. The modal academic average amongst respondents (that which appeared the most) was the 80-89% range, with 39 of 95 respondents (one missing value) in that category. The modal favourite subject in school was gym class and other popular choices included math and the natural sciences. I asked what they would like to do after high school and the modal response was to attend university while other popular responses included continuing to play hockey or civil servant positions such as police officer, firefighter, or military personnel. Surveys and interviews were completed in French or English as per the participant's preference. Lastly, of the 95 participants, I was able to locate 76 with Twitter accounts through a general search of their names and a bit of trial and error with profile photos and profile descriptions. Of the 76, four accounts were locked and 16 were inactive during the month that the content analysis was conducted, leaving a total of 56 accounts to be examined. The survey analysis will be presented according to the order in which it was conducted: players first and then the coaches. It should be noted that none of the participants identified as anything other than straight, however I did not specifically ask so as not to place pressure on them and some did not divulge their sexual orientation.

## **Understandings of Gender and Sexuality**

The purpose of the player survey was to obtain a preliminary idea of how participants understood gender and sexuality, how they felt about homosexuality in ice hockey, and how they felt that they and their teammates did or did not exemplify traits associated with hegemonic masculinity and inclusive masculinity. It thus began by asking them how they define the words gender, sexuality, homophobia, and LGBTQ so that I would have an idea not only of whether or not they had definitions, but also how they might use the terms in their interactions with one another and with me. The questions were open-ended, leaving full opportunity for the players' interpretation. All definitions were compiled, interpreted according to the main subject of the definition, and categorized in SPSS. The analysis will begin by providing the PFLAG Glossary definition and then the players' definitions for each term.

### ***Gender...***

Gender was the first of four words the players were asked to define. According to PFLAG (2009), gender can be separated into gender identity and gender expression, both of which I considered reasonable definitions. Gender identity "refers to an individual's innermost sense of self as "male/masculine," "female/feminine," somewhere in between, or somewhere outside of these gender boundaries" (para. 5) while gender expression "refers to a person's appearance and behaviour. For example, some women feel undressed if they leave the house without make-up and enjoy wearing high heels" (para. 6). A total of 90 players answered the question with 34.7% stating that gender meant something to the extent of identifying as a man or woman (or boy/girl or masculine/feminine) and 55.8% characterizing it anatomically or biologically as male or female, which could otherwise be understood as sex. The remaining 4.2% wrote something that could not be clearly classified or did not resemble the PFLAG definitions, such as 'which gender you like.' Table 6.01 on page 78 demonstrates the distribution of definitions of gender.

**Table 6.01: Define Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Man/Woman	33	34.7	36.7	36.7
	Biological Sex	53	55.8	58.9	95.6
	Other	4	4.2	4.4	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

The most striking part of the responses is that none of the participants conceived of gender outside of the masculine/feminine, man/woman, or male/female binary, making it a very limited and rigid category in the players' minds. Moreover, over half of them viewed gender anatomically or biologically and not as a socially constructed aspect of identity and self-presentation like the PFLAG definition articulates. This may suggest that sex and gender are one in the same for some of them. The study did not ask the players to define sex because it was very much concerned with gender as a social construction, however the players' definitions still offer valuable insight on what the terms mean to them. From here on out, the PFLAG definitions will be used to discuss the analysis, where gender refers to a social construction of identity and sex refers to a biological attribute because these are the definitions used in the literature (Butler, 2004; Connell, 1987; Kessler & MacKenna, 1978), so I will continue on with them unless otherwise indicated.

### ***Sexuality...***

Sexuality was the second word the players were asked to define. PFLAG defines sexuality as "a person's ability to experience or express sexual feelings" (2009, para. 1). Upon having compiled the players' definitions, I decided to revisit the PFLAG glossary and consider the definitions of sexual orientation as well because this definition builds from the first and the players mostly offered some iteration of these two terms. According to PFLAG, then, sexual orientation "refers to one's attraction to another person emotionally, physically, affectionately, romantically, sexually, erotically and/or spiritually," likely in the form of homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality (2009, para. 2). A total of 89 players answered the question, typically falling within one of the following six categories: 17.9% defined sexuality as an

attraction to a certain gender, 25.3% defined it as an attraction to a certain sex, 3.2% defined it as wanting to be in a romantic relationship with a certain gender, 2.1% defined it as wanting to be in a romantic relationship with a certain sex, and 16.8% defined it the same way that PFLAG defined sexual orientation. The remaining 28.4% defined sexuality as something completely different, such as ‘male or female,’ which perhaps indicates a conflation or confusion of sex and sexuality. Based on the players’ definitions of gender, it may not be useful to maintain the definitions of sexuality according to gender and sex. Another way to look at their definitions of sexuality might be to combine the groups that viewed the term as a form of attraction (i.e. adding together the 17.9% gender attraction, 25.3% sex attraction, and 16.8% sexual orientation) and compare them with the groups that referred to sexuality as specifically desiring a relationship (3.2% gender and 2.1% sex). Table 6.02 below demonstrates the distribution of definitions of sexuality.

**Table 6.02: Define Sexuality**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Gender Attraction	17	17.9	19.1	19.1
	Sex Attraction	24	25.3	27.0	46.1
	Gender Relationship	3	3.2	3.4	49.4
	Sex Relationship	2	2.1	2.2	51.7
	Sexual Orientation	16	16.8	18.0	69.7
	Other	27	28.4	30.3	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

From this, it can be said that 60% of respondents conceive of sexuality as something similar to PFLAG’s definition, which involves attraction, whereas 5.3% interpreted it as necessarily involving a relationship. None of the respondents contextualized what exactly was meant by the word relationship, but one could assume that it infers some sort of romantic or ongoing connection between two people, which extends beyond an individual’s preference or attraction. This struck me as a traditional or conservative interpretation of sexuality, which might imply that sexuality is reserved for monogamy, however the players did not elaborate sufficiently on what constitutes a relationship for this claim to have an empirical basis.

### ***Homophobia...***

The third word on the survey was homophobia. Its definition, according to PFLAG, is “negative attitudes, negative feelings or aversions towards LGBTTT2IQQ persons and those perceived to be of these sexual orientations or gender identities” (2009, para. 17). Because the literature included the fear of being, or being perceived as, gay as part of the definition of homophobia (Kimmel, 1994), I chose to include it in my assessment of how the players defined the term as well. Of the 91 players who answered this question, most of their answers fit into the following four categories: 31.6% defined homophobia as a hate or dislike of gay people, 27.4% defined it as a fear of gay people, 1.1% defined it as a fear of being gay, 18.9% defined it as a disagreement with or intolerance of homosexuality. While these four categories do indicate some sort of negative attitude towards homosexuality, a fifth category, comprised of 7.4% of participants, defined the word as sexual orientation, particularly being gay. This translates into seven participants of the 91 who thought homophobia meant homosexuality. It is unclear if they misread the word or misunderstood the question or if they did indeed think this was the proper definition of homophobia. One final category, made up of 9.5% of the population, answered that they did not know the definition or wrote down something entirely different, such as ‘homophobia means you’re scared of boys or girls.’ Table 6.03 below demonstrates the distribution of definitions of homophobia.

***Table 6.03: Define Homophobia***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dislike/Hatred	30	31.6	33.0	33.0
	Fear of	26	27.4	28.6	61.5
	Fear of being	1	1.1	1.1	62.6
	Intolerance/Disagree	18	18.9	19.8	82.4
	Sexual Orientation	7	7.4	7.7	90.1
	Other	9	9.5	9.9	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Note: a value of 99 represents a question left blank or unanswered

What can be taken from this is that the majority of respondents (79%) defined homophobia as some sort of negative attitude towards homosexuality, much like PFLAG. This

means two things. Firstly, the population appears to be quite aware of what homophobia is, which could suggest that they were aware that it was a contemporary social issue. Secondly, the population continued to conceive of sexuality in narrow terms because they only defined homophobia as negative attitudes towards homosexuality and not the LGBTQ community. Granted, ‘homo’ does infer homosexuality, however it has become more and more common to use ‘homophobia’ to designate anti-LGBTQ attitudes in general, as PFLAG has indicated. Taken with the limited and binary definitions of the last two words, it is possible that homophobia had been interpreted as limited to homosexuality, not because of the word stem ‘homo’, but because the players assume that an individual is either gay or straight.

***LGBTQ...***

The fourth and last term that the players were asked to define in the first section of the survey was LGBTQ. According to PFLAG, this is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or transsexual, and queer and/or questioning. A total of 93 players answered this question. On the one hand, 37 of them (38.9%) were able to identify all of the words. On the other hand, almost the same amount, (35 participants or 36.8%) either got no correct words or wrote something to the effect of ‘I don’t know.’ The remaining 22.1% were divided into 16 participants who got some of the words (between one and four of the five) and 5 participants who answered something completely different such as this attempt at humour: ‘Liam goes back to Quebec.’ Another respondent wrote ‘lesbians give birth to the queen,’ although this response was categorized among the 16 participants who articulated some of the terminology since the participant did indeed write down the word lesbian. Table 6.04 below presents the frequency distribution of players’ responses regarding the meaning of the acronym LGBTQ

***Table 6.04: What does LGBTQ stand for?***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Words	35	36.8	37.6	37.6
	Some Words	16	16.8	17.2	54.8
	All Words	37	38.9	39.8	94.6
	Other	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

The fact that just over a third of respondents could not identify any terms of the acronym LGBTQ and just over a third could identify every word in it demonstrated a sizeable divide in the level of understanding (and perhaps education) amongst the players, which could be seen as both surprising and unsurprising. At first, I was surprised because a considerable number of respondents could not define homophobia and the literature made this generation out to be much more aware and open to non-heteronormativity (Anderson, 2011). After some consideration, however, I continued to thread the idea of binaries through the analysis and realized that the 'BTQ' portion of the acronym lies outside of these binaries; if we are to accept that the players view gender and sexuality this way, it would make sense that they were unable to indicate all of the words, although the fact that they were also not able to identify the L or G suggests that they were not familiar with the acronym at all.

To summarize, the first section of the survey was meant to establish the players' understanding of gender, sexuality, homophobia, and LGBTQ in order to answer the part of the research question that asked 'how do male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada understand gender and sexuality?' The responses to the questions established that over the half of the players view sex and gender as the same thing (anatomically), whereas just over a third of them associate gender with the feelings or self-presentations associated with gender. Sexuality is also understood among them more as sexual orientation than the ability to experience or express sexual feelings. Many of them communicated that homophobia constitutes negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Lastly, responses to the LGBTQ questions were essentially divided in thirds, with approximately one third knowing the full acronym, another third not knowing it at all, and the remainder either identifying part of it or writing something completely irrelevant. Taken together, this summary of responses provided two useful revelations for the remainder of the analysis. First, although the study is concerned with homosexuality, the way that the players sometimes conceived of these concepts in binary terms might suggest that they have a narrow and limited view of gender and sexuality outside of man/woman and gay/straight. This could have meant that they would be well-positioned to discuss masculinity and homosexuality, but perhaps not much else. Second, the divided levels of knowledge of the meaning of the acronym LGBTQ suggests that some players are indeed aware of non-binary conceptions of gender, however this may be the extent of their knowledge on the subject. This was investigated further

in the interviews when I asked the players how much they thought they knew about the subject before participating in the study and will be re-visited in that portion of the analysis.

### **Hegemonic Masculinity, Acceptable Manhood, and Inclusive Masculinity**

The second part of the survey asked players to interpret character traits exhibited by their teammates, namely their best friend on the team and their team in general. Using their responses, indexes were created in conjunction with the theory and literature to determine the extent to which hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987), Goffman's indicators of character (1956) and the socially acceptable man (1963), and Anderson's (2009, 2011) theory of inclusive masculinity were reliable ways of assessing the study population (put differently, to see if the population fit any of the three descriptions). The traits were assigned to each of the three theories and the players' responses on the Lickert scale from 1-5, where 1 indicated no demonstration of a trait and 5 indicated a full demonstration of it, were input into SPSS and indexes were created along with a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency used to determine how closely related a set of items are as a group on a scale (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Acceptable values for Alpha range from 0.70 to 0.95. A low Alpha value could be a result of too few items in a group or poor inter-relatedness between items. In the case of poor inter-relatedness, items can be added or removed from groups in order to re-test relatedness. This can be done using the Item-Total Statistics of the Cronbach's Alpha test, the last column of which indicate whether or not the inter-relatedness increases or decreases if an item is removed from the list (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The raw data of the responses in which players selected a 4 or 5 on the Lickert scale were counted as this end of the scale constituted a positive demonstration of a characteristic or trait. The frequencies will display a count of 1-5, however, for the purposes of the indexes, the variables were recoded from 1-5 to 1-3 in order to create more a more decisive and manageable data set (i.e. 1-2 was converted to 'little to no demonstration', 3 remained as 'neutral', and 4-5 was converted to 'some to full demonstration').

Next, the indexes were tested for correlation between compared answers (either best friend on team to most teammates or self to most teammates) in order to take the analysis one step beyond self-reporting and to determine if there were any patterns in the comparative responses. Correlation was assessed using Pearson's  $r$ , which illustrates both the strength and

direction of relationships (Healey, 2002). The relationship between items is considered strong if the value of Pearson's  $r$  is close to 1.0, meaning that changes in one variable are correlated to changes in the other. A weak relationship, meaning that changes in one variable do not correlate with changes in the other variable, is indicated by a value close to 0. The direction of the relationship will then either be positive or negative, where variables increase together in positive relationships or decrease and decrease simultaneously in a negative relationship. The statistical significance of the correlation is labeled as Sig. (2-tailed). If this value is less than 0.5, it means that the relationship is weak. Conversely, if the value is greater than 0.5, the relationship is both strong and positive (Healey, 2002).

### ***Hegemonic Masculinity...***

Hegemonic masculinity was depicted by twelve traits on the survey, which were then grouped as an index. Those directly related to the theory included aggressive, competitive, heterosexual, leader, masculine, mentally strong, popular, risk-taking. Based on the literature, the traits arrogant, ignorant, inconsiderate, and obnoxious were added to reflect the societal perception of young elite male ice hockey players. When asked to rate the extent to which their best friend on the team demonstrated these characteristics, 70.5% of respondents indicated that their best friend demonstrates between five and eight of the twelve traits. This left 7.4% of respondents indicating that their best friend demonstrated nine or more traits of hegemonic masculinity while 22.2% said their best friend demonstrated four or fewer traits of hegemonic masculinity. For perspective, only one individual of 95 respondents indicated that his best friend on the team demonstrated little to no hegemonically masculine traits and, conversely, no one indicated that his best friend demonstrated all of the traits associated with hegemonic masculinity. Table 6.05 on page 84 demonstrates the distribution of responses (the columns on the far left represent the number of statements with which players agreed).

**Table 6.05: Trait Frequency Distribution, Index of Hegemonic Masculinity for Best Friend on Team**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
1	2	2.1	2.1	3.2
2	2	2.1	2.1	5.3
3	7	7.4	7.4	12.6
4	9	9.5	9.5	22.1
5	14	14.7	14.7	36.8
6	15	15.8	15.8	52.6
7	22	23.2	23.2	75.8
8	16	16.8	16.8	92.6
9	4	4.2	4.2	96.8
10	2	2.1	2.1	98.9
11	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

The value of Cronbach’s Alpha for hegemonic masculinity and best friend on the team was 0.530 (see Table 6.06 below), which indicates a lack of items in the index or a poor inter-relatedness. In order to investigate further, the Item-Total Statistics for the index (see Table 6.07 on page 85) were examined and revealed that the removal of heterosexual would increase the inter-relatedness of the traits within the index, although still not enough to make the index perfectly reliable (the column on the far right of the table indicates how Cronbach’s Alpha would be affected should the item be removed from the index).

**Table 6.06: Reliability Statistics, Index of Hegemonic Masculinity for Best Friend on Team**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.530	.564	12

**Table 6.07: Item-Total Statistics, Index of Hegemonic Masculinity for Best Friend on Team**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Aggressive	37.59	23.942	.294	.284	.484
Arrogant	37.95	24.630	.219	.448	.506
Competitive	35.98	24.379	.488	.458	.454
Heterosexual/Straight	36.13	27.123	.013	.227	.568
Ignorant	38.20	26.466	.126	.472	.529
Inconsiderate	38.33	26.653	.136	.428	.525
Leader	36.89	26.456	.126	.466	.529
Masculine/Manly	36.53	23.797	.428	.398	.455
Mentally Strong	36.74	26.044	.217	.336	.507
Obnoxious	38.01	27.126	.070	.379	.542
Popular	36.33	25.868	.243	.457	.501
Risk-Taking	36.85	24.965	.337	.321	.480

Indeed, the raw frequency distributions for each trait demonstrated that players only indicated that their best friend and teammates (over 65%) demonstrated three of the eight traits of hegemonic masculinity (competitive, heterosexual, and popular), which suggests that this theory does not best describe the population in the eyes of the respondents. See Appendix A4 for the raw frequency distributions of each trait.

In order to obtain added perspective, calculations were completed to see how respondents perceived their team as a whole compared to their best friend (see Table 6.08 on page 86). The frequency of responses was more evenly distributed for this index, with 65.3% of respondents indicating that most of their teammates demonstrate between four and seven of the twelve traits of hegemonic masculinity, which is lower than the percentage for best friend. This implies at first that players generally view their best friend on the team as more hegemonically masculine than the rest of their teammates, however the Pearson's  $r$  test for correlation will determine this. The remaining percentages constituted 20% of respondents who indicated that their teammates in general demonstrate three traits of hegemonic masculinity or fewer and 14.8% who believed that their teammates as a group demonstrate between eight and twelve of the traits. Notably, four respondents indicated that their team demonstrates no traits of hegemonic masculinity and no respondents felt that their teammates in general demonstrated any more than ten of the twelve traits.

**Table 6.08: Trait Frequency Distribution, Index of Hegemonic Masculinity for Most Teammates**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
	2	6	6.3	6.3	10.5
	3	9	9.5	9.5	20.0
	4	12	12.6	12.6	32.6
	5	15	15.8	15.8	48.4
	6	13	13.7	13.7	62.1
	7	22	23.2	23.2	85.3
	8	9	9.5	9.5	94.7
	9	4	4.2	4.2	98.9
	10	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Similar to the reliability statistics for the best friend on the team, the value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.576 (see Table 6.09 below), indicating either a lack of items in the group or a poor inter-relatedness. Again, the Item-Total Statistics calculation demonstrated that the removal of heterosexual would have increased the inter-relatedness of the index (see Table 6.10 on page 87). Heterosexuality thus plays a key role here somehow because the calculations show that it is not a good measure of hegemonic masculinity when combined with the other traits, yet the frequency distributions show that the players ranked their best friend on the team and teammates quite highly in their demonstration of it. Specifically, 82.1% of respondents reported that their best friend on the team fit the description of heterosexual and 77.9% reported that their teammates in general fit it.

**Table 6.09: Reliability Statistics, Index of Hegemonic Masculinity for Most Teammates**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.576	.591	12

**Table 6.10: Item-Total Statistics, Index of Hegemonic Masculinity for Most Teammates**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Aggressive	37.22	20.912	.375	.327	.522
Arrogant	37.53	22.691	.163	.436	.573
Competitive	35.80	23.041	.248	.183	.554
Heterosexual/Straight	35.88	24.218	-.009	.140	.620
Ignorant	37.69	23.998	.073	.269	.588
Inconsiderate	37.91	22.498	.210	.385	.561
Leader	36.68	22.606	.221	.300	.558
Masculine/Manly	36.32	21.291	.381	.352	.523
Mentally Strong	36.68	21.044	.386	.504	.521
Obnoxious	37.82	23.434	.146	.297	.573
Popular	36.28	20.672	.441	.383	.509
Risk-Taking	36.73	22.008	.336	.439	.535

Why, then, did heterosexuality not fit in the index if Connell (1987) argues that it is the most important component of hegemonic masculinity and the players reported that they mostly all perceive one another as quite straight? Of course, heterosexuality is more of an aspect of identity than loyalty, aggression, or friendliness, therefore it would not be unreasonable to say that it does not fit in with the other traits, so this will continue to be monitored throughout the remainder of the analysis.

Lastly, correlation between both best friend and teammates was tested in order to determine if there was indeed a relationship between the two. The Pearson's  $r$  test revealed a value of 0.441 (see Table 6.11 on page 88), which is considered a weak, but positive relationship. Ultimately, this indicates that respondents gave somewhat similar answers when comparing their best friend on the team and their teammates, which may have supported the idea that players considered their best friend on the team more hegemonically masculine than their other teammates, however this was not explored further as the calculations in SPSS determined that the index was not statistically reliable and the role of heterosexuality in the index was considered most important.

**Table 6.11: Correlation, Indexes of Hegemonic Masculinity for Best Friend on Team and Most Teammates**

		Hegemonic Masculinity Index Best Friend	Hegemonic Masculinity Index Teammates
Hegemonic Masculinity Index Best Friend	Pearson Correlation	1	.441**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	95	95
Hegemonic Masculinity Index Teammates	Pearson Correlation	.441**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	95	95

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

***Acceptable Manhood...***

Goffman’s indicators of character (1956) and the socially acceptable man (1963) were combined to form the following list of traits: ambitious, confident, dependable, heterosexual, high-achieving, honest, intelligent, loyal, mature, masculine, reliable, responsible, skilful, and trustworthy. Unlike the index for hegemonic masculinity, the distribution of responses for a player’s best friend on the team was not centralized in one large cluster (see table 6.12 on page 89). The majority of respondents were located anywhere between eight and all fourteen of Goffman’s traits with equal amounts of respondents (10.5% in four groups, totalling 42%) indicating that their best friend on the team demonstrates eight, nine, thirteen, and fourteen of the traits respectively. The largest group (14.7% of respondents) indicated that their best friend on the team demonstrates eleven of the fourteen traits. One respondent indicated that his best friend on the team demonstrates none of the traits from the Goffman index. Taken together, these statements suggest that the majority of respondents felt that their best friend on the team did indeed embody Goffman’s indicators of character and ideal of a socially acceptable man, although to differing extents.

The value of Cronbach’s Alpha for the Goffman index and best friend on the team was 0.802 (see Table 6.13 on page 89), which indicates a strong inter-relatedness of items in the scale and thus a reliable index. In order to determine what might have made the value even higher, an examination of the Item-Total Statistics (see Table 6.14 on page 90) revealed that the removal of

heterosexual would increase the reliability of the index more than any other trait. Here, for a second time, heterosexuality is considered a poor measure of masculinity despite the population scoring highly in it and despite the theorist asserting that it is an important aspect of the overarching description of ideal masculinity.

**Table 6.12: Trait Frequency Distribution, Index of Acceptable Manhood for Best Friend on Team**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	2	3	3.2	3.2	4.2
	3	4	4.2	4.2	8.4
	4	3	3.2	3.2	11.6
	5	2	2.1	2.1	13.7
	6	5	5.3	5.3	18.9
	7	7	7.4	7.4	26.3
	8	10	10.5	10.5	36.8
	9	10	10.5	10.5	47.4
	10	9	9.5	9.5	56.8
	11	14	14.7	14.7	71.6
	12	7	7.4	7.4	78.9
	13	10	10.5	10.5	89.5
	14	10	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

**Table 6.13: Reliability Statistics, Index of Acceptable Manhood for Best Friend on Team**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.802	.822	14

**Table 6.14: Item-Total Statistics, Index of Acceptable Manhood for Best Friend on Team**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Ambitious	51.13	48.856	.091	.275	.817
Confident	50.41	45.424	.440	.318	.789
Dependable	50.80	43.266	.528	.468	.781
Heterosexual/Straight	50.24	46.518	.144	.202	.825
High-Achieving	50.52	43.791	.584	.434	.778
Honest	50.81	44.207	.553	.504	.780
Intelligent	50.92	44.507	.496	.407	.784
Loyal	50.53	42.919	.590	.477	.776
Masculine/Manly	50.57	45.223	.393	.285	.792
Mature	50.92	45.071	.438	.338	.788
Reliable	50.56	43.737	.648	.663	.775
Responsible	50.80	45.471	.496	.430	.786
Skillful	50.71	44.312	.432	.336	.789
Trustworthy	50.49	45.715	.401	.307	.791

Calculations for teammates in general were done next to see how respondents perceived their team as a whole compared to their best friend (see Table 6.15 below). The distribution was more centralized than that for best friends; although the highest concentration of participants (22.1%) indicated that their teammates demonstrated eight or nine of Goffman's fourteen traits, the rest of the numbers were quite evenly distributed with anything from 2.1-8.4% of respondents feeling that their teammates demonstrated anywhere from zero to fourteen traits. Three respondents felt that their teammates as a general group met all fourteen traits.

**Table 6.15: Trait Frequency Distribution, Index of Acceptable Manhood for Most Teammates**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
1	6	6.3	6.3	8.4
2	2	2.1	2.1	10.5
3	9	9.5	9.5	20.0
4	8	8.4	8.4	28.4
5	2	2.1	2.1	30.5
6	8	8.4	8.4	38.9
7	5	5.3	5.3	44.2
8	11	11.6	11.6	55.8
9	10	10.5	10.5	66.3
10	8	8.4	8.4	74.7
11	7	7.4	7.4	82.1
12	7	7.4	7.4	89.5
13	7	7.4	7.4	96.8
14	3	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

When held up against the distribution for best friends, it appears that respondents tended to view their best friend as a more socially acceptable man than the rest of their teammates. The test for correlation will offer added insight into this claim. Much like the best friend index, the teammates index revealed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.827 (see Table 6.16 below), which confirms a high validity of the index. Also like the best friend index, the trait whose removal would have increased the validity of the scale the most was heterosexual, which illustrates a clear pattern within the Goffman indexes—they are both reliable indicators of Goffman's descriptions of character and the socially acceptable man and the reliability of both would increase if heterosexual were to be removed (see Table 6.17 below for Item-Correlation Statistics for most teammates). The Pearson's  $r$  value for the correlation of two indexes was 0.552 (see Table 6.18 on page 92), which represents a moderately strong and positive relationship between them. This means that, again, the respondents gave somewhat similar answers when comparing their best friend on the team with their teammates as a general group.

**Table 6.16: Reliability Statistics, Index of Acceptable Manhood for Most Teammates**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.827	.833	14

**Table 6.17: Item-Total Statistics, Index of Acceptable Manhood for Best Friend on Team**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Ambitious	47.50	57.880	.095	.241	.838
Confident	47.09	52.858	.519	.346	.813
Dependable	47.38	48.692	.664	.509	.801
Heterosexual/Straight	46.64	55.165	.169	.148	.842
High-Achieving	47.25	50.403	.587	.427	.807
Honest	47.46	50.785	.572	.434	.808
Intelligent	47.80	52.241	.506	.364	.813
Loyal	47.14	51.859	.533	.400	.812
Masculine/Manly	46.97	53.413	.412	.300	.819
Mature	47.75	52.377	.483	.432	.815
Reliable	47.17	51.744	.592	.466	.809
Responsible	47.57	52.196	.434	.433	.818
Skillful	47.11	52.122	.512	.349	.813
Trustworthy	47.47	51.479	.446	.368	.818

**Table 6.18: Correlation of Indexes of Acceptable Manhood for Best Friend on Team and Most Teammates**

		Acceptable Manhood Index Best Friend	Acceptable Manhood Index Teammates
Acceptable Manhood Index Best Friend	Pearson Correlation	1	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	95	95
Acceptable Manhood Index Teammates	Pearson Correlation	.552**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	95	95

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to paint a clearer image of how Goffman’s work was more applicable than hegemonic masculinity, the raw frequency data was examined in order to determine which traits associated with each theory that the players considered their best friend on the team and teammates in general to demonstrate. Among the higher frequencies (65% or more) were competitive, confident, fair, friendly, funny, heterosexual, high-achieving, masculine, loyal, popular, reliable, responsible, skillful, talented, and trustworthy, a list which very much resembles Goffman’s indicators of character and the socially acceptable man (see Appendix A3 for full frequency distributions within each theoretical framework of masculinity). It was also noted that players rated their best friend on the team as being more intelligent, more of a leader, more mature, more open-minded, and more responsible than the rest of their teams, however, as the Pearson’s r test for correlation demonstrated, the differences were not significant enough to claim that there was an immense difference in the response patterns.

***Inclusive Masculinity...***

The final theory to be tested in the second section of the survey was Anderson’s (2009, 2011) inclusive masculinity. Given the theory’s attempt at including a range of gender identities and sexual orientations, all traits in the survey were used with the exception of emotional traits (such as happy, sad, and angry) because they were not deemed to correspond with identity the same way as the other traits. Thus, indexes were created for inclusive masculinity that included the traits associated with hegemonic masculinity, Goffman’s indicators of character and the socially acceptable man, and a range of other traits, for a total of 40. This is a large number of traits to analyze together, however, Anderson’s (2009, 2011) argument is that society is

becoming more open to alternative representations of masculinity, which could mean almost anything because although he posits that society is moving away from hegemonic masculinity as an ideal, this does not mean that inclusive masculinity necessarily excludes traits associated with hegemonic masculinity—it simply does not reject traits in the same way hegemonic masculinity does. The frequency distribution (see Table 6.19 below) revealed that the biggest proportion of respondents (34.7%) indicated that their best friend on the team demonstrated between 21 and 23 of the 40 traits associated with inclusive masculinity; slightly more than half. No one stated that their best friend met any more than 30 of the 40 traits and this is reasonable given that some of them could have been interpreted as mutually exclusive (such as heterosexual and homosexual or feminine and masculine).

**Table 6.19: Trait Frequency Distribution, Index of Inclusive Masculinity for Best Friend on the Team**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
6	1	1.1	1.1	2.1
8	1	1.1	1.1	3.2
9	6	6.3	6.3	9.5
11	1	1.1	1.1	10.5
13	4	4.2	4.2	14.7
14	5	5.3	5.3	20.0
15	2	2.1	2.1	22.1
16	2	2.1	2.1	24.2
17	3	3.2	3.2	27.4
18	3	3.2	3.2	30.5
19	5	5.3	5.3	35.8
20	4	4.2	4.2	40.0
21	11	11.6	11.6	51.6
22	10	10.5	10.5	62.1
23	12	12.6	12.6	74.7
24	7	7.4	7.4	82.1
25	3	3.2	3.2	85.3
26	3	3.2	3.2	88.4
27	3	3.2	3.2	91.6
28	2	2.1	2.1	93.7
29	3	3.2	3.2	96.8
30	3	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

The value of Cronbach’s Alpha for inclusive masculinity and best friend was .730 (see Table 6.20 below), which confirms that the index is reliable, however the removal of several

factors would have increased its reliability, making it difficult to comment on exactly how reliable the scale is and for which reasons. I will comment on some of them below.

**Table 6.20: Reliability Statistics, Index of Inclusive Masculinity for Best Friend on Team**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.730	.749	40

I noticed that all traits related to gender and sexuality except two would have increased the validity of the scale: bisexual, feminine, heterosexual, and homosexual (see Table 6.21 on page 95 for Item-Total Statistics). The two traits related to gender and sexuality that would not have increased the reliability of the scale were transgender and masculine.

I received several questions following the survey about what transgender meant and also overheard some humour between friends about something to the effect of 'I gave you a big ol' 5 for transgender!' or 'I'd say the whole team is kinda transgender some days!' I was certainly never made aware of any transgender or transsexual participants (and they all appeared to me to embody typical masculine dress and physical features), so I am inclined to take the value of transgender with a grain of salt. This leaves masculine as the only aspect of gender and sexuality that is crucial to an index of inclusive masculinity.

**Table 6.21: Item-Total Statistics, Inclusive Masculinity for Best Friend on Team**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Affectionate	129.31	138.839	.244	.	.724
Aggressive	129.44	139.430	.223	.	.725
Ambitious	128.94	139.570	.256	.	.723
Arrogant	129.87	142.180	.112	.	.732
Attentive	129.00	144.557	.078	.	.732
Bisexual	131.08	150.928	-.189	.	.745
Calm	129.05	148.145	-.077	.	.741
Careless	129.65	142.692	.131	.	.730
Childish	129.52	143.598	.069	.	.735
Compassionate	129.39	137.454	.401	.	.716
Competitive	127.82	137.493	.486	.	.714
Confident	128.21	133.545	.615	.	.707
Dependable	128.56	138.611	.311	.	.720
Fair	128.53	141.925	.199	.	.726
Feminine/Girly	130.79	148.004	-.070	.	.738
Friendly	128.18	137.230	.471	.	.714
Funny	128.10	139.105	.335	.	.720
Heterosexual/Straight	127.94	145.274	.006	.	.739
High-Achieving	128.29	137.652	.422	.	.716
Homosexual/Gay	131.27	148.563	-.149	.	.734
Honest	128.53	137.892	.411	.	.716
Ignorant	130.16	141.711	.185	.	.727
Inconsiderate	130.19	145.208	.032	.	.735
Intelligent	128.69	134.773	.513	.	.710
Lazy	129.71	153.095	-.248	.	.751
Leader	128.68	135.861	.387	.	.715
Loyal	128.24	138.744	.367	.	.718
Masculine/Manly	128.37	136.139	.400	.	.715
Mature	128.74	138.916	.321	.	.720
Mentally Strong	128.63	133.680	.531	.	.709
Mentally Weak	130.24	147.104	-.040	.	.739
Obnoxious	129.90	144.318	.057	.	.734
Open-Minded	128.55	139.268	.325	.	.720
Popular	128.06	140.947	.290	.	.722
Reliable	128.34	139.605	.347	.	.720
Risk-Taking	128.71	135.619	.463	.	.713
Sensitive	129.89	147.446	-.051	.	.739
Serious	128.95	140.670	.231	.	.724
Skillful	128.55	135.989	.396	.	.715
Talented	128.40	137.523	.331	.	.719

I returned to the players' definitions of gender in order to determine what masculinity might mean to them. With the numbers split so closely between being biologically male or female (34.7%) and presenting one's self as masculine or feminine (55.8%), there was not enough substantial evidence that, for the players, to be masculine did not strictly correspond to being biologically male. I revisit this issue later in the chapter when I present the analysis of embodiments of hypermasculinity among the study population. For the moment, it will suffice to note that various sexual orientations—and, quite crucially, femininity—were not reliable indicators of inclusive masculinity, which Anderson states are precisely the components he seeks

to include. Indeed, where hegemonic masculinity rejects femininity, inclusive masculinity should have been understood to make room for it, therefore this complicates Anderson's theory.

The frequency distribution of the index for teammates in general (see Table 6.22 below) had no particularly noticeable clusters of responses and as with the assessment of their best friend, no participants indicated that their team as a whole demonstrated any more than 30 of the 40 traits.

**Table 6.22: Inter-Item Statistics, Index of Inclusive Masculinity for Most Teammates**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Affectionate	133.48	188.289	.201	.	.815
Aggressive	133.52	185.342	.330	.	.810
Ambitious	133.16	192.449	.122	.	.816
Arrogant	133.79	197.851	-.101	.	.824
Attentive	133.50	185.588	.387	.	.809
Bisexual	135.21	200.974	-.258	.	.824
Calm	133.62	195.643	-.035	.	.824
Careless	133.72	197.256	-.081	.	.823
Childish	133.16	192.204	.093	.	.818
Compassionate	133.48	183.131	.410	.	.808
Competitive	132.10	189.989	.251	.	.813
Confident	132.67	182.680	.555	.	.805
Dependable	132.91	179.519	.553	.	.803
Fair	133.17	182.040	.467	.	.806
Feminine/Girly	134.90	198.094	-.115	.	.823
Friendly	132.47	185.587	.379	.	.809
Funny	132.24	184.853	.431	.	.808
Heterosexual/Straight	132.24	192.397	.054	.	.821
High-Achieving	132.72	183.291	.444	.	.807
Homosexual/Gay	135.47	196.569	-.085	.	.817
Honest	133.07	183.223	.419	.	.808
Ignorant	134.02	198.508	-.125	.	.824
Inconsiderate	134.21	199.044	-.141	.	.825
Intelligent	133.26	179.774	.655	.	.802
Lazy	133.64	194.621	.002	.	.821
Leader	133.05	178.857	.605	.	.802
Loyal	132.83	178.426	.655	.	.801
Masculine/Manly	132.67	181.242	.514	.	.805
Mature	133.33	184.400	.430	.	.808
Mentally Strong	133.03	178.490	.646	.	.801
Mentally Weak	134.33	200.189	-.201	.	.824
Obnoxious	134.12	195.090	.000	.	.820
Open-Minded	133.24	180.572	.574	.	.803
Popular	132.60	181.822	.532	.	.805
Reliable	132.78	180.879	.638	.	.803
Responsible	133.10	184.656	.390	.	.809
Risk-Taking	133.03	182.385	.511	.	.805
Sensitive	134.33	189.873	.197	.	.814
Serious	133.34	182.370	.422	.	.807
Skillful	132.60	181.998	.565	.	.804
Talented	132.62	185.047	.387	.	.809
Transgender	135.43	195.302	.042	.	.816
Trustworthy	133.00	184.140	.378	.	.809

The value of Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.816 (see Table 6.23 below), which meant it was also reliable and, as with the index for players’ best friends, the reliability of the scale would have increased with the removal of bisexual, feminine, heterosexual, and homosexual, but not masculine (see Table 6.24 on page 98 for Item-Total Statistics). The calculation of Pearson’s r (see Table 6.25 on page 98) for the correlation between the two indexes provided a value of 0.568, therefore participants continued to answer somewhat the same way for their best friend on the team and their teammates.

**Table 6.23: Trait Frequency Distribution, Index of Inclusive Masculinity for Most Teammates**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	1	1	1.1	1.1	3.2
	3	1	1.1	1.1	4.2
	5	2	2.1	2.1	6.3
	6	1	1.1	1.1	7.4
	7	2	2.1	2.1	9.5
	8	3	3.2	3.2	12.6
	9	2	2.1	2.1	14.7
	10	2	2.1	2.1	16.8
	11	4	4.2	4.2	21.1
	12	8	8.4	8.4	29.5
	14	4	4.2	4.2	33.7
	15	3	3.2	3.2	36.8
	16	1	1.1	1.1	37.9
	17	7	7.4	7.4	45.3
	18	7	7.4	7.4	52.6
	19	8	8.4	8.4	61.1
	20	3	3.2	3.2	64.2
	21	4	4.2	4.2	68.4
	22	5	5.3	5.3	73.7
	23	6	6.3	6.3	80.0
	24	3	3.2	3.2	83.2
	25	4	4.2	4.2	87.4
	26	2	2.1	2.1	89.5
	27	5	5.3	5.3	94.7
	28	3	3.2	3.2	97.9
	29	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
	30	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

**Table 6.24: Reliability Statistics, Index of Inclusive Masculinity for Most Teammates**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.816	.817	40

**Table 6.25: Correlation of Indexes of Inclusive Masculinity for Best Friend on Team and Most Teammates**

		Inclusive Masculinity Best Friend	Inclusive Masculinity Teammates
Inclusive Masculinity Best Friend	Pearson Correlation	1	.568**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	95	95
Inclusive Masculinity Teammates	Pearson Correlation	.568**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	95	95

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**To Summarize...**

To summarize, it would appear that regardless of the index of masculinity in which heterosexuality is placed, the reliability of the indexes would all increase if it were removed. Indeed, two of the three theories require heterosexuality and the players report high demonstrations of it, yet the indexes are less effective at assessing masculinity when they include it. On a very basic level, this indicates that a player's sexual orientation is not relevant to whether or not he is friendly, aggressive, loyal, or other characteristics used to describe a person. This conclusion did not necessarily require complex mathematical computation, but it does serve as a reminder that the players could essentially fulfill any of the other 39 traits other than heterosexuality and those traits would have no bearing on sexual orientation, yet Goffman and (especially) Connell state that they are necessary parts of ideal masculinity. The fact that the indexes for hegemonic masculinity were not reliable and only the teammate index for inclusive masculinity was reliable should be taken into account; however the scale for Goffman was quite applicable despite the inclusion of heterosexuality. The SPSS analysis indicates that the index for

hegemonic masculinity was not reliable, which means that there are likely better ways to assess hegemonic masculinity, or that it is not useful for describing the study population. I recognize, however, that because I altered this index and not the others, the consistency of the index may have been compromised and, as a result, it became impossible to know whether the validity issue is due to the alteration of the instrument or because the instrument itself was not valid. Perhaps this could have been done by disregarding the traits added based on the literature on ice hockey players in the survey section on hypermasculinity, however I stand behind my decision to include them because they made the index more directly applicable to young male elite ice hockey players as opposed to boys and men in general. Additionally, one cannot rely solely on lists of traits and numbers to describe a phenomena as this is a limiting practice. This may explain why the indicators of reliability for inclusive masculinity were high; the theory is perhaps too broad (not limited to certain traits) for analysis of this nature and thus left considerable room for ambiguity. This should also be examined further, however it will not be done here as the study's main concern is hypermasculinity and not how to assess alternative representations of masculinity.

Most participants classified their best friends on the team and teammates as conforming to Goffman's (1956) indicators of character and description of a socially acceptable man (1963). The Goffman indexes were the most consistent, reliable, and revealing, all of which is intriguing considering that, on the one hand, Goffman's work is the most dated of the three approaches and has been rarely applied to sport in the past twenty years. On the other hand, there is no evidence that Goffman's socially acceptable man and indicators of character have been combined to specifically describe masculinity, therefore this undertaking of his work may open new doors of analysis. What sets his work apart from the others is that it is predominantly limited to traits that are associated with being a good person, such as honesty, loyalty, and maturity. The other two approaches included more traits that are commonly viewed as having the potential to become socially undesirable, such as arrogance, aggression, and laziness. What I have understood from this is that being a good person is of more value in the players' interactions and relationships with teammates than being straight and, for the most part, the players believe that their peers are good people.

## **Hypermasculinity in Major Midget AAA Ice Hockey**

The fourth section of the survey (labeled as the third section in the Methodology chapter) was geared specifically towards hypermasculine athletic environments and asked the players to use a Lickert Scale to rate themselves and most of their teammates, from 1-5, according to how often they embodied nine of the more prominent aspects of hypermasculinity (as informed by hegemonic masculinity theory and the sport-related literature), including the place of ‘fag discourse’, as well as the subject of girls and women in their conversations. The scale ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The nine aspects included trying to look muscular or physically fit, using verbal aggression off the ice, using verbal aggression on the ice, discussing topics related to girls/women and sex, making jokes about a teammate’s sexuality, discussing topics related to dating/relationships, discussing emotions, trying hard to look masculine/manly, and making serious comments about a teammates’ sexuality (i.e. genuinely insulting someone based on sexuality as opposed to using fag discourse). The responses were entered into SPSS and examined according to how the players rate their own displays of hypermasculinity as well as how they rate the same comportment amongst their teammates. Indexes were created again for this section as they allowed for a correlation test between the players’ self-perceptions as well as their interpretations of their teammates’ self-presentations when it comes to hypermasculine attitudes and behaviours.

When asked about the extent to which they the players themselves demonstrated these characteristics, nearly half (48.5%) of the respondents indicated that they demonstrate two or three of the nine traits associated with hypermasculinity. The remaining percentages constituted smaller groups, including 14.8% who demonstrated one or none of the traits while the rest (36.8%) self-reported that they demonstrate between five and eight characteristics. None of the players indicated that they demonstrated all nine traits. Table 6.26 on page 101 shows this distribution of responses, where the far left column represents the number of statements for which each player selected a 4 or 5 on the scale, which indicated that the respondent sometimes or always demonstrated the statements. It was most common for the players to report that they demonstrated less than half of the traits associated with hypermasculinity, which is not altogether different than the frequency distribution for the indexes of hegemonic masculinity in the previous section, meaning hegemonic masculinity (or hypermasculinity) is not the most accurate way of describing the constellation of traits embodied by hockey players in the study population. With

that said, it might also represent an important generalized other or social ideal that guides the subjective meaning of their behavior.

**Table 6.26: Hypermasculinity Index Self-Report**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	5	5.3	5.3	5.3
1	9	9.5	9.5	14.7
2	24	25.3	25.3	40.0
3	22	23.2	23.2	63.2
4	14	14.7	14.7	77.9
5	10	10.5	10.5	88.4
6	6	6.3	6.3	94.7
7	4	4.2	4.2	98.9
8	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

The value of Cronbach's Alpha for self-reported hypermasculinity was .700 (see Table 6.27 below), meaning the reliability of the index is just enough to be significant as 0.70 is the minimum value for confirming reliability. With that said, only one trait would contribute to increased reliability of the index: discussing emotions (see Table 6.28 on page 102 for Item-Total Statistics). This would suggest that although there is room for emotions associated with winning and losing in ice hockey, discussing them is not an indispensable aspect of hypermasculinity, which is logical given the well-established aversion to expressions of emotion within a hypermasculine context (Atkinson, 2011; Eitzen, 2012; Pronger, 1990).

**Table 6.27: Reliability Statistics, Hypermasculinity Index Self-Report**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.700	.692	9

**Table 6.28: Item-Total Statistics, Hypermasculinity Index Self-Report**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Exercising to Look Muscular/Fit	22.20	27.135	.257	.138	.694
Using Verbal Aggression Off Ice	23.10	22.415	.586	.488	.628
Using Physical Aggression Off Ice	23.74	21.994	.580	.491	.627
Discussing Girls/Women and Sex	22.01	25.537	.355	.390	.678
Making Jokes About Teammate Sexuality	23.80	24.235	.365	.262	.677
Discussing Dating/Relationships	22.27	24.750	.424	.402	.665
Discussing Emotions	23.83	26.670	.220	.176	.703
Trying to Look Masculine/Manly	23.74	24.769	.330	.193	.684
Making Serious Comments About Teammate Sexuality	24.49	27.178	.233	.226	.698

In order to add a different angle on perceptions of hypermasculine self-presentations, the survey asked the players to compare themselves to their team in general. This distribution was less centralized, as was the case in the last section when players were asked to assess their teammates in general. In this case, just over half (56.8%) of respondents indicated that their teammates demonstrate between two and five of the nine characteristics of hypermasculinity. Another 14.7% responded that their teammates demonstrate one or none of the characteristics of hypermasculinity, while the remaining 28.4% felt that their teammates demonstrated between five and eight of the nine characteristics. Again, no one indicated that their entire team meets all nine of the traits associated with hypermasculinity. Table 6.29 below demonstrates these frequencies. These numbers echo the findings of the player index, revealing that the most common response was for players to indicate that their teammates demonstrate approximately half of the traits of hypermasculinity.

**Table 6.29: Frequency Distribution, Hypermasculinity Index for Most Teammates**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	6	6.3	6.3	6.3
1	8	8.4	8.4	14.7
2	15	15.8	15.8	30.5
3	21	22.1	22.1	52.6
4	18	18.9	18.9	71.6
5	14	14.7	14.7	86.3
6	8	8.4	8.4	94.7
7	4	4.2	4.2	98.9
8	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

The difference between the index for the player and the index for the team is that the value of Cronbach's Alpha for the team index was 0.624 (see Table 6.30 below), which was not high enough to guarantee a strong inter-relatedness of the variables within the index. The only statement that could have been removed in order to push the index closer to the frame of acceptable reliability was making serious comments about teammates' sexuality (which still would have only increased Cronbach's Alpha to 0.638). Nonetheless, it could be deduced that, as the scholarship on 'fag discourse' suggests, players targeting one another's sexuality is not meant as a deliberate attack on sexuality as much as a way to satirize and deride their interactions in more general terms (Anderson, 2011; Pascoe, 2005). This was investigated further in the interviews and will be elaborated on in Chapter Eight. See Table 6.31 below for Item-Total Statistics. Although the teammate index for hypermasculinity was not perfectly reliable, the correlation between it and the player index was tested in order to determine if there was indeed a relationship between the two.

**Table 6.30: Reliability Statistics, Hypermasculinity Index for Most Teammates**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.624	.624	9

**Table 6.31: Item-Total Statistics, Hypermasculinity Index for Most Teammates**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Exercising to Look Muscular/Fit	23.80	22.085	.209	.114	.617
Using Verbal Aggression Off Ice	24.13	19.599	.451	.435	.561
Using Physical Aggression Off Ice	24.87	19.105	.444	.399	.559
Discussing Girls/Women and Sex	23.22	20.964	.315	.330	.594
Making Jokes About Teammate Sexuality	24.93	19.797	.273	.252	.608
Discussing Dating/Relationships	23.59	19.702	.436	.329	.565
Discussing Emotions	25.40	21.379	.231	.202	.614
Trying to Look Masculine/Manly	25.00	19.531	.306	.171	.598
Making Serious Comments About Teammate Sexuality Most of my Teammates	25.84	22.925	.109	.270	.638

The Pearson's  $r$  test revealed a value of 0.778 (see Table 6.32 below), which illustrated a relationship that is both strong and positive. This indicates that respondents gave similar answers when comparing themselves and their teammates, which is the first time throughout the survey analysis of masculinity so far that responses are consistent and not weakly or moderately related.

**Table 6.32: Correlation of Indexes of Hypermasculinity for Self and Most Teammates**

		Hypermasculinity Index Self	Hypermasculinity Index Most Teammates
Hypermasculinity Index Self	Pearson Correlation	1	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	95	95
Hypermasculinity Index Most Teammates	Pearson Correlation	.778**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	95	95

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

At this point, it can be argued that although not all of the players should be painted with the same brush, they do view themselves and each other as embodying some of the traits of hegemonic masculinity and hypermasculinity and they also see one another as relatively good people. Put differently, for the players, hegemonic masculinity and moral goodness are not mutually exclusive. Although this conclusion resonates with scholarship on homogeneity among male elite ice hockey players (Pappas, McKenry, & Catlett, 2004; Robidoux, 2001), the relationships were not consistently strong enough to state that the players are all the same in this regard. At this point, neither the index for hegemonic masculinity nor the index for hypermasculinity amongst the players were reliable methods of capturing the players' perceptions and attitudes because the traits and statements were not deemed strongly inter-related, especially compared to the Goffman index. Does this mean that there is a better way of assessing hockey masculinity or does it mean that this conception of extreme and traditional masculinity is no longer as airtight as scholars had once thought?

I suggest that the findings to date indicate that one's acceptance and inclusion in ice hockey culture depends less on sexual orientation than on how he presents himself in gendered terms. If he is able to do typically manly and athletic things such as be competitive and engage in 'fag discourse,' then his sexual orientation will be less consequential in the eyes of those around him. This idea is supported by Anderson (2009) who also argued that homosexuality was

acceptable as long as a male athlete can function in a hypermasculine atmosphere without his homosexuality affecting the environment, although Anderson (2011) now argues that this claim is less relevant among today's youth. This will be revisited in the interview analysis in Chapter Eight.

### **Homosexuality in Ice Hockey**

The fourth section of the survey (labeled as the third in the Methodology chapter) asked the players to consider their own opinions of homosexuality in ice hockey and to predict how most of their teammates might feel as well. Using a Lickert Scale of 1-5, they selected the extent to which they agreed with statements about homosexuality in hockey (1- Strongly Disagree to 5- Strongly Agree). These questions were meant to inform the part of the research question that asked about the players' attitudes towards homosexuality, clearly highlighting the ice hockey context in order to provide a more pointed answer to the research question. Their opinions on homosexuality in general were obtained in the interviews and this discussion will be built upon in Chapter Seven. Indexes and correlations were used here as well because the set of ten statements, taken together, create a comprehensive model of negative feelings towards homosexuality in ice hockey, including the use of 'fag discourse'. It would also indicate if there was a significant difference between the way that the players responded for themselves and how they thought their teammates might respond, just in case this proved to be different than the other sections. This, for me, was the most important section of the survey because it pointedly asked the players how they felt about homosexuality in an ice hockey context, which was the main puzzle that the review of literature and mainstream media indicated required solving at the moment.

The ten statements (which have been redesigned so as to reflect their recoding in SPSS) are as follows: It's important to know whether or not your teammates are heterosexual/straight; Having a gay teammate would be uncomfortable; There is something wrong with being a gay hockey player; Having a gay teammate would negatively affect the team's success; It's not okay for a coach to be gay; It would be upsetting if a close teammate turned out to be gay; It's common to make jokes about being gay; It's common to make jokes about being feminine/girly; It would not be okay if a gay ice hockey player tried to flirt with a teammate; It's okay to be gay, but not in ice hockey.

When asked about the extent to which they themselves agreed with the statements, 84.3% of respondents stated that they agreed or strongly agreed with between one and five of the ten (4 or 5 on the Lickert Scale). Only 4.2% of the population agreed with none of the statements, meaning that four participants communicated that they were quite accepting of homosexuality in ice hockey, at least where this index was concerned. The only considerably high (over 50%) value was for making jokes about a teammate being gay, which—while not unproblematic—does not necessarily indicate a negative attitude towards homosexuality, as Pascoe (2005) has established. This implies that the study population self-reports as not entirely averse to the idea of homosexuality in ice hockey, but evidently has some reservations. For instance, 30.6% would be upset if they found out a close teammate was gay and a quarter of them (25.2%) do not believe that it is okay to have a gay coach. Table 6.33 below demonstrates the distribution of responses. The column to the far left reflects the number of statements with which the players agreed.

**Table 6.33: Frequency Distribution, Attitudes Towards Homosexuality in Ice Hockey Index Self-Report**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
1	10	10.5	10.5	14.7
2	20	21.1	21.1	35.8
3	17	17.9	17.9	53.7
4	20	21.1	21.1	74.7
5	13	13.7	13.7	88.4
6	2	2.1	2.1	90.5
7	6	6.3	6.3	96.8
9	2	2.1	2.1	98.9
10	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

The value of Cronbach’s Alpha for the index of self-reported attitudes towards homosexuality in ice hockey was 0.726 (see Table 6.34 on page 107), which signifies a strong inter-relatedness of the statements and thus a valid index. In fact, the only statements that could have been removed in order to strengthen the inter-relatedness of the index were ‘it’s common to make jokes about being gay’ and ‘it’s common to make jokes about being girly,’ (where ‘girly’ here is equated with femininity, which is associated with homosexuality). Table 6.35 on page 107 demonstrates Item-Total Statistics for the Index. This makes sense as it continues to support the

idea that ‘fag discourse’ is not actually representative of attitudes towards homosexuality, despite the fact that it can still be degrading to a certain group.

**Table 6.34: Reliability Statistics, Attitudes Towards Homosexuality in Ice Hockey Index Self-Report**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.726	.730	10

**Table 6.35: Item-Total Statistics, Attitudes Towards Homosexuality in Ice Hockey Index Self-Report**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Important Know Teammate Sexuality	24.10	41.821	.338	.259	.714
Gay Teammate Uncomfortable	24.82	38.912	.600	.456	.669
NOT OK to be Gay Hockey Player	25.21	43.292	.278	.444	.723
Gay Teammate Negative Team Success	25.69	42.981	.480	.399	.694
NOT OK for Coach to be Gay	24.94	39.604	.489	.364	.686
Upsetting to Have Gay Teammate	25.03	39.965	.546	.380	.679
Common to Joke About Being Gay	23.84	44.852	.214	.306	.732
Common to Joke About Being Girly	24.13	44.566	.237	.396	.728
NOT OK for Gay Hockey Player to Flirt	23.11	45.605	.256	.150	.722
OK to be Gay, but not in Hockey	25.31	40.666	.476	.323	.690

Next, the players were asked how they thought their teammates in general might respond to the same ten statements (see Table 6.36 on page 108). The largest cluster of respondents (72.5%) indicated that their teammates would likely agree with between two and five of the statements, which is not altogether different from the responses they gave for themselves. On either end of the cluster were 14.7% who guessed that their teammates would agree with one or more of the statements and 12.7% who guessed that their teammates would agree with between six and ten statements.

**Table 6.36: Frequency Distribution, Attitudes Towards Homosexuality in Ice Hockey Index for Most Teammates**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	8	8.4	8.4	8.4
	1	6	6.3	6.3	14.7
	2	18	18.9	18.9	33.7
	3	18	18.9	18.9	52.6
	4	17	17.9	17.9	70.5
	5	16	16.8	16.8	87.4
	6	3	3.2	3.2	90.5
	7	6	6.3	6.3	96.8
	9	2	2.1	2.1	98.9
	10	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total		95	100.0	100.00	

This index was also considered a valid measure of attitudes towards homosexuality in ice hockey, having a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.707 (see Table 6.37 below). Also, like the index for the players themselves, the two statements that could have been removed to increase the reliability of the index were 'it's common to make jokes about being gay' and 'it's common to make jokes about being girly,' which can be explained by the same analysis used for the self-reports (see Table 6.38 on page 109). With such close percentages between both sets of responses, it was comprehensible that the Pearson's r test for correlation between the scales had a value of .856 (see Table 6.39 on page 109), which represents both a strong and positive relationship between the study population's answers, meaning they mostly all view homosexuality in ice hockey the same way.

**Table 6.37: Reliability Statistics, Attitudes Towards Homosexuality in Ice Hockey Index for Most Teammates**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.707	.717	10

**Table 6.38: Item-Total Statistics, Attitudes Towards Homosexuality in Ice Hockey Index for Most Teammates**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Important Know Teammate Sexuality	25.68	36.630	.321	.282	.694
Gay Teammate Uncomfortable	25.88	34.130	.567	.449	.647
NOT OK to be Gay Hockey	26.49	39.602	.179	.528	.717
Gay Teammate Negative Team Success	27.01	35.867	.604	.495	.651
NOT OK for Coach to be Gay	26.27	36.129	.387	.321	.681
Upsetting to Have Gay Teammate	26.44	34.948	.580	.427	.649
Common to Joke About Being Gay	25.10	40.063	.188	.328	.713
Common to Joke About Being Girly	25.44	39.213	.221	.445	.709
NOT OK for Gay Hockey Player to Flirt	24.58	39.475	.322	.316	.692
OK to be Gay, but not in Hockey	26.50	36.422	.396	.385	.679

**Table 6.39: Correlation of Attitudes Towards Masculinity in Ice Hockey Indexes for Self and Most Teammates**

		Attitudes Homosexuality Index Self	Attitudes Homosexuality Index Most Teammates
Attitudes Homosexuality Index Self	Pearson Correlation	1	.856**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	95	95
Attitudes Homosexuality Index Most Teammates	Pearson Correlation	.856**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	95	95

Even though there was not an alarming indignation with homosexuality in ice hockey, these numbers will still be qualified by interview data in order to determine which reservations players might have about having a gay teammate. This matter represented the disconnect between NHL players claiming that they would be accepting of a gay teammate and the fact that none have come out. Moreover, the indexes created based on theories of masculinity associated with sport demonstrated that heterosexuality was not a valid measure of those theories amongst this population. ‘Fag discourse’ will also be discussed in the interview data in order to demonstrate that it has very little to do with sexuality and how it might change if there were a homosexual ice hockey player in the dressing room. For now, however, it appears that my study population, despite not having any openly gay players, would eventually include an openly gay teammate. I was left wondering, after the survey, if any of them indicated that they would be accepting of it because they felt a societal pressure to say so, however I was certainly not in a position to accuse

them of lying and was confident that the interviews would provide better context for the survey responses.

### **Coach Survey and Conversations with Team Managers**

The coach survey was used to obtain added perspective on the players' interactions as well as an idea of the coaches' goals in terms of whether or not they dedicate themselves to shaping the players as individuals on the ice. It was a brief survey meant to add secondary level analysis and was therefore not as insightful as the player survey, but helpful nonetheless. The coaches were asked their age, education level, years of coaching experience, current employment, main goals for the team, whether or not there is room in ice hockey to educate players on gender and sexuality, how often they hear their players discussing sex or sexuality, and whether or not they have concerns about the players' level of awareness on the subject.

The coaches were a diverse group, all ranging in age, experience, background, and opinions on the work I was setting out to do. Their ages ranged from mid twenties to over fifty. They all currently play or had played organized hockey themselves. Half of them had between five and nine years experience coaching boys' and men's hockey while the other half had at least ten years experience. Time spent coaching their current Midget AAA team ranged from one year to ten or more. Four of the six had University degrees while the other two had college or vocational training. Two of them were retired and they all worked or had worked in a range of fields including trades, sales and marketing, and education (see Appendix A5 for full frequency distributions). Some of them took more interest in my study than others and with three teams, I spent more time speaking with managers than with coaches since the managers were in charge of the players' schedules and communications.

I would say that my informal conversations with the managers were more useful than the coach survey. I will discuss these conversations briefly at the end of this section. The coach who was most interested in my work and who was most welcoming of me in the team environment had a background in education and was fairly well-versed in matters relating to LGBTQ issues among teenagers. He asked many pertinent questions and was quite curious as to why I had chosen hockey as a context, which sparked a conversation about problematic Junior ice hockey player behaviour. Ironically, it was his team that had the unusually low participation rate, but the

players and coaching staff were all quite friendly: the coach gave me access to the dressing room to speak to players and to his office to conduct interviews or personal work; he coordinated interviews at the rink and at his players' schools for me; he gave me tickets to the team's games; and he introduced me to other members of his hockey community who may have been useful to my research. He seemed disappointed that his team's participation rate was not higher, however, ethically, he could not force his players to partake in the study, so I was just thankful to have had interacted with him and been made to feel welcome in an environment where outsiders are typically kept at arm's length.

The first question on the survey that was directly related to my research was open-ended and asked about the coaches' main goals for their teams. All of them indicated to some extent that one or more of their goals was to help their players develop and learn both on and off the ice. None specified what this meant, exactly, however my conversations with some of them indicated that they generally wanted to produce good hockey players and respectable people. Four of the coaches said that one of their goals was to help players move up to the next level of play. Two of them said they wanted to make hockey a fun experience for the players. Three of them said they wanted to win a championship. We see here that the goals are mostly oriented towards hockey, which is not surprising considering that this is an elite level of play that is oriented less towards recreation. With that said, however, there is evidence that some think hockey should be a fun experience and that all of them do see value in helping the players grow as individuals. With this in view, it was only logical that the next question asked if they thought there was room in ice hockey to educate boys and men on gender and sexuality (especially since hypermasculinity in general and sexual assault in particular have been portrayed as problematic in this specific culture by both scholars and the media. I did not include that clause in the question, but from the researcher's perspective, it appeared that this would be the main way the players should be helped to grow as individuals). Four of the coaches said that they did believe there was room in ice hockey to educate male players on the subject, one said no, and one said he did not know.

The coach who said that he did not think there was room in ice hockey to educate boys and men on gender and sexuality left me a comment explaining his response. He wrote 'Do not really see hockey/coach as playing a significant role in teaching about sexuality. We have to make sure that there is no room for harassment, abuse, hazing, or comments regarding sexual orientation.' To me, that sounded as though problematic hypermasculine behaviour should not be

tolerated in ice hockey, but that it was not his job nor the job of hockey culture in general to see to it that players do not learn that this kind of behaviour is acceptable. It led me to wonder if he would be in favour of Eitzen's (2012) argument that male athletes' attitudes and personalities are already determined before they arrive to their chosen sport—that sport does not typically socialize people to be hypermasculine; they are often already like that before they arrive. Of course, a major goal of this research is to determine, at least in part, who influences the players and whose expectations of them are prioritized in which contexts, but this comment caused me to linger on the socialization aspect. That is, if problematic hypermasculine behaviour is not tolerated in his dressing room, do his players not demonstrate it? And where are they learning how to comport themselves? Unfortunately, since only five of his players completed the survey, his team is not very well-represented among the population as a whole, however this situation validated my questions related to Goffman's discussions of social expectations of male athletes and the tension between navigating internal team dynamics and broader societal expectations of proper demeanour or character and conduct.

Regarding the discussion of and possible level of education on sex and sexuality, the responses varied. When asked how often they hear their players discussing sex and sexuality, two coaches said rarely, three said sometimes, and one said often. Evidently, then, it is a somewhat common topic of conversation, which corroborates with player surveys since 15.8% of respondents perceived their teams in general to discuss girls, women and sex sometimes while 63.2% of them felt that their teammates discussed the subject often. When asked if they were worried about the players' level of education on sex and sexuality, one coach said never, one said sometimes, and three said rarely. The nature of the question did not allow for any explanations as to why or why not they selected these levels of concern, however, the fact that half of them expressed some concern suggested that my work was indeed useful or would be at some point because one of my intended contributions is to create awareness on these matters within ice hockey culture. In any case, the coach survey did provide a small-scale image of the coaches' perspectives where sexuality, especially, is concerned. I chose not to ask questions about gender because when the survey was created, it was really done so with homosexuality and the sexualization of girls and women in mind, therefore masculinity more generally was disregarded in this specific component of the analysis.

I will briefly discuss my informal conversations with team managers because although

they were not coaches, they were highly involved with the players and were happy to discuss the players with me. It was evident that these two individuals, both men, played more of a parental role for the players, ensuring that they were in the right place at the right time, that they were fed when necessary, and that they had all the proper belongings for whichever activity the team was doing at the time. They seemed to really know their players and often offered me insight on specific ones or on their lifestyles or just the nature of the group. Two of them, in particular, whom I will call Jacques and Jean, were extremely helpful and welcoming of me and I appreciated my conversations with them very much.

Jacques was a younger man whose demanding summer employment left him with enough time to be the team's manager in the winter months. He was friendly and courteous and often provided me with tickets to his team's games or food when the team would eat and on one occasion, when he noticed I was eating alone, he asked to join me and spent the meal speaking with me about the players' lives and what their schedules look like at this level. I learned some interesting facts, such as the cost of hockey for them, which is approximately \$3,000 a year, and that they typically practice twice a week and have dry-land training at least once a week and then play games once or twice a week, typically on weekends. I later found out that this was normally the case for all of the teams with whom I worked. This particular manager told me about hosting team bonding retreats and activities to get the players to spend time with one another and get to know each other. I asked about gender and sexuality and he told me that the players were all out to prove their manhood and that they were obsessed with sex, but that this was the nature of the culture and that for the most part, it was all harmless talk that amounted to nothing. He said that he was not sure anyone had any real problems with homosexuality, but that the way the players spoke about girls and women could be alarming sometimes and that it could be difficult to keep up with their evolving vocabulary for the subject. This, again, validated the need for my research.

At one point, one of the players on his team whom I had interviewed contacted me via one of my publicly available social media profiles and said that he thought my work was important and that if I needed additional information, he would be happy to assist me. Although he had been the interviewee with whom I felt I had established the strongest rapport, I felt uncomfortable with the situation at first because I was not certain of his intentions and did not want to cross any boundaries as an adult in contact with a minor. I spoke to Jacques and he told me that this particular player, who did indeed become one of my two key informants in the end,

had been having a somewhat difficult time at home because his parents were going through a divorce, he had not consistently been in school recently, he spent most of his time at other people's houses, and did not seem focused that year, but that deep down he was an intelligent and good person and had the potential to do well both academically and in hockey. Jacques suggested it might be good for him to continue speaking with me and to have a bit of a project to work on. I had remembered when I first met the team, all of the players demanded that this particular player volunteer to be interviewed, stating that he was the most intelligent one on the team and would 'make them look good.' In the end, I accepted his offer and another one of the team managers suggested that texting would be the best way to reach the player, so I did and it worked out well. I will discuss this informant further alongside the interview data in Chapter Eight, but what should be taken from this is that Jacques appeared to really take the time to know his players and showed concern for their well-being outside of hockey, which was encouraging for me to see as a researcher who so often focuses on the harder and more unemotional side of being a male ice hockey player. It also gave me added perspective on the players and it meant a lot to me that Jacques saw value in sharing this kind of information with me. Had it not have been for the relationship I built with him, I likely would not have had one of my key informants.

The other manager with whom I developed a relationship was Jean, a middle-aged man who had been coaching hockey in his community for several years, was quite well-known in the area, and was now volunteering as a manager with this Midget AAA team. He allowed me access to the team's lounge at the rink, arranged a meeting room to act as my research space, provided me with apparel brandishing the team's logo, offered me food, and invited me in to conversations with other coaching staff. The conversations were all about hockey, but I was pleased to have been included. When there was time between interviews or before and after surveys when it was just Jean and myself, we would speak about LGBTQ issues or he would tell me stories about people he knew and about his team. He is the one who had told me about the parent at the team meeting who said that homosexuality 'wasn't an issue' in her house and therefore she had no problem with her son participating in my study. He was also the one who told me that parents involved in the health and education systems were the most open to their sons participating because they were more comfortable with the LGBTQ community and thought my work would be important.

One of my most memorable conversations with Jean was when he asked me if I knew

why the players on his team covered themselves up in the dressing room. He said that for the first time in his life, he noticed that the team this year did not like to be naked in front of one another and he could not figure out if a particular incident had caused this or if it was a generational characteristic. I had no insightful answer for him, but it prompted a conversation about the irony of homoeroticism in male ice hockey where typically everyone wants to prove their heterosexuality, yet they are comfortable being naked around one another—although not in this case. Jean also told me that he had friends and acquaintances who were coaches and team owners in elite and professional leagues who were gay and that you would never know it; they only told close and trusted friends, but they were just like any other man in the ice hockey community and Jean often wondered if the social conditions were right for players on his own team to feel comfortable with coming out, should there be any. He said the climate around homosexuality in ice hockey had certainly changed in his eyes and that any negative attitudes towards it on his team were likely instilled by parents, whose generation ‘still had to get used to it,’ in his words.

Jean was also useful in helping me obtain a key informant. There was a player on the team that, although I did not feel I really connected with him on a personal level, his responses were quite sincere and it was evident that he was attuned to the meaning of his relationships outside of hockey, which peaked my interest. I will discuss this informant alongside of the interviews as well, however, the only reason I sought him out again was because I felt comfortable asking Jean to facilitate another meeting should the player be willing and he was. Jean consistently asked if there was anything else he could do to assist me and said he was pleased to hear that someone on his team merited extra attention for having relevant insight on such an important subject. Jean, like Jacques, also knew his players very well and would often tell me what kind of personality each of them had—who needed to be told to focus, who seemed conniving, who was shy, who would go far with hockey. He once said that he felt that the players perceived him as some old man who was out of touch with contemporary teenage life and Jean said he was happy to have them think that because it meant he was always a step ahead of them. He told me about a road trip where the players had secretly arranged for their girlfriends to go along separately from the players so they could have time alone with them out of the city without their parents knowing (and after the coach had told them not to bring their girlfriends because they needed to focus on hockey) and then got caught by Jean and in trouble with coaches and parents. My interactions with him and Jacques were among my favourite throughout the entire

study. I am grateful that they took the time to share parts of their lives with me and even more appreciative that my comfort level with them led to two beneficial relationships with key informants.

CHAPTER SEVEN  
**RINKSIDE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SELF-PRESENTATION,  
 SEXUALITY, AND INTERACTION**

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This chapter consists of an overview and analysis of the player interviews as well as detailed accounts of my interaction with two key informants, who were instrumental in both providing additional information beyond their interviews as well as commenting on the findings of the survey. Before presenting the interview data, each of the players is briefly introduced in Table 7.01 below. Pseudonyms have been applied to both the players and their teams in keeping with the confidentiality and anonymity agreement.

*Table 7.01: Player Names (Pseudonyms), Teams, and Ages*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TEAM</b>	<b>AGE</b>		<b>NAME</b>	<b>TEAM</b>	<b>AGE</b>
Lyle	Golden Seals	16		Turner	Rockies	17
Todd	Golden Seals	17		Eric	Rockies	15
Paul	Golden Seals	17		Stephan	Rockies	15
Oleg	Golden Seals	17		Mike	Rockies	17
Gary	Golden Seals	17		Brian	Rockies	15
Richard	Nordiques	16		Denis	Thrashers	15
Kevin	Nordiques	15		Donald	Thrashers	16
André	Nordiques	15		Mathieu	Thrashers	16
Mario	Nordiques	17		Guy	Thrashers	16
John	Nordiques	17		Vincent	Thrashers	16
Kirk	North Stars	17		Sean	Whalers	15
Jeff	North Stars	17		JJ	Whalers	15
Benoit	North Stars	15		James	Whalers	17
Gilbert	North Stars	15		Ed	Whalers	17
Patrice	North Stars	16		Patrick	Whalers	17

The three main goals of the player interviews were: to follow up on what players knew about gender and sexuality prior to entering the study, to obtain a personalized account of their

thoughts on homosexuality and its presence in ice hockey, and to spend time identifying the most important people in their lives, the role that discussions of gender and sexuality play in their relationships with them, and how these relationships might be indicative of how the players' attitudes towards homosexuality are shaped. This last goal is aimed at determining if and how these relationships offer any commentary on players' social expectations when it comes to homosexuality (bearing in mind Goffman's (1956) notion of tension between differing expectations from the sport context to a broader public context, or in the players' various 'backstages').

The first questions, which asked the players to describe themselves and their hockey careers, acted as a substantial warm-up activity that allowed me to get to know them more personally. All participants except one of the thirty began playing hockey between the ages of four and six (the outlier began at the age of eight). Twenty-one of them said they were forced or encouraged to begin playing by a male family member, mostly fathers. Twelve of their fathers had hockey careers of their own, ranging from recreational to competitive, including Major Junior, University, and professional. The surveys revealed that 83.2% of respondents considered themselves members of families that take a particular interest in hockey (see Appendix A6 for frequency table), therefore the interview data was in keeping with the survey. Examples of common interview responses that best demonstrate this pattern include the following:

*Kevin (Nordiques): My Dad was really good at hockey... And he... Right when I was four, he wanted me to be a hockey player – like, he'd go to the rink and I always played on it. And my brother who's... a year younger than me – well, three years younger than me—he always played too, so, like, it's just, like, a family thing.*

*Eric (Rockies): All of my family played hockey—my grandfather, my great grandfather, my Dad...everybody. Except for my Mom's side; they didn't play hockey. But all through my Dad's side, they've all played hockey...my Dad wanted me to play hockey since I was...five, so...he started me off. He played Midget—he didn't play [at a] very high [level], but he wanted to.*

In these quotations is evidence of fathers encouraging their sons to play hockey, fathers having their own hockey careers, and entire families taking an interest in hockey. With that said, only three respondents listed female family members as their influences to join hockey, including

mothers, sisters, and aunts. The one respondent who listed his sister said she played as well, however none of the mothers or aunts listed by other players had their own hockey careers. Two respondents listed their friends as influences and one said he was motivated to begin playing hockey through having watched Hockey Night in Canada on television at a young age. Evidently, then, the respondents' hockey careers began with some sort of masculine influence, whether forced or chosen. I did not hear any stories of players who no longer wanted to participate or felt that they were continuously forced to play by the individuals who had originally encouraged them to participate. The reach of this masculine influence in an ice hockey context was examined further in the portion of the interview that asked the players to consider the individuals most important to them and will be revisited later in the chapter.

### **Describe Yourself**

The players were asked to describe themselves. I had included a prompt about how their teammates and the people at home would describe them in the event that the respondents were having difficulty describing themselves, however, it became clear after five interviews that the players sometimes perceived other people's descriptions of them as different from their own. Recognizing that this contextualization of the players could fit into the different 'backstages' or contexts in which the players negotiate their identities, I chose to include the prompts in the remainder of the interviews. This exercise acted as a strong transition point between my goal to become acquainted with the players and my goal to examine how their chosen vocabulary might resonate with the components of the survey that addressed the theoretical constructions of masculinity on which the study relies.

I first asked the players to describe themselves in general. Sometimes they would ask in which context they should describe themselves and I would suggest that they describe themselves to someone who has never met them before—this way I was answering their question, but not in such a way that would lead them in a particular direction within the study. Between all thirty of them, they used a total of 40 words or phrases to describe themselves, none of which could be described as explicitly recurrent. The most common descriptors were approachable and funny (nine players), athletic and easygoing (seven players), nice and outgoing (seven players), and friendly and hardworking (five players). With few exceptions, the other responses were similar to

these, including honest, respectful, open-minded, mature, personable, talkative, helpful, responsible, outdoorsy, shy at first, and knows the appropriate times to be funny and to be serious. None of these responses are necessarily inconsistent with Goffman's (1953; 1956) or Anderson's (2009; 2011) with the exception that the players did not mention anything to do with gender or sexuality. Moreover, although there is not enough evidence to claim that these descriptors oppose Connell's (1987) hegemonic masculinity, it can be said that characteristics such as open-minded, shy, and perhaps even approachable are not the first ones that come to mind where hegemonic masculinity is concerned. In fact, one respondent specifically referred to himself as non-aggressive and another as tidy. Again, this is not nearly enough to undermine Connell's (1987) theory, but it does provide a basis for the claim that not all hockey players are alike and it certainly confirms that they do not view themselves primarily as hypermasculine. Of course, one could argue that the players would have presented themselves differently with a male interviewer (be it more or less masculine), however, as discussed in Chapter Five, this would be nearly impossible to determine.

There were two outliers in the self-descriptions that merit brief attention because they did not always portray themselves in the same relatively positive terms as the other respondents. The first, a sixteen-year old named Lyle who played for the Golden Seals, referred to himself as rude in particular contexts. Although he said that he could be funny and nice, there was another side to Lyle:

*Some people—I dunno, some people get on my nerves and I'm kinda rude, but, other than that, I'm a nice person. Usually...it'sss either they're too cocky orrr they say something to me or to a friend or something like that. Just...puts me over the edge. But I have a good temper so I don't lose it too often, yeah.*

Lyle's description of himself can be taken in two ways—it could be interpreted as describing someone who genuinely admits to not always being a nice person or it could also be perceived as an aggressive tendency. Based on the fact that Lyle gave no other indications of aggression throughout the remainder of the interview, I am inclined to say that this was meant as a balanced account of who he is. Nonetheless, it was different from the other self-descriptions and led me to think about how realistic it would have been to expect the players to convey their less appealing qualities because, in the context of the interview, they had perceived this particular 'backstage' as one in which it was important to present themselves as good people. With that in view, I

appreciated this snippet of Lyle's response because he provided a well-rounded account of himself and also motivated me to increase my own level of reflexivity as a researcher.

The second outlier was seventeen-year-old Ed who played for the Whalers. When asked how he describes himself, Ed responded that he was strange and perhaps too forthcoming at first. In his words:

*...I'm weird 'til you get to know me. Haha. Uhmmm... haha. I...probably...people probably think of me as...I don't really know. As...being...if I didn't know you well—err, if I was trying to get to know you, I'd be...over-nice. And, like, I'd tell you stuff...like, I'd just tell you weird stuff. Just like... 'Yeah. When I was five years old, this happened to me!' Weird stuff like that. Haha. ....Yeah. That's pretty much it. Haha.*

Unlike the other 29 respondents, Ed did not refer to himself as funny, nice, athletic, or any of the other common responses; he focused solely on being 'weird' and 'over-nice.' He did provide other responses when prompted to state how he thought his teammates and the people at home would describe him, which consisted of 'a friendly giant,' however his own account of himself as a person was much more unique and less positive in nature than the other respondents.

Ed also conceded that he was one of the larger and less physically fit players on the team and that appeared to weigh on his mind a bit because he began to stare at the floor and began to struggle to find his words in an interview that otherwise flowed quite well. In that context, I wondered if his self-description pointed to diminished self-confidence. Indeed, there can be pressure on male athletes to be physically muscular and dominant (Lafrance, 2012; Messner, 2007; Miller, 1998; Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000) and it would be plausible that Ed struggled with fitting in for reasons like these, thus labeling himself as strange. However, he seemed pleased with being described as 'a friendly giant' and said that he is nice to everyone. In this sense, Ed could be considered a member of Connell's (1987) complicit or marginalized masculinity type since being socially atypical and physically unfit are not components of hegemonic masculinity. He would not necessarily fit into Goffman's (1953; 1956) conception of acceptable manhood for the same reasons. He could, however, be categorized within inclusive masculinity because Anderson's (2009; 2011) framework makes room for all male athletes who do not fit the profile of hegemonic masculinity. I did not press this subject any further as this part of the interview was still meant to be a warm-up and was not meant as an opportunity for deep self-reflection so early on. Nonetheless, Ed's self-description, although rare in nature, painted a

vivid picture of self-perceptions and self-presentations among the players that prompted engagement with the theoretical framework of masculinity among male ice hockey players.

### ***How would the people at home describe you?...***

After having been asked to describe themselves, the players were asked how they thought the people at home might describe them—be it family members, legal guardians, or billets. Five of the thirty players responded that the people at home would describe them the same way that they described themselves, meaning that they felt they were fairly consistent in their identity and demeanour when it came to how they perceive themselves and how they believe others perceive them. Although the players used similar words to identify how the people at home would describe them, there were fewer common responses and a pattern of critical descriptions from parents. Common responses similar to the self-descriptions included outgoing (seven players), nice and easygoing (six players). Other responses that appeared fewer than five times included tidy, respectful, approachable, athletic, messy, funny, and friendly. Again, the frequency of responses does not give reason to argue that there are common characteristics among the players since no more than six used the same one. Additionally, although some of the less common responses resonated with Goffman's (1953;1956) acceptable manhood, the most common ones did not, and none were overly consistent with hegemonic masculinity either. This may constitute further evidence that the players cannot be painted with the same brush because, in their eyes, neither they, nor the people in their home lives, describe them the same way.

The main difference between the self-descriptions and the presumed descriptions from people at home were those that criticized the players. Six of them responded that their parents in particular would describe them as lazy. Two respondents used the term annoying, two used messy, one used cranky, one used careless, and one used mouthy. There were also two outliers who provided similar accounts, however they were unique enough to be reserved for after the discussion of critical descriptions. The fact that over 20% of respondents believed that the people at home would describe them as lazy, messy, annoying, or otherwise, prompted several interpretations on my part. To be clear, every single respondent laughed while providing this answer and several also added other descriptions such as easygoing and nice. Indeed, the critical responses did not appear to be truly worrisome to the players, but they were common

nonetheless. The following is a detailed account of how fifteen-year-old Stephan of the Rockies thought each individual in his household might describe him:

*....Uh, annoying, probably, haha. My...my little sisters would probably call me annoying. I like to pick on them a bit, I guess. I have two sisters. Uh...my Mom, she'd probably say I'm pretty lazy and, uh, don't do enough chores, but I consider myself pretty hard-working at home. I like to clean my room a lot...Haha. It's gotta be clean for me. That's—that's one of my things. But I'd probably say, uh.....they probably say I'm pretty caring and nice too, so...*

Although not as detailed, many of the critical responses sounded much like this; they followed a sequence of not always being an ideal housemate, but still well-liked in the household. Most importantly, they were not in keeping with hegemonic masculinity, what with the use of words such as clean and tidy, which are typically associated with femininity. The findings suggested to me that the family or home context is one in which the less socially accepted characteristics of the players can surface and that housemates, particularly family, reserve the right to criticize the players because none of them seemed particularly offended by the characterizations and they often listed them first in the list of other descriptors. In other words, at home, the players fail to meet certain expectations regarding cleanliness and always getting along, however, they are aware of this and it does not affect their own personal self-presentations or their relationships with the people at home. While this was an engaging finding, it says little about masculinity and sexuality. Of course, it could be argued that males are traditionally expected to do less housework, however the interview data provided no grounds on which to make a substantial claim about this phenomenon.

The two outliers whose responses differed most from the others were significantly more negative and precise than the rest. The first was seventeen-year-old Kirk of the North Stars, who said that the people at home did not have many encouraging things to say about him. He thought that the people at home perceived him as stubborn, short-tempered, and perhaps a perfectionist. During our conversation, Kirk summed it up as “kind of, uh, hard headed...kind of...get mad pretty easy. Like my own way.” This interpretation carried over to his teammates’ description of him when he speculated that they would also say he was not well-tempered or had ‘a short fuse’. In fact, the only time Kirk said anything positive about himself was in the midst of commenting on the way he thought his teammates saw him as a hockey player, expecting that they might say

he did not have much skill, but still worked hard on the ice. None of these sounded like his own self-description, in which he characterized himself as easygoing and someone who likes to have fun and ‘go with the flow’. While the more critical description of Kirk was not entirely unlike those offered by the other players through the lens of people at home, Kirk did little in the way of giving himself any credit from the people at home (his parents and brother) and unlike the other players, he did not smile or laugh when providing this information. I asked him why the people at home thought this and he responded,

“I don’t know. I just...I like things kind of...professional or the way it should be done and everything. I like things neat...fancy.” I did not explore the matter any further in order to keep the beginning of the interview light, however there was a clear difference between Kirk and the other players and I kept this in mind as I conducted the rest of the interview in case it offered any other indication of his opinions or attitudes.

Another difference between Kirk and the other players is that he was the only player I ever saw be ejected from a hockey game throughout my time with the six teams. Kirk body checked an opponent from behind (I remain uncertain as to whether or not it was intentional) and was ejected from the game. After disputing the call rather animatedly, which led to his being escorted off the ice towards the dressing rooms, Kirk’s last words rang clear throughout the entire rink as he shouted, “Go suck a dick!” Of course, as a gender and sexuality researcher, this was likely one of the highlights of the study as I had almost never heard anti-gay banter while around the players. One Thrashers player did refer to another team as gay in my presence and his teammate quickly retorted, “Yo! You can’t say that!” and pointed to me, saying, “That’s why she’s here!” This showed that, to some extent, the players were attempting to shield me from their use of fag discourse. Nonetheless, Kirk was an interesting case.

The second outlier was fifteen-year-old Sean of the Whalers, who seemed to speak with more intent when it came to the people at home and I felt as though the way he characterized his parents’ description of him pointed to some sort of tension between him and his father. Upon being asked how the people at home would describe him, Sean responded with the following:

*Depends who is saying it, I guess! My Mom will tell me I’m a little kid and my Dad says I can be a little rebel-ish, Haha. Just, uh...Mom can see that...I can be nice to other guys and...make them feel like they’re welcome and stuff, but my Dad just...I dunno. He’s just...he’s just...he’s funny too, so he just sees both sides of things and...yeah. Just, uh...the*

*guys are jokin' around and he might see me be a little quiet, but then...if he's not there, he might hear that I was joking around.*

This response was very specific compared to the others and it motivated me to ask Sean to elaborate on what he meant about his father viewing him as rebellious and how that might be related to joking around or not joking around. Sean's answer was "He just thinks I might act a little different when he's not there, but...I don't really see a difference. Just...if the opportunity is there to joke around with my friends, I'll take it. Nothing serious." It sounded as though Sean's father expected a certain kind of behaviour from him and felt that Sean did not consistently exhibit that behaviour, although it was unclear as to whether his father thought he should joke around more or less. I did not ask about the nature of the joking around, but kept this account on my radar throughout the interview because if Sean had chosen his father as one of the most important people to him, I could have gained more insight.

Another aspect of Sean's interview that later caused me to look back at all of the interviews was his claim in the above quotation that his mother viewed him as a child. In literature about hypermasculinity and ice hockey, there is a somewhat peculiar relationship between an expectation to be very manly and a notion that the players are immature and childish, especially referring to themselves as boys and to females as girls, which infantilizes both groups (and can sometimes excuse immaturity) even into adulthood (Kimmel, 2008; Robidoux, 2001). After hearing Sean's response, I became interested in how the players referred to themselves, both in terms of gender and age as I myself had grappled with the different and best ways to refer to them—as youth, boys, young men, teenagers, participants, players, respondents, interviewees. Technically, they could be considered all of the above. Further examination of all interview transcripts revealed that three of the players referred to themselves as boys, five of them referred to their teammates as guys, five of them referred to their teammates as boys, one used 'teenagers' and one interviewee referred to himself as a man. The rest did not use any gendered or age-related terminology. I felt based on these characterizations that the players predominantly viewed themselves as young people, not grown men. The surveys indicated that 70% of respondents viewed their best friend on the team as masculine or manly and 59% of them viewed their teammates in general as masculine or manly, which left 30% and 41% respectively who remained neutral or felt that their teammates were not masculine or manly (see Appendix A4 for frequency tables). While it could be argued that to be masculine and to be manly are two different things,

the interview and survey responses do correlate in such a way that demonstrates that the players do not all view themselves or each other as grown adult models of ideal masculinity, be it hegemonic or otherwise. Whether or not their version of masculinity was policed amongst them, however, was still unclear mostly because there did not appear to be one single kind of masculinity to which they collectively adhered.

### ***How would your teammates describe you?...***

The final prompt on self-descriptions asked the players how they thought their teammates might describe them. Two players stated that their teammates would characterize them the same way that they describe themselves and the same way as the people at home. Otherwise, there were fewer descriptors listed than in the self-descriptions and people at home ones (a total of 34). Moreover, the teammate descriptions of the players, more than the others, showed evidence of similarities to Goffman's (1953;1956) acceptable manhood. The most common responses were that players thought their teammates would describe them as funny (twelve responses), as hard workers (seven responses), and as leaders (five responses). Funny was the most common response throughout all of the descriptions as the same word had not been used any more than nine times prior to this, although it still only consisted of 40% of the population, which continues to demonstrate that the players only view one another as somewhat the same, which was consistent with the surveys. Other common responses included talkative, easygoing, likeable, nice, outgoing, and knowing when to be funny and when to be serious. Examples of the ways in which the players could be funny included the following:

*Jeff (North Stars): I joke around in the room, which is kind of weird for a goalie considering we're all supposed to be kinda uptight and...kinda serious, but...I dunno, I...I think of it more as a regular position, so I just joke around and goof around with the guys, kinda—I keep them loose before a game. Everyone's like 'goalies are weird' or whatever, haha. I just float around the room goofing around, trying to keep them loose, make them laugh, lift their spirits. I'm always smiling, so...*

*Eric (Rockies): Funny. 'Cause I don't—since I'm younger, I can't say a lot of things 'cause I get fined...you have to pay money and stuff. Yeah. So...all the rookies—'cause I'm a rookie. If you say something bad, you*

*get—you've got to pay a fine. So I usually say something funny, like, not to—not towards anybody, just outside of the hockey team, so they all laugh. And I don't get fined! So...happens allllll the time! Doesn't matter what it is.*<sup>21 22</sup>

These responses were among several that demonstrated the ways in which the players thought their teammates would describe them as funny and the players themselves agreed that they did indeed make a point of being humorous around their teammates. The other two most common terms, leader and hard worker, are both consistent with Goffman's framework, which acts as further confirmation of the survey results, which also suggested that the players typically view one another through this same lens. None of these characteristics refer straightforwardly to gender and sexuality, which has been a continuous pattern throughout the self-description section of the interview, which also confirms that the players value a range of characteristics over being seen as overtly masculine or heterosexual.

Although acceptable manhood was the most relevant theory of masculinity at work in the teammates' descriptions, there was still minimal evidence of hegemonic masculinity. The teammate descriptions were the only ones to feature characteristics such as competitive, will do anything to win, strange due to dedication to academics, and often making jokes about girls or women and alcohol consumption. These characteristics only came up once in each case, however the fact that the team context was the only place in which they surface, combined with their striking relevance to hegemonic masculinity, made them worth mentioning. Seventeen-year-old Gary of the Golden Seals said that his teammates would describe him as funny because he's 'always doing dumb stuff'. As if quoting a gender-biased advertisement for automobiles (and giving credit to scholarship of hegemonic masculinity) Gary said his teammates would likely describe him in the following way:

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<sup>21</sup> There was a consensus among the players that rookies (players who were new to the team and typically younger) tended to be relatively quiet in the dressing room so as to not draw attention to themselves until they felt that they were active and accepted members of the team. Scholarship exists on this phenomena (Bryshun, 1998) and I also noticed in my interviews that three of the nine fifteen-year-olds with whom I spoke (André, Brian, and JJ) appeared shy and had less to say than their peers. One told me that it could be difficult playing with older teammates for the first time and learning the ins and outs of the team atmosphere as a newcomer.

<sup>22</sup> At least two of the six teams used monetary fines as a way to control players' behaviour. Upon asking Eric to elaborate, he said that fines typically ranged between two and fifteen dollars and would be administered for anything from being late for practice to knocking over a rack of hockey sticks to stepping on and dirtying the team's logo on the carpet in the dressing room.

*Goofy, funny—that type of thing. Umm... yeah. I do stupid stuff. I get my Jeep stuck. I make jokes about people, they make jokes with me, stuff like that. I make jokes about their girlfriends or somethin’—who they’re trying to date. Ummm...like, the past weekends that happened, drinkin’ or parties or something like that. Uhh... yeah.*

With its allusions to cars, alcohol, and ridiculing teammates for having love interests, this response caused me to label Gary as hegemonically masculine. In addition, he later stated that he was skeptical of homosexuality, as was his father, so a particular image of Gary had formed in my mind. With that said, he also actively asked me questions about homosexuality in sport such as how Michael Sam had been treated on his team and whether or not there was any difference between having a gay male teammate in the dressing room and having a straight female in the room when it comes to discomfort over being the object of someone’s desire. I found the latter question to be quite astute because it demonstrated that Gary had been thinking laterally about gender and sexuality in ice hockey and that he took some sort of critical interest in the prospect of having a gay teammate. This kind of thinking showed me that his worldview may be more advanced than that associated with hegemonic masculinity, which, in Connell’s view, would demand that he reject homosexuality at all costs, let alone speak about it with a woman such as myself. At this point, Gary’s was the only interview who demonstrated anything close to hegemonic masculinity and it was only in the hockey context because he had described himself as funny, outgoing, and nice in the context of the first interview questions. This suggested to me that hypermasculinity, although less relevant than acceptable manhood, might have more of a place in the hockey context than in the family context or even in the frame of how the players perceive themselves as individuals, however it was difficult to make this claim given that Gary was the only case of this nature and the surveys had predominantly indicated that hegemonic masculinity was not the best framework for characterizing the players’ self-perceptions and their perceptions of their teammates.

The second outlier related to hegemonic masculinity and hockey player culture was one player’s discussion of how he rejected an aspect of it and that his teammates referred to him as strange as a result. Seventeen-year-old Mike of the Rockies said that taking a particular interest in education was not common in the hockey context. Despite the fact that the players mostly all had high academic averages and my key informant’s teammates indicated that he should be interviewed because he was the most intelligent, being smart is associated more with acceptable

manhood, which demands that a man be both athletic and intelligent. Mike points to the fact that there is no room for academics within the hockey context when he states that his teammates would describe him as follows:

*I think they would describe me as funny and outgoing. Uhhh...I dunno. Also kinda strange, in a way, though. Haha. 'Cause...I dunno...I always do my homework on the bus... 'cause they never do homework on the bus, so I'm always doing homework and they think I'm kinda strange that way. Not how hockey players usually spend their time together, I guess...*

I found this response inconsistent considering that many players planned to attend university, get NCAA hockey scholarships, and had high academic averages. I had also witnessed an argument between two players during my time with the Golden Seals over who worked harder in Chemistry class compared to which grade they had each been assigned. I concluded that perhaps just because academics were important did not mean that they could not be relegated from the hockey context, thus making education a peripheral aspect of hockey culture that was addressed with the ridicule of those who brought their homework into team settings. Nonetheless, Mike's account was the only one of its kind and Goffman's work cannot be viewed as representative of the entire group.

To summarize, Goffman's work continues to provide the most solid ground on which a depiction of the players stands, however it cannot be said that a majority of the players exemplify this framework of masculinity—only that it is the most common. Nonetheless, a narrative of personhood that touches on masculinity (and not sexuality) has been shaped vaguely by the interviewees' responses. First, many of them stated that they were influenced to begin participating in hockey by a male family member. I was interested in seeing if that male family member would be listed later in the interview amongst the most important people in their lives, because this might reveal more about the influence that individual had on the players' attitudes towards homosexuality.

When describing themselves, they were most likely to use terms such as approachable, funny, nice, outgoing, friendly, and hard working. A considerable group presumed that the people at home would describe them as outgoing, nice, and easygoing, however, in some cases, the people at home were more likely to scrutinize the players. Another considerable group also suspected that their teammates would describe them as funny, hard working, and leaders. This meant that the players believed that they and their teammates would agree that the individual was

funny and hard working while the players and their housemates would agree more consistently that the individual was outgoing and hard working. None of the words appeared more than five times in all three contexts and I thus was not confident in reporting any consistent characteristics across the three. This serves as primary evidence that the players are perceived differently in each context and may suggest that, relatedly, they face different expectations in each context as well. My goal was to determine whether or not this mattered to them by asking later on who were the most important people in their lives—presumably, the people most important to them occupy the contexts that matter to them most. Secondary evidence of the existence of differing contexts lies in the minimal yet observable differences between frameworks of masculinity in each context. Although acceptable manhood came up most in the context of teammates and was detected in all three contexts, there were more traces of hegemonic masculinity in the teammate setting than in the other two. The players and their housemates were not likely to use hegemonically masculine terms compared to the teammates, which points to its relevance only in the sporting context. Most importantly, however, this part of the interview allowed me to obtain a more personalized account of who the players were that I was not able to access through using the surveys and this provided a primary casing of their lives from which their opinions and attitudes could be gleaned in the following sections of the interview.

### **On the Experience of Being a Participant**

The third question related more substantially to the study, asking the players to share their thoughts on the experience of having me around the team and completing the survey. This question often led to accounts of what the players knew about gender and sexuality beforehand. I quickly realized that the prompt asking them how their teammates reacted to the experience provided more information on the hockey context specifically, so I chose to use it throughout. This may have been because they were more comfortable recounting someone else's thoughts and actions instead of their own because it put them under less of a spotlight, however I did not question it as I obtained a wealth of information and did not want to make the player feel uncomfortable. While I do believe that it is necessary to push the players to think about the issues associated with gender and sexuality, I recognize that there may come a point in an interview where the respondent will feel pressured and, in turn, become reclusive, so I opted to err on the

side of caution and choose carefully when to investigate further.

I took note of the players' very first reactions to my question and then delved deeper into their more elaborate responses. Ten of the thirty used the word good to describe the experience, five used the word interesting, four said it was not a big deal, three said that they made a point to make sure they participated in the interview because they wanted to discuss the subject, two said that the study subject could not be avoided and was thus important to discuss, two said they were initially confused about how the topic related to hockey until I explained in my first meeting with them, one said he found the experience helpful in terms of his knowledge of the subject, one said he had gay people in his extended family, one said he was indifferent to the entire experience, and one said he was expecting it to be dumb, but it was not so bad in the end. I perceived this a generally positive reaction to the experience of participating in the study from the group.

In their elaborations of their thoughts on participating in the study so far, eighteen of the players commented on how they believed that the subject was important and that their time spent with me had been enriching in some way. One of the more lengthy and insightful responses came from seventeen-year-old Paul of the Golden Seals, who described his reaction to the experience in the following words:

*At first, I didn't know how that was gonna be connected to hockey, but like...once you fill out that test or survey or whatever and stuff and, like...the questions actually made ya start to think, like...wonder how they feel and how you feel...and it made a lot more sense. So...for me it's... a good learning experience, I guess—I dunno. Like, what I—when I read those questions, it was like.....if someone on our team actually was like that [gay] and...when you're sitting there talkin' and everyone's jokin' around about it and there's that one kid that...that feels like that [gay], and he's more or less just scared about people saying mean stuff...even if they're not actually making fun of sexuality at all...they just mean something is stupid or whatever. So it kinda makes you realize, more or less, that you kinda have to think before you say it, kinda thing. Realize that words you say are hurtful. But, at the same time, I don't..umm... I...do not feel attracted to the same sex, I guess? I feel that... this process would be different if you were... a... gay... person and were more or less kinda worried about what other people thought of you, I guess? Especially if no one knew, you'd be nervous, probably, but I'm open to these kinds of discussions. You can't deny that this is getting more important by the day. There's...there's gotta be gay hockey players out there. Well—there already are, more or less.*

The first thing I noticed about Paul's response is that he was uneasy about even using the word gay. He often paused before he said it or would get around it by saying things like 'feel that way' or 'someone who is like that' and even specifically avoided using a contraction when stating that he himself did not identify as homosexual, which seemed to indicate added effort at clarifying his own sexual orientation. I am not sure if this was because he was unfamiliar with it, disturbed by it, or was concealing some other thought, but I was not concerned at the moment. It was enough to notice the way he approached it for the time being and after having told me that he was heterosexual and had a girlfriend, my duty was to take that for face value. Nonetheless, Paul pointed to three important points in his response, all of which have fueled my investigation to date. First, ice hockey players do indeed use fag discourse. Second, that fag discourse is used with little regard for whether or not it offends a teammate, let alone a potentially gay teammate. Third, the subject of homosexuality in boys' and men's ice hockey is indeed becoming popularized and it would be virtually impossible to deny that there is a bigger push, more now than ever, for the acceptance of LGBTQ athletes in contemporary sporting spheres. This response, like many others, made me feel as though my intervention in the players' lives played some sort of role in propelling their already-established cognizance of LGBTQ issues in sport. As a further example, sixteen-year-old Richard of the Nordiques said that it made him stop and consider whether or not any of his teammates might be anything other than straight because no one would necessarily know if the individual felt as though he had to conceal his identity and that none of his teammates should feel the need to hide anything from the rest of the group. Seventeen-year-old John, also of the Nordiques, said that he was familiar with the *You Can Play Project* and that he was looking forward to discussing the subject and making sure that I knew that not all male ice hockey players were necessarily homophobic. It may also be useful to note that John was the individual who informed me of the possible reason that the Nordiques had a low participation rate in the study and said that he was disappointed in his teammates. In any case, the consensus was principally that participating in the study had been a positive event.

One participant stated early on in his reaction that he did not agree with homosexuality on the basis of his religion (Baptist), but that he did not judge or discriminate against others on the basis of sexual orientation because it only mattered that he personally adhered to his religion, not anyone else. In his own words:

*Turner (Rockies): Uhhhhh.....I think it's...it's good that, uh...to talk about, uh...like...everybody's, like...uh, sexual orientation and acceptance and stuff like that. And, uh...I'm not...I'm not for...uhhh...uhmm gay, but I don't get mad over it. I'm not scared of anybody with it. I—I accept....I don't accept what they do, but, like, I...am not...against them. Uh...only, I just...I dunno. I just grew up going to a Baptist church and stuff like that and...my parents were always kinda that way, so I follow my parents. As long as I'm following it...uh...I guess it doesn't...doesn't matter what, uh, everyone else, uh...does.*

I appreciated Turner's honesty because he functioned in a public society that had largely begun to oppose anti-gay attitudes and was still willing to share his politically less favoured opinion with me. I believe that this kind of honesty can lead to progressive discussions about homosexuality because changing the minds of those who disagree with it will not happen by stifling their voices and making them feel as though they should not share their opinion, but by listening to them and creating informative dialogue. With that said, as a researcher, it was not my place to impose my own opinion on Turner nor to question his any further. What mattered in the context of the study was that Turner constituted the first confirmed case of someone in my study population who disagreed with homosexuality, as well as the first confirmed case that homosexuality was not accepted in the context of his family and home life, meaning that for him, there were different expectations in his various 'backstages' and he chose to adhere to those of his family above all else. This is not to say that I believe that the hockey context and family context are always two separate 'backstage' areas; part of the aim of the study is to examine the players' interactions with family in order to determine if the most important people to them are also involved in hockey and what that says about the player's choice of self-presentation. For example, perhaps the fact that fathers were most likely to encourage their sons to play hockey suggests that the hockey context, or hockey culture, more broadly, extends to the home. This will be discussed later on in the chapter.

As an aside, I noticed that Turner referred to homosexuality with the same awkwardness as Paul—using the term gay incorrectly in a sentence, pausing before saying it, and also referring to it as something that someone would have, as if it were a particular condition. This misuse and hesitation suggested to me that the subject was likely one that the players had not discussed often and that perhaps made them uncomfortable, especially when discussing it with me, a stranger who they likely perceived as having a vested interest in it or may have even been a lesbian herself

and they did not want to offend me. I interjected comments about my partner when I thought it was appropriate, but had not done so with Paul and Tyler at that point. In theoretical terms, they were not yet familiar with my social expectations in the ‘backstage’ that our interactions had created and they had to decide how to present themselves with this in view. There was no evidence that this type of negotiation of their demeanour played a very important role in the study at this point.

The players typically continued to answer the question regarding their reactions to participating in the study by offering a brief explanation of their prior knowledge of gender and sexuality. In the cases that they did not share their level of education or awareness, I used the question as a prompt since it was useful for determining the part of the research question that sought to suss out their understandings of the two subjects. I discovered an entire range of knowledge from none at all to having a reasonable grasp of the meanings of gender and sexuality as well as social issues associated with them. None said that they would consider themselves experts on the subject, however.

### ***What did you know about gender and sexuality prior to entering the study?...***

Twelve of the players—almost half of the interview population—said that they were moderately to well-educated on the subject and cited experiences such as participating in school courses on social and sexual development, having friends in Gay-Straight Alliances, knowing people who identified as non-heterosexual, and seeing stories in the media about sexuality and sport, such as the story of Michael Sam, *You Can Play* initiatives, or TSN’s *reOrientation*. The survey results indicated that 84.2% of the entire study population had not heard of the *You Can Play Project* (see Appendix A6 for frequency distributions), which was reflected in the fact that only three of my interviewees said that they had heard about it. Granted, following the survey, some asked me what the Project was and upon answering them, some seemed frustrated with themselves because they had indeed heard about it and could not remember. Nonetheless, I considered John to be one of the players who best expressed his knowledge of gender and sexuality, both in and out of the hockey context, which he had alluded to in saying earlier that he was eager to speak with me about my study subject. As he spoke about his reaction to participating in the study, John said that although he struggles to remember what exactly ‘queer’

means, he was well-acquainted with the You Can Play Project and the Burke family and that his girlfriend's best friend was an active member of the Gay-Straight Alliance in his high school, so he was often involved in discussions of LGBTQ issues both at school and within the broader context of society, including the legalization of gay marriage. Aside from John, three other players seemed quite well-informed when it came to sexuality (although not gender) both in sport and out of it, which I can say with confidence may not have been the case ten or twenty years ago in competitive male youth ice hockey.

Ten of the players said that they did not consider themselves to have known much about gender and sexuality prior to participating in the study. In fact, Gary said the entire experience was new to him because he had never thought about gender or sexuality much and never realized that someone would conduct research on it, let alone in ice hockey. Others said they simply did not often encounter non-heteronormative or non-cis-gendered people, which enabled them to go through life without considering the subject in depth. My discussion with Ed, who lived in a particularly rural community, was a good example of the process by which an individual reflexively begins to notice his surroundings when asked to think of a subject for the first time. When I asked Ed if he felt that he knew much about gender and sexuality prior to entering my study, he spoke a lot about the visibility of different sexual orientations, remarking:

*Well, not LGB...T...? No idea what that meant. Haha. Uhhh... I dunno. I guess you taught me a lot of stuff. That...that Burke guy had two kids and one was gay. Haha.. Uhh...I never knew that there was a guy that came out in rugby. I never knew that. I'm not a rugby fan...but I'm...playing it this year in school. ...Uhhmmm, I don't see it too often around here....I see...Well...I—I do see...I think there's a...I think there's, like, a couple or two at school that go out that are gay. Oh, and...know what? There's this kid in my class who's asexual....? I think? He, uh, he says he doesn't like guys or girls. But he hangs out with mostly girls, so... I dunno. I think people think he's gay and won't admit it or something. And, uh...I see it more in big cities when I'm in them. I just don't...don't think much about it. Not really here... Everyone is pretty much the same here. Yeah...*

Ed's response, along with the reactions to the You Can Play question on the survey, demonstrates that the simple act of starting conversations with young male athletes about gender and sexuality will go a long way in showing them what they already know about the subject and will also catalyze positive action where meaningful social issues in the sporting context are concerned. By shedding light on these issues and pointing out that they are not as foreign as we think, we are

creating visibility, which is the first step in normalizing a range of sexual orientations and gender identities.

The players were quite open about what exactly they did not know. For instance, seven of the thirty interviewees said that they did not know what LGBTQ stood for. This was not surprising given that just over 60% of the entire study population was unable to fully indicate what the acronym meant (see Appendix A7 for frequency distribution). Moreover, two of the interviewees specified that they were confused about the meaning of the word ‘queer’ because they thought it may have been offensive. For instance, John said “I thought that was like, a wrong or a homophobic word. I understand that queer means, like... doesn’t it mean unordinary in, like Britain or something? Haha.” Sean expressed the same concern, commenting on the fact that his understanding of the word queer did not fit with the overarching goal of my research. In his words: “I actually didn’t know about that. I thought before that it probably meant that you’re stupid or gay or something...but it seemed like a bad word and not one people like you would use, you know? So I just...left it blank.” I anticipated the players’ lack of knowledge of the re-appropriation of the word queer as I had also struggled to understand it in recent years. I explained to John and Sean that the word was once considered derogatory or rude, but was also now used by people who do not adhere to social norms, often including non-normative displays of gender and sexual orientation or preference. I obtained this definition from the PFLAG website and while I am aware of the fact that it is a simplistic and non-problematized definition, I felt that it was appropriate in the context of the study; the goal was not to make the players dexterous gender and sexuality scholars, but I was pleased with the unintended outcome of raising awareness among them.

At this point in the interviews, I felt that I had a relatively clear image of the players’ reactions to participating in the study, which provided a solid idea of their levels of understanding and some of their attitudes towards homosexuality in general. Since the dialogue was fruitful and the players mostly all seemed comfortable, I chose to ask several of them how they thought that their teammates reacted to the experience of participating in the study. As mentioned previously, I suspected that I might be able to harvest more information from interviewees by taking them out of the spotlight and asking them to speak about someone else. This would also provide me with more personalized accounts of team dynamics and interactions within the hockey context. I was also motivated to ask the question because of the situation with the Nordiques, where it

appeared that one player had intentionally or unintentionally led his teammates to forego participation. Although I have stated repeatedly that I was not in search of any kind of truth throughout the research, it would be disingenuous of me to claim that the responses regarding how teammates reacted to participating in the study did not reveal what I expect was a more accurate big picture of the study.

### ***How have your teammates reacted to this experience?...***

For the first time in the interviews, I felt that players were trying to diplomatically and politely express things that they thought might upset me or negatively affect me. Put differently, this was the first time that I understood that not everyone took my research seriously and that not everyone thought it was useful and important. While some players came out and said this, some were rather dismissive of the question, which caused me to wonder if they had chosen not to share parts of their experiences. These kinds of responses included fifteen-year-old Gilbert of the North Stars, who said “Euhhh... Y’ont réagi normalement. C’était bien.” (They reacted normally. It was good.) without elaboration or Kirk, who was otherwise quite talkative, but curtly responded, “They all reacted the same. They’re all easygoing. It was fine.” Nonetheless, there is reason to believe that reactions were mixed. The following five quotations demonstrate the range of reactions as well as a bit of the diplomatic re-routing or sanitization of answers that I said I detected:

*James (Whalers): A couple people thought you were gonna be, like...in the dressing room, which...woulda been weird. But uhhhh...some of them were kinda, like...still, kinda, like...on the fence about it. I dunno...maybe scared to say something because they’re scared it might get back to the team and they’ll get made fun of or something, but...Most of them are taking it pretty good. They didn’t really say anything bad about it...as far as I’ve heard. No one is, like, actually against it or anything.*

*Gary (Golden Seals): Uh.....I don’t like. Like.....Haha. I dunno...I think they saw it as more of a joke. Well—well, not like, a joke. But like...I dunno...it’s just...kinda new to talk about stuff like that, so they don’t know how to... handle it, I guess.....Sorry. haha.*

*Richard (Nordiques): ...Uhhh... I think they’re fine with it. I mean...I mean, it’s kinda like...we’re all looking at each other ‘cause no one really wants to step up and do it, but like... ‘cause they’re kinda like.. if I*

*do this what will other people think? And all that stuff, but, like, really, it's not a big deal. And... well, our coach just, like, threw it on us, really. And we're like, okay, but we have, kinda, other commitments and he left this to the last minute but he kept reminding us, but... I dunno. But it was also, like, everyone kinda like 'what's going on?' and, like...but, I mean... once, like, when you really think about it, it's not bad. It's just...just trying to help you out with your degree and stuff, really. And, like...it's a survey. To get information. And it's anonymous... so I dunno what their problem was.*

*Benoit (North Stars) : Bien. Y'on pris ça —ben, on niaisait, juste...par rapport au projet—tu nous a entendu. Comme, on juste...on...niaisait un ti peu parce que c'est ça qu'on fait, la, mais comme groupe on prend ça au sérieux, pis on sait que les niaiseries sont pas une vraie question de genre ou sexualité...ça bien été.*

(Good. They took it—well, we were joking around, just...in relation to the project—you heard us. Like, we just...we...were joking around a bit because that's what we do, but as a group we take it seriously and we know that our jokes aren't actually about gender and sexuality...It went well).

*Lyle (Golden Seals): Umm...uhhh...They reacted... I dunno. Some of them may be a bit...weirded out by it, I dunno. Just like.....I dunno. Just...it's awkward for some people, I guess. For a lot of people it would be, especially when you're in a room with a group of guys talking about that, it's just—kind of—it's weird—you don't know what people will say if you talk. That would be...that would be the most—that would be awkward. That would be what's going through my mind if I talked about it. Especially if I thought I would say something that would make them call me gay or even just make fun of me. I tried to only say things when I was fairly confident in what I was saying. ....I dunno. There's like... a certain point, if like, say if they cross that point, of like, talking about it, then, people might start to think that....but I think that they're mostly—they're comfortable talking around the team, but...But I think most of them, just like, they're fine with it. They're having fun with it. I mean, no one expected Gary to ask a question like that out loud like he did. Everybody looked over! I think they were surprised. I mean he talks a lot and is open and stuff, but I didn't think he would come up with questions like that.*

Despite the excessive pauses, stumbles, and rephrasing, these snippets were some of the most compelling of the whole interview process, not only because they demonstrated some

apprehension of the project, but because in the same breath, they also explicitly indicated that there is indeed still a fear of what others will think or say if a player takes any kind of genuine interest in gender and sexuality aside from fag discourse or girls and women. With that said, it was evident that not everybody felt this way and that there is indeed room for meaningful conversations about the subject despite the attempts of others to bridle or ridicule the activity (I expect that those who were not enthused about the project did not volunteer to be interviewed). In the end I had an 85% participation rate on the survey and 100% for the interviews, so these mixed reactions have only served to complicate and enrich my study results, providing a robust account of the sometimes messy relations between and among athletes as society moves towards the acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQ community members. One might expect a researcher to wish for a streamlined and clear answer to the research question, but it was here in these conflicting accounts and expressions of skepticism and concern that evidence of the possibly changing nature of hockey masculinity came to fruition. They were willing to discuss challenging subjects even when they were not sure how to interpret those subjects themselves and that, perhaps more than anything, is how both the raising of awareness and the advancement of scholarship on gender and sexuality in male sporting contexts will occur.

In the way of a summary of the population's reactions to participating in the study, it can be said that it was positively received overall. Almost half of the interviewees considered themselves moderately to well-educated on the subject and said that they found the process of meeting me, filling out the survey, and speaking to me fairly interesting and beneficial. Their main sources of knowledge relating to gender and sexuality were school courses on social and sexual development, having friends in Gay-Straight Alliances, knowing people who identified as non-heterosexual, and seeing stories in the media about sexuality and sport, such as the story of Michael Sam, You Can Play initiatives, or TSN's *reOrientation*. This visibility caused by the media is precisely one of the ways that Anderson (2009; 2011) argued that young people have become more familiar with homosexuality, specifically. The most common query among the players was what LGBTQ stood for, as both the surveys and interviews revealed that they were not entirely certain, which suggests that perhaps homosexuality constitutes the limit of their awareness when it comes to non-heteronormativity and non-gender conformity (with the exception of Ed, who brought up asexuality).

Most importantly, this portion of the interview demonstrated that there does indeed exist a

fear, as Kimmel (1994) alluded to in his work on homophobia, that players will be perceived as gay or even jokingly referred to as gay. Very few seem to be willing to stand out and speak openly about gender and sexuality in sport from a rights or awareness perspective; that is, outside of fag discourse and the sexualization of girls and women. Both the participation rates and interviews suggest that this fear is not as rampant as it might have been when Kimmel first wrote about it, however there are still traces of it, perhaps best evidenced by the case of the Nordiques, who largely opted not to participate in the study.

### **The Prospect of Having a Gay Teammate**

Following the third question that more generally approached the study topic, the fourth question very pointedly asked what the players thought it is like or might be like to have a gay teammate (it quickly became clear that, to their knowledge, no one had a gay teammate) in order to address the part of the research question that asked about their attitudes towards homosexuality in the context of a sport that is said to encourage homophobia. This question was used to qualify the survey responses on the same topic and to obtain further insight. After all, the survey data did indicate that the players might have some reservations when it came to the idea of having gay coaches or teammates.

The most useful probe for this question when the players had trouble answering was to use Michael Sam as an example and have respondents comment on his experiences, although only eight of the thirty interviewees knew exactly who he was, so it was only useful to an extent. Four respondents said that they had never heard of him at all and the rest said that they had seen him on television and on social media, but that they were not entirely sure why exactly he was so important. In any case, the general consensus among the players regarding the prospect of having a gay teammate was that there would be challenges associated with the experience at first, however the situation would eventually become commonplace to them. Indeed, twenty-nine of the thirty respondents indicated that there would be some sort of discomfort from a teammate. The one respondent, Sean, said that there would be no problems at all with a gay hockey player on his team. In his words, "I think it would be fine. I think everybody's...pretty good to each other even if one of us was gay or...whatever. Yeah." At the risk of dismissing Sean's positive response, I continued to probe the possible discomfort among the other players.

Nine of the thirty interviewees said that the showers would be the biggest concern within the frame of having a gay teammate because the players would feel that they were on display or might attract unwarranted attention in the situation, although this fear would likely subside. The best example of this was outlined by James, who said the following:

*Hmmm...the only thing is maybe, like, showering or...getting changed in front of each other. That's kinda, like... the basics, I guess. Like...I wouldn't want someone looking at me, like...romantically or whatever, and...while I was changing and stuff like that. That's the only reason why it would be weird. Like, it's different from, like, the gym or something that's more public... 'cause...I find we—we're like more of a family...on the team. Like... the very first year might be a little weird, but...right now, it's just everyone's a big family and no one cares. Like... you can tell anybody anything and you know that...you might get teased a little bit if it's something bad, but...if it's...like, a secret...most of them won't tell. Like, you get pretty well—like, if you have close friends, you know, like...you can go to them for anything. Tell them secrets. So if someone was gay, they would eventually become part of that family, but at the same time, we would care more at first because the dressing room is, like, private for us. Not like the gym. So letting in someone who...is gay or whatever, that would be tough for us at first, but then they'd just become part of that family.*

For James, the dressing room is a sacred space where homosexuality has not existed, whereas the locker room at the gym is more public and it matters less what kind of people are in it because those people are not close to him. While it may be a bit presumptuous of the players to assume that a gay teammate would indeed be interested in them based on having viewed them unclothed (Ed and Turner added that they would not be okay with a teammate trying to flirt with them), it was still a common concern that merits further scholarly investigation. I chose not to pursue the subject further because the players often reduced the situation to not being gay themselves, although I suspect that there is a more deeply engrained sense of insecurity at work that deserves more attention than I was able to give it in that moment.

While Jeff acknowledged that the showers might be difficult for some of his teammates, when I informed him that Michael Sam chose to shower after his teammates for similar reasons, Jeff said that was unacceptable on the part of the teammates. He sums up his opinion in the following snippet:

*I said to you earlier...I'm an open person. I'm...well, I mean—at first it would probably be awkward, like, in the shower or something, and they aren't really going to talk about girls with you in the same way, but...after a while you get used to it and it's just...at the end of the day, it's your teammate, so... I mean... you eventually...like, especially with the shower—instead of excluding one kid, you make the...the other twenty get used to it and... I mean, you—you don't wanna make one kid wait the extra forty minutes. Like, I'm usually the last one out and I'm usually out...probably fifteen minutes after everyone else! So for someone to have to wait for me to leave...I—it wouldn't bother me that much. That wouldn't be right.*

Jeff viewed the situation in a decidedly humanistic way that dictated that no one should be treated differently on the basis of sexual orientation, nor should they have to freeze or stink any longer than anyone else. Responses like Jeff's work to contradict the literature that argues that homosexual male athletes are consistently and almost systematically excluded from the male team sport context. With that said, however, Jeff's comment about how the players would relate with regards to girls and women brought me back to my earlier reflection on whether or not a gay teammate would be more likely to be accepted if he was able to function in a hypermasculine atmosphere, using fag discourse and adhering to hegemonic masculinity. I explored the idea further when given the opportunity by sixteen-year-old Patrice of the North Stars.

When asked for his thoughts on the prospect of having a gay teammate, Patrice said the experience would make him reconsider his use of fag discourse. He said:

*J'veux dire, comme...peut-être les douches pour certains gars...chevas. Tu te sentirais—ben, pas que tu te sentirais mal à l'aise...mais...tu dirais—comme, je penserais plus à ce que j'dirais. Comme, j'dirais pas le mot 'gai' pis les affaires de même... j'essayerais de...plutôt juste parler d'autres affaires avec lui pis pas de faire de blagues à propos de la sexualité. Mais j'le traiterais pas différemment des autres gars non plus, là. Comme...des fois, juste, 'aw c'est gai', comme, ça veut dire c'est stupide ou des affaires de même. C'est pas pour dire rien de méchant contre les gens qui sont gais. Si y'avait un gars dans la chambre...Juste pas...pour pas l'insulter indirectement, tu sais? Je serais beaucoup plus prudent, c'est certain.*

(I mean, like...maybe the showers for certain guys...I dunno. You'd feel—well, not that you would feel uncomfortable...but...you'd say—like, I would think more about what I said. Like, I wouldn't say the word 'gay' and things like that...I'd try to...speak more about other things with him and not make jokes about sexuality. But I wouldn't treat him

differently than the other guys, either. Like...sometimes, just, 'aw that's gay', like, it means it's stupid or things like that. It's not to say anything mean against people that are gay. If there was a guy in the room...just not...to not insult him indirectly, you know? I would be much more careful, that's for sure.)

The sense I got from Patrice is that fag discourse would have to stop in the dressing room out of respect for a gay teammate, meaning that at least Patrice was aware that language of this nature could be hurtful even if it was not intended to offend the people at the root of its use. In this sense, Patrice is alluding to the possibility that gay ice hockey players would not always be expected to use fag discourse in order to be accepted and included in the dressing room. Indeed, Anderson (2011) did argue that this was the case and that inclusive masculinity makes room for different expressions of masculinity regardless of sexual orientation. With that said, this was the only evidence that both fag discourse and hypermasculinity would not apply to a gay ice hockey player fitting in with teammates, therefore this should be one of the first points of enquiry if and when a professional hockey player becomes openly gay.

One response to the question about having a gay teammate that did not necessarily relate to the research question, but merited attention, was Mario's reaction to the idea of having a gay teammate. Mario, who was seventeen and played for the Nordiques, said that the showers might be awkward at first, however, it would not bother him personally. What he said next, however, was contradictory in nature. He began by stating that homosexuality is a choice. Specifically, Mario said that homosexuality is "something that—that's their choice and, like if they choose to be gay, then you just gotta...accept that, I guess. It's not like I'd degrade them for that at all or anything. It's just...kinda just accept them." I wondered if perhaps Mario meant that it was a player's decision to be openly gay or not, however I did not ask for clarification because the origins of homosexuality are far beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, Mario's statement caught me by surprise given the debates over whether or not homosexuality is indeed a choice with the popular belief being that it is not (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2013; Horn & Heinze, 2011; Whisman, 2012). Mario's statement was the only one of its kind and did little to answer my research question, however I felt that it should be documented given that it speaks to the ways in which the players understand gender and sexuality.

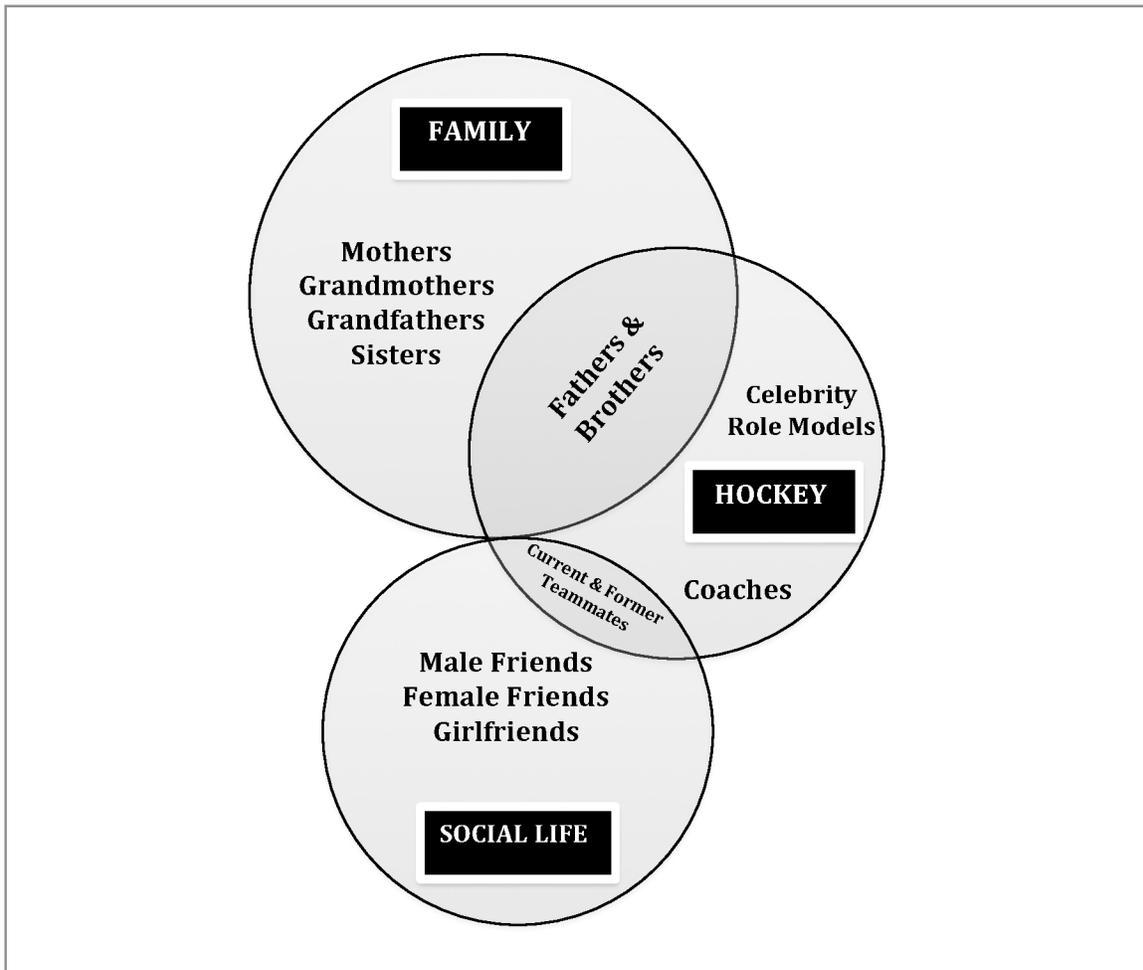
Both the surveys and the interviews confirmed that, overall, the study population would likely view having a gay teammate as a challenge at first, particularly when it came to showering

with them in the dressing room, however these concerns would eventually subside. I found the players to be quite open to the idea of having a gay teammate despite their reservations and would argue that the only way to address those reservations would be for them to actually have a gay teammate because they seem quite attached to the idea that naked bodies necessitate sexual attraction. This may be a case where having conversations about the subject would not be enough; it sounded like they would need to have the lived experience of showering with, interacting with, and playing hockey with a gay teammate in order to speak more confidently on the experience. Jeff did speak about a former teammate on a previous team who announced to some close friends, including Jeff, that he was gay, however the individual had stopped playing hockey after that point, so Jeff still had no real experience with a teammate who was openly gay. I will discuss this further in the section of this chapter on key informants.

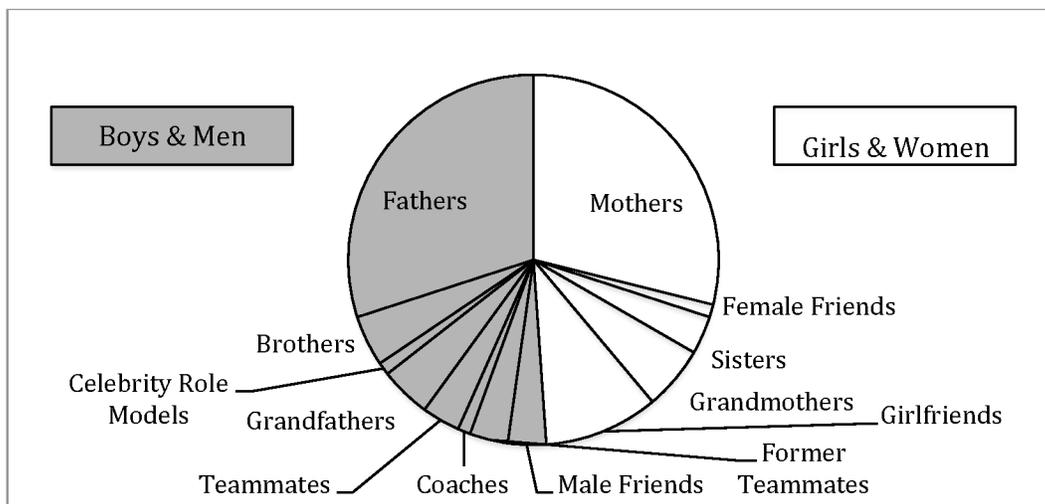
### **Valued Relationships with Others**

The fifth and final portion of the interview was geared towards addressing the final portion of the research question which asked how the players' interactions with others shape their attitudes towards homosexuality. I had participants choose three people that they considered most important to them at the time and had them describe those people and their relationships in order to determine which 'backstages' these individuals occupy and how they view homosexuality in the event that their attitudes were related to those of the players. All ninety people that the players discussed identified as heterosexual and the group was divided between 46 people who identify as boys or men and 44 who identify as girls or women, meaning that overall, men are not necessarily more valued than women in the players' lives. In descending order, the individuals the players selected as most important to them were as follows: fathers (27), mothers (26), girlfriends (9), current and former teammates (6), grandmothers (5), grandfathers (4), brothers (4), sisters (3), male friends (3), female friends (1), male coaches (1) and male celebrity role models (1). Chart 7.01 on page 146 depicts the distribution of these relationships according to how they relate to one another, visually confirming an overlap of particular contexts in the Midget AAA ice hockey player's life. Chart 7.02 on page 147 depicts them according to gender identity. The gendered nature of these relationships will be discussed, as will the meaning and significance of the overlaps within them.

**Chart 7.01: Mapping the Contexts of Male Major Midget AAA Ice Hockey Players' Relationships with the Most Important People in their Lives**



**Chart 7.02: Distribution of Important Relationships in Male Midget AAA Ice Hockey Players' Lives According to Gender Identity**



Based on the interviews and the charts that portray their content above, the players tend to value their mothers, fathers, and, girlfriends above all others. I have chosen to focus on these three groups so as to mirror the way the question was posed in the interview—‘tell me about the three most important people in your life at the moment.’ For the purposes of the analysis, the current and former teammates will be combined in to one group since both sets of relationships were formed through hockey and maintained outside of it as well. Additionally, celebrity role models and players’ relationships with grandparents, non-hockey friends, and siblings have been omitted from the analysis for three reasons: First, collectively, these three groups represented less than a quarter of the people most important to the players, adding up to anywhere between 1% and 6% (none of which were deemed exceptions worth discussing). Second, the players did not speak about or allude to hockey, gender, or homosexuality when discussing any of these people, other than the fact that they all identified as heterosexual and that grandparents would be much less educated on gender and sexuality than younger generations, which is made clear throughout other parts of the interviews that are analyzed in depth. Put differently, the players did not add anything new that would help answer the research questions when discussing their relationships with these individuals. Third and last, to report on all of these relationships would disproportionately emphasize the various extended contexts of the players’ lives in a study that sought primarily to address the players’ themselves. With this in view, the most representative relationships have been selected for discussion, such as the three most common responses (fathers, mothers, and girlfriends) and those that relate most to hockey and homosexuality. The analysis will then end with a brief analysis of Richard’s choice of his coach because his case was relative and not representative, but did offer a new perspective on Richard’s interactions in a hockey context.

### ***Fathers...***

To begin, the analysis will address the nature of the players’ relationships with their fathers because the fathers were listed most often as one of the most important people in the players’ lives and also because this portion of the interview extended the analysis of the fact that fathers were typically responsible for encouraging the players to participate in hockey from a young age. Taken together, all of this would suggest that fathers play a role in the ways the

players' experience masculinity and perhaps in shaping their attitudes towards homosexuality, however it became apparent that, for the most part, masculinity and sexual orientation occupied little space in the players' interactions with their fathers. As Charts 7.01 and 7.02 demonstrate, fathers occupy a considerable part of both the players' hockey and family lives or 'backstages.'

Thirteen of the thirty interviewees spent upwards of five minutes discussing their fathers, which amounted to a considerable duration in interviews that lasted approximately thirty minutes and covered four substantial subjects. The players spoke about their fathers' hockey careers, their employment, how well they did (or did not) get along with one another, and what they admired about them. I also asked the players how their fathers felt about heterosexuality in order to compare these accounts with the players'. As far as I could discern (I did not ask), one player of the thirty was not involved with his father and three others had divorced parents, however they were still involved with both parents. Four of them have fathers working away from home, which has implications for their relationships.

I found myself surprised at the players' willingness to provide detail and reflect on their relationships—they were willing to divulge information about fathers who were gravely ill, fathers who worked tirelessly to pay for their son's hockey, fathers who dealt with alcoholism in their families, fathers and sons who were both stubborn and fought a lot as a result—all aspects of boys' and men's lives that are perceived as being strictly under wraps in terms of their struggles and emotions. In other words, to adhere to hegemonic masculinity would dictate that these subjects are not up for discussion. But are they up for discussion with women? The experience has left me wondering if these stories were elicited by the changing nature of expectations where masculinity is concerned, by my skill level as an interviewer, or by the players' possible perception of me as nurturing or empathetic. I suspect that it may have been a mix of all of the above, however I remain unconditionally thankful that they were willing to discuss their relationships with their fathers with me. This is not to say that they did not provide the same detail when discussing their other relationships—I will attend to those later in the chapter.

The bulk of my discussions with the players about their fathers were centered on how they like to spend their time together, the nature of their every day conversations, what the players admire about their fathers, and whether or not they perceive their fathers as having any kind of anti-gay attitudes. With few exceptions, the players enjoyed watching hockey with their

fathers and talking about hockey with them as well, which immediately affirms that the hockey and family contexts overlap quite a bit amongst these relationships. Indeed, seventeen of the players said that hockey is the main topic of conversation between them and their fathers. Stephan very enthusiastically stated this, exclaiming “It’s pretty much all me and my Dad talk about together, really—hockey. My hockey, NHL hockey—doesn’t matter, haha, we talk about it!”

Six of the players noted that their conversations about hockey with their fathers tended to involve getting advice on how to improve their level of play or which direction to take in the future, such as how to balance hockey and university. For example, Lyle grew up learning about hockey from his father, who had a try-out with a professional team, but was cut late in training camp. Lyle recalls spending a lot of time learning the cognitive side of the game from his father:

*Usually we’ll watch the hockey game and he gives me, like, he’ll pause the game and stop me from watching and explain what just happened and go on about plays and stuff. Like, try to teach me about it. When I was a little kid he used to have me, like—I used to have a board and I used to have to, like, trace where the puck would go and then he’d get me to look at it and say ‘Well, if the puck’s here, it’s goin’ here and blah blah.’ That’s how I learned most of my stuff about hockey and...still today, he makes me do stuff like that—watchin’ the game.*

Similarly, Sean says that he treasures the time he spends with his father because his father works far away from home, so when he is in town, he spends time helping Sean improve his game:

*Dad...he started working [out of town] three years ago...but, he’s been there for me since I was, like—since I was born...but...the last three years have been kind of difficult on me and my Mom ‘cause we’ve been trying to...stay clean between us, not fight and stuff, make sure school’s good and hockey’s good and... But...when he’s home, it’s...more me trying to hang out with him, go for drives or...he’ll take me to hockey and Mom will come later...just so that we can talk and...catch up and...him telling me what I can do on the ice to make my game better. He played up into Junior A and then he...started fighting so he stopped, haha, but his opinion is important to me. It always works...so...it’s good when he’s around.*

In both cases, it is evident that fathers are dedicated to ensuring that their sons are improving as hockey players. Sean’s account of speaking with his father in the car led me to wonder if meaningful interactions with or between boys and men take place in settings where those

involved are not facing one another and thus evacuate the personal aspect of the interaction. These settings could include driving in the car or watching television because the ability to look away or briefly focus on something else removes some of the pressure on the individual and, above all else, ensures that no disquieting emotional intimacy is created between them. Ed also noted that he enjoyed getting hockey advice from his father as they drove to practice and, tangentially, Paul said that one of his favourite things to do was go for long drives with his grandfather and listen to his stories about ‘the olden days.’ Indeed, eight of the players specified that it was their fathers who brought them to hockey (at least until some of them obtain drivers’ licenses and could drive themselves). Vehicles thus play a key role in the players’ interactions with their fathers and other male family members by forcing them to spend time together and facilitating conversation.

Aside from hockey, the players said they also enjoyed outdoor activities with their fathers. Jeff enjoyed hunting with his father. Mario and Mike liked to take trips on their four-wheelers with their fathers. Some enjoyed doing manual labour together on cars or in the yard, such as Ed and Gary or seventeen-year-old Todd of the Golden Seals (Gary was the only one of the thirty interviewees who said that his father was not very interested in hockey, so they rarely spoke about it). Kevin, Eric, and John both enjoyed watching movies with their fathers. Sean, Lyle, and sixteen-year-old Roch (of the Thrashers) also all said that their fathers often spoke to them about girls, safe sex, and the proper way to treat women. Sean says his father told him that if he needed condoms, his father would go get them and that he should not hesitate to ask any questions about sex. Lyle said he found those conversations off-putting however: “I don’t really like that, though, because it just, I dunno, kind of weird, my Dad talking to me about that stuff—ugh, so awkward! [shakes head in disgust]. I guess it’s gotta happen though.”

Another aspect of the players’ relationships with their fathers where hockey was concerned was accounts of the times when hockey had got between them. Two players, Lyle and Todd, said that there were times when their fathers coached them at younger ages that they took the sport too seriously. Todd recalls being embarrassed by his father’s conduct at the rink:

*He used to...he used to be my coach when we were younger and that was...kinda...it was different, haha. He...he used to get really into it and he... used to get kinda mad at me when I wasn’t doin’ somethin’, but I really appreciated him doin’ it because it made me the hockey player I am today, really...and gave me....heart...to keep going and...he used to—whenever he wasn’t coaching he used to be standin’ in the stands yellin’*

*and waving his arms and going on, haha. Ugh! And then Mom would be sittin' there right embarrassed and quiet [makes a cringing motion]. I dunno if I was embarrassed.....I was just kinda.....okay, yeah I was embarrassed! Haha. But, whenever he stopped...like, it changed...I played different right away; I played better. And he did help me; I played better 'cause of him. But...I think everyone liked it better when he'd quiet down, haha.*

Lyle said that his relationship with his father also improved once his father stopped coaching him. Indeed, Lyle, Todd, and Kirk all said that they were a lot like their fathers and that their shared shortcomings often contributed to their falling outs. Almost as a carbon copy of Kirk's response about how his teammates would describe him, he reflected on his relationship with his father and bellowed, "He's got a short fuse, too! We're exactly the same!" I never got the sense that any of the players' fathers crossed any barriers of acceptable conduct like the aggressive hockey parents whom Robidoux & Bocksnick (2010) observed, however the fathers' passion and the importance they placed on hockey was certainly palpable because it was the only context in which the players' said that their fathers put a lot of pressure on them (and it could be argued that Todd and Kirk's fathers might be verbally aggressive to an extent). In any case, hockey was clearly a main component, if not the only component, in several of the players' relationships with their fathers. Whether or not this translated into shared expressions of masculinity, however, remained to be seen.

Hockey-related altercations aside, the players offered several accounts of how they admired their fathers. Todd, Mario, Stephan, and sixteen-year-old Donald of the Thrashers all emphasized the fact that their fathers work incessantly to pay for hockey. Todd appeared quite emotional when speaking about it because he viewed his father's commitment to paying for hockey as a reflection of his father's life struggles:

*Dad works so hard for the money he gets, then, like...I feel so bad 'cause, like, he throws it into me like it's nothing, not a big thing. Like, it's a lot of money to play this hockey, but he does it. And we're not exactly the richest family around. Dad worked so hard. Like, I feel bad about—like...he comes to all my games and it's a lot of money to do that. He tries so hard.....it's really encouraging. Like... like I feel so bad for him, a lot of the—like, he had a lot of troubles growing up, I guess, and he does so much for me, like...he really turned his life around, I guess. Like...his father was a really bad alcoholic...um, and him and my grandmother split up after the...after my two uncles and my Dad were born, so...but,*

*anyway, like, he hitchhiked anywhere he went and, like, walked to school every day and all that kind of stuff. He's only...thirty-five? He had me when I—he was seventeen. So that's like me having a kid right now. He graduated the year I was born...yep. So.....I really look up to him. Him and my Mom stayed together. I really look up to them both for that reason. I dunno...maybe they didn't want to, but it's really nice that they did. For me.*

Similarly, Donald admires how hard his father works to support their family and Donald's participation in ice hockey:

*My father...Uh...he's there for me, tries to guide me in what direction to go... He's passionate about a lot of things. Uh...he works all the time. Uh, he has two jobs he works. Government and actually, he owns his own business with his brothers and...has a hard time, but my Mom helps him out with that and...puts food on the table and...helps my Mom. I mean, uh... like working—he probably doesn't get enough sleep. He comes home at, like, midnight, sleeps 'til...six—six hours, then back at it. Keeps workin' ...And a lot of that goes to my hockey, you know? Sometimes I don't think he knows how much I appreciate it that he's...doing stuff like that.*

On a lighter note, Mario said he respects his father's dedication to paying for hockey and raising children and that he considers his father a role model:

*I guess, uhhh...he buys me my hockey sticks. Haha. Yeah. Uh...and...well, I guess he's just part of my every day life. Ummm, and I guess he'd be a role model of mine too. I just admire that he takes so much out—uh, so much time out of his day, probably every day, for stuff like hockey. I have a sister as well, so, he takes his time, uh...every day he puts us in front of his work, like, our—his family in front of his work, so...I guess, like, obviously... you hope any parent would do that, but that doesn't always happen, so, I—I respect my Dad for doing stuff like that and I think that he—he's really, like, along with my Mom too—he's really done a good job at raising three good kids, and uh....like, it's not like we have any troubles at home or anything, so...he's a role model of mine and, uh...that was—that's...that means a lot to me. That he can balance work and life and pay for everything and be there for us. I wouldn't be in hockey without his help, so...*

These accounts of fathers working to pay for hockey and take care of their families (including their sons' appreciation of their effort) produce two kinds of narratives. On the one hand, these accounts could be read as conventional stories of men as breadwinners, being committed to supporting the household, and working to maintain hockey culture in the male family lineage. On

the other hand, the narratives could be read as both the players and their fathers exhibiting the tenets of acceptable manhood or inclusive masculinity (it could presently be both since discussions of sexual orientation have not yet been interjected into the analysis and the two frameworks share many of the same characteristics otherwise). These players view their fathers as hard working in the context of their careers, as courageous, responsible, dependable, and intelligent. Some of them view their fathers as athletic; Lyle said he enjoys admiring all of his father's hockey trophies. Gilbert and Benoit said that they wanted to play hockey because their fathers were so successful in it and Patrice said that his father was good at all sports. The ways in which the players depicted their fathers and the ways in which they were willing to convey that, emotionally, their fathers meant a lot to them resonated much more with inclusive masculinity and acceptable manhood than with hegemonic masculinity. While hegemonic masculinity does make room for the adoration of male heroes, such narratives are centered on toughness and bravery and typically not shaped by emotional responses. Whether or not one narrative will prevail will be determined throughout the discussion of how the players' fathers view sexuality. Aside from their appreciation of their fathers working hard to pay for hockey, three of the players said that they wished they could work as hard as their fathers, one said he would like to be as rich and handsome as his father, and another said that his father has a lot of pressure placed on him at work and is effective at not taking that stress out on his children.

The aspect of the players' relationships with their fathers that interested me most was whether or not and in what context anything related to LGBTQ communities or issues came up in their discussions. I suspected that, when compared to the players' attitudes around homophobia and heterosexuality, this information might help round out the extent to which fathers influence the players and whether or not this had anything to do with hockey. I began by asking the players if they thought their fathers would know the definitions of the words in the first section of the survey.

With regards to fathers' level of knowledge of terminology and issues associated with gender and sexuality, the consensus amongst eighteen of the thirty players was that their fathers likely were not as well-educated as the players' generation would be and four of them pointed out that their fathers' fathers (the players' grandfathers) would know even less, which is not altogether surprising given the generational gap. With that said, however, ten of the players said that the subject has not come up in conversation with their fathers, so they could not be sure.

When I asked Kirk if his father would know what LGBTQ stood for, Kirk offered a spirited “Oh, no way in Hell! I didn’t even know what it meant!” There continues to be a pattern of incognizance where this acronym is concerned considering that 36.8% of survey respondents were unable to identify any of its words at all, which perhaps indicates that it is not unreasonable that their fathers would also not have any knowledge of the term if we are to accept that knowledge and awareness are increasing amongst younger generations.

Regarding the fathers’ views of homosexuality, none of the players’ responses connected to hockey, however four of the players who communicated that their fathers had any kind of negative attitudes towards homosexuality were sons of hockey players. At the same time, however, six of the fathers who played hockey had no problems with homosexuality, so to argue that familial participation in hockey has any bearing on attitudes towards homosexuality is not borne out by my findings. Indeed, according to the players, their fathers’ attitudes and opinions were quite divided. Nine players said that their fathers had no problem with homosexuality, three called their fathers homophobes, three said that their fathers made anti-gay slurs or privately ridiculed homosexuality despite knowing better, three said that they had no real evidence yet they felt that they knew their fathers disagreed with it, and the remaining eleven said that they really were not sure how their father’s felt on the matter.

The fact that 30% of fathers were comfortable with the idea of homosexuality (and had gay friends themselves, such as Eric and Richard’s fathers), continued to support the ongoing suggestion throughout the analysis that it was practically impossible to lump all of the players into the same categories of masculinity because their fathers had set different examples. Moreover, although the players and the people closest to them all identified as heterosexual and some had reservations about homosexuality, this did not mean that there was no room for it in their lives or that. Examples of fathers who had no problems with homosexuality will be presented first, followed by examples of fathers who had negative attitudes towards it. To begin, Richard spoke quite comfortably about his father’s friendships with gay men:

*Like, my Dad has three gay friends...I think it's three haha. I'm not sure. But, like, he—yeah, it doesn't change the way he thinks about people. Well...I mean, he doesn't like the people who go around saying 'yeah I'm gay, treat me better 'cause I deserve better rights,' type stuff. He doesn't like that—drawing attention to yourself. But he doesn't like anyone drawing attention to themselves, like...at all. It's something I learned real*

*early at home. But, he's like, 'if you're gay, it's not a big deal; I'll still hang out with you, go for a beer with you' or something like that. And, like, they—my parents told me and my brothers and sisters that it's not—like, it doesn't define who you are; it's just who you like and that really doesn't have a whole lot to do with you your friends are or how you treat people. It's just normal.*

While Richard's father's opinion regarding whether or not members of the LGBTQ community should advocate for their rights to equality could be contestable, his decision to show Richard that homosexuality says very little about an individual's worth demonstrates that in some way, he does have a positive attitude towards homosexuality. In the same vein, fifteen-year-old Denis of the Thrashers, who had a gay cousin, said that his father always told him the following:

*'If you find out stuff like that...take it in and try to help the person if you think they need it. Don't make fun of them or anything. Try to make them fit in, like, with other people.' I think he's all for it. They're humans, you know? It's hard to think that just because you're not gay or because you don't understand it or something, you're gonna mistreat people.*

These accounts resonated highly with Jeff's views of having a gay teammate and not making him wait to shower; their opinions of homosexuality were humanistic accounts that portrayed sexuality as such a minute difference between individuals that it did not merit different treatment or even much consideration, especially once one has gotten to know the individual in question.

From a research perspective, I took a greater interest in the fathers who had negative attitudes towards homosexuality because of the historical progression that demonstrates that it is becoming more acceptable to be openly gay and I felt that it was my duty as an academic to understand these attitudes. Lyle did an effective job of explaining to me how anti-gay attitudes trace back through the generations of his male family members:

*Dad might be homophobic. I don't know if he's—if it's, like, that he's scared, but I think he would be really awkward around—if like, a gay person is around, he might be awkward. He would be awkward because, like, the way he sometimes—sometimes he goes on, he's like, the person that would be awkward around a gay person. I dunno. I gotta think.....Well his Dad, too—my grandfather—they're both the same way. Like...he's just, like, my grandfather's just straight against it, like...yeah, he's from—he's way back out country, a hick. He can't stand gay people, and I think he tried to drill that into Dad's head and he probably scared him when he was a kid about them and that's probably why Dad's like that. I don't think he could stand being around one.*

Lyle has pointed to two roots of anti-gay sentiments: historic attitudes towards homosexuality and the decreased visibility of homosexuality associated with living in rural neighbourhoods. Lyle's comment regarding rural neighbourhoods supports Ed's remark that he only recognizes homosexuality in larger urban centres, which invokes Simmelian (1903) theories of the metropolis and the idea that people who are conceived of as socially different can blend in more in big cities partly because passers-by put on hypothetical blinders, avoiding direct contact with their surroundings (see also: Witz, 2001). Indeed, some of the fathers and players who demonstrated the most skepticism, if not disdain, towards homosexuality lived in rural communities, however the make-up of those communities was such that reporting on them and comparing them to teams in other regions had the potential to compromise the ethical confidentiality and anonymity agreements put in place to protect the study population. Gary, who was on the same team as Lyle and also lived in a very rural community, said that his father is quite vocal about his thoughts: "My Dad's old fashioned. I guess he's a homophobe, you could say. He'll say it...like, when he sees a guy, he'll be like 'look at that faggot.' He's not a fan. Not sure why he acts that way..."

Todd, another member of Lyle and Gary's team who lived outside of town, explained his father's negative attitude towards homosexuality as a question of normalcy:

*Dad...Dad—I don't know if he's against it...he doesn't really say much about it, but like—like, he definitely—like he doesn't make gay slurs or anything—like, he doesn't—like, I think if someone was gay he might be a little different than he was...whenever...a straight person is around him, I guess? I'm not sure what I'm trying to say...Just...just the thought of it, maybe...it's not normal to him, I guess...He doesn't know anyone that's gay and has no idea how to act around it I guess... or what it's about.*

Visibility (or familiarity or proximity) appeared to be a theme that ran through accounts of skepticism towards homosexuality. While I have been unable to thread hockey through this discussion, it was around this point in the interviews that I understood—perhaps unsurprisingly—that, on the one hand, the players and fathers who have been open to homosexuality have had gay friends, extended family members, or acquaintances in their lives, although none reported anyone in their immediate families or social circles. On the other hand, players and fathers who were less comfortable with the idea of homosexuality were less acquainted with it in their own lives—much like Todd and Ed pointed out.

This difference in perspectives led me to extend my argument that having a gay teammate would likely be the only experience that would concretize the players' attitudes towards homosexuality in hockey; I think that it often takes for the unknown to become normalized to increase one's level of comfort and strengthen their opinion on matters. This is not to say that I am attempting to legitimize negative reactions to the unknown based on unfamiliarity, but I hold that being immersed in an unfamiliar context can affect an individual's attitudes towards that context. Grappling with this idea led me to extend it to the context of the NHL and to think more about the role of visibility in changing attitudes towards LGBTQ athletes.

At this point in the analysis, I had two sets of questions. First, is it possible that the visibility of homosexuality, such as on television or the internet or in distant social and family circles, does more to create familiarity than to encourage acceptance? Put differently, although familiarity contributes to acceptance, is it enough compared to living through the experience of actually getting to know people who identify as homosexual? The players in this study all speak about homosexuality with some degree of familiarity and indifference when it comes to broader society because they have seen it at arm's length, but when it comes to having a gay teammate in constant close quarters, they become a bit more apprehensive. Second, how does this idea of lived experiences and interactions versus simple visibility relate to the NHL, which supposedly houses gay players and teammates who are aware of the individual in question's sexual orientations, yet this information does not leave the dressing room, as Patrick Burke contends? If we are to accept the argument made in mainstream media that homosexual professional male athletes fear coming out because of fan reactions and not teammate reactions (Freeman, 2013), does the notion of familiarity possibly make sense regarding why none of them have come out? That is to say, whereas teammates have lived the experience of having a gay peer and the fans perhaps have not (certainly in the case of getting to know and interact with the athletes themselves), is familiarity not enough to win over homophobic fans, which still exist in droves? Indeed, seeing the plight of Michael Sam on television creates awareness, but it does little to show audiences that Michael Sam's sexual orientation has no bearing on his daily routine or his abilities as an athlete. Perhaps, then, NHL players feel that the visibility of gay athletes and the small but growing group of people in society who understand that being in close quarters with someone who identifies as gay is not enough, thus confirming that it is not their teammates that they are concerned about, it is the people at arm's length.

When trying to extend these questions about visibility and familiarity more laterally to masculinity, I began to wonder if the idea of becoming deeply acquainted with the unknown had anything to do with gender at all. Of course, social expectations have largely dictated that heterosexuality was compulsory for men, and institutions such as sports have maintained these expectations. However the players accounts of their fathers' and their own attitudes towards homosexuality both in and out of ice hockey made no mention at all of masculinity or manliness or the aspects of heterosexuality that made it more valuable than homosexuality (such as being a manly man or a family man), therefore it is becoming more and more difficult to justify conceptions of masculinity that place sexuality at their core, such as hegemonic masculinity in Connell's terms. What is more, in the way of overlapping contexts and whether fathers influence their sons' attitudes towards homosexuality, sixteen-year-old Vincent of the Thrashers was one of two players of the thirty to make any mention of how their opinions were indeed shaped by parents. Vincent singled out his father and the other will be discussed later. Although the players may be close with their fathers and place utmost value on their relationships with them, it does not necessarily mean that attitudes towards sexual orientation are translated through those bonds. Vincent explained that he saw his father as a role model and has always wanted to be like him, although having gay students in his high school has made him more comfortable with homosexuality than his father might be In his words:

*Il y en a trois dans ma classe [des gens gais]. Juste mon père, là, il est—j'suis un peu comme ça, là, moi aussi, mais ça dépend—pis quand on vient à en parler plus pis on vient plus éduqué, des fois tu...on apprend plus pis c'est pas si pire, mais, j'sais pas, tu sais, j'ai tout le temps regardé mon père faire pis...j'ai toujours appris des choses de mon père pis...chepas—depuis que chu jeune, mon père—je le regarde ; ce qu'il dit, je dis; lui dit ça, moi je dis ça pis...c'est ça. C'est la même chose quand ça vient au gais, mais ma génération, elle change, tu sais...*

(There are three in my class—gay people. Just my father, he's—I'm a bit like that too, but it depends—and when we speak about it more and become more educated, sometimes you...we learn more and it's not so bad, but, I dunno, you know, I always watched my father and...I always learned from him and...I dunno—from a young age, my father—I watch him; what he says, I say; he says this, I say this and...that's it. It's the same thing when it comes to gay people, but my generation, it's changing, you know...)

Taken together, all of these conversations with the players about their fathers and homosexuality confirmed that the overlap of the family and hockey context were not substantially relevant in the shaping of players' attitudes towards sexuality and that, although the players may have had similar opinions of homosexuality to their fathers, this was more consistent across rural and urban contexts as well as contexts that involved visibility versus lived engagement with individuals who identified as homosexual—neither of which was a context this study sought to address.

### ***Mothers...***

I originally considered continuing to trace the idea of masculinity through the other boys and men in the players' lives, however the fact that mothers were the second largest group listed as most important to the players persuaded me to begin examining those excerpts of interview transcripts first. The numbers suggested that hockey was less important to the players than family, so there was a chance that their family contexts might play more of a role in shaping their attitudes towards homosexuality than their teammates' or other friends', who will be discussed later on.

Mothers played less of a role in the players' hockey lives, mostly committing to supportive and nurturing roles such as making sure the players were prepared for hockey or making sure that other aspects of their lives were in order so as to facilitate hockey, and helping to cheer them up when hockey had not gone as hoped.

This did not mean that they were not interested in hockey; Mike called his mother “a diehard Habs fan” and John, Jeff, Stephan and James all said that their mothers took a keen interest in how their own hockey was going, but not other levels or leagues.

At first, the players shared stories about their mothers that mirrored the stories they told about their fathers, including Sean and John, whose mothers faced life challenges in ways that made their sons admire their dedication and perseverance:

*Sean (Whalers): Well, my Mom...she grew up with...so she's adopted now, but she was, uh, born from like, a bad family and...didn't really get raised that well. But she turned her life around and actually...started achieving things and...I looked up to her for that to see how well she did and...raised a good family and...she didn't quit. She was...fourteen when she left her family. She had me when she was...seventeen. So...that's*

*definitely...something hard on her. We're pretty close. She's always trying to get me to do well in school and—'cause she knows how fast it can slide.*

*John (Nordiques): Me and Mom share a lot with each other. She, uh...when I come home, she's always cooking supper for me and... Umm...my Mom's been through a lot the last couple years and, uh...and, uh... I'm just kinda—she's a very tough person. Uh, my Mom had cancer. Well, she split up with my Dad and a year later, she got...sick with cancer. Yeah. And, uh, she was all alone when she went through it, so that was really hard for her. Yeah. But she did fine; she did great. Just, uh...made me realize how strong she is. Kinda scared all of us a bit.*

The difference between the way the players spoke about their mothers and fathers, however, was the fact that they described their mothers as much more dynamic and multifaceted individuals who were able to fulfill traditionally masculine roles on top of feminine ones. Ten of the players gave their mothers credit for domestic work such as cooking or cleaning. Mothers were also more likely to be the family members with whom players spoke about personal problems, other relationships, and school, in addition to hockey. From this perspective, gender roles in the players' family lives were more evident; important hockey discussions and lessons were largely the fathers' roles, along with manual labour and outdoor activities, while mothers cooked, cleaned, and provided a shoulder and an ear and made sure that school and manners were up to par. At the same time, however, the mothers accomplished their tasks without being characterized as fragile, feminine or over-emotional.

Players spoke with the same passionate appreciation for their mothers as they did about their fathers, which demonstrated that all of the roles their parents played were meaningful and valuable to them, not just those with masculine or hockey-centric qualities. For instance, Lyle, who could always be counted on for great detail, described his mother as quite multifaceted:

*She's probably the person I talk to the most. She's the person I sort out all my problems with. If I get stressed out over school and hockey, she's usually the one to talk me down from it—get me calmed down. And... yeah, she's pretty much my best friend...other than the school and hockey people and stuff like that. She's pretty much the first one I talk to. And she's tough! She usually teaches me how to do things like cooking and, like, cleaning and stuff. She makes me clean my room, but I don't want to. Like, why do you need to clean your bed if you're just gonna mess it up?! Yeah! Like she makes me make it every morning. Makes me cook my own food, make my own lunch and stuff and...yeah. She says she's getting me ready for, like, university when I don't have her to cook for me. Annddd,*

*like...uhh being responsible most of the time, like—just, things like pushing in your chair after you're at the dinner table or taking your hat off at the dinner table, blah blah blah, stuff like that, mostly. Uhm...hold doors for people. Get good grades. Like, she's all about being the right person. She's always looking out for what's best for me. She's tough, she's confident... like, she does all the cooking and cleaning and Dad does the heavy lifting, but she runs the show, you know? She keeps us in line.*

I was particularly interested in the fact that Lyle had used the word tough to describe his mother, a word typically associated with masculinity, however Lyle was one of many who used both typically feminine and masculine words to describe their mothers; being tough, confident, self-sacrificing, and resilient were not gendered traits for the players. In all, I received fourteen accounts of mothers who were intelligent, nurturing, hard-working, independent, great cooks and cleaners, trustworthy, and essential to the players' lives. Gary said his mother was working hard on a university degree, Eric said his mother was his father's boss, and Richard said his mother worked around the clock doing laundry, driving him and his siblings places, organizing hockey gear, and putting food on the table.

Many players said that they could talk to their mothers about their problems, including James whose father worked out of town. James told me that in his father's absence, he felt that it was important that he and his mother get along well and rely on one another. In his words:

*Our relationship together—like, me and my Mom...just kinda, like—she's actually kinda, like, someone I turn to...that I trust, like...she tells me stuff that I—I'm not allowed to repeat; she tells me that. And I tell her stuff that she's not supposed to repeat. Dad being gone has made us stick together, I guess and it's nice that...that I have her.*

All of these descriptions of the players' mothers arguably resonated with Goffman's framework of acceptable manhood, despite the fact that their mothers are women. With that said, however, the players essentially described their mothers as more than what Goffman characterized as the socially acceptable man because the mothers went above and beyond traditional gender roles by fulfilling both the caring and compassionate side of womanhood as well as the tough and confident side of manhood and then capping it off with the characteristics that usually describe a good and successful person, such as trustworthiness, intelligence, and a strong work ethic. This was not lost on the players, six of whom conceded that they and their fathers were very fortunate to have such driven and dynamic women in their lives.

This depiction of mothers as simultaneously nurturing and strong does a lot in the way of problematizing gender binaries and commenting on the diversity of the players' family lives, especially where gender is concerned. This problematization was reinforced by Donald, who, despite having a reportedly excellent relationship with his father, said that his mother was in charge of cooking, cleaning, and making him a good man. Donald was the only interviewee to specify that his parents played a role in shaping him gender-wise, so I pressed him to tell me what it meant to be a good man. Donald offered the following response: "Uh, like...be honest and...be respectful to people and...try to be on their good side when you go somewhere so...they understand your point of view and...ask a lot of questions, be educated. Don't be shy around other people. Have respect." Donald's words bear a striking resemblance to Goffman's indicators of character and the socially acceptable man, however, time and time again, there is no mention of heterosexuality, which some parents might expect of their sons (this leaves athleticism, and although Patrice did say that his mother was athletic, one case was not enough from which to make claims about the rest of the mothers). Heterosexuality was certainly a given throughout several of my interviews, but nowhere in the players' accounts of their interactions with parents is there any mention of anything as potentially innocent as 'they want me to grow up and be successful and have a wife and a family that I can provide for...'<sup>9</sup>—those brief yet deeply-engrained implications of heteronormativity that perhaps are not meant to impose on or offend their children, but are implied nonetheless. To me, based on Donald's description of his mother's wishes for him, she wanted him to be a good person, not necessarily a good man. Perhaps what we can take from these mothers who shake gender binaries is that to be a good man or woman—to be a good adult—is to be a good person, free of judgment regarding clothing choice or chosen pastimes or sexual orientation or other aspects of an individual that say little to nothing about their ability to function as members of society.

At this point, as I grappled with the destabilization of traditional mothers' roles, I decided to ask the players about their mothers' level of knowledge of terminology and issues associated with gender and sexuality. Sixteen players said that they were not sure how educated their mothers were on the subject, although they suspected that their mothers knew more than their fathers and grandparents. Three other respondents, Jeff, Donald, and Patrick, said that their mothers' chosen careers acquainted them with LGBTQ issues in particular. For example, Jeff's mother worked in their community justice system and was well-versed in matters of LGBTQ

rights and the particular set of social injustices that they faced. He shared a story about how his mother's expertise in dealing with teenagers through the justice system helped him comprehend a situation in which a former teammate informed Jeff that he was gay. Jeff said that although he never really thought much of the event, his mother was instrumental in making sure that Jeff was emotionally equipped to deal with any potential changes in the nature of his relationship with his former teammate. He recounts the story here:

*But my Mom, well, one of my friends...came out...hmmm...I think last year, actually...we finished a game in another city and we got on the bus...anddd [my teammates who were from the same town as me]—we were all good friends with him from before. We all got the same text from him—he came out. Umm... so I just kinda talked to her about it 'cause she...she kinda knew it was coming, she says. Um...um, I had no idea, so it's like 'Mom, what...like, where did that come from?' Ummm...so...her and I kinda sat down and talked about, like...he's just...being himself. Like, I'm still friends with him—when I see him at school and stuff, it's not that big of a deal. My Mom's very open with stuff like that. She doesn't mind talking about it and I'm really open about it too. He doesn't play hockey anymore, though. I don't know if that has anything to do with it or not. I know he tried out for another team and got cut, but I don't think being gay had anything to do with that, really.*

Other mothers actively searched out information on the subject, such as Todd's mother, who, according to Todd, was “always on her phone on Google and stuff looking up a million things a day, so... She'd probably know a lot about it, actually.” John said that his mother frequently watches the news and keeps up with current events, meaning she, too, would likely have some knowledge of the LGBTQ acronym and any politically important events going on around the world.

Eight players said that although they were not sure if their mothers would have known any of the terminology on the survey that their mothers, like Jeff's mother, certainly had no problems with homosexuality and did speak to their sons about it. James and sixteen-year old Guy of the Thrashers said that they speak to their mothers if someone comes out at school or about the possibility of ever having gay teammates and said that their mothers remind them that it is normal at their age for people to address their sexual orientation and establish their identities. Guy said that his mother instructed him to handle the prospect of having a gay teammate respectfully:

*Disons qu'il y aurait quelqu'un gai dans mon équipe, ma mère m'a déjà parlé de ça. Elle m'a dit de pas...de pas parler, de rien dire si c'est pas ma place...avoir du respect. Même si...même si tu ne sais pas si la personne est vraiment gaie...tu demandes pas...sois gentil...c'est pas de mes affaires.*

(Let's say that I had a gay teammate, my mother has discussed that with me. She told me not to...not to speak, not to say anything if it's not my place...have some respect. Even if...even if you don't know if the person is really gay...you don't ask...be nice...it's none of my business.)

Gary said that his mother would not tolerate anti-gay language from him despite the fact that his father was evidently homophobic. There was no evidence of mothers opposing homosexuality, they were largely understood to know more about matters relating to gender and sexuality than fathers, and some even demanded of their sons that they treat homosexual schoolmates and hypothetical teammates with respect. While the study is not meant to attend to why the mothers might be more open to non-heteronormativity than the fathers, it can offer commentary on how their opinions, which they insert in their interactions with the players, might affect the players' attitudes towards homosexuality.

The players' hockey and family lives, as evidenced by Chart 7.01, overlap in such a way that, although their fathers occupy more space in the hockey context, their mothers are still equally some of the most important people in their lives. What is more, the mothers of the study population are less likely than the fathers to be homophobic or to harbour negative attitudes towards homosexuality, meaning amongst the most commonly important people in their lives, the players are more likely to experience anti-gay attitudes amongst the most important family members in their lives who are more likely to be involved in ice hockey. Of course, it should be considered that several fathers had no problems at all with homosexuality, so what can be said about the hockey and family context and the ways in which they overlap is the following: although fathers were more likely to be involved in hockey culture and were more likely to have anti-gay attitudes, the players' attitudes were also shaped by their mothers, who had no issues with homosexuality, and were thus less likely to have negative attitudes towards homosexuality. This claim leaves room for a discussion of the players' agency and the extent to which they can make judgments themselves (their parents can only do so much in the way of socializing them to hold particular opinions), however it can be argued that the family context, along with the fathers within the hockey context who had no reservations about homosexuality, likely contributed to the

players only having some reservations about the prospect of having a gay teammate. One might hypothesize that if parents were homophobic, that would be even more likely to carry over to the players' lives, including their involvement in hockey culture, but such was not the case. Very simply, only some parents had issues with homosexuality and such was also the case for the players. There is a possibility that the players' attitudes were shaped by their parents, however these relationships were only part of the players' network of relationships, so the analysis will continue to build.

### *Partners...*

The third individual whom the players commonly selected as one of the most important people in their lives was their girlfriend.<sup>23</sup> Fourteen of the players had girlfriends, nine of whom chose them to discuss with me. Todd actually chose his ex-girlfriend, stating that they had recently broken up, but were trying to remain friends, which he said he was having difficulty with because he was afraid to eventually lose her presence in his life. I have elected to include this case with the other eight because he spoke about the relationship as if it was still happening and therefore it did not require its own category. Three of the fourteen girlfriends played hockey themselves (according to the players—I did not ask) and hockey did play a role in their relationships—such as six players having to miss their Christmas formal at school because they had a hockey game—however, the rest mostly attended their partners' games and took little interest beyond that. More specifically, the players never spoke about their girlfriends participating in ice hockey culture as it pertained to the players, so I decided not to overlap the hockey and girlfriend contexts. They are very closely related, however.

The nine relationships had lasted anywhere from one to six years and they all said that they typically see their girlfriends every day and that they spend a lot of time together. Lyle and Turner had known their girlfriends from a very young age through school. Guy met his girlfriend at a dance. Mario, John, Ed, James, Todd, and Eric never specified how their relationships began. Aside from spending time at one another's houses and with friends, the players cited different ways that they enjoyed spending time with their girlfriends. For instance, James enjoyed playing

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<sup>23</sup> The term 'girlfriend' will be used throughout because this is the word the players used, however I recognize that other formulations such as 'partner' could be more appropriate in the context of the discussion.

video games and seeing films with his girlfriend. John enjoyed going for coffee and bringing her dog for a walk. Mario and his girlfriend attended school events together such as football games. Ed enjoyed being at his girlfriend's house spending time with her parents and little brother. Turner said he enjoyed going for drives with his girlfriend and specified that they were not overly interested in attending parties or consuming alcohol like some of his teammates. The fact that Turner framed his narrative according to how he did not spend his time made me think that this might have been a point of significance. I asked if this caused any kind of division between him and his teammates and he responded by discussing one party he did attend and said he did not think his teammates were affected by his decreased participation in social events that the others attended.

When asked why their girlfriends are important to them, the players' responses all communicated, to different extents, their girlfriends' valuable qualities. As a group, they viewed their girlfriends as caring, supportive, dependable, non-judgmental, and generally amiable. For example, Todd covered all of these qualities when he described why his ex-girlfriend is important to him:

*My ex-girlfriend is important because I've known her—whenever we went out, we hung out every single day. Like, I...we go to school and we're in a couple classes together and after school every day I'd go to her house and wait there and then...I'd get picked up to go to hockey, so basically—like, she was my whole life in the three years. We just got so close, so she's extremely important in my life... I dunno. She's really...she was unbelievably nice. Like when I first met her, she was always happy and extremely nice and caring. But...um...I don't know. I like that she got—like, that she could tell me anything. It made me feel kinda good, in a way, like good about myself kinda way, I guess, and knowing you have someone you can tell everything about you, too and being able to trust them aside from your parents, 'cause that's like...awkward, haha. And I don't talk to my teammates about much—at least nothing real important. She wouldn't judge me like they would, I guess.*

What I found most important about what Todd said about his ex-girlfriend was that he felt more comfortable sharing his secrets and feelings with her than with his teammates. This contradicts scholarly accounts of hockey players who feel that they can speak to one another about anything (Robidoux, 2001). This statement was reminiscent of Richard and Lyle's fears of being judged by teammates for speaking openly about sexuality in the context of the study. It could thus be argued

that there is a form of censorship or policing among the players because some feel that they are not free to speak about personal or sensitive matters without being judged or ridiculed.

Ed characterized the importance of his girlfriend in his life in similar terms as Todd, however, he also drew attention to her family hardships and how she was handling them:

*I can be myself with her completely. Tell her anything I want and then...she respects whatever decision I wanna do and supports it. Like, for example, I'm going to a hockey game and missing Christmas Prom this weekend. So...she understands... 'cause...our coaches don't want us missing games...so she understood. She's a little upset, but I mean who wouldn't be? It means a lot to me that she's so understanding. She's just...funny...and smart. Like, in school-wise...like, her math mark...is like—got a ninety....eight in calculus and stuff like that. She's... school smart...and then, like...she even has common sense, haha. She's not just school smart; she's school smart and street smart. And, uh...and, like, she had, like—she—when she was born—her mother was only, like, seventeen when she was born, so, like, we're both, like...have young parents. And, uh, I guess... she got raised well 'cause her father would have been seventeen at the time too, so...for having such young parents, she got raised well and they make it work...she understands when her parents aren't perfect because they're so young and it's tough to figure it out when you're that age, for everyone, you know?...and shee....like, she's not all snobby and stuff like that; she's actually nice. Yeah...*

Ed, like Sean and Todd before him, referenced the challenges of having young parents or, conversely, the challenges of having children at a young age and making it work. Indeed, the players recognized that their girlfriends faced challenges and they were each quite active in the process of helping their girlfriends cope with them. Four of the nine players discussed their girlfriends' hardships, from low self-confidence and depression to the death of a parent and divorce. John was helping his girlfriend deal with her parents' bitter divorce and said she was handling it well. Todd said that his ex-girlfriend's father passed away and that although she was dynamic and outgoing around everyone else, she had been battling depression and felt that she could be herself with him and that made him feel useful and valued through her depending on him for emotional support.

As Lyle was discussing his girlfriend's trouble with self-confidence, he laterally connected his role with his girlfriend with the role his own mother played for him. He said that it was his job to cheer his girlfriend up in the same way that it was his mother's job to cheer him

up. I found that this made Lyle quite emotionally aware. This is reflected in the following snippet:

*She's...kind of—she's not that confident, though. Like, she's...she's a genius—like, I'm talkin', like, 99.8 average, like, if she gets a question wrong, it's the end of the world. Like, she's a...huge genius. I can't get over it. She missed the last four weeks of school 'cause she was sick, she's been there for two days and she still has a 99.2 in math or something like that and she hasn't been there for the work. Like she just writes the test [brushes hand away as if to signal it's no problem]. So, yeah, I look up to her in that like she's...she's what I want to be in that—smart. But it's like she doesn't know she's good enough. She's, like.. yeah, she's not confident. She feels—I dunno, she kinda feels like she's lettin' everybody down, so...I have to—that's what I...talk to her about it like I'm confident and I'm like... when Mom calms me down and builds me up, that's what I do for her. Yeah, like, I have to talk to her the same way.*

I found the players' discussions of their girlfriends' challenges to be quite profound in nature. Their involvement in helping their partners face those challenges, the pride they took in being involved, and their acknowledgement that they have the same support in their lives (be it from their girlfriends or their mothers) demonstrated that the players continued to be emotionally expressive beyond the family context or 'backstage.'

Most importantly, they continued to be much more emotionally expressive than proponents of hegemonic masculinity would expect them to be. At first, I was inclined to view their involvement in their girlfriends' challenges traditionally, perhaps best explained by the age-old argument that girls and women are emotional and thus it is to be expected that men have to help them put their emotions in check and be the strong ones in the relationship. The more I read into the interview data, however, the more it became clear that the players inserted their own emotions into their discussions of their parents and girlfriends and they recognized that the emotional connection and support in their relationships were often mutual. For instance, comments such as Lyle's, in which he states that he does the same emotional labour for his girlfriend that his mother does for him, do work to contradict hegemonic masculinity, which rejects both femininity and emotionality. At the same time, it can be said that there was less of an emotional component to their accounts of their relationships with their fathers, however I would not say that they were completely devoid of emotions either.

Based on their narratives, the players felt more useful as contributing members of their relationships with their girlfriends through emotional support than through paying for things and

fulfilling other traditional male roles, which they made no mention of whatsoever in their interviews. In fact, performances of gender rose to the surface when Ed informed me affirmatively that his girlfriend was “not a girly girl; she likes, like...power lifting.” Where strength training could be associated with boys’ and men’s roles, certainly in the perspective of hegemonic masculinity—which dictates that men, and not women, should be physically strong—Ed did not seem troubled at all by the fact that his girlfriend was interested in weight-lifting. His conception of femininity is not so limited as to reject the possibility of girls and women participating in exercise that has stereotypically been limited to men. One need look no further than scholarship on gender binaries in bodybuilding for evidence of this kind of thinking at work (Bunsell, 2013; Klein, 2007; Lafrance, 2012; Martin & Gavey, 1996; McGrath & Chananie-Hill, 2009; Miller & Penz, 1991; Rosdahl, 2014; Wesely, 2001). Although this was not made explicitly clear by all of the players, their concepts of gender performances, roles, and boundaries are somewhat flexible and, if we are to include perceptions of femininity as part of expectations regarding masculinity, the players’ view of gender then resonates with inclusive masculinity because they are open to participating emotionally in their relationships and players like Ed and those whose girlfriends play ice hockey, all work to destabilize gender boundaries as they have been historically understood.

Having made connections to gender in the players’ relationships, I moved the interviews along to ask about their perceptions of their girlfriends’ knowledge of gender and sexuality. Mario, Guy, James, and Lyle said they had never spoken to their girlfriends about the definitions from the survey, the prospect of having a gay teammate, or anything to do with individuals who identify as LGBTQ, however they had no reason to suspect that their girlfriends had negative attitudes towards homosexuality.

The other five players were quite confident that their girlfriends were well educated on gender and sexuality and knew that they harbored no negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Eric said his girlfriend had an aunt with whom she was quite close who identified as a lesbian, therefore he suspected that his girlfriend would be comfortable with homosexuality, although they had never spoken about gender or sexuality before. The remainder of the players spoke more affirmatively. Todd said that his ex-girlfriend often “got worked up about stuff—like, causes, so...she’d always be lookin’ up stuff on it, so she’s quite educated on it, I’d say. It’s important to her...being fair to people no matter their sexuality and stuff.” Paul said his girlfriend likely knew

more than he did himself because she took several Family Life courses in school that discuss gender and sexuality and said that she is very sensitive to bullying based on appearance and other aspects of an individual that do not speak to their character, such as sexual orientation. John said he learned a lot from his girlfriend because her best friend was a member of the Gay-Straight Alliance at their high school, therefore his girlfriend was highly involved as a sign of support for her friend and John would end up tangentially hearing about the different activities and causes in which the group participated or took interest in. Turner, who disagreed with homosexuality himself, said that his girlfriend likely knew more about matters relating to gender and sexuality because she had a gay friend and was very inclusive of him in her social life and cared deeply about the feelings he experienced as a gay teenager, whether positive or negative.

### ***Current and Former Teammates...***

Two players chose their current teammates as one of the most important people in their lives, Benoit and Turner. Benoit had been playing on the same team as his friend for two years and they had classes together at school. They enjoyed going to movies together. He said that his teammate was important to him because they liked a lot of the same things, although when I asked if he could elaborate, he very vaguely said that they had the same sense of humour (about ‘anything’), that they liked the same kinds of movies and video games (‘a bunch of different kinds’). Benoit also said that he spoke most about hockey with his teammate and that they had never discussed gender and sexuality, however, he was at least fairly confident that his friend was straight: “J’veux dire, y’a déjà sorti avec des filles, j’pense qu’il est aux filles... j’pense que oui là, haha.” (I mean, he’s gone out with girls before, he’s into girls...I think, haha). Benoit was not the most expressive of the population compared to many of his peers, despite having volunteered to participate.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Indeed, two other players, seventeen-year old Oleg of the Golden Seals and sixteen-year old Mathieu of the Thrashers, were quite mute in their interviews—so much so that I was unable to adequately pull demonstrative snippets from our conversations because they provided very little detail when prompted and other players offered more effective examples of the same points I was attempting to make. My limited exchange with these players could have been due to several factors: they may have been nervous, embarrassed to speak about somewhat private or possibly taboo topics, they may not have liked me or felt comfortable speaking to me (as a person or a member of the opposite sex—or both). In these cases, King (1994) recommends being patient with silences, asking more open-ended questions, rephrasing questions, being clear about how much time you have to listen to the individual, reminding the individual that they can opt out of the interview at any time and that their responses are confidential and anonymous—all strategies I used. I remained puzzled regarding the fact that the interviewees were volunteers

Turner met his teammate in kindergarten, they lived nearby to one another, and they almost always played on the same hockey team growing up. Turner said that he and his teammate got along well because they are both private and reserved and respect one another's desires to act as such. They speak mostly about hockey, however their hobbies range from playing ping pong and video games to playing ball hockey and paintball. I had heard from other teammates that Turner's chosen friend had not participated in the study. When I asked him if he knew why, he replied:

*Uhhh...he didn't come here tonight. I don't know why. His, uh, his Mom didn't say he could come to this. Well.... actually....he asked his Mom to not make him do this...actually. Like, I don't think he's homophobic...He might be. I don't even know if that's why he's not here. Well, his parents actually have gay friendsss...so I don't—I don't know. They're kind of a weird family. I don't know. I don't—I don't think he's....he's not homophobic, but... I don't know. I think he might be the same way as me, like...kinda...don't agree with it, but...doesn't bother him too much...kinda thing. We never really talked about it.*

I may have put Turner on the spot here, however, should we accept that, like Benoit and his teammate, Turner and his friend have a lot in common, there is a chance that his friend elected not to participate in the study because he did not feel comfortable discussing the subject, especially if he disagreed with homosexuality and felt defensive. In any case, what can be taken from these two narratives is that players deem teammates important if they are similar to themselves.

Gary, Patrick, André, Denis, Patrice, and Jeff all selected former teammates as one of the three most important people in their lives. Patrice and Jeff met their friends through hockey whereas the others met through school first and then played hockey together. In keeping with Benoit and Turner, all six respondents said that they and their former teammate had similar interests and demeanours. Gary and Jeff said that their friends were important to them because they were honest. Denis appreciated that his friend always had a positive attitude and was very supportive. Jeff shared the story of the moment he knew that he and his friend had connected and how they have remained close since:

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who elected to speak with me, but have chalked the experience up to the fact that it would have been unlikely for me to have developed a strong connection or rapport with a group of thirty people in this timeframe, therefore some interviews were more useful than others and I can rest assured that I followed the advice in the literature on how best to conduct interviews with uncommunicative interviewees.

*It started off—I got cut from Major and...I was kinda down on myself, like ‘wow, like, I just got cut from the top team and I have to go play a year here in Minor.’ I get there and everyone’s talking about drugs and stuff. I was like ‘Oh, this is gonna be a great year! This is fantastic. Both my parents are involved with the law. This is gonna be...an awesome year.’ Um...and thennn...umm...he was kinda same as I was; he got cut and he was just kinda...floating around in the shadows, so I...we ended up introducing ourselves to each other and... In the summer I usually hang out with him for two weeks at a time because I live out of the city. Um, him and I...we’ve gotten so close over the...couple years, but...even now, we don’t play on the same hockey team and we still...hang out as often as we can. He’s been through the same thing as me with hockey; he’s never been the top of his...position, so he kinda just—he always works hard, so he’s—he knows what I’m going through.*

This was the first time I had heard of drug use in the interviews, however Jeff later confirmed that Major midget players were much less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol than Minor players, who he characterized as taking both life and hockey less seriously. In any case, Jeff’s anecdote continues to confirm that players build meaningful relationships with teammates based on shared interests and values.

In terms of how the players liked to spend time with their friends or what they spoke about most often, Gary said he enjoyed attending parties and going for drives with his friend and that they did not speak about one subject in particular other than perhaps cars. Denis said that he and his friend often attend parties together and play basketball or ball hockey. Jeff said that he and his friend spent a lot of their time driving around, playing video games, or spending time with their girlfriends in a group. He also said that the bulk of their conversations revolved around hockey and their girlfriends. I asked about the nature of discussions about girlfriends and he said that they mostly discussed when their girlfriends were angry at them. Patrice’s friend was away at preparatory school playing hockey, so he said that they often texted back and forth about hockey as a way of staying active in the relationship between holidays and other opportunities to spend time together.

All six players who selected former teammates as most important to them said that they did not discuss gender and sexuality with them and that they likely would not have been well-versed where terminology or matters relating to LGBTQ athletes or social issues were concerned. Patrice said that his friend would likely be familiar with Michael Sam and the You Can Play Project through television and social media, but that would be the extent of his knowledge on the

subject. With this in view, I compared the players' accounts of their relationships with their fathers—the other male who was most likely to be important to them in a hockey context—and concluded that the players spoke about their teammates with less emotion or appreciation and that they were more aware of their fathers' points of view on homosexuality than their teammates'. This claim is reflected in the mapping of all of the relationships as a whole since players almost always chose their parents first and girlfriends or teammates third. The fact that the players had very limited knowledge of their teammates' level of education and opinions on matters relating to gender and sexuality suggested that both family members and girlfriends may have had more of an effect on the players' own opinions than teammates. Another conclusion drawn from this section of the interview was that the way the players viewed themselves as similar to their teammates supported the survey data that established that players viewed themselves, their best friend on their team, and their team in general as relatively similar in terms of their expressions of masculinity, although less so in terms of their opinions of homosexuality in ice hockey since this portion of the interview offered very little on the subject. I was left with loose ends regarding who on the team made players feel that they had to censor themselves or why Todd felt that he could not speak to his teammates about his problems and what that said about masculinity. However, it was apparent that the teammates the players chose to discuss did not make them feel this way and, therefore, these relationships were not overly indicative of gender or sexuality with the exception of Turner's case regarding his teammates' view of homosexuality, which went unconfirmed in the end (although it would not be a stretch to assume that his absence was a reflection of his opinion).

Lastly, the fact that Richard included his coach as one of the most important people in his life merited brief analysis. Richard chose his coach for the following reasons:

*He's obviously been a big role in my life 'cause I played for him the past few years. I played for him since a young age, I was like fourteen with seventeen-year-olds, so like, he kinda brought me in and, like, helped me out and then like, he... uhhh, the year I played under age, he made our captain be, like, my guard, or whatever haha. So, like... he helps me out with anything. Yeah...like how I think about hockey or school too. Like I can come to him and...it's just like... he's a person I can talk to without feeling uncomfortable. Everybody respects him a lot. That's pretty cool. And then...like.. I don't know. He's just someone that you can go to and figure out your problems in hockey or school or...anything.*

Richard said that he mostly only saw his coach at the rink and that their conversations never strayed very far from school and ice hockey. With regards to gender and sexuality, he said that the first and only time he heard his coach speak about gender or sexuality was when he informed the players about the project and said “I don’t care if you’re gay, transsexual, or whatever else...just decide if you’re doing this and get the sheet signed.” He said he had no idea how his coach felt about homosexuality, however, based on my conversations with the coach, he had no negative attitudes towards it. Nonetheless, I found it unusual that Richard considered his coach so important considering that their relationship did not meaningfully cross over into a social context. The relationship said nothing at all about Richard’s attitude towards homosexuality, however it demonstrated the extent to which those involved in hockey culture can and do affect these young athletes—such is apparently not the case in terms of this study, however, since Richard was the only one to select a coach. The players really value their parents, girlfriends, and teammates above all others.

### *To Summarize...*

The final section of the interview asked the players to choose the three most important people in their lives. Their narratives addressed the portion of the research question which asked how the players’ interactions with others might shape their attitudes towards homosexuality. The ninety people the players selected were divided almost perfectly in half according to boys or men and girls or women, all of them identified as heterosexual, and the most common responses were father, mother, and girlfriends. The players’ family and hockey lives overlapped the most of all the relationships, largely through their fathers’ involvement in the players’ hockey.

Although the questions were meant to assess the players’ attitudes regarding homosexuality, some conclusions regarding gender were also reached. For example, the players often described their parents and girlfriends as hard working, courageous, responsible, dependable, intelligent, and athletic. They also described their mothers in both traditionally masculine and feminine terms. These descriptors, along with the players’ emotional discussions of why they valued their relationships, resonated with inclusive masculinity and acceptable manhood more than hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, the players’ conceptualizations of gender performances and boundaries are flexible to an extent, which was also evidenced by their

emotional participation in their romantic relationships and their descriptions of their partners that sometimes troubled traditional gender boundaries, such as their support of their girlfriends participating in body building or ice hockey. These aspects of their relationships also suggest a departure from hegemonic masculinity, albeit briefly and outside of the hockey context, because hegemonic masculinity encourages emotional reservation and reserves athleticism for boys and men.

Regarding attitudes towards homosexuality of the most important people in the players' lives, both the attitudes and the effects they had on the players varied within contexts and within the overlaps of those contexts. Within a family context, mothers were not characterized as having negative attitudes to homosexuality and 70% of fathers were depicted as not fully accepting of it. The players' relationships with their fathers also tended to occupy the hockey context, however the overlap between family and hockey contexts was not particularly significant in the shaping of players' attitudes towards homosexuality and, although the players may have had similar opinions of homosexuality to their fathers, this was more consistent across rural and urban contexts as well as contexts that involved visibility versus lived engagement with individuals who identified as homosexual. The fact that 30% of fathers were comfortable with the idea of homosexuality (and had gay friends themselves), supported both the fact that all members of hockey culture could not be lumped into the same category of masculinity and that they did not all reject homosexuality. Their reservations, however, were centered on the prospect of having a gay teammate.

The players' social lives were also divided similarly, where the players had not discussed gender and sexuality with any of their teammates and approximately half of them had discussed the subject with their girlfriends, thus they were not sure how approximately half of the most important individuals in their social circles felt about homosexuality. The girlfriends with whom the players had spoken about homosexuality were all very accepting of it and often quite supportive of LGBTQ rights and equality.

It could be said, then, that parents' and girlfriends' attitudes towards homosexuality were most likely to shape the players' attitudes, however there is no concrete evidence to prove that such was consistently the case across the study population. Additionally, interactions with members of ice hockey culture also were not significant indicators of the players' attitudes towards homosexuality, which continues to demonstrate that gender and sexuality do not play

key roles in the players' lives where hockey is concerned—at least not from their perspectives; it is not something they contemplate or discuss often and their opinions on homosexuality are divided, despite being frequently positive in nature. With that said, however, the surveys and some interview snippets, such as those that indicate a fear of being ridiculed, do indicate that gender is indeed at play in hockey culture—it simply does not always take a straightforwardly hegemonically masculine form and would be better described by Goffman's (1953; 1956) acceptable manhood than by Anderson's (2009; 2011) inclusive masculinity. Unfortunately, inclusive masculinity was more difficult to measure as an index of masculinity. One of the complicated differences between acceptable manhood and inclusive masculinity where sexuality is considered is that the players all identified as heterosexual, which coincides with the Goffman framework, but they did not all reject homosexuality, which implies an openness that coincides with Anderson's framework. In terms of the players themselves, though, acceptable manhood is indeed the framework that best applies. Possible ways of revisiting Goffman so as to accommodate changing views of sexuality will be discussed in the dissertation's conclusion.

### **Key Informants**

Neither of my key informants wanted their teammates to know that they had been in contact with me beyond the time I spent with their respective teams and one asked me not to make any connections between his interview and his role as an informant, so I have done the same for both. Although I did not question their decisions, it is fair to say that their requests demonstrate some sort of fear of teammates' judgments of one's actions or words. I will thus refer to them as Informant A and Informant B. Informant A was the player on the team Jacques managed who had contacted me via one of my publically available social media profiles. He and I had contact from the time I was done working with his team until the completion of my data collection; he was useful in helping me sort out challenging situations as I encountered them. We communicated via private social media messages and text messages. Informant B, who played on the team that Jean managed, spoke to me over the course of my analysis. I sought him out through Jean because I found the player very insightful and representative of the group of players who were skeptical of homosexuality in an ice hockey context. We communicated in person; I

returned to his community and conducted an interview-style discussion based on my analysis that he eventually took control of, however, I was appreciative of this because he shared information that I may never have thought to ask for. Informant B continually expressed his surprise that I thought he offered valuable input in his interview, although he said he was happy to continue to contribute.

I enjoyed interacting with both participants, although my relationship with Informant A became complicated. I had scheduled one final appointment to meet and discuss my analysis with him before moving on without his input, which he agreed to, but went on to reschedule six times over three months. Once we finally agreed on a place and time, I arrived at the arena in his team's city and approached him just to have him tell me quite unapologetically that he could not speak with me that evening and he then smiled and walked away and joined some friends in a different area of the rink before I was able to respond. Reasons for this occurrence were not clear to me; he could have felt that I was imposing on him, he could have not actually wanted to assist me any further and did not have the heart to say so beforehand, he could have been concerned that someone would see him speaking to me and make assumptions; he could have been having a bad day—the possibilities are practically endless. Following that incident, he did not contact me to reschedule as he had done in the past, therefore I decided to continue on with the information he had offered via text message, which was still quite useful. Aside from the regrettable ending of our contact, Informant A was always polite, well-spoken, and had a keen ability to read the actions of his teammates which demonstrated his ability to reflexively remove himself from his role as a hockey player and critically examine the patterns and customs around him. This was evident from the moment our interview began and continued on throughout our contact.

My discussions with Informant A took place over the course of my fieldwork. He originally sent me a private message on social media that said "I'd like to thank you for the whole project you did, it's something that needs to be brought up more often, especially at this age. Thanks again! If you need anything such as more interviews or you have other questions for people or need someone, I'm here." As I stated in Chapter Six, I was originally unsure of how to respond to his offer, but he became a useful resource for me as I navigated the field. The most substantial subject that he helped me understand was the way the players treat girls and women. The discussion was inaugurated when I expressed my bewilderment at the comments left on the surveys: "I love you," "You're cute," phone numbers, etc. I asked Informant A if he had any

insight on these comments and, to my surprise, he responded “I left a comment in my survey for you and I think most guys wanted to so you’ll be hearing lots of stuff about you.” He never specified the nature of his comment (some comments also communicated messages to the effect of ‘thank you’ and ‘great survey’), however, in this context, his response to my question led me to think that he had been one of the respondents who left a more suggestive comment. Moreover, he was so forthcoming as to tell me that he himself had participated in conversations about me and felt he should be truthful about it before proceeding with being my informant. He never shared with me what he said and I am sure that many researchers would have cut off contact at this point, however I steered the conversations in different directions and continued to obtain fruitful information.

In another conversation about the comments, I shared with Informant A that, coming in to the study, I had assumed that I would be considered too old to merit any kind of sexual or romantic attention from the players, whether sincere or in jest, and therefore was not certain what to make of the survey comments. Were they meant to be funny? Were the players not quite bold to have made these comments? He responded by telling me that any girl or woman who encounters the players would be treated the same way: “Age or not you’ll eventually hear some of it. It’s what hockey players our age say and do. It won’t matter what you wear or how you look. Guys will be trying to say things over the line. At this age it’s all about sex and stories. It’s harsh but true.” Regarding the comments on the surveys, Informant A said that he was not certain about what all of his teammates wrote, but that his comment ‘wasn’t too bad.’ He added that he had heard them speak about me in different ways ranging from very genuinely referring to me as ‘cute’ to outlining ‘horribly explicit dirty things’ of a sexual nature in a joking manner. He assured me that none of it was meant to be mean or hurtful; however, he said that he found it insulting to women, despite participating in it himself and knowing better. It was not the first time that I had been informed that one of the study participants thought I was ‘cute.’ Aside from the comment being in the surveys, Turner informed me after his interview, in the tone of a child tattling on a sibling, that Eric had also told his teammates that I was ‘cute’.

Informant A asked me voluntarily what I made of the language being used by the players. I told him that I had not noticed anything out of the ordinary, although some said in their interviews to date that they recognized the use of fag discourse amongst teammates. He told me to expect to hear a myriad of different terms relating to sexuality. He responded by saying, “sex

lingo is a bit odd for us. There are so many words that mean the same thing and it's just all crazy. Hard to keep track of it. Hard to keep track of everything sexual going on nowadays." He said that "kills" was the most common word used by players his age to describe sexual intercourse, as in the number of people a player had sex with would be referred to as his number of kills. I did not hear this kind of language during my time with the six teams; however, I do hear it in my own personal circles within ice hockey culture. Informant A's account of the players' preoccupation with girls, women, and sex confirmed two other claims. First, it confirmed the survey results, which indicated that 63.2% of players thought that their teammates discussed girls, women and sex often (see Appendix A8 for frequency distributions). Second, it confirmed Jacques's claims in Chapter Five that players sought to prove themselves as men, were obsessed with sex, that their discussions of women could be alarming, and that their vocabulary was difficult to keep up with.

This input from Informant A was valuable because I had designed the key parts of the study to examine attitudes towards homosexuality in ice hockey, not leaving much room for the ways that the players treated women, so he added an unexpected yet welcome data collection component to the study. Indeed, Ingham et. al (1999) did find in their study of male PeeWee hockey players that within the sport, the sexual objectification of women was legitimized through learned hypermasculinity. It would appear that although homophobia is less of a threat today, misogyny remains a consistently pressing issue if some of the players themselves believe that this kind of rhetoric is insulting and wrong.

Informant B discussed the treatment of girls and women with me as well, amidst a number of subjects. I asked him to tell me about the ways in which his teammates discuss girls and women and he responded with the following:

*Uhhh...if girls were around...to, like...hear the way guys talk about them, I don't think they'd be very....like...they wouldn't be very happy, I guess. Some girls might, but a lot of girls wouldn't be very happy with the way guys talk about them. Some girls might see it as a compliment, I guess...but I think most would see it as discomfoting. But I dunno...none of the guys actually really talk that way in front of them. At least not that I've seen. Just between us.*

In light of Informant B's response, I shared the survey data with him on how often the players reported speaking about girls, women, and sex and he said the number did not surprise him and that some of his teammates may have lied because they either do not realize how often they do it

or they did not want me to think they were ‘perverts,’ to use his terminology.

Next, I asked him about the comments on the surveys and he was not surprised by them either. I asked why he was so confident in his response and he, like Informant A, divulged that the players had been discussing me during my tenure with their team. Informant A said the following:

*After....all of our interviews, we were all—we all went and talked about you in the dressing room, so... Haha. Yeah...like...one person on my team told me that—I didn't realize you were this old, but you're like...married and in your....fifth year university. I had no idea. I thought you were, like... twenty-two! Yeah! Haha. Oh yeah, everybody thought you were, like, first or second year university or something like that. Like, I don't know...like, did they think they had a chance with you or something? Like...I don't know. They talk about every girl.*

I asked Informant B if he was willing to share what his teammates had said about me, however he laughed and declined. Like Informant A, he said he could tell me that the way his teammates spoke about me resembled the way they would speak about any girl or woman regardless of age or appearance or otherwise—possibly insulting to some girls and women and possibly complimentary to others. For instance, he said that the players often talk about the way girls and women dress, which incited the moment when he motioned towards my pants that I described in Chapter Five. He pointed out, however, that a lot of the conversation is hypothetical and insincere and that only one player on his team took misogynistic discourse too far. He explained, “There’s this one person on my team that, he does a lot...and he has a list on his phone of the—all the girls he’s done stuff with, but, like...that’s the only person I know that does that all the time and, I mean, we all laugh at it, but some people think he’s a bit of a dick for it.” This snippet indicated, again, that there are players who feel that the objectification of women is wrong, but participate in it or maintain its existence by remaining silent on the matter and playing along. Connell (1987) would refer to these individuals as the complicit group who legitimize the attitudes and actions of the hegemonically masculine group atop the gender hierarchy. Both Connell (1987) and Messner (2002) argue that individuals who silently allow or encourage problematic masculine behaviour such as misogyny are just as responsible as those who perpetrate it because they do nothing in the way of rectifying the issue. Following my discussions with my key informants, I am inclined to agree because they were quite aware that the way both they and their teammates spoke about girls

and women was troublesome, yet they either continued to participate anyway or minimized the activity to insincere and not truly hurtful.

The next major subject I discussed with Informant B was his and his teammates' attitudes towards homosexuality. In his interview, Informant B was quite open about his opinion that there was little to no room for homosexuality in ice hockey—at least not at the present time—so I was eager to keep speaking with him about the matter once I had more study results to share with him and discuss. I began by asking him if he thought homophobia was a problem on his team, to which he responded:

*Uhh... I don't think it is...like...no, I don't think there's—it is at all. Like...if there was a gay person... like, on the hockey team or...I mean...no one would make fun of them to their face, but...people would definitely make fun of him behind his back. I think, like, when we start to get older and more—like, get more mature and stuff, we'll start to realize that... everyone's, like, the same and...everyone has likes and dislikes and...we'll all just kinda get along, but...I don't know when that's coming, so...there's some people that aren't very mature. But I'm still not sure I'd call them homophobic. Just...uneducated; we're not used to it.*

This response bridged to my claim in the interview analysis that creating acceptance of homosexuality in ice hockey might be more of a matter of experience or deep familiarity than visibility; that until the players actually have an openly gay teammate, they may not be fully prepared to commit to the idea of handling the experience maturely, fairly, and open-mindedly.

I turned the conversation towards my survey results and he continued to posit that they were skewed because the players felt a need to be politically correct where LGBTQ issues were concerned (which was evidenced in part by the player who told his teammate to stop using fag discourse in front of me). For instance, he felt that players had been quite liberal in their claim that it would be acceptable to have a gay coach (22.1% agreed and 50.5% suspected that their teammates would also agree—a significant jump in percentages). He responded:

*That surprises me! I figured it would be lower. I just...figured, like...everybody....wouldn't feel very comfortable with the coach in the dressing room, stuff like that, getting changed and...I know I wouldn't feel very comfortable, but I don't know...I just feel like...maybe they'd be, like...watching me get changed or something like that... like a gay adult looking at kids getting dressed? I wouldn't want to get changed in front of 'em and I know some other guys wouldn't.*

When I told him that 22.1% of players said they would be upset if they found out that they had a gay teammate (see Appendix A9), he reacted similarly, citing the possibility of unwanted attention as a problem:

*Yeah...Uhhh...pretty well the same reason as the coach. Like, you wouldn't wanna...get naked in front of your...gay hockey player friend. Like, you don't want to have to worry about that stuff while you're trying to...to focus. And, like... especially if you don't feel the same way. Like, I'm not interested in some guy looking at me naked, so...*

Informant B said that he expected the number for being upset over having a gay teammate to be higher and he, like several other players, was very concerned with the possibility of attracting unwanted sexual or romantic attention from a teammate on the basis of being naked in front of him. Several players seemed to have built up this situation in their minds and I continue to find it peculiar that nudity can have such a profound effect on them. At the same time, I remembered Jean's inquiry presented in Chapter Five about why none of the players on Informant B's team currently wanted to be nude in front of one another (a rarity in boys' and men's ice hockey), so perhaps there was more at work in this situation than either Jean or I could decipher.

Next, I asked Informant B about how common it is to make jokes about being gay or to use 'fag discourse'. After sharing with him that 60% of survey respondents agreed that it was common among their teammates to make jokes about being gay (see Appendix A9), he responded:

*Oh! I think that should be 100%, actually. Haha. Everybody does that. But, I mean...I don't think anyone would ever make fun of a teammate that's actually gay...But, we're always just, like...calling people fags and...stuff. Just, like... if someone came and told a story and...they—everyone thought it was weird, they wouldn't say 'Oh, that's weird,' they'd call you fag and gay and stuff like that. But that's totally different than someone actually being gay.*

Informant B's response implied once more that the players may have sanitized their responses due to some fear of being incriminated or judged. Should this have been the case, it made me wonder if the players responded the way they did because they thought deep down that it was morally wrong to make jokes about homosexuality or simply because they thought I found it morally wrong and therefore, they elected to say what they thought I might want to hear. This could be interpreted as researcher bias, but, to apply Goffman's work, it could be interpreted as a

mechanism by which the players create their frontstages and backstages between the locker room and interacting with me. However, there is no effective way to account for researcher bias or the risk of players offering insincere answers to questions such as those that asked them to rate their teammates' sexuality on a scale in the survey. When Informant B found out that 9.5% of respondents said that it would be acceptable for a gay teammate to flirt with them (see Appendix A9), he laughed almost hysterically and retorted:

*What! Haha. That should be zero. I can't believe someone said that! That it would be okay with them! They must have either not been paying attention or were trying to be nice because they know it's wrong. But it can't be honest. Well... I can tell you that 9.5% probably didn't come from my team, at least. I mean... you're not gonna hold it against the person, but I don't want any part of it, myself and I don't think the guys do either...*

Here, Informant B has implicated his own personal opinion on the matter, which made me wonder if he had reason to believe that his teammates would agree or if he had assumed so—he never specified and I did not ask. Moreover, he could not speak for the other five teams I worked with. I had committed to taking each respondent's account on their terms, so this complication of my findings made the research interesting for me. Informant B's teammates who participated in the interview all said that having a gay teammate would take time to get used to, which was the main response throughout the entire population. He, like other players, added that his teammates do not often see very evidently homosexual couples in public and that this likely contributed to his teammates not being comfortable with homosexuality, should he have perceived their attitudes correctly. It continues to be safe to say that, overall, while the players in my study population are open to the prospect of having a gay teammate, there is still some skepticism and a small segment of the population is not comfortable with the idea at all.

The final subject of my discussion with Informant B was social media. I asked if he found that any of his teammates use social media to communicate any thoughts or feelings on any of the material we had discussed throughout our conversation. Of course, I had already examined the populations' Twitter accounts, however, I wanted to use the opportunity to see if I would learn anything new—and I did. As discussed in Chapter Five, according to Informant B, some of his teammates, as well as other Midget AAA players he knows outside of his team, use Tinder. Although he did not believe it was necessarily common among Midget AAA players in general, he did say, "I don't even know how to use it; I've never had it, but...I know a few people that are

on it and...when we go on, like, road trips to [bigger cities] and stuff like that, they always use it and...talk to girls at [universities] and stuff like that. Haha.” The difficulties associated with examining Tinder, as outlined in Chapter Five, blocked my ability to search any further, however, after a thorough search of Informant A’s Twitter page, I was led to his ask.fm page and examined it based on Informant B’s claim that ask.fm might be a reasonable place to find information on gender and sexuality. These findings will be reported on next in Chapter Eight.

Both of my key informants were instrumental in, in a relative manner, adding to the facet of the study that sought to address hypermasculinity in ice hockey. Their input on the players’ treatment of girls and women added a meaningful layer to the research because relations with girls and women were not a priority, however, their implication in matters of gender and sexuality in the players’ lives shone through via my key informants, proving that the subject was a necessary part of the study that the research design did not successfully encompass. In a way, it could be said that I set out to analyze homophobia and returned analyzing misogyny, although I use both terms lightly with the study population in question. Despite the risks associated with having key informants, such as the motives associated with the relationship and the risk of informants being outsiders themselves (Berg, 2009), I contend that having some added contact with willing participants was beneficial to the study because it added new information and perspective. I also do not believe that my informants were outsiders to the group; in fact, based on my interpretation of their interaction with teammates, they were well-liked veterans who other teammates looked up to. Most importantly, however, had it not been for my key informants, I would have missed essential clues while interpreting the findings of my social media analysis.

CHAPTER EIGHT  
**AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF MALE MAJOR MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY  
PLAYERS' PUBLICLY AVAILABLE TWITTER ACCOUNTS**

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The final phase of analysis was the content analysis of Midget AAA players' publicly available social media accounts on Twitter. The data was collected prior to my entrance into the field in case my intervention into the players' lives would have any bearing on their social media activity; however, the analysis was conducted after the surveys and interviews because this portion of the study was not meant to hold as much weight as the surveys and interviews. The purpose of this aspect of the study was to search for content that may have been related to gender and sexuality in any way, as well as to add a contemporary element to the study that considered that youth and athletes both rely heavily on social media to communicate with one another and almost any kind of audience. The analysis will begin by presenting the data collected from Twitter and will briefly discuss the accounts of key informants to provide added insight. No names will be shared so as to ensure that the players Twitter profiles cannot be connected to their interviews and possibly identify them.

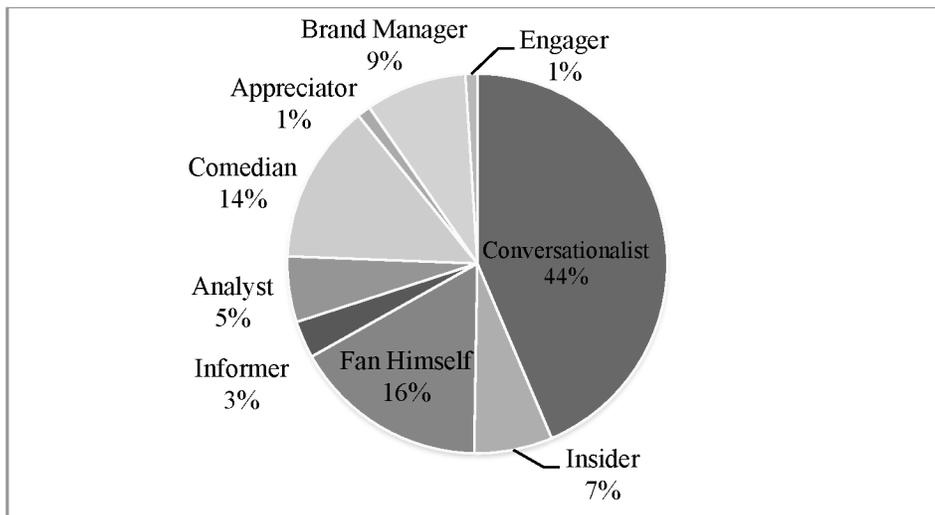
I examined a total of 1484 tweets, retweets, and likes among 56 accounts. Put differently, I located the Twitter accounts of 80% (n=76) of my study population, however four accounts were locked and sixteen were inactive in the month during which data was collected, therefore I examined the active Twitter accounts of 59% (n=56) of the study population. As stated in Chapter Four on methodology, each post was classified according to the following categories adapted from Lebel & Danylchuk's (2014) study of athlete self-presentation on Twitter: the Conversationalist, the Insider, the Fan Himself, the Informer, the Analyst, the Comedian, the Brand Manager, the Engager, the Appreciator, and Other. It was also noted within each category when a post related to gender or sexuality appeared. Additionally, I took note of whether or not the player's profile stated that he was a hockey player in order to determine if identifying as a hockey player had any bearing on their self-presentations and interactions where gender and sexuality were concerned. The posts were coded manually and then entered into SPSS where frequency distributions and cross tabulations were created to provide an elementary view of the players' public lives on social media.

## Overview of the Posts

To provide an idea of the makeup of the 1484 posts, the players posted on Twitter anywhere from one to 140 times over the course of the month during which data collection took place, however players most commonly posted between one and ten times in the span of the month (see Appendix D3 for full distribution of post frequency). The nature of the player's posts will be examined first and then other layers will be added to the analysis such as whether or not the posts contained anything to do with gender or sexuality, how often the player generated posts, and whether or not the player noted in his profile that he is an ice hockey player.

All 1484 posts among 56 accounts were coded within the categories of self presentation, in no particular order, as follows (see Chart 8.01 below for a visual representation): 647 Conversationalist posts, 99 Insider posts, 246 Fan Himself posts, 47 Informer posts, 83 Analyst posts, 202 Comedian posts, 128 Brand Manager posts, 15 Engager posts, and 17 Appreciator posts. None were deemed to fit the category of 'other'. The most common type of post was the Conversationalist, which made up nearly half of all posts, and consisted of conversations or interactions with other people regarding any number of topics; school, hockey, and weekend plans came up often. No specific examples will be given as they would immediately be searchable on the internet and would then identify the population, therefore elaboration will only take place when necessary and in fairly non-specific terms.

**Chart 8.01: Content of Player Twitter Posts**



The remainder of the posts fit into their coding categories as described. After the conversationalist, the next two most common categories were the Fan Himself and the Comedian. Fan posts mostly consisted of tweeting, retweeting, or liking posts related to professional sport game results, commentary on recent sporting events, or athlete milestones and accomplishments. The posts were mostly about hockey at Junior and Professional levels, however some posts were also about football, baseball, and basketball, among others. Comedian posts ranged more in nature and were more difficult to interpret as such since my idea of comedy might have differed from that of the players. The discussion of comedic posts has been reserved for later in the chapter because some of the posts, such as those relating to gender, sexuality, race, and alcohol and drug use merit more attention than the other posts. The next most common type of post was the Brand Manager, in which the players typically tweeted, retweeted, or liked posts relating to their own teams such as game times and locations. In some cases, the players would retweet or like posts created by others about the player's accomplishments or their performance in a recent game. Insider posts mostly consisted of the players announcing what they were doing at any given time, such as watching television, going to school, studying, going to hockey, travelling with family, attending school dances, or partying on the weekends.

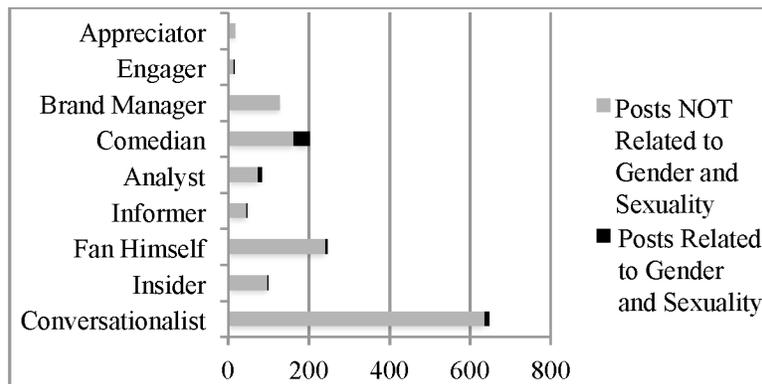
Examples of Analyst posts included commentary on the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Ice Bucket Challenge (a common social movement in which people dumped ice water on themselves in support of individuals with ALS), opinions on local politicians, opinions on music, and motivational quotes on how to handle challenges. Examples of Informer posts included the sharing of information on teen suicide rates, events that occurred on the same day in history, animal rights issues, and events occurring at school. Engager posts consisted of open-ended questions with no perceivable specific recipient, such as something to the extent of 'someone text me; I'm bored' or 'how did summer end so quickly?' Lastly, examples of Appreciator posts included players thanking people and organizations for new sport apparel, thanking people for attending their games, and speaking generally about things they appreciate, such as nice weather.

## Posts Related to Gender and Sexuality

Regarding posts that related specifically to gender and sexuality, 67 posts out of 1484 (4.5%) related in some way to the subject. This indicates that gender and sexuality play a very small role in the players' self-presentations and interactions on Twitter. Additionally, all but three of the posts were about heterosexuality in some way, which will be discussed at length later on in the chapter. The three posts that referenced LGBTQ in some way included one retweet referring to soccer as gay compared to hockey (I consider this fag discourse), one like of a photo of a man screaming with the words "HA! GAY!" superimposed on it (likely also fag discourse, but unclear), and one seemingly sincere tweet asking when people would stop caring about the sexual orientation of others. These posts demonstrate, not only that gender and sexuality play a small role in the players' Twitter lives, but homosexuality is discussed in terms of fag discourse and literally one of 1484 (0.00067%, for reference) seems to actually support LGBTQ equality. This is a small number considering the magnitude of LGBTQ rights on the Canadian and American political agendas and the fact that the players engaged in other social issues such as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, teen suicide rates, and local political issues.

The posts were further coded according to those that related to gender and sexuality within the original categories. For example, 11 of the 647 Conversationalist posts made reference to gender or sexuality in some way. The following table and two charts depict the distribution visually and will be followed by a discussion. Chart 8.02 below visually demonstrates the frequency of posts within the total. Table 8.01 on page 189 presents the frequency of posts by category. Chart 8.03 on page 189 then depicts the categorical makeup of the 67 posts related to gender and sexuality.

**Chart 8.02: Visual Representation of Table 8.01**



**Table 8.01: Categorical Distribution of Posts Including those Related to Gender and Sexuality**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Conversation	636	42.9	42.9	42.9
Conversation (Gender & Sexuality)	11	.7	.7	43.6
Insider	98	6.6	6.6	50.2
Insider (Gender & Sexuality)	1	.1	.1	50.3
Fan Himself	241	16.2	16.2	66.5
Fan Himself (Gender & Sexuality)	5	.3	.3	66.8
Informer	46	3.1	3.1	69.9
Informer (Gender & Sexuality)	1	.1	.1	70.0
Analyst	74	5.0	5.0	75.0
Analyst (Gender & Sexuality)	9	.6	.6	75.6
Comedian	163	11.0	11.0	86.6
Comedian (Gender & Sexuality)	39	2.6	2.6	89.2
Brand Manager	128	8.6	8.6	97.8
Engager	14	.9	.9	98.8
Engager (Gender & Sexuality)	1	.1	.1	98.9
Appreciator	17	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	1484	100.0	100.0	

\* Note: There were no posts related to gender and sexuality within the categories of Brand Manager and Appreciator

**Chart 8.03: Distribution of Twitter Posts Relating to Gender and Sexuality**

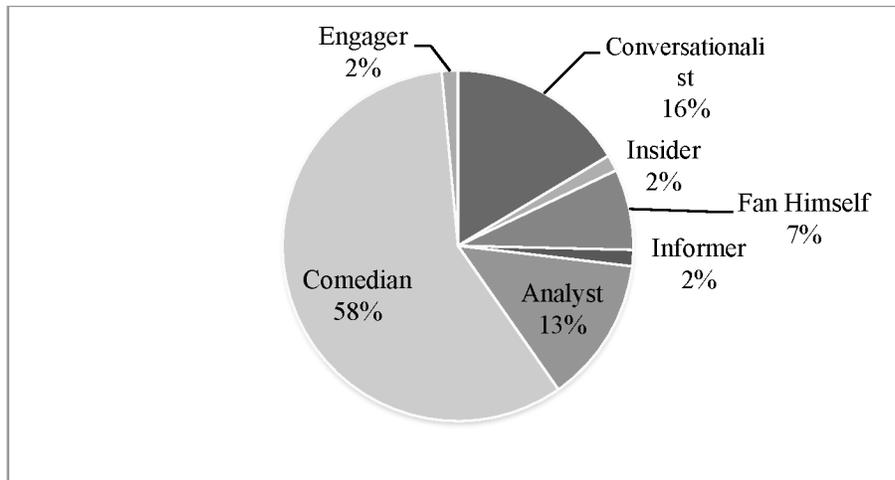


Chart 8.02, in particular, demonstrates that gender and sexuality do not figure prominently in the players' self-presentations and interactions. Indeed, as my key informant, James, noted, Twitter may not have been the best place to seek information on gender and sexuality despite being the most used form of social media amongst the population. I found this contradictory, however, considering that the surveys, interviews, two managers, and two key

informants all indicated that the players commonly discuss sex and girls and women. Possible explanations for this will be discussed later in the chapter. For now, however, the analysis will turn to the content of the 67 posts that were related to gender and sexuality. Fortunately, many of them were retweets or favourites of content that had been created by popular accounts, meaning they had been shared thousands of times and could be depicted in the analysis without compromising the identity of the players.

As Chart 8.03 demonstrates above, nearly 60% of the players' Twitter posts were comedic in nature. Of course, this percentage was generated according to my own interpretation of what is meant to be comical and this often included posts that could be considered insensitive where girls and women are concerned. The 39 comedic posts related to gender and sexuality could be classified under the following themes: women's bodies and appearance, sex with women, women who serve or please men, and inferior and emotional women.

Examples of posts related to women's bodies and appearances included: a retweeted video of a monkey grabbing and rubbing his face between a woman's breasts; a like of a photo that placed a super model next to a young woman in a hoodie with no makeup and disheveled hair to depict how women present themselves on social media compared to their actual appearance (implying that women mislead audiences by sharing only photos that portray them as attractive); two retweeted videos of a woman 'twerking' (a dance involving pelvic thrusting in a squatting stance); a retweeted photo of a young wide-eyed male lurking behind two women, staring at their back sides, with the caption 'when the booty game strong,' referring to women with attractive posteriors; two liked photos of an elderly topless woman with a caption about the photo being a rare nude image of Hollywood actress Jennifer Lawrence; a like of a tweet by a female who is expressing her concern over her breasts being too small; and, most strikingly (see Image 8.01 on the right), a like of a photo of a heavy-set black woman with the caption 'The owner of this black suburban please move your vehicle. It's blocking the road'. This post, in particular, added a racial layer to

**Image 8.01: Black Suburban**



discourses of expectations regarding the shape and size of women’s bodies, comparing the individual in this image to a large truck while alluding to her race. If we are to extend the metaphor even further, it could also be argued that women, like vehicles, are made for ‘riding’, which could invoke sexual intercourse. Indeed, it quickly became evident that negative attitudes towards homosexuality were much less prominent in the players’ Twitter lives than their tendencies to sexualize and objectify women.

Examples of posts depicting sex with women included: a tweet about the morning after pill being a life saver, a retweet about having used the popular culture turn of phrase ‘F#\$% her right in the pussy!’ (originally used to derail a female broadcaster’s segment); a tweet stating that it is acceptable to have intercourse with ugly women, but not to marry them; and, one of the most

**Image 8.02: Manual Penetration**



controversial posts I found throughout the entire content analysis (see Image 8.02 on the left), a like of a photo meant to depict the difference in vaginal secretions of white, Asian, and Hispanic women through manual penetration. The photo included three perspectives of two fingers, one with glitter (white), one with rice (Asian), and one with chili powder (Hispanic). In a way, this use of racial and sexual material on the players’ Twitter accounts is not in keeping with some of their self-descriptions as open-minded, fair, and mature. At the same time, not all of the players described

themselves or their teammates in such terms, and where there were so few posts of this nature, it would be impossible to cast an analytical net so wide as to claim that these posts are commonly created or shared amongst the population. Nonetheless, these posts are public and can reflect on the player as an individual depending on the social expectations of the audience, which signifies more interplay of front and backstages.

The third theme within the context of comedic posts relating to gender and sexuality was that of women as inferior. Examples included: a retweet of a post explaining that if girlfriends are feeling ignored, it is because the latest NHL video game had just come out and not because their

‘booty game ain’t strong’ (their posteriors are not attractive); a favoured tweet about a woman calling herself a trophy wife and then being informed that she was ‘more like a 7<sup>th</sup> place ribbon

wife’; a retweet of a post about women not achieving equality because men are better than them (see Image 8.03 on the right); and a favourite of a tweet by a young woman who said she was worried that her hockey player boyfriend was going to break up with her because he

had moved to another city and begun attending bars with his teammates where he would presumably meet other women. These posts, one of which was created by a woman herself, all carry an air of belittlement and allude to women’s insecurities and perceived inferiority by men.

The fourth and final theme among Twitter posts related to gender and sexuality that were meant to be funny was women who serve or please men. Examples of these posts included: a

#### ***Image 8.04: Hockey Player Candy***



#### ***Image 8.03: Gender Equality***



tweet referencing ‘puck sluts’ (otherwise known as puck bunnies or girls and women who supposedly perpetually seek romantic or sexual relations with hockey players); three retweets of a photo (see Image 8.04 on the left) that showed a bin of hockey-player shaped candies with the caption ‘white girls [sic] favourite candy’, a tweet of a photo of a group of young women carrying a players’ hockey bag with the caption ‘tanks ladies!’ and a like of a video showing a man standing still on a dance floor drinking beer, while a woman gyrated around him, with the caption ‘take notes boys!’ These posts, to differing extents, portrayed women as subservient to or preoccupied with men and

hockey players. I connected these posts with the narrative of self-entitlement that players can feel through being turned into minor (or major) celebrities amongst their peers and communities as a result of the praise ice hockey receives on local, regional, and national levels in Canada. Where Midget AAA players are the most elite for their age and level of play, there is a chance that girls and women have begun to approach them or that they have begun to feel entitled to female attention. On another note, posts within this theme continue to make use of race and have also introduced alcohol to the content analysis.

Alcohol factored in to eight other tweets, some of which were meant to be comedic, which was ironic because some of the underage players posted photos of themselves consuming alcohol through this very public medium. With that said, however, my interest lay more in the posts about gender and sexuality, and I located some of these related to alcohol as well. For instance, I found a retweet of a photo

*Image 8.05: Female Hormones*

of a young man drinking beer with a funnel while a young woman sits on his shoulders with the caption ‘multitasking.’ I also came across a retweet of a post (see Image 8.05 on the right) about beer encouraging



stereotypical womanly behaviour that read ‘Apparently beer contains female hormones. After you drink enough you can neither drive nor shut the hell up.’ All of the posts examined so far demonstrate that the players’ sense of humour—and, by extension, their interests and self-presentations—sometimes, but not always, revolve around stereotypical views of women and that they can also be bound up with race and alcohol consumption, both of which could be problematic given the nature of some of the racialized posts and the fact that the players were all under the legal drinking age at the time.

I will emphasize again that, based on my conversations with the players, I do believe that the posts were meant to be humorous and not offensive, however, there is no doubt that several of the posts could be interpreted as reducing women to inferior, simplistic, sexual objects and also as derisive towards a variety of racial communities. Furthermore, the players have to have learned somehow that these words and images were considered humorous; I am inclined to say that teammates dictate what is considered humorous on Twitter since the players are most likely

to follow and interact with young people and not their fathers and mothers, who were also considered important people with whom they interact. With that said, however, some interviewees said that many players ridicule homosexuality and objectify girls and women despite knowing better and the reason why continues to be unclear. I suspect that it is connected to an almost ritualistic demonstration of one's difference from women, which is an aspect of masculinity in general that might be more pronounced in sporting contexts, however the separation of homophobia and misogyny is still not accounted for here.

Some players did say in their interviews that they were worried about what their teammates might think if they did not present themselves in a hypermasculine way. However, concern over the opinions of others was not a prominent subject of discussion and I am inclined to return to James' point that most players do not actually know better; they are uneducated when it comes to the possible negative effects of fag discourse and sexual objectification of others (and possibly the repercussions of sharing illegal activity publicly on the internet such as consuming alcohol under age). This leaves two groups: that which knows better and engages in it to fit in and the group that does not engage in it at all, such as John who believed that my project deserved more attention than it received from his team. Indeed, as a reminder, one individual (who was categorized as an engager in the content analysis) did ask when sexual orientation will stop mattering. At first, this framework of participation in fag discourse and the objectification of women is reminiscent of Connell's (1987) masculinity types with the hegemonic group initiating the behaviour and the complicit group supporting it. My study population diverges from this, however, because many of the players who had no problems with homosexuality or engaged less in the objectification of girls and women were team captains and were well-liked and respected, making them leaders in their own ways. There is a chance, though, that this distancing might be less important to these individuals who have a secure sense of their position; the more marginal males might be more inclined to engage in misogyny so as to confirm their masculinity. In any case, from this perspective, inclusive masculinity is more relevant because players who are open to other forms of sexual orientation or masculine self-presentations are not subjected to any kind of explicit or hardline hierarchy among their teammates.

The analysis will now proceed to discuss the remaining posts related to gender and sexuality. All other posts consisted of 11 Conversationalist, nine Analyst, five Fan Himself, and one of each the Insider and the Engager. Examples of Conversationalist posts included: one

player's tweet directed at a young woman in which he called her a 'puck slut'; one player tweeted a photo to a friend showing who he matched with on Tinder; four retweets and two likes by what I perceived to be players' partners expressing their love or appreciation for them. The posts were all something to the extent of 'glad to be spending the day with my love [insert name]' or 'my Man Crush Monday is my babe [insert name]'. Man Crush Monday is a popular culture trend to post photos of men that people like or find attractive (by all genders) on Mondays. Woman Crush Wednesday is its counterpart.

Examples of Analyst posts included the sharing of opinions on women such as retweeting a photo of celebrity model and actress Blake Lively and commenting on her beauty, a tweet about the positive emotions associated with an individual for whom the player has romantic feelings attending his hockey game, a like of a tweet about girlfriends who attend their partner's hockey practice are worthy of marriage, and liking a photo of a woman sitting on top of a man who is lying down in bed with a caption to the effect of how desirable such a situation is. The Fan Himself posts related to gender and sexuality included two retweets of a post how girls and women who play hockey are 'cool' as well as three favourites of women wearing only hockey jerseys or t-shirts supporting NHL teams. Lastly, the one Informer post on gender and sexuality was a reminder to peers that there was an essay on sexual health due in a personal development class and the one Engager post was a tweet asking if any girls wanted to be in a relationship with the player who had created the tweet. These posts could be considered less offensive than the Comedian posts related to gender and sexuality where girls and women are concerned.

As was the case with the surveys and interviews, I obtained a range of perspectives from the players, however their attitudes towards homosexuality have been all but absent compared to their views of girls and women. My key informants were first to establish that the ways the players discussed girls and women could be interpreted as offensive, however my examination of their Twitter posts revealed this more clearly. It may go without saying that several of these depictions of women raise questions about hypermasculinity in ice hockey and gender equality. After all, Ingham et. al (1999) did find that hockey players of a similar age were likely to sexually objectify girls and women and Connell's (1987) framework of hegemonic masculinity, which some of the players embody to an extent, prioritizes the rejection of femininity, which would account for their depictions of women as inferior on Twitter.

While it is my opinion that the players should be educated on the possible (if not blatant) issues associated with such depictions of gender, even if they are meant to be humorous, I am inclined to point out that these posts made up a small part of the whole and that, much like their attitudes towards homosexuality, there are very few who view gender and sexuality in negative, stereotypical, or possibly offensive ways. I hold that it can be easy to become disproportionately caught up with posts of this nature because they can be quite alarming to viewers. I believe that this is how mainstream media works in its portrayal of male ice hockey players as well—there is disproportionate focus on those who embody hypermasculinity in socially deviant ways (cases of sexual assault, excessive alcohol consumption, and crime), not enough credit given to hockey players who demonstrate socially acceptable comportment in a public context, and little to no attention is paid to those who do not have enough information to make educated decisions where their attitudes and interactions are concerned, including those who stay silent out of fear. If mainstream media and academia are to focus proportionately on the entire population as different groups and as having different front and backstages, I believe that hockey culture could be understood as more complex and that perhaps more could be done to address socially unacceptable behaviours within it.

In order to further investigate my position on hockey culture, I took note of which players specifically stated in their Twitter biographies that they were hockey players and then ran a cross tabulation in SPSS to determine if identifying publicly as a hockey player was related at all to the nature of the players’ posts. Biographies are available even in locked accounts, so I was able to access those of all 76 players who were on Twitter. Just under half of the biographies (44.7%) included the player’s identity as a hockey player, typically noting their jersey number and for which team they played. Table 7.02 below provides an overview of how many biographies included hockey.

**Table 8.02: Hockey Player Identity in Twitter Biographies**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Does Not Include Hockey	42	55.3	55.3	55.3
Includes Hockey	34	44.7	44.7	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

The fact less than half of the population made a point to identify themselves as hockey players was further evidence in support of the fact that, although hockey is a major priority in their lives, it is not always the pinnacle of all of their identities. Having found this, I chose to run the cross tabulation in order to add posts relating to gender and sexuality to the analysis. It is not uncommon for players to downplay their athlete status in certain situations. For instance, some Junior players are forbidden by coaches to wear team apparel to night clubs so that the team will not be associated with any possible incidents that might occur in the club that could give the public a reason to look down upon the team and players (MacDonald, 2012). Based on this, I wondered if Midget AAA players who did not identify publicly as hockey players would be more likely to post comedic posts about gender and sexuality that may toe the line between humorous and insensitive. Table 7.03 below demonstrates the number of Comedian posts by players according to how many players posted and whether or not their identity as a hockey player was in their Twitter biography.

***Table 8.03: Comedian Posts Relating to Gender and Sexuality According to Hockey Identity in Twitter Biographies***

		Biography		Total
		Does Not Include Hockey	Includes Hockey	
<b>Number of Posts</b>	0	16	25	41
Comedian (Gender and Sexuality)	1	4	2	6
	2	2	0	2
	3	2	1	3
	4	0	2	2
	5	1	0	1
	7	1	0	1
	Inactive	13	3	16
Account Locked	3	1	4	
<b>Total</b>		42	34	76

The table communicates that players who did not include their identity as a hockey player in their Twitter biography posted more humorous posts about gender and sexuality. Indeed, ten of the players who did not include hockey in the biographies posted between one and seven times whereas only five players who did include hockey in their biographies posted the same amount. Put differently, participants who did not identify themselves publicly as hockey players were half as likely to post jokes or images like those shared above with sexist and racist connotations. Of course, this is an elementary analysis and no relationship can be detected between the two from a

cross tabulation, but in the way of an exploratory study, this finding may be useful in future research on the same or similar subjects. I suspect that, if we are to consider the limited amount of posts on gender and sexuality alongside of how many players included hockey in their biographies, the relationship might be relatively insignificant. I propose this because approximately half of the population did not include hockey in their biography, but far less than half of the population posted comedic content related to gender and sexuality on Twitter, therefore there are likely other explanations for not including hockey in one's biography beyond the potential of not wanting to seek attention for posting possibly offensive material on social media.

I believe that debates in the literature regarding the status of hypermasculinity result from a disproportionate view of ice hockey culture. Indeed, it would appear, based on this study, that homophobia and misogyny are both concerns that have been misrepresented by each camp in the debate over hypermasculinity in male sports. The Twitter analysis added perspective on misogyny and confirmed that neither inclusive masculinity nor hegemonic masculinity best describe my study population, but they do describe some of them and they do contribute to an understanding of the social meanings that subtend the players' interactions. At the same time, acceptable manhood could be used to describe many of my participants, but it demands heterosexuality. It is difficult to report on a group that is diverse in many ways. I will draw conclusions on these theoretical approaches to masculinity in ice hockey in the next chapter.

Despite the small number of possibly insensitive Twitter posts, a main question that arose based on the nature of such posts was why do the players appear to understand that Twitter is a place to ridicule and stereotype women and racial identity, but not homosexuality? What is it about homosexuality that makes it largely off-limits in terms of humour on Twitter but not in the dressing room? And why are women fair game in both contexts? I presume that homophobia might be a way that misogyny manifests itself in relations among men and it manifests itself differently in interactions with women. Additionally, although race is an important part of the discussion, I will not include it here because it lies outside of the scope of the study; it will be discussed in the Conclusion as part of the suggestions for future research.

One possible explanation for the scant smattering of anti-gay humour and fag discourse on Twitter as opposed to misogynistic posts is the players' awareness of homophobia in sport in the media and in their high schools. With all of the attention homosexuality has received, such as

the examples listed in the Introduction of the dissertation, the players' personal development courses, and their arm's-length ties to LGBTQ support groups, it may be clear to them that humour about homosexuality is only welcome in certain contexts and that Twitter is not one of them, but the dressing room is. This is perhaps because, as far as they know, no one in the dressing room will be insulted. In reality, some of the players, whether gay or not, are insulted by it and do understand that it can be offensive to others, regardless of the context. In this sense, the players' 'backstages' prove to be quite significant from a consensus perspective—is it acceptable to use fag discourse and to have anti-gay attitudes in a setting in which all participants have consented to its use? What about in the case of gay teammates who may not be bothered by it? Such questions are not presently for me to answer, but this explanation suggests that it has somehow been communicated to the players that it is less acceptable to deride homosexuality than to deride women in the public eye.

I would argue that the derision and sexual objectification of women is so engrained in society in general that it may be taken for granted in many of the players' 'backstages' and that traditional gender performances might speak not only to what the players post on Twitter, but also to their mothers playing supportive and emotional roles. Based on my conversations with the players about mothers and girlfriends, however, it was evident that the players did not always place the girls and women in their lives in traditional gender boxes (as evidenced by 'tough' mothers and 'non-girly' partners). I suggest that, in the players' lifetime (approximately fifteen to eighteen years), the push towards combatting homophobia has actually been more visible and tangible than the push for women's equality because certain gender performances are so deeply engrained that the players and perhaps several of the people with whom they interact have taken them for granted, therefore the message about homophobia rings louder and clearer to the players than does the message about misogyny. Put differently, there are likely less activists in the players' lives who make a point to combat a handful of male youth making jokes about women on Twitter than there are working to dismantle homophobia in schools, families, and communities.

The players never once spoke to me about women's equality in discussing the causes their girlfriends support or the lessons they learned in their personal development classes or their interactions with parents because, I think that, in many of their eyes, girls and women are equals and the humour that this small group of players uses has been normalized over a long period of

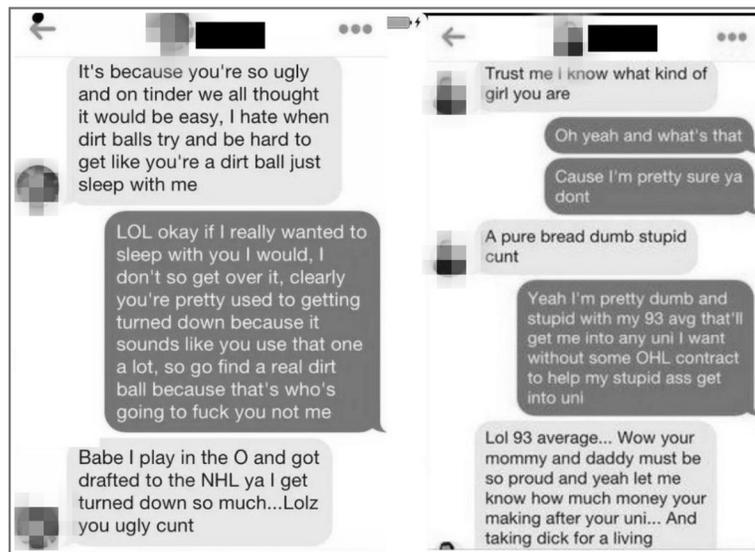
time, therefore there may have been little to no efforts to educate the players on why such attitudes may have harmful effects on girls and women. This poses somewhat of a contradiction. Within the academy, this can be explained by Goffman (1976), Butler (2004), and Kessler & McKenna (1978), who argue that the performance of gender is consistently taken for granted because the roles associated with it have been so repetitively played for centuries that it becomes second-nature and taken for granted to the extent that others judge us if we do not participate accordingly. I think that this simple but fundamental explanation of how gender functions in society can be used to explain why there is room for misogyny on Twitter and not homophobia in the players' lives. They have learned to read their various contexts or 'backstages' and some, more than others, toe the line between acceptable and unacceptable when it comes to where and when to deride certain groups.

Do coaches, parents, and other authorities have a responsibility to monitor what the players post on Twitter? And what if these individuals have anti-gay or misogynistic attitude themselves? Governing bodies in sport, such as the NCAA, have implemented regulations regarding student-athletes' use of social media (Gay, 2011; Hopkins, Hopkins & Whelton, 2013; Sanderson & Browning, 2013). Hockey leagues in Canada are beginning to follow suit, although the players in my study were not subjected to any regulations regarding their social media use. Nonetheless, these regulations can be seen as both a way to teach the players about acceptable conduct in public, but also as a way to compartmentalize their use of insensitive humour. Both perspectives raise moral and ethical questions about whether or not governing bodies reserve the right to control the content athletes create and share on social media. Indeed, it would appear that if they did not regulate the use of applications like Twitter, the athletes would be at a higher risk of creating or sharing content that fans and others may find inappropriate, thus placing negative attention on them. Again, however, all of the attention is placed on the select few who cross socially acceptable lines and the remainder of the group is often lumped in with them.

Can it be argued that being a hockey player makes an individual more likely to post and share insensitive material on Twitter? I do not believe it can. After all, it is not just hockey players who post and share derisive material about women and racial groups and not many individuals in my study engaged in this kind of activity. If we are to subscribe to the argument that hockey players are prime examples for homophobic and misogynistic masculinity, there is only limited evidence on Twitter that will support this claim. Although Twitter is useful as a site

for scholarly investigation, survey and interview data should continue to carry analytic weight and different modes of enquiry using social media should be sought out. Tinder may be a useful avenue to explore based on the suggestion of my key informant, the one player who shared some of his experience on Tinder via Twitter, and the nature of the incident mentioned in Chapter Five involving vulgar and abusive communication by Junior hockey players in Ontario via Tinder (See Image 8.06 on the right). My findings, along with the existence of regulations for athletes' use of social media, also reiterate the questions of structure and agency that I posed at the beginning of the dissertation—how much should the athletes' use of social media be structured and to what extent does knowing the difference between acceptable and unacceptable in each of their 'backstages' factor in to what they create and share on social media? This is a question I was not able to answer.

**Image 8.06: Ontario Hockey League (OHL) Tinder**



With regards to Ask.fm, after one informant had told me that it was banned in his school and youth used it less, I chose not to pursue the application much further. I did look up my other key informant's Ask.fm page as he had provided a link to it on his Twitter profile. The account, which appeared to have not been touched in over a year, was filled with content related to gender and sexuality. He had been asked over 100 anonymous questions (or left anonymous messages) regarding the following: his relationship status; whether or not he supports homosexuality; what he finds attractive in women; and several questions about the nature of his sexual experiences, including how many 'kills' he had and whether or not he was interested in group sex or has had one night stands. He was often told that he was attractive, but was also sometimes told that he was not a nice person. Although much less often, he was also asked about his thoughts on suicide, body grooming practices, where he would like to live when he is older, and what kind of career he would like to have. He answered many of the questions and comments, sharing some personal information and opting to keep other information private. Having made this discovery, I

attempted to locate other players' profiles that were also publicly available, however I only found a handful and, as was the case with my key informant, they had been inactive for several months. This confirmed the claim by my other informant that Ask.fm was not as popular and thus perhaps not the best site for examining contemporary understandings of gender and sexuality or attitudes towards homosexuality among the players.

To conclude, social media is indeed an adequate place to find information on the role of gender and sexuality in the players' lives—it is simply a matter of locating the most efficient and ethical ways of locating information. Twitter proved to be useful because it shone a light on sexism and racism in a way that the surveys and interviews did not and it also added perspective on the contexts in which certain attitudes and humour are acceptable. Almost all of these attitudes were expressed as jokes in all three phases of research—not meant to insult anyone, but having the potential to do so regardless. I was not able to obtain the players' opinions of girls and women (i.e. if their Twitter humour was some sort of misogynistic equivalent to 'fag discourse'), however the ways in which they discussed their mothers and partners led me to believe that much of what was shared on Twitter did not constitute a serious attack on women. Instead, I believe that these posts were likely a result of a lack of understanding regarding their implications—not completely unlike the way that some players lack knowledge where homosexuality is concerned. That is not to say that the issues can be addressed in the same way; I do not think that being in close proximity with certain women would have the same effect as having a gay teammate in the dressing room. These are two different issues entirely with different historical backgrounds that require drastically different attention. What should be taken from this is that both issues merit attention because homophobia is evidently within the realm of the players' awareness, but misogyny may not be as evident to all of them.

CONCLUSION  
**MALE MAJOR MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY AS A SITE  
FOR THE SCHOLARLY EXAMINATION OF CHANGING SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS  
OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN SPORT**

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The following four questions were posed about homosexuality in an ice hockey context at the beginning of the dissertation: (1) What is it about ice hockey that makes boys and men feel that homosexuality is still proscribed for them? (2) Is it only at the professional ranks or do players at other levels feel this way as well? (3) Does the presence of openly gay athletes in professional leagues necessarily mean that homosexuality is indeed less taboo in this context? (4) And how do scholarly accounts of the subject compare to the present climate in boys' and men's ice hockey where homosexuality is concerned? To answer these questions, this mixed methods doctoral research examined the lives of 95 male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players on six teams in Canada, concluding that both their understanding of gender and sexuality as well as their attitudes towards homosexuality are profoundly diverse. By examining six broader areas of enquiry (referred to as micro questions in the research design), the study was able to address these four questions by identifying and analyzing the reach of hypermasculinity in the players' lives, their levels of awareness of public discourse on LGBTQ issues, their opinions of homosexuality, and the ways in which their interactions with the most important people in their lives figure in to the formation of their opinions and attitudes. The six areas of enquiry will be addressed and the conclusion will then offer commentary on the original four questions about homosexuality and ice hockey.

The study's overarching research question was: Within the context of a sport understood to encourage hypermasculinity and homophobia, how do male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada understand gender and sexuality and how are their attitudes towards masculinity and homosexuality both shaped and presented in their interactions with teammates and the individuals closest to them? The question was broken down into six distinctive areas of enquiry as follows: (1) Is there evidence of hypermasculinity among the players? (2) How do the players perceive or treat girls and women? (3) To what extent is heterosexuality compulsory for performances of hypermasculinity in ice hockey? (4) Are players familiar with contemporary public discourse surrounding the LGBTQ community, including media accounts of homosexual professional athletes? (5) What are players' opinions of homosexuality? (6) How do their

interactions with others figure in to the formation and presentations of their opinions on homosexuality (including ‘fag discourse’ and are those more important for socialization than actually participating in hockey?)

### **Evidence of Hypermasculinity Among the Players**

Based on the review of literature, hypermasculinity is common amongst male ice hockey players (Allain, 2008, 2010; Bélanger, 1999; Crawford & Gosling, 2004; Gee, 2009; Ingham et. al, 1999; Robidoux, 2001). It involves mental and physical strength, striving for success, bravado and aggression, the willingness to take risks and defy authority, the rejection of femininity and emotion, and, most of all, heterosexuality (Anderson, 2010; Atkinson, 2011, Branon, 1976; Connell, 2005; Messner, 2007). In ice hockey, it is said to be learned from coaches, parents, teammates, and celebrities or other media portrayals and performances that demand that players be mentally and physically tough, heterosexual, and anti-feminine. This is especially the case in Canada, where, more than any other sport, ‘Canadian hockey masculinity’ becomes borderline synonymous with hypermasculinity (Allain, 2008). According to Ingham et. al (1999), one of the main ways that heterosexuality is asserted and homosexuality is denounced amongst hockey players is through their sexualization, or sexual objectification, of girls and women. Lastly, because ice hockey has historically been and continues to be a fast and tough male sport, it can be seen as one of few enclaves that prioritize traditional and perhaps stereotypical portrayals of masculinity.

My research demonstrated that although some participants could be considered to embody hypermasculinity, several others did not and many of those who did could not be said to do so in extreme ways. Indeed, neither the index for hegemonic masculinity (often used interchangeably with hypermasculinity) or the index created for hypermasculinity in ice hockey were considered statistically reliable measures of masculinity, meaning they did not constitute the best way to describe the majority of the study population based on their judgments of themselves and one another. Based on the survey results, which involved self-reporting and reporting on teammates, approximately half of the players were likely to exhibit the traits associated with hypermasculinity to different extents. The survey analysis revealed that some of the more common traits and practices included competitiveness, discussing girls and women and sex, using

fag discourse, and being heterosexual. Conversely, however, the indexes created for hegemonic masculinity and hypermasculinity in hockey demonstrated that heterosexuality is not a compulsory part of hypermasculinity (despite it being highly ranked amongst the players), that discussing emotions is not off the table in the players' lives, and almost none of them make serious or malicious comments about a player's sexuality. The only evidence of risk-taking or defying authority was amongst the smattering of players who posted on Twitter about drinking under age and drinking in excess. These findings indicate some divergence from Connell's (1987) view of hegemonic masculinity as well as the depictions of hockey players in some of the literature.

Perhaps the most compelling study result where hypermasculinity is concerned is the de-coupling of homophobia and misogyny in the players' public lives on Twitter. This understanding that homophobia is off limits, but the derision of girls and women is not, speaks very much to gender norms in society at large. It also speaks to the ways in which the players compartmentalize and negotiate their 'backstages' according to what constitutes acceptable humour in each. With that said, both the players and the literature indicate that eventually fag discourse, in particular, will not be welcome in dressing rooms either as there will likely only be an increase in openly gay hockey players at all levels in the future. This finding goes to show, though, that the way some hockey players treat girls and women should not be overlooked since my study confirms that it happens as early as age fifteen. Whether or not this is directly as a result of their participation in hockey is unclear, however, as there is room to argue that these portrayals of girls and women happen outside of sports entirely and there were relatively few posts of this nature among the study population.

### **Perceptions and Treatment of Girls and Women**

The social media analysis was key in establishing that there is a de-coupling of homophobia and misogyny taking place within the different contexts of the players' lives. Where hypermasculinity has required the rejection of both homosexuality and femininity, these rejections occurred among a cross-section of the population and to differing extents depending on the 'backstage' in which the player was participating. Homosexuality will be discussed later, however, unlike homophobia, misogyny occurred both in the hockey context and in a small

number of the players' social media self-presentations. The survey indicated that, among teammates, it was common to discuss girls, women, and sex. Two key informants also confirmed that the players were preoccupied with sexualizing women. This was quite uncommon, but existent, on social media. The handful of players who did participate in these discussions on social media sometimes did so using sexist and racist portrayals of women that should not go unnoticed despite their rarity.

The study also examined the ways in which the players perceive and treat girls and women through their interactions with mothers and girlfriends. The players' accounts of their interactions with these individuals revealed some flexibility in the players' conceptions of proper gender performance. For instance, many players described in their interviews how much they cared for and admired their mothers. A considerable number of players characterized their mothers as self-sacrificing and strong achievers, all of which are characteristics typically associated with masculinity. Lastly, a handful of players appreciated that their girlfriends were involved in traditionally male-dominated activities such as ice hockey and power weight lifting. These relationships are evidence that the players both see and support the ways in which the girls and women in their lives challenge gender boundaries.

The players' positive views of gender boundaries are at odds with the message created by Twitter posts that deride women sexually and racially and dressing room conversations that prioritize sex. This contradiction shows that there is a place and time for misogyny. It would appear that it is acceptable among teammates and on social media, but not among mothers and girlfriends. Based on my conversations with the players and the number of Twitter posts that could be considered misogynistic, I would argue that the players place greater value on the 'backstages' they share with their mothers and girlfriends, but there is some pressure from teammates to sexualize and deride women and society at large tends to overlook such practices because they are so deeply engrained in both hockey and socially accepted humour that they are often taken for granted and reduced to facts of nature in both contexts. It should be reiterated, however, that these discussions of girls and women are more common among teammates than on social media.

## **The Role of Heterosexuality in Hypermasculine Performances**

The role of heterosexuality in hypermasculine performances among the study population was ambiguous at times. The survey determined that the players ranked their teammates highly where heterosexuality is concerned and the relevant literature stated that it was a compulsory aspect of hypermasculinity. The players I interviewed either identified as straight or did not share their sexual orientation. Despite all of this, heterosexuality was considered an unreliable measure not only of hypermasculinity, but also of hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity, and acceptable manhood. This made sense for inclusive masculinity because Anderson (2009; 2011) developed the theory so as to accommodate different sexual orientations, however Connell (1987) and Goffman (1953, 1956) state that their theories of masculinity require heterosexuality, which complicates the study's findings.

I have concluded that heterosexuality, despite seeming universal, was not compulsory to the population nor to hypermasculine performances because the population could not all be described as acutely hypermasculine and because they were most likely to value other traits from Goffman's theory over heterosexuality and over hegemonic masculinity and inclusive masculinity as well. These traits included athleticism, competitiveness, dependability, and having integrity. Additionally, since the players were not entirely averse to the idea of having a gay teammate, it would appear that just because they may all be straight does not mean that they always expect teammates to be. This suggests that although the hockey context may be the most hypermasculine of the players' 'backstages' and heterosexuality is both important and implied within it, it is not necessarily compulsory because other traits associated with hypermasculinity such as competitiveness were more important. Additionally, it may go without saying that one's sexual orientation says very little about what kind of person a teammate is or about his ability to play hockey, which the players communicated in their interviews is what matters most.

## **Players' Familiarity with Contemporary Public Discourse Surrounding the LGBTQ Community and Sport**

The players' range of familiarity with both public discourse surrounding the LGBTQ community and homosexual athletes varied greatly. For instance, many of the players understood gender and sexuality in binary terms, leaving little room for people who do not identify strictly as

a man or woman and straight or gay. This could especially be confirmed by the fact that almost 60% of survey participants could not fully articulate what LGBTQ stands for. This was surprising considering the presence of same-sex marriage and other LGBTQ equality issues on the public agenda, as well as the social development courses the players take in school, which contain content of this nature. Moreover, almost 85% of survey respondents were not familiar with the *You Can Play Project* and only eight of the thirty interview participants were well aware of Michael Sam and his challenges as a homosexual athlete.

The limited understanding and awareness of public discourse and homosexual athletes translated deeper into some of the players' lives, where they expressed that non-heteronormativity was virtually absent from their every day routines. For instance, only one interview participant could recall an individual in his high school who identified as anything but gay or straight and the players from rural communities said that they simply never encountered visibly homosexual people unless they went to larger cities. The players also had no openly homosexual individuals in their circles of immediate friends and family. These factors could all explain the players' level of awareness, especially if they are highly involved in hockey culture, which has typically excluded homosexuality.

On the other end of the spectrum of players' awareness of public discourse surrounding the LGBTQ community and homosexual athletes were players who had homosexual extended family members and acquaintances as well as friends and girlfriends involved in Gay/Straight Alliances at their high schools. Some had parents with gay friends and one had attended a same-sex wedding. Some also learned about homosexuality in sport through media portrayals (such as social media and television) of Michael Sam, the *You Can Play Project*, and by watching and TSN's *reOrientation*. A handful recognized that, especially in sport, it was necessary to discuss homosexuality because the push for the acceptance of homosexuality in boys' and men's team sports was only getting stronger and showed no signs of slowing down, regardless of whether or not the players agreed with homosexuality, meaning there was no reason to avoid the subject and it should be made clear that sport is for everyone regardless of sexual orientation. This particular area of enquiry was especially effective in demonstrating the wide range of players' awareness where gender and sexuality are concerned and it has thus been relevant in justifying the fact that the players as a population often could not be described by one single theory of masculinity because they were all very different.

## **Players' Opinions of Homosexuality**

The players' opinions of homosexuality varied as much as their awareness of LGBTQ issues. Some supported it, others were not entirely sure how they felt about it because they had little experience with it in their lives, and others disagreed with it on account of religion or their parents' attitudes towards it. Moreover, it was evident that although some players' attitudes towards homosexuality were consistent across 'backstages', others were not. For many players, homosexuality was interpreted differently in the context of hockey culture than in the family or social or school contexts. Outside of hockey, homosexuality appeared to bother the players less. A key informant explained this by speaking about the close-knit nature of a hockey team compared to a more public non-interactive environment such as the gym—two contexts in which men might be naked in front of one another.

Within a hockey context, the players I interviewed agreed that having a gay teammate would be okay, but only after a certain amount of time and only under certain conditions. The most common reservation was the idea of showering naked with a gay teammate and other, less common, concerns included situations in which a gay teammate would touch or try to flirt with them because such attention would be unwarranted. Based on the way the players discussed the showers, it appeared that they directly associated nudity with attraction and also that there would be a constant danger in the early stages that a gay teammate might be inherently attracted to all of the other players. These two concerns make a lot of assumptions about how a gay hockey player would think, feel, or act and could be considered a mild form of homophobia insofar as the players fear being implicated into homosexuality. After all, a key informant was shocked to find out that 9.5% of players indicated in their surveys that it would be okay for a gay teammate to flirt with them. He felt that perhaps some of the players had sanitized their answers in order to seem politically correct. Nevertheless, other players offered decidedly humanistic accounts of homosexuality being normal and gay teammates deserving to be treated no differently than anyone else. The general consensus was that eventually, that individual would fit in and his sexual orientation would no longer be an issue once everyone was comfortable with him.

Whether the players lived in rural or urban areas also offered some indication of how they felt about homosexuality, however this could not be sufficiently examined without identifying some of the teams. What can be said is that players in rural areas were more likely to be uncomfortable with homosexuality because it was not visible to them and thus seemed more

abnormal. Additionally, some of them described their parents as old-fashioned and described their fathers as disagreeing with homosexuality on the basis of long-held traditions in remote locations. This is something that merits further investigation because it not only demonstrates that opinions on homosexuality are divided, but it adds to the range of reasons as to why these cultural divides exist where sexual orientation is concerned.

It was evident that some of the players might not be able to form an opinion of homosexuality in the ice hockey context until they experience having a gay teammate. While some say that it would not change their experience of ice hockey, others have made assumptions about attraction and acceptable topics of discussion that may or may not be accurate. In this sense, I am inclined to argue that someone in the NHL needs to be the first to break the barrier because it could very well prompt players at younger ages to come out and to begin showing teammates what it is like to have a gay teammate. This is easier said than done, of course, and has led me to wonder if the public efforts of the NHL to combat homophobia are not representative of the actual opinions of its players.

Should we accept Patrick Burke's claim that there are gay men in the NHL and that their teammates know about it, and should we take into account that the possibly unwanted pressure and media attention the first openly gay player in the NHL will face, is it possible that the NHL's attempts at combatting homophobia are not entirely representative of hockey players' opinions of homosexuality? If Midget AAA players, who are typically at least ten years younger than NHL players, are only beginning to come around to the idea, do NHL players present tolerate or accept homosexuality in the dressing room? This distinction between tolerance and acceptance could be the difference between a player keeping it to himself and a player announcing it to the world; perhaps, as I found in my study and as Anderson found several years prior, if one is able to function in the dressing room environment, his sexual orientation is secondary. Of course, there is a chance that as hockey players age, there is less pressure on them to prove their heteronormative masculinity, but I cannot help but wonder if the NHL over-represents its acceptance of homosexuality in order to pay some sort of lip service to the broader public context in which it is demanded that homophobia be eliminated. This would not be altogether different from the way the players in this study refrained from sharing their opinions of homosexuality on Twitter. In this sense, if hockey players truly have no problems with homosexuality, they will need to bring the contexts of their lives closer together because, as my Twitter analysis has

demonstrated, their opinions of homosexuality are not expressed in public and for some of them, it is because they are well aware that their opinions do not coincide with the mainstream and because they feel that the public will not understand their anti-gay humour.

### **The Role of Interactions with Others**

The players were most likely to value their relationships with their mothers, fathers, and girlfriends. This is not to say that the hockey context was not important, but that the players' interactions with teammates were largely more superficial within it, despite being more common. While the literature on hypermasculinity said that it was largely learned from parents, coaches and teammates, very few players said that they considered their teammates and coaches the most important people in their lives. The players' compartmentalization of their relationships, along with the importance they placed on them, made certain behaviours and attitudes legitimate in some contexts, but not others. For example, 'fag discourse' was acceptable amongst teammates and sometimes with fathers, but less so around mothers and on Twitter. Furthermore, some players acknowledged that some of the hypermasculine behaviour that takes place in a hockey context does not necessarily reflect how they see themselves as individuals. This was best evidenced by the fact that some were aware that 'fag discourse' and some of their conversations about sex with girls and women were not necessarily right, but they participated in order to fit in and not cause waves. A couple participants also said that they avoid meaningful conversations about gender and sexuality for the same reason—to avoid being ridiculed or called gay. At the same time, however, several players appeared to truly believe that some of their conversations were harmless and should not be taken seriously as offensive or hurtful.

The players' interactions with others also provided further information on their concepts of gender. Most notably, while they seemed to be expected to act more hypermasculine in the presence of their teammates, they were less concerned with gender boundaries outside of hockey. This was evident in the ways that the players provided emotional accounts of their relationships with their parents, in their willingness to do emotional labour in their romantic relationships, and in their supportive descriptions of their mothers and girlfriends using language often associated with masculinity. Relationships and interactions within them thus played a role in how the players conceived of gender and sexuality and context was an important part of this. By

investigating these interactions, it became apparent that although the players may live for hockey and love it, their participation in the sport and interactions with teammates are not the sole factors at work in determining the players' self-performances and attitudes towards homosexuality. Although they spent a lot of time speaking and acting a certain way amongst teammates, it appears that the values and beliefs created outside of hockey are more important to many of them.

### **Answering the Four Original Questions**

The first of the four main questions asked in the introduction was what is it about ice hockey that makes boys and men feel that homosexuality is still proscribed for them? Aside from the sport being the country's most influential combative and male-dominated sport (Atkinson, 2010; Lucyk, 2011; Messner, 2012; Pronger, 2012), I argue that the compartmentalization of hockey culture is what makes it unique. Through this sectioning off from other contexts, such as romantic and family relationships and social media, the players have an insulated space in which to use 'fag discourse' and misogyny. It has been communicated to the players, perhaps through teammates and a handful of fathers also involved in ice hockey culture that it is acceptable to behave this way.

Another explanation related to compartmentalization that surfaced indirectly from my discussions with players about their fathers who were involved in hockey culture could be the fact that hockey has undergone a lot of change since their fathers played. Taken in the context of fathers who did not play as long or at the levels they would have wished, there appeared to be a sense of responsibility on the players' parts to fulfill their fathers' wishes where hockey was concerned and this invokes a sense of nostalgia for when their fathers played. When their fathers were in their prime, hockey was even more insulated than it is now and activities such as hazing, fighting, and the objectification of women were less proscribed than they are now. The same goes for homosexuality, which has existed outside of the sealed off compartment that is hockey culture. These same fathers' attitudes towards homosexuality sometimes also trickled down to the players, whether intentionally or not.

The code of silence in ice hockey culture could be considered a symptom of this compartmentalization of hockey culture and, as stated in Chapter Five, some ethical constraints can also hinder the research. With that said, however, I hold that my conversations with players,

although sometimes diplomatic and sanitized, represented a break from the code of silence. They were all quite willing to speak with me about their personal lives and what happens amongst teammates, so there is evidence of change where the code of silence is concerned.

The second question asked if homosexuality is proscribed at other levels of hockey than the professional ranks. I would argue that it is proscribed in Midget AAA to a certain extent, but perhaps more so among my study population because they have not yet experienced having a gay teammate. They communicated that a gay teammate would eventually fit in. I still hold that although the visibility of a gay NHL player would not change opinions over night, it would inaugurate somewhat of a movement for younger people to feel more comfortable being openly gay ice hockey players, but I think that a player coming out on their own team would be more effective than seeing one on television because then the players would have first-hand experience with homosexuality in an ice hockey context. Whether the players know it or not, this tension created by waiting intently for a player to announce that he is gay is made manifest in Midget AAA. I argue that the players are unique because they occupy an in-between position in hockey culture that ties them to both historic and forward-looking norms associated with ice hockey. They are in a liminal temporal space where players have come out at lower levels, but not yet in these players' lives or in the NHL, but the imminence of such events is palpable and the players know that. Some are more ready for such an occurrence than others, but my study has encouraged them to consider what life might be like if and when it happens. By pushing younger players to confront the changing landscape of masculinity and sexuality in ice hockey, I have provided the very few players who will move on to the NHL with some form of experience that will help them acclimatize to having a gay teammate in the future.

The third question asked if the presence of openly gay athletes in professional leagues necessarily means that homosexuality is less taboo in the sporting context. Where Midget AAA is concerned, I will concede that homosexuality is not entirely taboo, but in limited and complicated ways. For instance, the players were more likely to support homosexuality outside of the hockey context, which shows that they were not staunchly against it. Within the hockey context, players mostly stated that having a gay teammate would eventually be okay, but that it would take some time and a bit of negotiation of a gay teammate's position within team dynamics. They never connected any of this discussion to the visibility of openly gay professional athletes. Given that very few players were aware of the details of Michael Sam's career and the fact that meaningful

discussions of gender and sexuality were absent among teammates, the odds of a professional hockey player announcing that he is gay do not appear likely to cause much of a disturbance in the players' lives. Perhaps this is because all of my study participants were straight and therefore felt that there was no need to deal with homosexuality in an ice hockey context, but I cannot confirm this.

The fourth and last question asked how scholarly accounts of the subject compare to the present climate in boys' and men's ice hockey where homosexuality is concerned. On the one hand, it could be said that they do not compare since recent scholarly accounts of homosexuality in elite male Major Midget AAA ice hockey are non-existent; this is where my study makes a substantial contribution to the field. On the other hand, the findings of my study place it precisely in between the two bodies of literature that work to understand whether homophobia in sport is decreasing or remaining stable.

In brief, the study results align with Messner's (2012) claim that although homosexuality is less proscribed for male athletes, there is still work to be done if homophobia is to be eliminated. This places the study in between Anderson's camp, which holds that homophobia is declining among male athletes, and Connell's camp, which clings a bit more steadfastly to the existence of homophobia and misogyny among men. Indeed, if we are to consider the two camps as theoretical models of masculinity, neither of them constituted the best fit for describing male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada—not in the players' eyes and not by my own interpretation either. Connell's model was too limiting and Anderson's model was not limiting enough, which only serves to reinforce the argument that trait based models of masculinity are not efficient ways of describing populations like male ice hockey players, no matter how homogenous they may seem.

Of the three models of masculinity used in this study, the framework I have assembled of Goffman's socially acceptable man and indicators of character (which I have termed acceptable manhood) was the model that resonated most with my population's self-perceptions and perceptions of others. This framework required that a man be heterosexual, athletic, intelligent, poised, loyal, and competitive, among others, and the players mostly all viewed themselves this way. Additionally, where theories of men and masculinity can sometimes develop with the assumption that men are violent and not good people, Goffman's work makes room for positive character traits and establishes them as desirable. With that said, however, my study also

revealed, perhaps unsurprisingly, that sexual orientation has no bearing on whether an individual is rude or polite, intelligent or unintelligent, outgoing or reclusive, or any other qualities an individual could possess. Anderson's work best represented this, however I would argue that my study resonated more with Anderson's previous (2002) claim that an athlete would be accepted regardless of sexual orientation if he fits in to the context in which he is participating. Anderson has since stated that this claim is outdated, but some of the players in my study have affirmed that if a hockey player does not 'act gay' (by touching or flirting with teammates), he is welcome in the dressing room.

None of the frameworks paid specific attention to context and all three could benefit from this distinction where sport is concerned because my study shows that some players present themselves quite differently in the company of teammates compared to parents and significant others and this works to explain why the sporting sphere lags behind society in its addressing of social issues such as LGBTQ equality—it is highly exclusive and compartmentalized and the place of structure and agency is not always clear. Anderson does some of this work insofar as he thoroughly accounts for homophobia in society and discusses the sporting context accordingly, but more could be done to parse out what is happening in the other contexts of the players' lives more locally. For instance, future studies would benefit from deeper engagement with coaches and parents and perhaps the players' partners in order to obtain a better reading of the players' lives. Longitudinal research on their understandings of and attitudes towards gender and sexuality would also be more useful than my study, which has provided a very detailed snapshot, but cannot account for changes in hypermasculine self-presentations and attitudes towards homosexuality over time. A comparative analysis of different levels may also have provided similar insight.

To succinctly answer the research question, the hockey context can be understood to foster hypermasculinity and homophobia, however perhaps to lesser extents than some scholars have claimed in the past. Additionally, the hockey context appears to be a very isolated one for many of the players that is not always representative of their thoughts and opinions in other contexts. Their understandings of both gender and sexuality vary, however they can be narrow in the sense that the players largely conceive of gender and sexual orientation as man/woman and gay/straight with little awareness of identities in between and outside of these confines. With that said, though, there can be room for flexibility in a handful of their conceptions of gender as

they described their mothers and girlfriends as non-stereotypically feminine. Their attitudes towards homosexuality also vary as some players support the idea, others do not, and many remain apprehensive of the possibility of having a gay teammate. When examining how this is played out in the players' interactions with others, there is no evidence of their attitudes towards homosexuality in their Twitter interactions. Moreover, they mostly only had meaningful discussions with their mothers and partners about homosexuality, the majority of whom supported it and some of whom actively took an interest in LGBTQ issues. The players did not discuss homosexuality in a meaningful way with teammates and although they did not discuss it much with their fathers, the players were able to report on whether or not their fathers supported homosexuality. In this case, fathers' opinions varied as well. It can thus be said that although boys' and men's ice hockey has occupied a unique position in sport's battle against homophobia, its compartmentalization only goes so far because public activism has been prominent, scholars have begun to focus on the subject, and young players are cognizant that anti-gay discourse is not welcome in certain contexts of their lives, such as on Twitter. The ways in which they continue to negotiate both their attitudes and where and when it is acceptable to express them should continue to be monitored closely as it will inform the argument that there is something about hockey in particular that makes male athletes feel that homosexuality is proscribed for them.

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## **APPENDIX A: SURVEYS**

## **APPENDIX A1: PLAYER SURVEY**

### **GENDER AND SEXUALITY SURVEY**

#### **CANADIAN MALE MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY**

Researcher: Cheryl MacDonald, Concordia University, che\_mac@live.concordia.ca

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This survey contains five (5) sections. DO NOT write your name or any personal information on this document. No one will know you filled this out. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. If you decide not to finish the survey, leave the rest blank and return it to Cheryl (the researcher). If you have any comments about the survey, there is room to write them at the end. If you have any questions, Cheryl is happy to answer them.

**SECTION A) Answer the following four (4) questions in your own words. There is no right or wrong answer and you're allowed to guess.**

1. What does the word 'gender' mean to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What does the word 'sexuality' mean to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What does the word 'homophobia' mean to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What does 'LGBTQ' mean to you?

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**SECTION B) In this section, you will need to choose one person that you consider your best friend on the team. You will also need to think about your teammates as a group in general. On a scale of 1-5, circle the number that you think best describes how your best friend on the team and your teammates fit the personal characteristics listed below. A score of one (1) means that you do not think your friend or teammates demonstrate the characteristics and a score of five (5) means that you think they fully demonstrate them. These questions are based on your personal opinion and there is no right or wrong answer. Circle the number that best reflects your opinion.**

**Example:**

	Does not demonstrate					Fully demonstrates
Talented	1	2	3	4	5	

Characteristics	My best friend on the team						Most of my teammates				
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Affectionate	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Ambitious	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Angry	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Arrogant	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Attentive	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Bisexual	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Calm	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Careless	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Childish	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Compassionate	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Competitive	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Confident	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Dependable	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Fair	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Feminine/Girly	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Friendly	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Funny	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Happy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Heterosexual/Straight	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
High-achieving	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Homosexual/Gay	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Honest	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Ignorant	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Inconsiderate	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Leader	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Loyal	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Masculine/Manly	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Mature	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Mentally strong	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Mentally weak	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Obnoxious	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Open-minded	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Popular	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Responsible	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Risk-taking	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Sad	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Sensitive	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Serious	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Skillful	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Talented	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Transgender	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5



**SECTION D) In this section, you will need to think about your own experience as a hockey player as well as your teammate's experiences. On a scale of 1-5, circle the number that you think best describes how often the statements below apply to you and your teammates. A score of one (1) means that you think the statement never applies and a score of five (5) means that you think they the statements often apply. These questions are based on your personal opinion and there is no right or wrong answer. Circle the number that best reflects your opinion.**

**Example:**

Never Always

Attending Junior hockey games 1 2 3 4 5

Experiences	Me						Most of my teammates				
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Exercising in order to look muscular or fit	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Using verbal aggression to deal with issues off the ice	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Using physical aggression to deal with issues off the ice	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Discussing topics related to girls/women and sex	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Making jokes about a teammates sexuality	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Discussing topics related to dating or relationships	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Discussing emotions	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Trying hard to look homosexual/straight	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Trying hard to look masculine/manly	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Making sincere about a teammate's sexuality	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

---

**SECTION E) This is the last section. It is meant to collect some details about your background that will help. Remember, you do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Please use checkmarks (✓) to select your answers and fill in the blanks in your own words where lines are provided.**

**Example:** Which is your favourite colour?       Red    Blue    Yellow

1. How old are you?

- 14 or younger
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19 or older

2. What is your ethnic background? You can select more than one:

- African
- Asian
- Australian (including Pacific Islands)
- Caribbean/ West Indian
- European
- Middle Eastern
- North American A (Canada)
- North American B (United States)
- South American
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't Know
- Prefer not to say

3. Who do you live with?

4. Would you say that you are from a hockey family?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know
- Prefer not to say

5. Which grade are you in?
- a. 8 or lower
  - b. 9
  - c. 10
  - d. 11
  - e. 12
  - f. Done high school
  - g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Prefer not to say
6. What is your favourite subject in school? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What was your average at the end of the last school year?
- 49% or below
  - 50-59%
  - 60-69%
  - 70-79%
  - 80-89%
  - 90-100%
  - Don't Know
  - Prefer not to say
8. What do you plan on doing after high school, if anything?
9. Do you spend a lot of time with your teammates outside of hockey?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't Know
  - d. Prefer not to say
10. Have you heard of the 'You Can Play Project'?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't Know
  - d. Prefer not to say

**You're finished. Thank you for your help. Please give the document back to Cheryl. Feel free to leave comments below or ask Cheryl any questions you may have.**

**COMMENTS:**

## APPENDIX A2: COACH SURVEY

### **GENDER AND SEXUALITY SURVEY**

CANADIAN MALE MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY COACHES

Researcher: Cheryl MacDonald, Concordia University, che\_mac@live.concordia.ca

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Circle the appropriate answer to each question or respond in your own words where indicated. Return the document to Cheryl (the researcher) when you've finished. **DO NOT** write your name or any identifying information that was not requested on the document as it is meant to be anonymous. Do not answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. If you decide not to complete the survey, leave the rest blank and return it to Cheryl.

1. For how long (in total) have you been coaching boys' or men's hockey?
  - a. 1 year or less
  - b. 2-4 years
  - c. 5-9 years
  - d. 10 years or more
  
2. For how long have you been coaching your current team?
  - a. 0-4 years
  - b. 5-9 years
  - c. 10 + years
  
3. Did you or do you play organized ice hockey yourself?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
  - d. Prefer not to say
  
4. How old are you?
  - a. 19 or younger
  - b. 20-29 years
  - c. 30-39 years
  - d. 40-49 years
  - e. 50 or older
  - f. Don't know
  - g. Prefer not to say
  
5. What is your highest level of educational attainment?
  - a. Less than a high school diploma
  - b. High school diploma
  - c. College or vocational training
  - d. University degree
  - e. Don't know
  - f. Prefer not to say
  - g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. If you have employment outside of coaching the team, in which field do you work?
  - a. I do not have employment outside of coaching the team
  - b. Don't know
  - c. Prefer not to say
  - d. I have employment outside of coaching the team, I work in:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. What are your three main goals as the coach of this team?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Do you think there is room in ice hockey for educating young boys and men about sexuality?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
  - d. Prefer not to say

e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. I hear my players discussing topics related to sexuality (including intercourse or sexual orientation):

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Always
- f. Don't know
- g. Prefer not to say
- h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. I worry about the level of education of my players when it comes to sexuality (i.e. their awareness and understanding of the different forms of sexual orientation):

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Always
- f. Don't Know
- g. Prefer not to say
- h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

You have completed the questionnaire. Thank you for your help. Please return the document to Cheryl. Feel free to leave comments in the space provided below and do not hesitate to be in touch with any questions or concerns.

**COMMENTS:**

**APPENDIX A3: TRAITS (SECTION B) ACCORDING TO  
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

<b>HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY</b>		
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Database Code for Best Friend</b>	<b>Database Code for Most Teammates</b>
Aggressive	B2A	B2B
Arrogant	B5A	B5B
Competitive	B12A	B12B
Heterosexual	B20A	B20B
Ignorant	B24A	B24B
Inconsiderate	B25A	B25B
Leader	B28A	B28B
Masculine	B30A	B30B
Mentally Strong	B32A	B32B
Obnoxious	B34A	B34B
Popular	B36A	B36B
Risk-Taking	B39A	B39B

<b>ACCEPTABLE MANHOOD</b>		
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Database Code for Best Friend</b>	<b>Database Code for Most Teammates</b>
Ambitious	B3A	B3B
Confident	B13A	B13B
Dependable	B14A	B14B
Heterosexual	B20A	B20B
High-Achieving	B21A	B21B
Honest	B23A	B23B
Intelligent	B26A	B26B
Loyal	B29A	B29B
Masculine	B30A	B30B
Mature	B31A	B31B
Reliable	B37A	B37B
Responsible	B38A	B38B
Skillful	B43A	B43B
Trustworthy	B46A	B46B

<b>INCLUSIVE MASCULINITY</b>		
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Database Code for Best Friend</b>	<b>Database Code for Most Teammates</b>
Affectionate	B1A	B1B
Aggressive	B2A	B2B
Ambitious	B3A	B3B
Arrogant	B5A	B5B
Attentive	B6A	B6B
Bisexual	B7A	B7B
Calm	B8A	B8B
Careless	B9A	B9B
Childish	B10A	B10B
Compassionate	B11A	B11B
Competitive	B12A	B12B
Confident	B13A	B13B
Dependable	B14A	B14B
Fair	B15A	B15B
Feminine/Girly	B16A	B16B
Friendly	B17A	B17B
Funny	B18A	B18B
Heterosexual	B20A	B20B
High-Achieving	B21A	B21B
Homosexual	B22A	B22B
Honest	B23A	B23B
Ignorant	B24A	B24B
Inconsiderate	B25A	B25B
Intelligent	B26A	B26B
Lazy	B27A	B27B
Leader	B28A	B28B
Loyal	B29A	B29B
Masculine	B30A	B30B
Mature	B31A	B31B
Mentally Strong	B32A	B32B
Mentally Weak	B33A	B33B
Obnoxious	B34A	B34B
Open-Minded	B35A	B35B
Popular	B36A	B36B
Reliable	B37A	B37B
Responsible	B38A	B38B
Risk-Taking	B39A	B39B
Sensitive	B41A	B41B
Serious	B42A	B42B
Skillful	B43A	B43B
Talented	B44A	B44B
Transgender	B45A	B45B
Trustworthy	B46A	B46B

**APPENDIX A4: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FOR PLAYER SURVEY TRAITS IN SECTION B**

**Affectionate (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	11	11.6	12.0	12.0
	Sometimes Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.0	23.9
	Neutral	28	29.5	30.4	54.3
	Often Demonstrates	30	31.6	32.6	87.0
	Fully Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.0	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Note: A value of 99 signifies a question left blank

**Affectionate (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	9	9.5	9.9	9.9
	Sometimes Demonstrates	19	20.0	20.9	30.8
	Neutral	34	35.8	37.4	68.1
	Often Demonstrates	19	20.0	20.9	89.0
	Fully Demonstrates	10	10.5	11.0	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Aggressive (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	11	11.6	11.8	11.8
	Sometimes Demonstrates	29	30.5	31.2	43.0
	Neutral	17	17.9	18.3	61.3
	Often Demonstrates	24	25.3	25.8	87.1
	Fully Demonstrates	12	12.6	12.9	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Aggressive (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	7	7.4	7.6	7.6
	Sometimes Demonstrates	24	25.3	26.1	33.7
	Neutral	29	30.5	31.5	65.2
	Often Demonstrates	25	26.3	27.2	92.4
	Fully Demonstrates	7	7.4	7.6	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Ambitious (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.3	3.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	15	15.8	16.5	19.8
	Neutral	36	37.9	39.6	59.3
	Often Demonstrates	20	21.1	22.0	81.3
	Fully Demonstrates	17	17.9	18.7	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Ambitious (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sometimes Demonstrates	13	13.7	14.3	14.3
	Neutral	41	43.2	45.1	59.3
	Often Demonstrates	24	25.3	26.4	85.7
	Fully Demonstrates	13	13.7	14.3	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Angry (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	15	15.8	16.9	16.9
	Sometimes Demonstrates	28	29.5	31.5	48.3
	Neutral	30	31.6	33.7	82.0
	Often Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.4	94.4
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.6	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Angry (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	5	5.3	5.4	5.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	34	35.8	36.6	41.9
	Neutral	29	30.5	31.2	73.1
	Often Demonstrates	19	20.0	20.4	93.5
	Fully Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.5	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Arrogant (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	21	22.1	23.1	23.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	29	30.5	31.9	54.9
	Neutral	18	18.9	19.8	74.7
	Often Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.2	87.9
	Fully Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.1	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Arrogant (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	12	12.6	13.3	13.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	25	26.3	27.8	41.1
	Neutral	31	32.6	34.4	75.6
	Often Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.3	88.9
	Fully Demonstrates	10	10.5	11.1	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Attentive (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.5	4.5
	Sometimes Demonstrates	16	16.8	18.2	22.7
	Neutral	32	33.7	36.4	59.1
	Often Demonstrates	25	26.3	28.4	87.5
	Fully Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.5	100.0
	Total	88	92.6	100.0	
Missing	99	7	7.4		
Total		95	100.0		

**Attentive (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.3	2.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	21	22.1	24.1	26.4
	Neutral	38	40.0	43.7	70.1
	Often Demonstrates	21	22.1	24.1	94.3
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.7	100.0
	Total	87	91.6	100.0	
Missing	99	8	8.4		
Total		95	100.0		

**Bisexual (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	83	87.4	92.2	92.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	94.4
	Often Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	95.6
	Fully Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.4	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Bisexual (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	69	72.6	75.8	75.8
	Sometimes Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.2	89.0
	Neutral	5	5.3	5.5	94.5
	Often Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	96.7
	Fully Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Calm (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	10	10.5	10.9	10.9
	Sometimes Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.0	23.9
	Neutral	30	31.6	32.6	56.5
	Often Demonstrates	30	31.6	32.6	89.1
	Fully Demonstrates	10	10.5	10.9	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Calm (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	11	11.6	11.8	11.8
	Sometimes Demonstrates	19	20.0	20.4	32.3
	Neutral	33	34.7	35.5	67.7
	Often Demonstrates	21	22.1	22.6	90.3
	Fully Demonstrates	9	9.5	9.7	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Careless (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	11	11.6	12.1	12.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	30	31.6	33.0	45.1
	Neutral	29	30.5	31.9	76.9
	Often Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.2	90.1
	Fully Demonstrates	9	9.5	9.9	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Careless (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	10	10.5	11.4	11.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	29	30.5	33.0	44.3
	Neutral	33	34.7	37.5	81.8
	Often Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.5	94.3
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.7	100.0
	Total	88	92.6	100.0	
Missing	99	7	7.4		
Total		95	100.0		

**Childish (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	14	14.7	15.4	15.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	24	25.3	26.4	41.8
	Neutral	22	23.2	24.2	65.9
	Often Demonstrates	17	17.9	18.7	84.6
	Fully Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.4	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Childish (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.5	4.5
	Sometimes Demonstrates	21	22.1	23.6	28.1
	Neutral	28	29.5	31.5	59.6
	Often Demonstrates	22	23.2	24.7	84.3
	Fully Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.7	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Compassionate (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	8	8.4	8.9	8.9
	Sometimes Demonstrates	19	20.0	21.1	30.0
	Neutral	36	37.9	40.0	70.0
	Often Demonstrates	23	24.2	25.6	95.6
	Fully Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.4	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Compassionate (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	8	8.4	8.9	8.9
	Sometimes Demonstrates	19	20.0	21.1	30.0
	Neutral	30	31.6	33.3	63.3
	Often Demonstrates	26	27.4	28.9	92.2
	Fully Demonstrates	7	7.4	7.8	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Competitive (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	2.2
	Neutral	12	12.6	13.0	15.2
	Often Demonstrates	15	15.8	16.3	31.5
	Fully Demonstrates	63	66.3	68.5	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Competitive (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	3.3
	Neutral	11	11.6	12.1	15.4
	Often Demonstrates	26	27.4	28.6	44.0
	Fully Demonstrates	51	53.7	56.0	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Confident (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	3.3
	Neutral	18	18.9	19.6	22.8
	Often Demonstrates	34	35.8	37.0	59.8
	Fully Demonstrates	37	38.9	40.2	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Confident (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.2	5.4
	Neutral	25	26.3	26.9	32.3
	Often Demonstrates	41	43.2	44.1	76.3
	Fully Demonstrates	22	23.2	23.7	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Dependable (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.4	3.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	8	8.4	9.1	12.5
	Neutral	21	22.1	23.9	36.4
	Often Demonstrates	34	35.8	38.6	75.0
	Fully Demonstrates	22	23.2	25.0	100.0
	Total	88	92.6	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
	System	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Dependable (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.4	3.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	13	13.7	14.6	18.0
	Neutral	24	25.3	27.0	44.9
	Often Demonstrates	30	31.6	33.7	78.7
	Fully Demonstrates	19	20.0	21.3	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Fair (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.2	3.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.5	9.7
	Neutral	22	23.2	23.7	33.3
	Often Demonstrates	41	43.2	44.1	77.4
	Fully Demonstrates	21	22.1	22.6	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Fair (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	11	11.6	11.8	16.1
	Neutral	36	37.9	38.7	54.8
	Often Demonstrates	33	34.7	35.5	90.3
	Fully Demonstrates	9	9.5	9.7	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Feminine/Girly (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	52	54.7	57.8	57.8
	Sometimes Demonstrates	27	28.4	30.0	87.8
	Neutral	6	6.3	6.7	94.4
	Often Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	96.7
	Fully Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Feminine/Girly (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	53	55.8	58.2	58.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	20	21.1	22.0	80.2
	Neutral	11	11.6	12.1	92.3
	Often Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	94.5
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.5	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Friendly (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.3	5.4
	Neutral	11	11.6	11.8	17.2
	Often Demonstrates	32	33.7	34.4	51.6
	Fully Demonstrates	45	47.4	48.4	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Friendly (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Neutral	20	21.1	21.7	26.1
	Often Demonstrates	34	35.8	37.0	63.0
	Fully Demonstrates	34	35.8	37.0	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Funny (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.2	3.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	5.4
	Neutral	4	4.2	4.3	9.7
	Often Demonstrates	36	37.9	38.7	48.4
	Fully Demonstrates	48	50.5	51.6	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Funny (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.4	5.5
	Neutral	15	15.8	16.5	22.0
	Often Demonstrates	25	26.3	27.5	49.5
	Fully Demonstrates	46	48.4	50.5	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Happy (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.3	3.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	4.3
	Neutral	11	11.6	12.0	16.3
	Often Demonstrates	43	45.3	46.7	63.0
	Fully Demonstrates	34	35.8	37.0	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
	System	1	1.1		
	Total	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Happy (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.4	5.5
	Neutral	14	14.7	15.4	20.9
	Often Demonstrates	47	49.5	51.6	72.5
	Fully Demonstrates	25	26.3	27.5	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Heterosexual/Straight (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	11	11.6	12.1	12.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	13.2
	Neutral	1	1.1	1.1	14.3
	Often Demonstrates	7	7.4	7.7	22.0
	Fully Demonstrates	71	74.7	78.0	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Heterosexual/Straight (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	9	9.5	10.0	10.0
	Sometimes Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	12.2
	Neutral	5	5.3	5.6	17.8
	Often Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.6	33.3
	Fully Demonstrates	60	63.2	66.7	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**High-Achieving (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.3	4.4
	Neutral	17	17.9	18.7	23.1
	Often Demonstrates	39	41.1	42.9	65.9
	Fully Demonstrates	31	32.6	34.1	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**High-Achieving (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	5	5.3	5.4	5.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	10.9
	Neutral	28	29.5	30.4	41.3
	Often Demonstrates	30	31.6	32.6	73.9
	Fully Demonstrates	24	25.3	26.1	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Homosexual/Gay (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	82	86.3	90.1	90.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.6	96.7
	Neutral	2	2.1	2.2	98.9
	Fully Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Homosexual/Gay (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	77	81.1	85.6	85.6
	Sometimes Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.3	98.9
	Often Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Honest (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.5	7.6
	Neutral	25	26.3	27.2	34.8
	Often Demonstrates	45	47.4	48.9	83.7
	Fully Demonstrates	15	15.8	16.3	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Honest (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.2	16.3
	Neutral	29	30.5	31.5	47.8
	Often Demonstrates	34	35.8	37.0	84.8
	Fully Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.2	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Ignorant (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	25	26.3	28.1	28.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	32	33.7	36.0	64.0
	Neutral	17	17.9	19.1	83.1
	Often Demonstrates	10	10.5	11.2	94.4
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.6	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
	System	1	1.1		
	Total	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Ignorant (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	13	13.7	14.3	14.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	32	33.7	35.2	49.5
	Neutral	36	37.9	39.6	89.0
	Often Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.6	95.6
	Fully Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.4	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Inconsiderate (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	29	30.5	31.9	31.9
	Sometimes Demonstrates	26	27.4	28.6	60.4
	Neutral	27	28.4	29.7	90.1
	Often Demonstrates	7	7.4	7.7	97.8
	Fully Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Inconsiderate (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	23	24.2	26.1	26.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	20	21.1	22.7	48.9
	Neutral	33	34.7	37.5	86.4
	Often Demonstrates	10	10.5	11.4	97.7
	Fully Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.3	100.0
	Total	88	92.6	100.0	
Missing	99	7	7.4		
Total		95	100.0		

**Intelligent (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.2	3.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	10	10.5	10.8	14.0
	Neutral	28	29.5	30.1	44.1
	Often Demonstrates	39	41.1	41.9	86.0
	Fully Demonstrates	13	13.7	14.0	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Intelligent (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.3	3.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	16	16.8	17.6	20.9
	Neutral	35	36.8	38.5	59.3
	Often Demonstrates	30	31.6	33.0	92.3
	Fully Demonstrates	7	7.4	7.7	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Lazy (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	16	16.8	17.2	17.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	32	33.7	34.4	51.6
	Neutral	22	23.2	23.7	75.3
	Often Demonstrates	15	15.8	16.1	91.4
	Fully Demonstrates	8	8.4	8.6	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Lazy (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	9	9.5	9.8	9.8
	Sometimes Demonstrates	29	30.5	31.5	41.3
	Neutral	30	31.6	32.6	73.9
	Often Demonstrates	15	15.8	16.3	90.2
	Fully Demonstrates	9	9.5	9.8	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Leader (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	5	5.3	5.4	5.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	11	11.6	11.8	17.2
	Neutral	28	29.5	30.1	47.3
	Often Demonstrates	21	22.1	22.6	69.9
	Fully Demonstrates	28	29.5	30.1	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Leader (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	10	10.5	11.2	12.4
	Neutral	33	34.7	37.1	49.4
	Often Demonstrates	27	28.4	30.3	79.8
	Fully Demonstrates	18	18.9	20.2	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Loyal (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.3	3.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	5.6
	Neutral	16	16.8	17.8	23.3
	Often Demonstrates	38	40.0	42.2	65.6
	Fully Demonstrates	31	32.6	34.4	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	System	1	1.1		
	Total	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Loyal (most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.7	7.8
	Neutral	27	28.4	30.0	37.8
	Often Demonstrates	34	35.8	37.8	75.6
	Fully Demonstrates	22	23.2	24.4	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Masculine/Manly (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.3	3.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.4	7.7
	Neutral	14	14.7	15.4	23.1
	Often Demonstrates	37	38.9	40.7	63.7
	Fully Demonstrates	33	34.7	36.3	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Masculine/Manly (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.7	6.8
	Neutral	23	24.2	26.1	33.0
	Often Demonstrates	29	30.5	33.0	65.9
	Fully Demonstrates	30	31.6	34.1	100.0
	Total	88	92.6	100.0	
Missing	99	7	7.4		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Mature (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	6	6.3	6.5	6.5
	Sometimes Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	11.8
	Neutral	26	27.4	28.0	39.8
	Often Demonstrates	43	45.3	46.2	86.0
	Fully Demonstrates	13	13.7	14.0	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Mature (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	5	5.3	5.6	5.6
	Sometimes Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.7	21.3
	Neutral	43	45.3	48.3	69.7
	Often Demonstrates	19	20.0	21.3	91.0
	Fully Demonstrates	8	8.4	9.0	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Mentally Strong (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.2	3.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.5	9.7
	Neutral	24	25.3	25.8	35.5
	Often Demonstrates	40	42.1	43.0	78.5
	Fully Demonstrates	20	21.1	21.5	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Mentally Strong (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.1	13.2
	Neutral	31	32.6	34.1	47.3
	Often Demonstrates	31	32.6	34.1	81.3
	Fully Demonstrates	17	17.9	18.7	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Mentally Weak (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	30	31.6	32.6	32.6
	Sometimes Demonstrates	33	34.7	35.9	68.5
	Neutral	13	13.7	14.1	82.6
	Often Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.0	94.6
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Mentally Weak (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	20	21.1	22.0	22.0
	Sometimes Demonstrates	37	38.9	40.7	62.6
	Neutral	25	26.3	27.5	90.1
	Often Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.5	95.6
	Fully Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.4	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Obnoxious (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	18	18.9	20.0	20.0
	Sometimes Demonstrates	28	29.5	31.1	51.1
	Neutral	27	28.4	30.0	81.1
	Often Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.3	94.4
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.6	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	System	1	1.1		
	Total	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Obnoxious (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	18	18.9	20.2	20.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	22	23.2	24.7	44.9
	Neutral	38	40.0	42.7	87.6
	Often Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.4	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Open-Minded (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	3	3.2	3.3	3.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	7	7.4	7.7	11.0
	Neutral	22	23.2	24.2	35.2
	Often Demonstrates	39	41.1	42.9	78.0
	Fully Demonstrates	20	21.1	22.0	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Open-Minded (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.4	4.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	10	10.5	11.1	15.6
	Neutral	34	35.8	37.8	53.3
	Often Demonstrates	35	36.8	38.9	92.2
	Fully Demonstrates	7	7.4	7.8	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Popular (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.2	7.4
	Neutral	6	6.3	6.4	13.8
	Often Demonstrates	41	43.2	43.6	57.4
	Fully Demonstrates	40	42.1	42.6	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Popular (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.3	8.7
	Neutral	11	11.6	12.0	20.7
	Often Demonstrates	43	45.3	46.7	67.4
	Fully Demonstrates	30	31.6	32.6	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Reliable (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	7.6
	Neutral	15	15.8	16.3	23.9
	Often Demonstrates	45	47.4	48.9	72.8
	Fully Demonstrates	25	26.3	27.2	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Reliable (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.5	7.6
	Neutral	27	28.4	29.3	37.0
	Often Demonstrates	42	44.2	45.7	82.6
	Fully Demonstrates	16	16.8	17.4	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Responsible (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	8	8.4	8.5	10.6
	Neutral	21	22.1	22.3	33.0
	Often Demonstrates	50	52.6	53.2	86.2
	Fully Demonstrates	13	13.7	13.8	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Responsible (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	5	5.3	5.4	5.4
	Sometimes Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.0	18.5
	Neutral	33	34.7	35.9	54.3
	Often Demonstrates	28	29.5	30.4	84.8
	Fully Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.2	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Risk-Taking (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.3	7.6
	Neutral	29	30.5	31.5	39.1
	Often Demonstrates	36	37.9	39.1	78.3
	Fully Demonstrates	20	21.1	21.7	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
	System	1	1.1		
	Total	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Risk-Taking (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	8	8.4	8.9	11.1
	Neutral	31	32.6	34.4	45.6
	Often Demonstrates	37	38.9	41.1	86.7
	Fully Demonstrates	12	12.6	13.3	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Sad (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	44	46.3	47.8	47.8
	Sometimes Demonstrates	36	37.9	39.1	87.0
	Neutral	4	4.2	4.3	91.3
	Often Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	96.7
	Fully Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Sad (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	36	37.9	39.6	39.6
	Sometimes Demonstrates	40	42.1	44.0	83.5
	Neutral	11	11.6	12.1	95.6
	Often Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.3	98.9
	Fully Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Sensitive (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	20	21.1	21.7	21.7
	Sometimes Demonstrates	28	29.5	30.4	52.2
	Neutral	28	29.5	30.4	82.6
	Often Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.0	94.6
	Fully Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Sensitive (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	26	27.4	28.6	28.6
	Sometimes Demonstrates	30	31.6	33.0	61.5
	Neutral	29	30.5	31.9	93.4
	Often Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.5	98.9
	Fully Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Serious (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	6	6.3	6.5	6.5
	Sometimes Demonstrates	11	11.6	11.8	18.3
	Neutral	37	38.9	39.8	58.1
	Often Demonstrates	29	30.5	31.2	89.2
	Fully Demonstrates	10	10.5	10.8	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Serious (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	7	7.4	7.7	7.7
	Sometimes Demonstrates	14	14.7	15.4	23.1
	Neutral	40	42.1	44.0	67.0
	Often Demonstrates	19	20.0	20.9	87.9
	Fully Demonstrates	11	11.6	12.1	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Skillful (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	5	5.3	5.3	5.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.3	9.6
	Neutral	20	21.1	21.3	30.9
	Often Demonstrates	42	44.2	44.7	75.5
	Fully Demonstrates	23	24.2	24.5	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Skillful (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	7.6
	Neutral	25	26.3	27.2	34.8
	Often Demonstrates	37	38.9	40.2	75.0
	Fully Demonstrates	23	24.2	25.0	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Talented (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.4	9.7
	Neutral	15	15.8	16.1	25.8
	Often Demonstrates	36	37.9	38.7	64.5
	Fully Demonstrates	33	34.7	35.5	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
	System	1	1.1		
	Total	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Talented (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Sometimes Demonstrates	4	4.2	4.3	6.5
	Neutral	16	16.8	17.2	23.7
	Often Demonstrates	44	46.3	47.3	71.0
	Fully Demonstrates	27	28.4	29.0	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Transgender (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	75	78.9	83.3	83.3
	Sometimes Demonstrates	5	5.3	5.6	88.9
	Neutral	5	5.3	5.6	94.4
	Often Demonstrates	3	3.2	3.3	97.8
	Fully Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.2	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Transgender (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	71	74.7	81.6	81.6
	Sometimes Demonstrates	7	7.4	8.0	89.7
	Neutral	6	6.3	6.9	96.6
	Often Demonstrates	1	1.1	1.1	97.7
	Fully Demonstrates	2	2.1	2.3	100.0
	Total	87	91.6	100.0	
Missing	99	8	8.4		
Total		95	100.0		

**Trustworthy (Best Friend on Team)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Sometimes Demonstrates	6	6.3	6.5	7.5
	Neutral	16	16.8	17.2	24.7
	Often Demonstrates	39	41.1	41.9	66.7
	Fully Demonstrates	31	32.6	33.3	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Trustworthy (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Does Not Demonstrate	5	5.3	5.5	5.5
	Sometimes Demonstrates	10	10.5	11.0	16.5
	Neutral	26	27.4	28.6	45.1
	Often Demonstrates	35	36.8	38.5	83.5
	Fully Demonstrates	15	15.8	16.5	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

## APPENDIX A5: COACH SURVEY FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS

Note: Some frequencies have been omitted because they risk identifying the population

### Coaching Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-4 Years	0	0	0	0
5-9 Years	3	50.0	50.0	50.0
10+ Years	3	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	6	100.0	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

### Time Spent Coaching Current Team

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-4 Years	1	16.7	16.7	16.7
5-9 Years	3	50.0	50.0	66.7
10+ Years	2	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	6	100.0	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

### Personal Hockey Career

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Do not or have not played organized hockey	0	0	0	0
Do or have played organized hockey	6	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	6	100.0	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

### Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid <19	0	0	0	0
20-29	1	16.7	16.7	16.7
30-39	1	16.7	16.7	33.4
40-49	1	16.7	16.7	66.8
>50	3	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	6	100.0	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

### Highest Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Less than High School	0	0	0	0
High School Diploma	0	0	0	0
College or Vocational	2	33.3	33.3	33.3
University	4	66.7	66.7	100.0
Other	0	0	0	100.0
Total	6	95.8	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

**Is there room in ice hockey to educate boys and men on gender and sexuality?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	4	66.7	66.7	66.7
No	1	16.7	16.7	83.3
Don't Know	1	16.7	16.7	100.0
Prefer Not to Say	0	0	0	100.0
Total	6	100.0	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

**I hear players discussing topics relating to sex and/or sexuality...**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	0	0	0	0
Rarely	2	33.3	33.3	33.3
Sometimes	3	50.0	50.0	83.3
Often	1	16.7	16.7	100.00
Always	0	0	0	100.0
Total	6	95.8	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

**I worry about my players' level of education when it come to sex and/or sexuality...**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	1	16.7	16.7	16.7
Rarely	4	66.7	66.7	83.3
Sometimes	1	16.7	16.7	100.0
Often	0	0	0	100.0
Always	0	0	0	100.0
Total	6	100.0	100.0	
Total	6	100.0		

**APPENDIX A6: PLAYER DEMOGRAPHICS (SURVEY SECTION E)**

**Age**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 14	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
15	29	30.5	30.5	32.6
16	35	36.8	36.8	69.5
17	28	29.5	29.5	98.9
18	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

**Ethnic Background**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Asian	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Caribbean/West Indian	1	1.1	1.1	2.1
European	4	4.2	4.3	6.4
North American (Canada)	76	80.0	80.9	87.2
Other	5	5.3	5.3	92.6
Don't Know	5	5.3	5.3	97.9
Prefer Not to Say	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing 99	1	1.1		
Total	95	100.0		

**With whom do you live?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Parents	86	90.5	90.5	90.5
Billet	5	5.3	5.3	95.8
Other	4	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

**Would you say that you come from a hockey family?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	79	83.2	83.2	83.2
No	13	13.7	13.7	96.8
Don't Know	1	1.1	1.1	97.9
Prefer Not to Say	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

**Education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Grade 9	3	3.2	3.2	3.2
Grade 10	29	30.5	30.5	33.7
Grade 11	33	34.7	34.7	68.4
Grade 12	28	29.5	29.5	97.9
Graduated High School	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
Other	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

### Favourite Subject in School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Gym	40	42.1	42.6	42.6
	Math	18	18.9	19.1	61.7
	Personal Development	1	1.1	1.1	62.8
	Natural Sciences	19	20.0	20.2	83.0
	Languages	4	4.2	4.3	87.2
	Social Studies	5	5.3	5.3	92.6
	Broad Based Technology	3	3.2	3.2	95.7
	No Preference	3	3.2	3.2	98.9
	Fine Arts	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

### Academic Average at the End of Last School Year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	49% or Below	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	50-59%	3	3.2	3.2	4.3
	60-69%	4	4.2	4.3	8.5
	70-79%	22	23.2	23.4	31.9
	80-89%	39	41.1	41.5	73.4
	90% or Above	24	25.3	25.5	98.9
	Prefer Not to Say	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

### Plans After High School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Health Professional	6	6.3	6.4	6.4
	University (General)	26	27.4	27.7	34.0
	Hockey	13	13.7	13.8	47.9
	Other	4	4.2	4.3	52.1
	Don't Know	16	16.8	17.0	69.1
	Police/Firefighter/Military	8	8.4	8.5	77.7
	Engineer	6	6.3	6.4	84.0
	Trades	9	9.5	9.6	93.6
	Business	4	4.2	4.3	97.9
	Veterinarian	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
	Teacher	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Do you spend a lot of time with your teammates outside of hockey?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	71	74.7	74.7	74.7
No	17	17.9	17.9	92.6
Don't Know	6	6.3	6.3	98.9
Prefer Not to Say	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

**Heard of You Can Play Project**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	7	7.4	7.4	7.4
No	80	84.2	85.1	92.6
Don't Know	6	6.3	6.4	98.9
Prefer Not to Say	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing 99	1	1.1		
Total	95	100.0		

## APPENDIX A7: SURVEY DEFINITIONS (SECTION A)

### Define Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	B/G or M?/W	33	34.7	36.7	36.7
	Biological	53	55.8	58.9	95.6
	Other	4	4.2	4.4	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

### Define Sexuality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Gender Attraction	17	17.9	19.1	19.1
	Sex Attraction	24	25.3	27.0	46.1
	Gender Relationship	3	3.2	3.4	49.4
	Sex Relationship	2	2.1	2.2	51.7
	Sexual Orientation	16	16.8	18.0	69.7
	Other	27	28.4	30.3	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

### Define Homophobia

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dislike?/Hate	30	31.6	33.0	33.0
	Fear of	26	27.4	28.6	61.5
	Fear of being	1	1.1	1.1	62.6
	Intolerance?/Disagree	18	18.9	19.8	82.4
	Sexual Orientation	7	7.4	7.7	90.1
	Other	9	9.5	9.9	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

### Define LGBTQ

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Words	35	36.8	37.6	37.6
	Some Words	16	16.8	17.2	54.8
	All Words	37	38.9	39.8	94.6
	Other	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**APPENDIX A8: HYPERMASCULINITY INDEX FREQUENCIES  
(SURVEY SECTION D)**

**Exercising to Look Muscular/Fit (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Rarely	4	4.2	4.3	5.4
	Sometimes	22	23.2	23.9	29.3
	Often	34	35.8	37.0	66.3
	Always	31	32.6	33.7	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Exercising to Look Muscular/Fit (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Rarely	7	7.4	7.6	8.7
	Sometimes	25	26.3	27.2	35.9
	Often	36	37.9	39.1	75.0
	Always	23	24.2	25.0	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Using Verbal Aggression Off Ice (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	9	9.5	9.6	9.6
	Rarely	24	25.3	25.5	35.1
	Sometimes	34	35.8	36.2	71.3
	Often	14	14.7	14.9	86.2
	Always	13	13.7	13.8	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Using Verbal Aggression Off Ice (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Rarely	11	11.6	12.0	16.3
	Sometimes	38	40.0	41.3	57.6
	Often	23	24.2	25.0	82.6
	Always	16	16.8	17.4	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Using Physical Aggression Off Ice (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	27	28.4	29.0	29.0
	Rarely	33	34.7	35.5	64.5
	Sometimes	17	17.9	18.3	82.8
	Often	8	8.4	8.6	91.4
	Always	8	8.4	8.6	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Using Physical Aggression Off Ice (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	10	10.5	11.0	11.0
	Rarely	36	37.9	39.6	50.5
	Sometimes	24	25.3	26.4	76.9
	Often	13	13.7	14.3	91.2
	Always	8	8.4	8.8	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Discussing Girls/Women and Sex (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Rarely	5	5.3	5.4	7.5
	Sometimes	13	13.7	14.0	21.5
	Often	22	23.2	23.7	45.2
	Always	51	53.7	54.8	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Discussing Girls/Women and Sex (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	Rarely	3	3.2	3.3	5.6
	Sometimes	10	10.5	11.1	16.7
	Often	15	15.8	16.7	33.3
	Always	60	63.2	66.7	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Making Jokes About Teammate Sexuality (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	32	33.7	34.8	34.8
	Rarely	22	23.2	23.9	58.7
	Sometimes	20	21.1	21.7	80.4
	Often	11	11.6	12.0	92.4
	Always	7	7.4	7.6	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Making Jokes About Teammate Sexuality (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	21	22.1	23.6	23.6
	Rarely	22	23.2	24.7	48.3
	Sometimes	22	23.2	24.7	73.0
	Often	13	13.7	14.6	87.6
	Always	11	11.6	12.4	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Discussing Dating/Relationships (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Rarely	11	11.6	11.8	12.9
	Sometimes	17	17.9	18.3	31.2
	Often	28	29.5	30.1	61.3
	Always	36	37.9	38.7	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Discussing Dating/Relationships (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Rarely	9	9.5	10.0	11.1
	Sometimes	11	11.6	12.2	23.3
	Often	34	35.8	37.8	61.1
	Always	35	36.8	38.9	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Discussing Emotions (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	20	21.1	21.7	21.7
	Rarely	38	40.0	41.3	63.0
	Sometimes	22	23.2	23.9	87.0
	Often	5	5.3	5.4	92.4
	Always	7	7.4	7.6	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Discussing Emotions (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	27	28.4	30.3	30.3
	Rarely	31	32.6	34.8	65.2
	Sometimes	21	22.1	23.6	88.8
	Often	6	6.3	6.7	95.5
	Always	4	4.2	4.5	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Trying to Look Masculine/Manly (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	32	33.7	34.8	34.8
	Rarely	13	13.7	14.1	48.9
	Sometimes	27	28.4	29.3	78.3
	Often	15	15.8	16.3	94.6
	Always	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Trying to Look Masculine/Manly (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	24	25.3	27.0	27.0
	Rarely	18	18.9	20.2	47.2
	Sometimes	24	25.3	27.0	74.2
	Often	14	14.7	15.7	89.9
	Always	9	9.5	10.1	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Making Serious Comments About Teammate Sexuality (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	55	57.9	60.4	60.4
	Rarely	20	21.1	22.0	82.4
	Sometimes	10	10.5	11.0	93.4
	Often	5	5.3	5.5	98.9
	Always	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
	Total	95	100.0		

**Making Serious Comments About Teammate Sexuality (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	47	49.5	53.4	53.4
	Rarely	22	23.2	25.0	78.4
	Sometimes	12	12.6	13.6	92.0
	Often	7	7.4	8.0	100.0
	Total	88	92.6	100.0	
Missing	99	7	7.4		
	Total	95	100.0		

## APPENDIX A9: HOMOSEXUALITY IN ICE HOCKEY (SURVEY SECTION C)

**Important Know Teammate Sexual Orientation (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	17	17.9	18.1	18.1
	Disagree	12	12.6	12.8	30.9
	Neutral	20	21.1	21.3	52.1
	Agree	14	14.7	14.9	67.0
	Strongly Agree	31	32.6	33.0	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Important Know Teammate Sexual Orientation (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	17	17.9	18.3	18.3
	Disagree	18	18.9	19.4	37.6
	Neutral	17	17.9	18.3	55.9
	Agree	14	14.7	15.1	71.0
	Strongly Agree	27	28.4	29.0	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Uncomfortable with Gay Teammate (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	25	26.3	26.6	26.6
	Disagree	26	27.4	27.7	54.3
	Neutral	19	20.0	20.2	74.5
	Agree	10	10.5	10.6	85.1
	Strongly Agree	14	14.7	14.9	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Uncomfortable with Gay Teammate (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	19	20.0	20.4	20.4
	Disagree	14	14.7	15.1	35.5
	Neutral	29	30.5	31.2	66.7
	Agree	16	16.8	17.2	83.9
	Strongly Agree	15	15.8	16.1	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay to be a Gay Hockey Player (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	14.7	15.1	15.1
	Disagree	6	6.3	6.5	21.5
	Neutral	9	9.5	9.7	31.2
	Agree	20	21.1	21.5	52.7
	Strongly Agree	44	46.3	47.3	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay to be a Gay Hockey Player (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	11.6	12.0	12.0
	Disagree	8	8.4	8.7	20.7
	Neutral	18	18.9	19.6	40.2
	Agree	21	22.1	22.8	63.0
	Strongly Agree	34	35.8	37.0	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Gay Teammate Negative for Team Success (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	60	63.2	63.8	63.8
	Disagree	14	14.7	14.9	78.7
	Neutral	12	12.6	12.8	91.5
	Agree	7	7.4	7.4	98.9
	Strongly Agree	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Gay Teammate Negative for Team Success (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	48	50.5	51.6	51.6
	Disagree	22	23.2	23.7	75.3
	Neutral	15	15.8	16.1	91.4
	Agree	5	5.3	5.4	96.8
	Strongly Agree	3	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay for Coach to be Gay (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	10.5	10.6	10.6
	Disagree	18	18.9	19.1	29.8
	Neutral	15	15.8	16.0	45.7
	Agree	14	14.7	14.9	60.6
	Strongly Agree	37	38.9	39.4	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay for Coach to be Gay (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	12.6	12.9	12.9
	Disagree	12	12.6	12.9	25.8
	Neutral	21	22.1	22.6	48.4
	Agree	21	22.1	22.6	71.0
	Strongly Agree	27	28.4	29.0	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Upsetting to Find Out Teammate is Gay (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	34	35.8	37.0	37.0
	Disagree	19	20.0	20.7	57.6
	Neutral	18	18.9	19.6	77.2
	Agree	16	16.8	17.4	94.6
	Strongly Agree	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Upsetting to Find Out Teammate is Gay (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	28	29.5	31.5	31.5
	Disagree	19	20.0	21.3	52.8
	Neutral	23	24.2	25.8	78.7
	Agree	17	17.9	19.1	97.8
	Strongly Agree	2	2.1	2.2	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	99	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Common to Joke About Being Gay (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	14.7	14.9	14.9
	Disagree	6	6.3	6.4	21.3
	Neutral	23	24.2	24.5	45.7
	Agree	23	24.2	24.5	70.2
	Strongly Agree	28	29.5	29.8	100.0
	Total	94	98.9	100.0	
Missing	99	1	1.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Common to Joke About Being Gay (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	8.4	8.7	8.7
	Disagree	8	8.4	8.7	17.4
	Neutral	19	20.0	20.7	38.0
	Agree	27	28.4	29.3	67.4
	Strongly Agree	30	31.6	32.6	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Common to Joke About Being Girly (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	12.6	13.0	13.0
	Disagree	18	18.9	19.6	32.6
	Neutral	19	20.0	20.7	53.3
	Agree	24	25.3	26.1	79.3
	Strongly Agree	19	20.0	20.7	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Common to Joke About Being Girly (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	8.4	8.8	8.8
	Disagree	17	17.9	18.7	27.5
	Neutral	21	22.1	23.1	50.5
	Agree	21	22.1	23.1	73.6
	Strongly Agree	24	25.3	26.4	100.0
	Total	91	95.8	100.0	
Missing	99	4	4.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay for Gay Hockey Player to Flirt with Teammate (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	52	54.7	55.9	55.9
	Disagree	23	24.2	24.7	80.6
	Neutral	9	9.5	9.7	90.3
	Agree	4	4.2	4.3	94.6
	Strongly Agree	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay for Gay Hockey Player to Flirt with Teammate (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	46	48.4	51.1	51.1
	Disagree	26	27.4	28.9	80.0
	Neutral	10	10.5	11.1	91.1
	Agree	4	4.2	4.4	95.6
	Strongly Agree	4	4.2	4.4	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	99	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay to be Gay, but not in Hockey (Self)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	45	47.4	48.4	48.4
	Disagree	21	22.1	22.6	71.0
	Neutral	14	14.7	15.1	86.0
	Agree	3	3.2	3.2	89.2
	Strongly Agree	10	10.5	10.8	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

**Okay to be Gay, but not in Hockey (Most Teammates)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	33	34.7	35.9	35.9
	Disagree	21	22.1	22.8	58.7
	Neutral	22	23.2	23.9	82.6
	Agree	6	6.3	6.5	89.1
	Strongly Agree	10	10.5	10.9	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS**

## **APPENDIX B1: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **MIDGET AAA GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDY INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. Tell me about your hockey career leading up to now
  - a. Where did you play?
  - b. At what levels?
  - c. What motivated you to start playing hockey?
  - d. Do you plan to continue on from here?
  
2. Describe yourself for me...
  - a. How do you think the people at home would describe you?
  - b. How do you think your teammates would describe you?
  - c. What are your interests outside of hockey?
  - d. What would you say are your priorities?
  - e. Do you have a job?
  - f. Are you in a romantic relationship?
  - g. Do you spend a lot of time with your friends?
  
3. What have your thoughts been on participating in this study?
  - a. What did you know about gender and sexuality before participating?
  - b. How do you think your teammates have reacted to this experience?
  - c. Tell me what you know about Michael Sam, the openly gay professional football player.
  - d. Where do you obtain information on homosexual athletes?
  - e. How would you feel about having a gay teammate?
  
4. Tell me about the three most important people in your life right now...
  - a. Why are they important to you?
  - b. How do you like to spend your time with them?
  - c. What do you speak about with them?
  - d. What is their level of education when it comes to gender and sexuality?
  - e. Tell me about their opinions of homosexuality.

**APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM & FEEDBACK LETTER**

## APPENDIX C1: CONSENT FORM

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN GENDER, SEX, AND SEXUALITY; MALE MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY PLAYERS

*For participants under the age of eighteen (18), this form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian.*

I understand that I/the participant have/has been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Cheryl MacDonald, a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology of Concordia University. Cheryl can be reached by e-mail at XXXX or phone at XXX.XXX.XXXX.

**A. PURPOSE:** I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to survey and speak with members of a Midget AAA ice hockey league in order to become familiar with their perceptions of gender, sex, and sexuality. I understand that the researcher also plans to conduct a survey with the coaches in order to understand their opinions on the role of gender, sex, and sexuality in the team environment.

**B. PROCEDURES:** I understand that I/the participant will complete a survey regarding gender, sex, and sexuality that will take approximately 30 minutes and possibly an interview that should also take 30 minutes. I understand that the researcher will keep my/the participant's information confidential. I understand that the survey will not have my/the participants' name or other identifying information on it. Therefore, the researcher will not know which survey is mine/the participant's. However, the researcher will know who participated. I understand that if I/the participant am invited to participate in an interview, it will be audio-recorded and transcribed. My/the participant's name and identifying information will not appear on the audio-recording or the transcription. It will be replaced by a pseudonym. I understand that if the researchers intend to publish the results of the research in a thesis or other formats, and that any publications will not contain my/the participant's name or identifying information.

**C. RISKS AND BENEFITS:** I understand that I/the participant will benefit from this research in the form of compensation (gift cards and chances to win prizes). I also understand the level of risk associated with the study as it deals with a personal subject and is sometimes directed at underage participants. I certify that the researcher has discussed the potential risks with me and I understand that participants reserve the right to discontinue participation in the study at any time. The researcher will have contact information for the community mental and sexual health centres and will have relevant pamphlets on mental and physical health on hand.

**D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION:** I understand that the interview portion of the study, should I/the participant (check one) will \_\_\_\_\_ or will not \_\_\_\_\_ will undergo, will be audio-recorded. I understand that I/the participant am/is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at anytime without negative consequences. I also understand that upon discontinuing, all information, except the survey (which is anonymous, but can be discounted mid-completion), can also be omitted from the study results prior to April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 when the researcher will begin writing the dissertation. I understand that data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE/ALLOW THE INDIVIDUAL IN QUESTION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

**PARTICIPANT NAME** (please print) : \_\_\_\_\_

**PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE** : \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN** (if under 18 years of age) : \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN** (if under 18 years of age): \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you/the participant have/has questions about the rights of research participants, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor at Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or [ethics@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:ethics@alcor.concordia.ca).

## **APPENDIX C2: FEEDBACK LETTER**

### **FEEDBACK LETTER**

#### **GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MAJOR MIDGET AAA ICE HOCKEY**

Greetings!

I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in my study. As you know, the information you shared with me is going towards my doctoral dissertation on gender and sexuality in the lives of male Major Midget AAA ice hockey players in Canada. The responses you provided me will help me better understand things like homophobia in ice hockey and what it means to be a male ice hockey player. I chose to conduct a survey as a preliminary canvassing of your perceptions of gender and sexuality and the surveys with some players as a way to further understand your opinions and experiences as a group.

I must inform you that I have also looked at players' publicly available Twitter accounts (I did not have access to locked accounts). I did this as part of a smaller project that involved seeing if gender and sexuality played any sort of role in Midget AAA players' online lives. Please note that I will not reproduce any personal Tweets as they could make you identifiable; I will therefore only include posts from other accounts that received hundreds or likes or retweets or more. If, for any reason, you take exception and would like your information removed from the study, please contact me no later than December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, and I will happily remove your Twitter information from the study.

From this point, I will be taking all of the information I've collected, transposing it, analyzing it, and putting it together in my dissertation. It will be publicly available in the Concordia University Thesis Database in June of 2016 should you like to view it. Feel free to contact me at any time if you are interested in my progress before then and please keep in mind that if you would like any information removed, you must contact me before December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 as this is when I will begin writing the analysis portion of the dissertation. I would like to remind you that any information you shared with me will be accessible to only me (kept under lock and key or via password) and will only be disclosed for educational purposes in my thesis. I will use fake names to hide your identity and will not release any information that makes you immediately identifiable. I will destroy all means of information collected once my dissertation is finished.

I hope this experience added to your understanding of the relationships between gender, sexuality, and ice hockey. Sometimes we learn things about ourselves that we never knew through being asked questions outside of our ordinary conversations.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact me by cell phone at XXX.XXX.XXXX or e-mail at XXXX.

Thank you again and best of luck in the remainder of the hockey season!

**Cheryl MacDonald**  
PhD Candidate  
Concordia University  
Montreal, QC

## **APENDIX D: SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS**

APPENDIX D1: LEBEL & DANYLCHUK (2014, p. 23) CODING CATEGORIES

<i>Athlete Self-Presentation Strategies</i>		
Type	Definition	Example
<b>Backstage Performances</b>		
The conversationalist	Interaction with fellow athletes, celebs, friends, and family.	"@JustinRose, I saw you shank it on 14 today. Welcome to the club, mate."
The sport insider	Insider sport information.	"All packed and ready to go to Augusta National in the morning. Very excited as per normal like a little school kid. It just has that buzz."
The behind-the-scenes reporter	Behind-the-scenes information about an athlete's life.	"So excited for my kids to wake up. Seeing them off to school, then going to the new house as furniture starts to go in. 2 weeks to install."
The super fan	Discussion of an athlete's personal sport interests.	"Come on Arsenal! A win would be so huge. So glad my mum is sitting in my seats today. Enjoy the game mummy. Bring them luck!"
The informer	Sharing of information that an athlete believes is important or interesting.	"There's a great new golf app by @mastercard that you guys can download on iTunes. Instructional & fun. You will love it."
The analyst	Sharing of athlete opinions or life musings.	"Can Johnny Miller actually say anything positive? Er no."
<b>Front Stage Performances</b>		
The publicist	Sharing of athlete promotional information.	"Just done my column in the @huffingtonpost. Check it out at the link <a href="http://tinyurl.com/c3sd2b5">http://tinyurl.com/c3sd2b5</a> . Enjoy."
The superintendent	Checking in with followers via short athlete updates.	"Good morning tweeps! How is everyone today?"
The fan aficionado	Athlete engagement in fan interaction.	"Friends it's been a lot of fun on twitter today! I look forward to answering more of your questions tomorrow. To answer Ross' question about the last time I flew coach, it was today."
The brand manager	Athlete provision of formal acknowledgements.	"Happy Mother's Day to all that celebrate today. I hope you have a really nice day!"