

When Individual Heroism Resembles Collective Post-heroism: Exploring the Discursively Constructed Leadership Paradox in Ice Hockey Teams

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, an increasing amount of literature on discursive leadership has shed light on the multifaceted and complex nature of organisational leadership. The notion of complexity of social life in organisations has raised awareness of possible alternative and simultaneous forms of leadership. Hence, leadership scholars have recently focused their studies on the co-existence of paradoxical leadership discourses. However, the literature still lacks studies which show how paradoxical discourses overlap and interact. By drawing on a qualitative investigation of discursive leadership in the context of team sports, particularly ice hockey, this study exposes still-evaded issues surrounding the paradox between individual heroism and collective post-heroism. The findings point to how leadership is constructed through the rich discourses of masculinity, heroism, controlling, collectivism and caring. Based on contextual features, the study demonstrates how these discourses supplement one another. Its contributions extend the discussions of discursive leadership by blurring the dichotomy between heroic and post-heroic leadership, by demonstrating how this blurring is actualised in their interplay and by showing how heroism comes to resemble post-heroism.

Keywords: discursive leadership, heroic leadership, post-heroic leadership

INTRODUCTION

In leadership research, the philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks have long been based on an entitative world view, which reduces a collective to a bundle of bounded individuals (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Due to this tradition, a clear distinction is still easily drawn between leaders and followers, subjects and objects or selves and others. Nevertheless, in recent decades, the social constructionist approach to leadership has raised questions related to the entitative approach (Hosking, 2011a), bracketing of existence (Cunliffe, 2009) and linear management processes (Bathurst & Ladkin, 2012). Consequently, the ever more popular stream of social constructionist leadership research (Chreim, 2015; Grint, 2005) calls for studies which examine leadership as an intersubjective phenomenon (Cunliffe, 2011) and as a joint process which engages both leaders and followers. By applying a social constructionist lens to leadership, this study goes beyond the bounded entities to acknowledge leadership as a collective process constructed discursively throughout organisations (Hosking, 2011b).

Following the logic of constructionist thinking, leadership is seen as an ongoing process which is maintained and reconstructed through discursive practices. Discursive leadership (Fairhurst, 2009), as a critical perspective, avoids celebrating individual heroes and the great stories behind their success; instead, it fosters the relational nature of leadership, which is constructed through mundane interactions. While the reality of leadership is co-constructed in contextual discursive practices, its philosophical background invites multiple, even contradictory construction processes of the leadership phenomenon (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). The discursive approach focuses not on the outcomes of the leadership construction but on the overarching construction process itself.

The steady increase in discursively constructed leadership studies has raised awareness that multiple simultaneous discourses exist in particular contexts. As a result, many studies in the field have recently focused on the paradoxes and contradictions between these co-existing leadership discourses (e.g. Ford, 2006; Grint, 2010; Knoppers, 2011; Parush & Koivunen, 2014). Similarly, some conceptual studies have argued that the resilient dichotomies between heroic and post-heroic discourses of leadership should be blurred (Collinson, 2014; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Gronn, 2011). Nevertheless, the discursive leadership literature lacks empirical studies which, in line with a constructionist standpoint, avoid bracketing the entities and allow them to overlap and interact. Therefore, this study brings the dynamism into question and shows how ‘blurring’ is actualised in the interplay among paradoxical and contradictory leadership discourses.

This study examines discursively constructed leadership paradoxes in team sports, particularly ice hockey. Until recently, leadership research has used work teams from various fields in multiple ways to develop an understanding of ‘leadership in the plural’ (Denis, Langley & Sergi, 2012). In the professional sports environment, the interdependency of team members and relational nature of team performance are taken seriously (Silva, Pina e Cunha, Clegg, Neves, Rego & Rodrigues, 2014). Ice hockey offers a team environment in which individual heroes are occasionally celebrated and sought after, but in which harmonious cooperation among team members is often necessary for success. In this study, team sports afford an opportunity to understand how leadership paradoxes related to contradictions between individual heroism and collective post-heroism are discursively constructed in a competitive team environment.

Using discourse analytical methods, this study reports how ice hockey coaches and players make sense of their everyday work and how these sense-making activities participate in constructing the understanding of leadership in this field. This study grounds its contribution

to the discussions of discursive leadership on the arguments of Collinson (2005, 2014) and Gronn (2011) but extends their studies by demonstrating how the existence of post-heroic leadership discourses does not eliminate the discourses on heroic leadership (see Grint, 2010; Fletcher, 2004). It shows that various micro-contexts invite different kinds of leadership constructions (see Fairhurst, 2009). Finally, it discusses with and for its part extends earlier studies on how blurring between contradictory discourses is actualised, particularly how heroism comes to resemble post-heroism through their interplay.

DISCURSIVELY CONSTRUCTED LEADERSHIP

This study adopts the notion that leadership is a continuously co-created and contextual process where ‘acts of organizing’ in talk or action contribute to the local social ordering (Hosking, 1988). This definition underlines that acts of organising need to be recognised and supported by others. Therefore, based on Barge (2012: 111–2), leadership is seen as ‘joint action between or among people’, and ‘a discursive context’ complements our particular local notion of leadership. Consequently, by promoting the sociality and discursivity of leadership, this study is grounded on a social constructionist world view (Hosking, 2011a), which has a long tradition in leadership studies (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

In the social construction process of leadership, the focus lies not on the individual mind but on local-cultural and local-historical processes, which entwine local actors with their contexts (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). These local processes are constructed through continuous act-supplement or text-context relating processes (Hosking, 2011b). In other words, leadership does not occur in a vacuum. Thus, singular acts do not, in themselves, express leadership; rather, the context is needed to give meaning to actions and leadership alike. Therefore, this study focuses primarily on the construction processes, not on outcomes of the processes. As Ospina and Foldy (2010: 294) have stated about relational approaches on

leadership, 'Relational leadership is therefore not a trend or type of leadership, but a way to characterize the phenomenon in all its forms, whether hierarchical, shared or networked.' That is to say that regardless of the outcome, leadership is emergent and socially constructed among local participants in relation to the local context.

The individual-centric or heroic notion of leadership has historically dominated the leadership literature; however, the last decade has seen an upsurge in studies adopting a more social and relational approach to leadership in terms of post-heroic leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). By promoting the cooperative practices of working life and the act-supplement and text-context relations of our everyday interactions, leadership is viewed more widely as being distributed throughout an organisation (Bathurst & Ladkin, 2012). Thus, leadership is not necessarily seen only as a top-down process but also as a bottom-up process. Yet current developments have raised questions on whether appointed leaders have power over their subordinates or are vulnerable with respect to operational performance. For example, Klein, Ziegert, Knight & Xiao (2006) argued for dynamic delegation in their study of leadership in emergency action medical teams, which showed how an active leadership role is passed around among leading and junior doctors. Similarly, Koivunen's (2007) leadership study of the symphony orchestra context made visible the power of shared leadership alongside heroic leadership, since conductors cannot control every detail of an ensemble performance. These representative studies demonstrate how leadership discussions are increasingly directed towards covering the everyday practices of working life in the multifaceted local context and, as a result, questioning leaders' status as individual heroes.

A growing body of literature on leadership has underlined the need for local knowledge (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2010). To reveal local leadership phenomena, we must immerse ourselves in local practices and interaction processes and avoid building solely on the traditionally dominant conventions of objectivism and knowing from the outside.

Consequently, in leadership texts, everyday tasks are intertwined with notions of leadership, which at times makes the leadership phenomenon as it used to stand ‘disappear’ (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). In the past decade, discursive leadership (Fairhurst, 2009; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014) has proven to be one of the leadership frameworks that have shifted the epistemological ground towards the local processes of interaction and knowing, and it has redirected the nature of the leadership from heroic individualism to post-heroic collectivism.

While a discourse analytical approach to leadership has established scientific legitimacy in recent decades (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011; Hardy & Grant, 2012), the ways of applying this methodology have been fragmented (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Phillips & Osrick, 2012). However, many of the discourse analytical schools appear to share the idea that language constitutes, rather than merely describes, reality (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). If language constitutes reality, then language users participate in constructing reality. This means that leadership is not ‘out there’ but instead actively co-constructed by all in cooperative processes (Fairhurst, 2009). To provide in-depth knowledge of leadership relations, we must study how local actors participate in the local processes of interaction.

In this study, the concept of discourse refers to an ideological perspective from which local participants supplement the acts around them (i.e. participate in the local processes of interaction). In earlier discourse literature, this ideological perspective is referred to as D-discourses (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). By supplementing surrounding acts in certain ways and thus building on certain ideological perspectives, D-discourses, when giving meanings to texts around them (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), participants are involved in the construction of social order. The analytical approach applied in this study underlines that discourses are not maintained and reconstructed based solely on the actual use of micro-level language, namely d-discourses (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). Instead, texts in talk or action are meaningful in relation to their cultural and historical macro-contexts (Hosking, 2011b). Leitch and Palmer

(2010) grounded their discursive constructions on intertextuality, by which they explained how the present is interconnected with the past and future. Discursive accounts in the present carry meanings from earlier experiences and probable future events. Therefore, even interview accounts that seem to be individual actions are culturally coordinated collective actions (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

One of the recent developments in discursive leadership research has shed light on the contradictory nature of organisational leadership (Ford, 2006; Knoppers, 2011; Madsen & Albrechtsen, 2008; Parush & Koivunen, 2014). Parush and Koivunen (2014: 108) underlined the ubiquity of the paradox between heroic and post-heroic discourses of leadership:

Managers are expected to lead but also be led, be in control but also relinquish control, be calculative but also playful, plan but also surrender to the flow of events, broadcast but also listen, see the ‘big picture’ but also the ‘small details’, etc.

Ford (2006), Knoppers (2011) and Madsen and Albrechtsen (2008) examined the juxtaposition of heroism and post-heroism through gendered leadership. While followers may perceive ‘team-based transformational leadership’ as a generally approved feminine way of relating at one moment, ‘macho-management’ may be supported and sought after at another moment. At a general level, the development of constructionist leadership studies has led to arguments for blended leadership (Collinson & Collinson, 2009), hybrid leadership (Fulop, 2012) and cyborg leadership (Muhr, 2011), which all bind meanings from the opposite extremes together. Although the literature on discursive leadership recognises the co-existence of multiple discourses, the answer to the question of how they interact is still vague.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Professional ice hockey as representative of team sports

This study delves into the social world of ice hockey in Finland. Ice hockey parallels other, more global team sports (e.g. soccer and basketball) in which performance depends on the cooperation of interdependent players. According to Day, Gordon and Fink (2012), the very juxtaposition of individualism and collectivism provides a fruitful starting point for a leadership study. Alongside individual hero-centred performances by star players, the team sport environment promotes the necessity of team performance and collective efforts for success (Vermeulen, Koster, Loos & Slobbe, 2016). Similarly, Silva et al. (2014) argued that the relational construction of social reality is particularly apparent in a team sport environment, in which multiple simultaneous and paradoxical voices are allowed. In team sports, a contradiction originates from the reality that players and coaches move through their careers as individuals, not as collectives. In addition, earlier leadership studies in team sports have underlined the heroic role of the head coach (e.g. Hughes, Hughes, Mellahi & Guermat, 2010). In the present study, the prevailing hero worship in team sports is questioned, as coaches are seen as more or less vulnerable during a team's performance and only occasionally influence the course of events. Coach-led activities take place mainly between games.

Empirical fieldwork

The empirical fieldwork of this study consisted of interviews of professional male ice hockey coaches and players and an ethnographic observation of a male ice hockey team. Table 1 presents the data sources and their functions in more detail.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The descriptive interviews conducted for the study lasted from one hour to two and a half hours. The interviewees' backgrounds varied: Some had played or coached as professionals

for several years, while others were in the prospect phases of their careers. Some had played or coached at the top level, while others were established in the lower level. In reference to varying backgrounds, the object of the study was leadership within the field of ice hockey in Finland. Despite their unique career paths, players and coaches share certain cultural conventions. In ice hockey, players and coaches change their organisations frequently. For example, two years later, only two out of the 18 players and coaches still represented the same teams as during the interviews. That is to say, ice hockey actors construct leadership discourses across organisational borders. Moreover, even though the prevailing wages differ between Liiga, Mestis and Suomi-sarja, it is argued that in all these levels, playing is taken seriously enough for all three to be included in the same study. It is worthwhile to note that the coaches had typically played ice hockey before beginning their coaching careers; consequently, they had broader repertoires of experiences in the ice hockey world than the players did. These interviews aimed to determine how local actors made sense of the leadership relations in their field. To avoid the value-laden meanings carried by the concept of leadership, the interviews did not focus on the usage of 'leadership' itself.

To deepen the understanding of leadership in the field, the interviews were complemented by ethnographic observations of an ice hockey team's daily work. The purpose was to illuminate the interpretations of given meanings in interviews through spoken language. The observation phase was conducted among a third-level team. Teams in Liiga might be more professional than in the third level, but concerning the juxtaposition between individualism and collectivism, these levels are more or less equivalent. As in more professional leagues, in the third level, players advance their careers as individuals and a champion team needs cooperative players. It was observed the players and coaches in their training and game facilities and attended one of the visiting games. The author was a non-participant observer and typically stayed on the team bench outside the rink while following the action on the ice.

Before and after the trainings and games, it was shadowed the players and coaches in their locker room and other facilities. The presence of the coaches during the observation gave the author an opportunity to unofficially discuss the interpretations and thus deepen the analysis.

The analysis was carried out from an insider perspective (e.g. Bathurst & Ladkin, 2012). The author's experience as a former ice hockey player and coach was used to provide access to and ensure a locally conventional analysis of the fieldwork material.

Analysis of the material

The analysis of the empirical fieldwork followed an outline of discourse analytical methods (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The focus was on how the coaches and players made sense of their social order. As is common in the abductive method (e.g. Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011), continual comparisons were made among the raw data from the interviews and observations, the interpretations generated through analysis and the leadership literature. In practice, the analysis process was iterative.

In this study, the interview accounts are seen as relational activities that carry meanings from earlier social experiences through the reflexive nature of talk (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Even if the sequential flow of actions is hidden, the interview accounts are part of an ongoing process of leadership construction (Barge & Fairhurst, 2008). In this study, the pieces of interviews are not seen as facts but as specimens of world-constituting (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). These specimens of the social reality reflect the intertextual nature of communication. Texts in the present are part of a cultural and historical process when they are melded into past texts and possible texts in the future (Leitch & Palmer, 2010; Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

The accounts that described the social ordering of the studied context were identified and coded. Particular attention was given to subject positions (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Barge

& Fairhurst, 2008) which local participants constructed to emerge in their work surroundings. Pronouns and various signs of individual and collective identities played an important role in recognising relational positions. For example, ‘Of course, on the ice, I try to work my butt off’ demonstrates how the leadership relation is constructed between those who work their butt off and those who admire diligent workhorses. By categorising the material systematically into first-order codes, this initial process was inspired by grounded theory (e.g. Clark, Gioia, Ketchen & Thomas, 2010).

The next step was to sort out the most critical identified codes. The analysis was deepened by combining interview data with observation data. The ethnographic material steered the analysis by illustrating how locals were sequentially relating in action. The author was able to see the acts of organising and their supplements with own eyes or sense it in own body. Although the players and coaches represented various teams and levels, the study did not seek to identify differences in leadership among teams. Rather, the purpose was to examine the similarities with respect to the process of constructing leadership in different sporting conditions. Comparing the codes revealed several similarities, and the codes were combined to form distinctive units. This sorting process reduced the material to only those units that were distinctive enough to be called themes.

The ethnographic analysis combined all the empirical material to form a more coherent whole. Besides observation material, my insider knowledge from the field supported conventional links between the clues (see Humphreys, Ucbasaran & Lockett, 2012). In terms of the ongoing relating process (Hosking, 2011b), all the identified evidence was combined by relating the codes and themes to one another and to certain theoretical leadership discussions. For example, individual discourses and themes of discourses were constructed in relation to others. In her study, Koivunen (2007) demonstrated the relational and contradictory nature of leadership discourses. Discourses have both an inner logic and an

identifiable connection to other discourses. To form a coherent whole, each discourse is needed to complement one another. They cooperate but also compete with one another. For example, masculinity, heroism and controlling together represent the spirit of heroic leadership. In the masculine ice hockey environment, individual heroes strive to control their outer world. Simultaneously, the heroic discourses together counterbalance two other discourses that embody post-heroic leadership: collectivism and caring.

DISCOURSES CONSTRUCTING LEADERSHIP IN ICE HOCKEY TEAMS

Table 2 provides an overview of the research findings. The findings reveal how leadership in ice hockey teams is constructed through five discourses: constantly displaying one's masculinity, celebrating individual heroism, controlling alternative voices, ensuring a harmonious collective and caring for the family. Table 2 presents the discourses that emerged during the analysis, the themes providing support for each discourse and illustrative quotations representing each theme. After the table, the logic of each discourse is elaborated. Each discourse begins with a vignette of the ethnographic observation data that supported the discourse.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Constantly displaying one's masculinity

From the player bench, it became apparent that one crucial reason to bodycheck was that it hurts. When it hurts, players are on their guard against re-checks and probably do not focus on playing as planned. During one observed game, a player was retrieving a puck from their own zone; meanwhile, one opposing player charged into him and threatened him physically. The player with the puck stepped aside and lost the

puck to an opposing player, who finally created a scoring chance for his team. The coach on the bench responded to events: “You cannot be scared there!” At the next moment, in a similar situation, the player with the puck pressed the panic button and struck the puck at nowhere. The coach on the bench reacted immediately: “Do you s**t in your pants, D-men?” In a contrasting case, a player would show his bravery in the eyes of his teammates by holding the puck on his blade and searching for a chance for an opening pass regardless of the obvious physical threat.

To express leadership among members of an ice hockey team, one must display masculinity. For instance, if one acts in a masculine way by demonstrating readiness to compete against others, to work hard without questioning given orders or to display aggressiveness, then teammates will respect that person.

The competitive nature of professional sports was expressed in many ways. To build a successful team, each member is necessary. Consequently, team actors require each of their colleagues to be completely serious about participating in their joint action. The data revealed how players form expectations of other players and hence force others to participate in a certain way. By displaying their bravery and readiness to fight for the team, players earn respect from teammates. Yet constant rivalry among individuals is visible in the internal team process of social ordering. Players in a team compete constantly for their place in the playing roster and for their future as ice hockey professionals. In everyday work in training facilities and in the locker room, by working hard and by maintaining their physical state of preparedness, players signal to one another that they are ready to do everything needed to beat other players and advance their own careers.

This constant rivalry among individuals in competitive team sports leads local participants to display their masculinity. The findings clearly show that one should be active rather than

analytical. Coach 2 (Liiga) stated, 'If I can't survive by doing less, then I work 16 hours [a day].' Ice hockey actors demonstrated that in the case of failure, they prefer a heavier workload over analysing if work could be done more wisely. While players are 'working their butts off', teammates and coaches are nodding their heads in support. Emphasising acting and diligence over analytical and intelligent efforts is understandable in the sports world, where performance builds mostly on bodily knowledge.

Given the constant rivalry and admiration of diligence over intelligence, it was no surprise to observe aggressive behaviour. Aggressive behaviour occurs through internal competition among teammates who wish to achieve more visible and recognised roles in the team. Despite the nature of team sport and the critical need for cooperation, players proceed through their careers as individuals. Hence, they need to separate themselves from their teams and grab every opportunity, including the injuries and failures of teammates. As Coach 7 (Mestis) admitted, 'Each of them works for themselves. Each of them wants to be a better player, play in better leagues and earn more money.'

Celebrating individual heroism

During my observation period, the team hired a new player who used to be a professional player for several years. He had won the Finnish championships and been a valued part of those champion teams. I had played with him in the junior level and knew his strengths very well. He gave his all, sacrificed himself for the benefit of others and loved to play physical games. Following him playing for this new team, I quickly noticed that he had stayed faithful to his habits. Ice hockey was still a contact sport for him. After some weeks, I asked the head coach if he had noticed any difference in the team atmosphere. He answered, 'In those games where [new player] has joined us, every guy has been five centimetres longer and braver. And the locker

room has been much more lively and noisy.’ The presence of a respected professional infused fresh courage and confidence in all other players of the team. The courage to show their best and to physically challenge the opponents originated from the new player’s example.

In the analysis, the role of the hero was constructed especially for the head coach; however, as the description above shows, star players also had their share of the celebration. It became obvious that ice hockey actors need individuals who give meaning to events, have authority over others and lead by example.

Head coaches seemed willing to take on the position of role model or heroic figure. Coaches also tend to believe that players are incapable of taking leading positions:

In general, from manners to ... being a role model and showing how the team is a group of upright members, reflecting the morality they have. Yes, I think all this comes from the example of ... and I think the head coach is responsible for all of this. (Coach 7, Mestis)

However, players also play an essential role in the process, since they have learned to occasionally wish for a heroic figure who can tell them how and why they should take action. As Coach 3 (Liiga) mentioned, ‘Our players have an inner desire to have external authority.’ Therefore, coaches are allowed to demonstrate, through their everyday actions, norms about expected attitudes towards winning and losing and ways to show respect to other players. Certain coach reactions during a hectic game or a training session communicate how a player should respond to surrounding phenomena:

I yell, and talk, and break off and tell ... But above all, I am there, in that moment, at present. And I get angry, and I praise, and I cheer, and so on. ... However, I want to

show with my behaviour what is the most important moment of the day. (Coach 1, Liiga)

A culturally established one-way chain of command originates partly from the body work in ice hockey. When players are forced to rely on gut reactions, conscious rationalisation processes might hinder spontaneous play. Therefore, players prefer to rely on authorities who do not play but who brainstorm, plan and decide for them. Another reason for the need for a heroic leader is the unity of the collective. To maintain feelings of unity and equality among teammates, it is best to shift decision making and responsibility to the shoulders of an outsider: the head coach.

As shown at the beginning of the discourse, players also hold authority. In their talks, players celebrate the need for leading players who spread knowledge about the common practices among professionals. For example, a team captain or a national team player embodies heroic peer leadership and is frequently imitated.

Controlling alternative voices

‘I want us to have a specific drill for every game situation that is organised my way. And these drills are repeated on the ice over and over again’, the coach of the observed team commented when asked about operationalising their game plan. The whole process seemed to be very controlled. First, the coaches finished pieces of tactics in their locker room behind closed doors. Then, players, line by line, were invited to hear the newest details of the plan. At that moment, the coaches asked the players if they had anything to add or any questions, which they seldom had. The atmosphere did not really encourage interfering. Before on-the-ice practice, the head coach drew all the drills on the tactic board in the players’ locker room. In on-the-ice training sessions, it was observed that actions were very strictly led. If players did something wrong,

didn't remember exact positions shown to them, the coaches blew their whistle and asked the players to restart.

The findings identified how actors in the dynamic environment of ice hockey try to control their joint sense-making processes. They endeavour to minimise alternative, diverging voices that could impede effective teamwork. Although alternative voices might provide a basis for development, the coaches and players in the study sample preferred that these multiple voices be controlled by keeping their distance, avoiding challenging and diluting uncertainty.

Head coaches engaged in controlling mechanisms by keeping their distance from the other team members. If coaches form close relationships with players, then they become emotionally attached, giving the players more power and control, which would equilibrate the leadership configuration. By contrast, by keeping their distance, coaches enable themselves to treat players as they prefer and to prevent emotions from influencing their decisions (e.g. who to play, with whom and how much):

When I was there, the assistant coach played defenders, and that role was a bit different. At that time, he was something like the players' friend, chit-chatting with [them] and so on. But now, as head coach, this is the way it goes: That boss has no friends. (Player 7, Mestis)

Closer observation revealed that players occasionally have power over coaches. While players are on the ice, a coach can influence activities only indirectly. However, despite their ability to express power over their coaches, the interviewed players declared that challenging their head coaches' authority is forbidden. Player 4 (Liiga) explained, 'Well, yes, every player may mutter to himself that "we can't play like this" or something similar, but we never speak frankly to the coach: "Why do we play like this?"' This prevailing thinking highlights that a

performance is under control when a head coach maintains hold of the reins and players concentrate on following orders.

Diluting uncertainty results partly from the need to secure concurrent actions on the ice. A game is a hectic environment, and players might have diverging views on how their joint playing should proceed. Yet while playing, players lack time to be analytical or to solve problems consciously. Instead, to achieve smoothly flowing teamwork, a head coach plans tactics (i.e. players' moves on the ice) beforehand. By controlling diverging voices, coaches dilute their players' uncertainty about how joint playing will proceed.

Ensuring a harmonious collective

Observation sessions demonstrated vividly how intensively players are involved in continuous competition. Shift after shift, they take part in serious contests over who will be a momentary winner and loser. Players try to rob the puck from one another, and they are engaged in elbowing, scuffling, slashing and bodychecking close to a rink board. While watching these strivings to get the upper hand over an opposing player, it was repeatedly proven how some players frayed their nerves and retaliated by punching or cross-checking. In the following seconds, the referee called a penalty for the offender. At that very moment, teammates and coaches on the bench showed their disappointment openly: 'Hey guys, let's keep our heads calm!' Everyone on the bench understands that their nerves are tested continuously. However, team members show their appreciation and supplement the acts of organising with acceptance if they steer clear of trouble for their team. Intuitive retaliation is construed as an egoistic action which endangers collective power.

A harmonious collective manifests in and originates from players' on-the-ice performance. On the ice, players learn that harmonious cooperation is indispensable to success; thus, the

acts which aim at synchronic relations with teammates are seen as influential acts of organising. Therefore, players value, show respect and provide support for teammates who cherish the unity of the team, hide their individual excellence and display commitment to the team unit. The data revealed how the demand for harmonious cooperation and the resulting appreciation of collectivism are also visible in spoken language.

Players and coaches cherish their unity by giving the impression that all members of the team are like-minded. For example, they denied any conflicts among them. To illustrate this appreciation of harmony, Player 5 (Liiga) described goal setting at his team meetings as follows:

We spoke freely, and coaches were the ones who started conversations and asked [our opinions about our goals]. No one had anything to either add or pull out. Truly, together, we felt that we would play in the playoffs. If we are third [after the regular season], it's good, and if we are tenth, that's very good as well.

However, it is hard to believe that team members are equally satisfied with the achievement of these divergent and sometimes conflicting goals. Instead, the above comment reflects a need to present participants as harmonious.

The theme of cherishing unity was also emphasised in interviews discussing how players participate in team meetings in general. Participants noted how individual voices are suppressed inwardly through various team practices. Coach 5 (Mestis) commented, 'No one dares to open their mouth to say "let's win the league" or "let's be the eighth"'. So we coaches have to open discussion about what our goal is.' The analysis revealed that players are passive because they seek equality. Players who express their opinions publicly become the centre of attention, and their opinions appear to be more important than those of other players. The

interviewed players expressed a desire to avoid such situations, which could jeopardise the team's harmony.

In the spirit of appreciated collectivism, players tend to prefer we-talk to I-talk. When players publicly manifest their unconditional commitment to their teams, their teammates are appreciative. In addition to using we-talk, players and coaches cultivate language that promotes luck over talent. For example, the participants avoided talking about their personal success. A leading goal scorer would never attribute his results to talent; instead, he would talk about being lucky to play with outstanding teammates. Similarly, players' talk implies that their successful careers as professionals in the National Hockey League (NHL) follow from a chain of lucky coincidences. This is the way players and coaches ensure their harmony.

Individuals tend to be dominated by the team collective. However, the interviews also suggested that individuals play an active role in constructing the domination of a harmonious collective; namely, teammates think highly of their proactive colleagues. While players take care of themselves as sportsmen, they also bear responsibility and show their commitment to team performance. When players earn a regular position in the team roster, they recognise their vital role in the team and, consequently, their responsibility in the team's joint performance. In team sport, it is critical for every team member to be committed.

Caring for the family

When a referee blows a whistle and gives the penalty to their team, almost every time, a head coach complains against the decision. '[An opposing player] is slashing all the time ... or elbowing.' On the one hand, he is dissatisfied with the decision when their team is again shorthanded. On the other hand, he shows that he is on the players' side.

It was noticed that the coach complains even without good reason. The coach creates

an atmosphere where players can count on him, and shows he is ready to defend them. However, one exception to this defending rule emerged; namely, if a player causes an injury or endangers someone's health by charging into an opponent unnecessarily or recklessly, teammates and coaches do not support the act. On the bench, it was sensed many occasions in which the player bench either exploded with triumph or rapidly died away depending on the fairness of the act.

'Caring for the family' suggests that leadership emerges when players or coaches show that they are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others, to push others towards excellence and to defend them when they are mistreated. Yet this discourse has a moral tone when it takes into account that one is not allowed to pursue success at any cost.

In the context of ice hockey, even directive behaviours by a coach may construct a discourse of caring. To illustrate, players expect a head coach to demonstrate acceptable standards of performance. When coaches raise these standards and push players towards even better performance, players perceive their coaches as sacrificing their energy for the benefit of the players. Coaches who push their players exhibit a belief in their players' potential and talent. As Player 5 (Liiga) reflected, 'It is hard to like him [the head coach] ... He is kicking and yelling, not letting us [have] even one empty shift, exercise or anything. But it [produces] rewards afterward.'

Similarly, teammates as a collective may control the efforts that individuals devote to the team. By requiring a serious level of participation, teammates push others to raise their standards. Player 10 (Mestis) illustrated this phenomenon by noting that 'leading players didn't really exist ... It was more like a troop of monkeys.'

Another perspective on the discourse is demonstrated through the idea of defending one's own family. Despite their occasional paternal strictness and leadership styles of command and

control, head coaches are expected to show that they support their players and are on their side in the event of problems (e.g. when penalties are called). Many participants highlighted the importance of a familial attitude towards the team and its members. Participants said they considered their locker room a second home, noting that teammates form a tight group of brothers and that coaches are expected to protect their players the way a mother lion protects her kittens. Presumably, the leadership discourse of caring has roots in the nature of team sport and in the appreciation of others' efforts in support of the team collective.

COMPETITION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN HEROIC AND POST-HEROIC LEADERSHIP DISCOURSES

Combining masculinity, heroism and controlling to achieve heroic leadership

In the history of leadership research, the dominant way of thinking has put heroic leaders on a pedestal. The prevailing picture of heroic leaders in leadership literature, regardless of context, was aptly described by Binns (2008: 601) as follows: 'The heroic leader is a tough, self-reliant, combative man who works long hours, prioritizes results over family and relationships, controls his emotions and never shows weakness'. The present study similarly shows how local participants have a need for individualistic leaders and their power of command in terms of 'constantly displaying masculinity', 'celebrating individual heroism' and 'controlling alternative voices'.

'Constantly displaying masculinity' reflects heroic leadership thinking by promoting certain ways of being over other alternatives. The process of constructing the social order in an ice hockey team follows a Darwinian spirit, in which the fittest player or coach survives; thus, individuals who belong to a particular roster tend to be homogenous (see Robidoux, 2001). To survive in an environment of constant competition, which is fundamental in sport, a player's body must be well conditioned and ready to seize opportunities. Hence, even the players'

bodies communicate a need for masculinity and heroic being. By revealing their instinctive aggressiveness and proactive and diligent participation through their actions, players and coaches can become 'king of the hill'.

Competition is at the centre of sportsmen's lives, strengthening their love for winning. In the world of sport, illustrations of heroic leadership, such as winning gold medals, scoring the most goals and reaching the top of the podium, result in the celebration of individual heroes. This study has shown that heroic leadership is supported through the discourse of 'celebrating individual heroism', particularly between a head coach and his players. Players seem to need a heroic figure who can assertively and self-confidently show them the way.

With respect to 'controlling alternative voices', the discourse separates local participants and thus fosters heroic leadership. Both parties (i.e. coaches and players) exhibit a need to control others' actions. Since the harmonious cooperation of several participants is crucial to team sport, players try to minimise diverging voices regarding performance. Again, some ways of acting are preferred to others.

Collectivism and caring as co-playing symbols of post-heroic leadership

The discourses of 'ensuring a harmonious collective' and 'caring for the family' construct a spirit of post-heroic leadership in the world of ice hockey. The ideal of post-heroic leadership represents an extreme opposition to the domination of heroic figures and their great stories.

The post-heroic leadership literature calls for more collective, un-authoritarian and mundane leadership (Crevani et al., 2010; Fletcher, 2004).

By 'ensuring a harmonious collective', local actors participate in post-heroic turns in leadership research. By cherishing their unity and committing to joint team units, players deny any individual authority among themselves. The ideal of post-heroic leadership requires an appreciation of others' efforts towards joint performance and a recognition of the

construction of leadership in relation to teammates. By hiding their talent, actors do not position themselves as heroic individuals on a pedestal; rather, they suggest that their success is due to the support of the collective and favourable contextual circumstances.

When harmonious cooperation represents appreciated performance, there is a need to take good care of others in a team. In the ethos of post-heroism, both coaches and players try to push their teammates towards excellence and sacrifice their energy for the benefit of others. By defending their team families and promoting feelings of appreciation for all team members, players and coaches secure the vitality of the collective.

Dynamic interplay between heroic and post-heroic leadership

Heroic and post-heroic leadership are not separate constructions; rather, a dynamism exists in their interplay. Justifications for this argument lie in the contextual features of the twofold ice hockey environment; namely, the phase of action is separate from the phase of preparing for action. These two phases invite different kinds of leadership construction processes.

In the ice hockey world, head coaches hold a relatively powerful position. However, the contextual character of ice hockey—that players play the game without the possibility for the coach to immediately influence their playing—creates an unavoidable situation in which players still have power over coaches. As Coach 5 (Mestis) mentioned, ‘It is pointless to shout instructions to players on the ice because the shout is always a bit late.’ Therefore, the heroic leadership exerted by a coach cannot dominate the entire context of ice hockey; instead, players participate in co-constructing leadership relations. To be precise, the heroic leadership adapts to the logic of post-heroic leadership.

Another contextual feature that justifies the dynamic interplay between heroism and post-heroism is related to the nature of team sport. As Player 3 (Liiga) noted, ‘by playing alone, you cannot win ... yeah, we could put there one guy to play against five opponents, but it

won't work out at all.' At the professional level, regardless of their exceptional skills, star players cannot beat an opponent alone; rather, they must participate in forming a cohesive unit. Therefore, individual heroes benefit from post-heroic influences in terms of their harmonious and caring collectives. In sum, various micro-contexts produce various leadership roles, which together create a dynamic interplay between heroism and post-heroism.

The following empirical illustrations show how this interplay emerges among ice hockey team members. The first two illustrations describe how a coach's heroism is seen as post-heroism, while the last two show how player heroes benefit from post-heroic influences.

First, this study has theorised leadership as a discursively constructed phenomenon that emerges through act-supplement processes; this standpoint provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the discourse of 'celebrating individual heroism' overlaps with its counterpart of 'caring for the family'. According to the powerful discourse of 'celebrating individual heroism', players require their head coaches to take responsibility, express an appealing vision for the future and generally perform as heroic leaders. The head coach, who is expected to take on this role of individual leader and is perceived as a paternal figure, is allowed to command players and to make autocratic decisions. Thus, as demonstrated by the theme of 'caring for the family', players tend to accept and even desire the head coach's behaviours to push them to improve. Coaches who push their players reveal a passionate interest in their teams and players.

Second, 'celebrating individual heroism' mirrors how players experience their relationships with the head coach. Players feel relieved when they are allowed to channel all of their energy into playing a game. When a head coach takes on the expected role of an outsider decision maker, harmony among the players is ensured. Thus, players seem to expect and even require their head coaches to behave autocratically. In fact, coaches do their players a favour by

taking on the role of a hero. This illustrates how the heroic discourse of ‘celebrating individual heroism’ intertwines with the post-heroic discourse of ‘ensuring a harmonious collective’.

Third, overly aggressive behaviours on the ice might demonstrate the existence of an opposite framework among the players. Despite behaving violently, players construct their internal leadership relations through processes of caring. For spectators, fights and undue hard checking on the ice may appear to be unacceptable behaviours, but for players, these same actions might reflect feelings of caring among teammates. For example, a fight on the ice might originate from an incident in which players believe their teammate to have been mistreated by a competitor. In such situations, players instinctively feel the need to defend their teammate. Thus, in the masculine world of ice hockey, there are situations in which the post-heroic leadership discourse of ‘caring for the family’ is communicated through masculine aggressiveness.

Fourth, the interplay between heroism and post-heroism binds together ‘controlling alternative voices’ and ‘ensuring a harmonious collective’. By celebrating their unity and ensuring like-mindedness, players control voices that could hinder their seamless cooperation. By reminding one another that power lies in teamwork, players shackle egoistic heroes who might try to achieve more glorious positions as individual players and thus break the harmony of the collective. By promoting we-talk over I-talk and lucky-talk over talented-talk, players encourage their teams to remain harmonious.

DISCUSSION

This study offers two contributions to the leadership literature. First, it shows that the power relations between identified leadership discourses are not stable; rather, the intensities of different discourses vary depending on the prevalent micro-context. Second, this paper

extends our understanding of blurred dichotomies and actualises the interplay between heroic and post-heroic leadership discourses. The final paragraphs of this section address the limitations of the study and future recommendations.

Although each discourse identified in this study is prevalent in the ice hockey team context, the power relations among the discourses vary with different circumstances. In other words, the discourses compete and cooperate with one another. The whole formed by the discourses is an active collective whose shape varies depending on the present micro-context. At different times, different discourses will be most visible. However, in many studies, the leadership phenomenon is still presented as a typology (see Chreim, 2015; Ospina & Foldy, 2010) which states that agents in certain roles exert leadership in certain ways or that leadership has predominant characteristics in certain cultural conditions. This study contradicts this prevalent view by showing that even paradoxical discourses of leadership may co-exist.

In practice, 'celebrating individual heroism' and 'ensuring a harmonious collective' are not mutually exclusive. In some contexts, players may expect heroic behaviour; in others, they prefer support for the collective. For example, while planning tactics or naming playing rosters, appointed leaders (i.e. coaches) might use their positional power over subordinates, whereas during the game, coaches lose their power and are instead vulnerable to the performance of their operational leaders (i.e. players). In line with Klein et al. (2006) and Koivunen (2007), this study demonstrates that leadership should be seen as processual and shared throughout the organisation. However, this study extends earlier studies by illustrating how this process emerges and how intensities of discourses vary contextually. In particular, it highlights that appointed leaders are not omnipotent but occasionally lose their heroism and become dependent upon operational-level performance.

This study contributes to the discursive leadership literature by demonstrating how heroic and post-heroic leadership discourses are interconnected. Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014) have urged leadership scholars to devote their analytical efforts to the contradictions of organisational life. To illustrate the everyday processes of leadership construction in dynamic environments and thus address the drawbacks of the literature, this study uses the rich context of professional ice hockey. Here, 'rich' refers to the juxtaposition of individualism and collectivism, whose presence is especially transparent in the team sport context. This study responds to Collinson's (2005, 2014) wish to problematise dichotomies in leadership research through the examination of discursively constructed leadership, which reflects the contradiction between heroic individualism and post-heroic collectivism. This contribution addresses earlier wishes by making visible through empirical evidence how heroism and post-heroism interact in a particular context.

In reviewing the discursive leadership literature, it became evident that some studies have focused on the co-existence of paradoxical leadership discourses. For example, Parush and Koivunen (2014) discussed the widespread tension between simultaneous heroic and post-heroic models of a good manager. Similarly, earlier readings maintained this heroic–post-heroic leadership tension, setting macho-management discourse against post-heroic leadership discourse (Ford, 2006), charismatic discourse against participative discourse (Madsen & Albrechtsen, 2008) and perseverance discourse against team-based leadership discourse (Knoppers, 2011). Although these studies recognised the tension, they did not show how paradoxical discourses of heroism and post-heroism overlap and interact.

Among the empirical studies that blurred the distinction between heroism and post-heroism, Collinson and Collinson (2009) argued for blended leadership in the context of further education. Similarly, Fulop (2012) proposed a need for hybrid leadership in the healthcare context. Muhr (2011) argued for a combination of masculine and feminine leadership and for

constructing leadership in the form of a cyborg. Again, these studies admirably demonstrated existing leadership paradoxes in organisational life and took a step further by conceptualising the prevailing tension, but they did not show how the interplay is actualised. Therefore, despite all these forerunners, the leadership discipline still lacks empirical research demonstrating how to walk the tightrope between the heroic and post-heroic leadership discourses (Gronn, 2011). This study addresses this gap in discursive leadership research and extends the abovementioned studies by making the interplay between heroism and post-heroism more concrete by throwing into relief the interacting roles of 1) leaders and teams and 2) individuals and collectives in everyday work.

First, in this empirical illustration, the juxtaposition derives from a twofold environment. Using the context of team sport and by delving deeply into operational work, this research makes visible the interplay between heroism and post-heroism. Due to the acknowledged necessity of cooperation during the action phase of the environment—namely, the game—appointed leaders are vulnerable because they do not have the opportunity to immediately influence the performance. Consequently, their heroic behaviour becomes post-heroic, serving the common good more than egoistic needs. Players contextually see paternalism as caring and autocratism as ensuring a harmonious collective. This transparent sub-environment, which builds on action in operational work, identifies a need for post-heroism, whereas the environment of the preparing-for-action phase still allows for the rise of heroism.

Second, among the subordinates (i.e. players), heroic peer leaders are not supported, particularly in the game environment. Close observation at the operational level reveals that players prefer collective support for post-heroism over individual heroism and that heroic leadership is justified only when closely connected to collective performance, thus closely resembling post-heroic leadership. Some management scholars (Kerfoot & Knights, 1993; Knoppers, 2011) have argued that an increasing focus on teamwork strengthens masculine

and hence heroic discourses of leadership. For example, Knoppers (2011) promoted teamwork's role as an instrumental tool for success. In the present study, on the one hand, collective performance is promoted to achieve the outcome. On the other hand, the spirit of post-heroism is cultivated when players physically feel how indispensable their teammates are for them on the ice. Afterwards, they have an internal need to take good care of their teammates.

In the construction of leadership knowledge in the context of ice hockey, critical readers may expect a study to delve into body-intensive work and thus engage more in extensive observational methods and in the literature of embodied leadership. In the future, leadership discourses in team sports that devote more attention to 'embodied narrative sensemaking' (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012) have the potential to contribute to discussions about how embodied aspects of social ordering participate in the process of discursively constructed leadership.

Future theoretical discussions on leadership in the plural could benefit from the contributions of this study. The extant literature on team leadership lacks empirical studies, particularly those focused on a processual approach; therefore, the concept of the 'team' has not yet gained the appreciation it deserves. Despite the use of various teams to renew empirical knowledge about team leadership, research in the team sport context has been fairly vague. In addition, most research exploring leadership as a shared phenomenon is still philosophically grounded in an entitative approach (Denis et al., 2012); thus, this stream of research would benefit from the pluralistic framework followed in this study. By examining leadership in the plural through collaborative agency (Raelin, 2016) or group agency (Gronn, 2015), future leadership studies in ice hockey team contexts could extend the prevailing knowledge. Despite the increasing prevalence of demonstrations of how leadership occurs in the plural, recent studies have failed to achieve empirical transparency regarding leadership as a

collaborative performance, in which organisational agents are not separated but instead perform through joint agency.

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Table 1. Overview of the fieldwork material

Data sources	Function of data																								
<p><u>Interviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21 interviews with 18 informants (June 2009 to June 2011) - 18 informants consists of 8 head coaches and 10 players - from Liiga (top level), Mestis (2nd level) and Suomi-sarja (3rd level) <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="5">Experience in years on average</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Age</th> <th>Liiga</th> <th>Mestis</th> <th>Suomi-sarja</th> <th>Foreign leagues</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>8 head coaches (as coach + player)</td> <td>49</td> <td>3.5+7.5</td> <td>3+2</td> <td>1.5+0.5</td> <td>3+3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 players (as player)</td> <td>29</td> <td>5.5</td> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Experience in years on average						Age	Liiga	Mestis	Suomi-sarja	Foreign leagues	8 head coaches (as coach + player)	49	3.5+7.5	3+2	1.5+0.5	3+3	10 players (as player)	29	5.5	4		1	<p>To identify how head coaches and players make sense of their work and how these sense-making activities participate in constructing leadership in their field</p>
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10 players (as player)	29	5.5	4		1																				
<p><u>Ethnographic observation</u></p> <p>Non-participant observation periods at the training and competition facilities of a Suomi-sarja team (Nov 2011 and Feb 2012):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - two intensive three-week periods during the competition season - 8 on-the-ice trainings, 3 games in the home arena and 1 away game - 40 hours of shadowing at sporting facilities - 50 pages of hand-written notes 	<p>To observe how leadership is constructed in everyday work</p> <p>To ensure the meanings created through spoken language</p>																								
<p><u>Insider knowledge</u></p> <p>The author's experience as a former ice hockey player and coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 seasons as a player in Mestis and in a foreign league (1998–2004) - 4 seasons as an assistant coach in the oldest junior levels (2004–2008) 	<p>To provide locally conventional lenses for the analysis</p>																								

Table 2. Overview of the leadership discourses in ice hockey teams

Discourses	Themes	Illustrative quotes
Constantly displaying one's masculinity	Constant rivalry	<p>'Those who don't really want and work hard enough, they will fall by the wayside ... all those who have been selected for the team, they know how to work as a team.' (Player 7, Mestis)</p> <p>'Then, the whole thing has gone fully to ... that all the players think mostly of themselves.' (Coach 7, Mestis)</p>

Admiring diligence over intelligence	<p>'Of course, on the ice, I try to work my butt off.' (Player 9, Mestis)</p> <p>'For example, we have such a term as a working position, and it means that, when you skate ... if you are holding the body upright, not curved forwards, and so forth ... for me, it signals disregarding.' (Coach 3, Liiga)</p>
Aggressiveness	<p>'You had to be mentally ready, and physically ... then, of course, I guess these persons who were there wanted to save their place in the roster, and that way secures that it is not too easy to replace them ... but also, I was lucky that one guy [was] injured. I was given his place and then succeeded right away.' (Player 4, Liiga)</p> <p>'They counted on me to be centre in the third line ... then we chatted with the coach, that you had to fight to be number two ... it is, however, natural that there is internal competition over those positions. You need to tolerate that.' (Player 2, Liiga)</p>
Celebrating individual heroism	<p>Playing the role of the sense giver</p> <p>'Many coaches behave like ... that you can't show you disagree. Even though [something] looks very clear to you, it's better to swallow that.' (Player 7, Mestis)</p> <p>'But there the idea is pitched ... it is meant to pitch the idea to the players ... as if players are allowed to make up their minds. ... but they say the words you wanted.' (Coach 2, Liiga)</p>
Need for an authoritative figure	<p>'We need external [people] or coaches as leading authorities who tell these five guys ... because they can't necessarily say or do it themselves ... that it should be done like this, or we do it like this.' (Coach 3, Liiga)</p> <p>'It is culturally established more or less that our players have such a need for authorities.' (Coach 4, Liiga)</p>
Power of example	<p>'I spend a lot of time and effort [to] find the right guys for our team ... because I'm not there all the time, and the good vibes should keep going.' (Coach 6, Mestis)</p> <p>'We start with the premise that the one who really is exemplary and takes good care of himself and things around him ... they command great veneration, and it offers a lot of possibilities.' (Coach 1, Liiga)</p>
Controlling alternative voices	<p>Keeping one's distance</p> <p>'The coach can never get in the locker room. As you know, it is impossible.' (Coach 7, Mestis)</p> <p>'Or is it so that we are scared of that ... and players have no courage to say their real opinions to the head coach? However, the coach is the one who decides who plays ... and if he punishes [me] for my comments.' (Player 3, Liiga)</p>
Challenging is forbidden	<p>'If players start to be critical towards the coach and his tactics ... asking why we did this and that ... after a while, there will be one hell of a herd of hags, who negotiate over halftime, what we will do next time.' (Coach 1, Liiga)</p> <p>'But don't f*** open your trap, here in front of everyone ... especially if you are some captain and you will say something like this, that all this is f***d.' (Coach 2, Liiga)</p>
Diluting uncertainty	<p>'But when it goes well, is it wise to change anything [planned by the coach]? Of course, there might be some better alternatives [tactics or rosters], but changing that may mess up our plans as well.' (Player 3, Liiga)</p> <p>'Coaches plan their tactics without consulting players ... That way you as a coach can create such an atmosphere among players that they know and feel that everything is under control.' (Coach 5, Mestis)</p>

Ensuring a harmonious collective	Cherishing unity	<p>‘We settled on a common [ground] ... Our target is quite clear and making decisions was actually easy. We had a clear-cut target and, actually, each line ended up having the same target, and there was no need to revise those.’ (Player 3, Liiga)</p> <p>‘When we start to keep at it and work hard at the gym or at the sawdust track or at the ice hockey rink, wherever we are together. We keep at it, and dripping with sweat, everyone is exhausted, and we chat there ... In my opinion, it is hard working together, which effects a sense of unity, and afterwards, when we win and lose, we suffer and cheer; that has, however, such an effect.’ (Player 5, Liiga)</p>
	Hiding individual talent	<p>‘I have, however, been lucky in that regard that I’ve played in such good teams ... which have been successful.’ (Coach 2, Liiga)</p> <p>‘First game, scored two goals, signed a contract. Grew a little bit more, and that’s how it all started. All things just clicked into place ... it is often that certain players need to be a bit lucky to manage.’ (Player 4, Liiga)</p>
	Committing to the team unit	<p>‘Cause I can’t stand remissness. These players need to grow up to [realise] that they are not remiss about their sporting ... that they know the meaning of all this—being part of the first team, which has been their dream, it doesn’t go far. With such an attitude, you go only to a state that, no, wait a bit, this may end very quickly.’ (Coach 3, Liiga)</p> <p>‘Now I need to bear in mind in the summer time if I can eat one lettuce leaf more or not.’ (Player 4, Liiga)</p>
Caring for the family	Pushing others towards excellence	<p>‘I don’t know if I was a better player ’cause I was pushed and almost regimented by teammates ... that did it, good or bad, to me. Now, afterwards, when I think, maybe it was a good thing.’ (Player 4, Liiga)</p> <p>‘For me, he was a quitter ... I had a feeling that he didn’t give 100% ... well, maybe if I compare him with these other two, who have always given everything so that their teams would be successful ... they have entered into the spirit and maybe entered sometimes even too much.’ (Player 2, Liiga)</p>
	Defending one’s own family	<p>‘That you know, that you can trust in those guys. If you think about events on the ice ... that if you make a mistake or you play one game very poorly, then they don’t whisper about you behind your back.’ (Player 2, Liiga)</p> <p>‘It isn’t necessarily always a question of that, but they don’t feel at home there ... however, it all begins from ... that it feels good, safe, there in the locker room. About that, it, however, begins that you brim over with positive energy, and then playing starts to run better ... but if you behave all the time in this way—something like, that if you don’t enjoy being here—then playing will not usually work.’ (Player 3, Liiga)</p>