
Talent recruitment and development in hockey

A multiple-case study involving four Swedish ice hockey clubs

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Abstract

Even though talent management has received more and more attention in the recent years, the research around it is still young and lacking especially in empirical research in different kinds of organizational environments. The aim of this study is to broaden the scope of talent management research by examining how talent is managed, acquired and developed in professional ice hockey organizations in Sweden. In order to do this, an explorative multiple-case study was planned. Four Swedish ice hockey clubs playing in SHL, the highest ice hockey league in Sweden, were included in the study. Altogether 19 people were interviewed in these clubs with the intention of getting an understanding of the talent management practices applied. The results of the study show that variety of talent management activities are undertaken by these organizations and that the clubs themselves exhibit approaches very similar to each other in identifying, selecting and developing talent.

Keywords: Talent management, Talent identification, Talent development, Talent management in sports

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Talent management (TM) is one of the most important challenges faced by organizations today (e.g. Collings et al., 2009; Thunnissen et al., 2013; Dries, 2013). Businesses are getting more and more competitive about hiring the best, and that is the domain of TM (Pfeffer, 2001). Furthermore, 'talent' itself is a topic that has been a source of interest not only in the world of business, but also in other fields such as arts, education and sports. In the recent years, there also has been more and more interest in finding synergies between businesses and these other fields, and initiatives such as the center of sports and business at Stockholm School of Economics have been created to fill in the gaps.

Sport organizations are often large organizations facing similar challenges to what other types of organizations are facing. In addition to this, they have a unique interest in being the best, and the "focus on winning every game" (Learning lessons from elite sport, 2015). Thus the world of professional sports is extremely interesting field for research.

In Sweden, ice hockey is one of the most popular sports, in which Sweden has also managed to create a great international success. In 2015, Sweden is ranking third in the world in men's ice hockey, losing only to the world leader Canada and the runner-up Russia, and leaving behind for example United States (IIFH 2015 Men's World Ranking, 2015). For a country much smaller in population, ranking high seems to indicate that something is done well in Sweden regarding developing hockey players. This raises the interesting question of how and what is done for the success to happen.

1.2 Problem discussion

Though TM is highlighted as one of the most important challenges faced by organizations and management today, the research around it is still young: In 2006 Lewis and Hackman, and in 2009, Collings and Mellahi determined the literature on TM to be in its infancy. In 2011, according to Collings et al. (Collings et al., 2011, cited by Thunnissen et al., 2013), the literature on TM had moved from infancy to adolescence. Even though TM has received more attention during the past few years (according to Thunnissen et al. (2013), the number of empirical research papers has increased since 2010), there is still a lack of empirical research on the topic, confirmed by numerous authors (Thunnissen et al., 2013; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Collings and Mellahi, 2009). According to

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), the current literature on TM is normative in nature, and different approaches to TM are often described as objective facts in the research, even when little empirical data is provided on the accuracy of the claims. The current empirical research has also been identified as US-centric, and concentrating on private corporations and multinational enterprises (Collings et al., 2011, cited by Thunnissen et al., 2013; Powel et al., 2012 cited by Thunnissen et al. 2013). Previous studies have thus concluded that there is a need for more variety in empirical research in order to build theoretical framework for TM in different contexts (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Collings et al. (2011, cited by Thunnissen et al., 2013) arrived in the same conclusion. There has thus been a demand for more research on TM in different contexts, which provides the basis for this study.

1.3 Research purpose and research question

The main purpose of this thesis is to widen the scope of empirical research done regarding talent management, and learn as much as possible from the way talent management is practiced in a non-traditional business environment (in this case, professional sport organizations). The aim is to also shed some light to possible synergies between these different environments. Due to the research being highly explorative in nature, the research question has purposefully been set to be fairly open. Thus, this thesis will aim to answer the question:

How do Swedish ice hockey clubs handle talent management?

- *What sort of talent management practices are present?*
- *Are there any distinguishing differences between clubs?*

1.4 Delimitations

The study conducted will only concentrate on ice hockey in Sweden. It was decided that including other countries in the study would have made the study hard to conduct within the time frame. Furthermore, the study will be restricted to men's ice hockey. Men's ice hockey has a long tradition and is more established regarding many aspects of development in Sweden than women's ice hockey, so for the purposes of this thesis it was determined to be a better subject to study. The study will also be restricted to the 'talent' in the players. There is undoubtedly much talent in other

parts of the organizations (e.g. the coaching), but those topics are likely better suited to be studied on their own.

1.5 Thesis disposition

The thesis is structured into six chapters. The first chapter explained the background and the purpose of this thesis. Second chapter will present the current literature around talent management in business and sports and the theoretical framework. Third chapter describes the methodology around the empirical study conducted, and the fourth chapter will introduce the findings of the study in the form of four cases. Fifth chapter analyzes the cases based on the theory and framework presented in chapter two. Finally, chapter six will conclude the thesis with final thoughts and recommendations for further research.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

The following chapter begins with a look into the current literature on talent management in business and talent (management) in sports, and pulls the concepts explored together into a theoretical framework at the end.

2.1 What is talent management?

Talent Management (TM) literature is closely linked to human resource management (HRM) literature. The literature review done by Thunnissen et al. (2013) describes TM drawing from such fields as international HRM, strategic HRM and organizational behavior. The issues discussed in TM literature are similar to strategic or international HRM, but differ in that they use “excellence” or “management of (scarce) talents” as the starting point for the discussion (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

In 2006, Lewis and Heckman found in their literature review that it is hard to identify what the precise meaning of TM is due to confusion in the use of definitions and terms among different authors. They, however, distinguish three different “strains of thought” in the TM literature. The first strain defines TM as typical human resource practices (e.g. recruiting, selection, development) which are done maybe more efficiently or with wider scope (in whole organization rather than within one department) than traditionally in HRM. Essentially, however, in this definition talent management equals HRM. The second strain concentrates on the management of talent pools (ensuring flow of employees throughout the organization). The third strain focuses on talent in general, ignoring organization boundaries and specific positions. Collings and Mellahi (2009) add a fourth strain to the list: the emphasis of it is on identification of key positions that contribute to the organization’s sustainable competitive advantage rather than talented individuals, and developing a talent pool of high performance and high potential individuals for these positions.

2.2 Talent definitions

One of the most elementary questions in TM is how to define ‘talent’. It is not however a simple matter and there is no set right answer for the question in TM literature: Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) conclude in their literature review that there is no consensus in the world of work on what is meant by ‘talent’. In the past, the literature around TM has been weighted down by the confusion regarding how ‘talent’ should be defined, slowing down the process of establishing TM theories and practices that would be commonly acknowledged (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). In the recent years, however, more effort has been put into clearing some of this confusion, and several authors

have contributed to the theoretical framework of TM by trying to identify common themes or approaches in how talent has been defined in the existing literature. Dries (2013) identified five areas of “tensions” regarding talent in TM literature. These areas are discussed below.

2.2.1 Object or subject approach

The first approaches to be described are the object and the subject approaches. **The object approach** encompasses of seeing talent as the characteristics a person possesses, whereas the **subject approach** sees the people themselves as ‘talent’ (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). In other words, the object approach concentrates on identification and development of characteristics of talented people and the subject approach concentrates on the identification and development of talented people (Dries, 2013). According to Dries (2013), while in practice the distinction can be hard to make, it does have a significance in the TM research and practice: the object approach is linked to literature on human capital, resource-based view, pivotal positions and individual differences, whereas the subject approach is linked to literature on high potential employees, A, B and C players, and talent pools. The approaches also affect what kind of talent management practices should be adopted: object approach is often connected to organization taking part in competence management and knowledge management, whereas subject approach is often accompanied by organizational career management and succession planning (Dries, 2013).

2.2.2 Inclusive or exclusive approach

The inclusive and the exclusive approaches take a stand on the “prevalence of talent in the (working) population (Dries, 2013, pp. 279). In **inclusive approach**, all of the people in the organization are regarded as ‘talented’, while the **exclusive approach** is based on the idea that only a segment of the people in the organization are identified as ‘talent’ (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). The inclusive approach is often found together with *strength-based approaches*: recognizing and developing the natural talents of people, rather than concentrating only on improving on areas of weaknesses (i.e. *gap-based approaches*) (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Dries, 2013). The exclusive approach, on the other hand, is often connected to practices that promote workforce differentiation (Dries, 2013). In companies that promote the exclusive approach, the focus is put on rewarding and giving incentive and attention to the “A players” (i.e. top performing employees) and actively trying to identify and dispose of employees who perform poorly (“C players”) (Stahl et al., 2012). Some companies do also adopt a hybrid of the two, applying different approaches depending on, for example, the talent pool type (e.g. senior executives or technical experts) (Stahl et al., 2012).

2.2.3 Innate or acquired approach

With the talent as innate or talent as acquired approaches, the discussion is turned to how talent is attainable and whether talent can be learned. The talent as ***innate approach*** seems to be an approach adopted by most scholars and practitioners in HRM, as they see talent as an innate characteristic (at least to some extent) that is hard or almost impossible to learn or teach if not naturally possessed (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Talent as ***acquired approach***, on the other hand, views talent as something that is acquired through practice and learning from experience (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). According to Dries (2013), the innate approach indicates a focus on selection, assessment and identification (of talent), whereas the acquired approach would imply a focus on development, experience and learning. According to Meyers et al. (2013), ***talent as innate approach*** is supported by ideas such as high talent is linked to high intelligence (which in turn is determined genetically); that some children demonstrate high abilities at a very young age (child prodigies); exceptional performers are only few; and that some individuals will always outperform others with the same amount of training (Meyers et al., 2013). On the other hand, talent as ***acquired approach*** is supported by ideas such as (deliberate) practice being the most important predictor of performance; talent evolving from (early) experience (unless early learning opportunities can be ruled out as an explanation, early talent is not necessary a proof of innate talent); and that almost anyone is capable of becoming a “prodigy” (if educated right) (Meyers et al., 2013). Meyers et al. (2013) also present a third approach, ***talent as a result of nature-nurture interactions***, which is essentially a combination between the innate and acquired approaches.

2.2.4 Output or input approach

According to Dries (2013), the input or output approach refers to whether talent is dependent on ability or motivation. When assessing talent from the ***input approach*** point of view, effort, motivation and ambition are seen as the main points. If ***output approach*** is adopted, the focus is on output, performance, achievements and results (Dries, 2013). The output approach is more common in organizations which most only focus on abilities and past performance when assessing talent (Dries, 2013). According to Dries (2013), it has been said that motivation has been “underappreciated” in the TM research and practice.

2.2.5 Transferable or context-dependent approach

The last of the five “tensions”, or approaches, identified by Dries (2013) is the transferable and the context-dependent approaches. According to the ***transferable approach***, talented people will show

talent in all environments, and thus TM practices should be directed towards recruitment and identification before entry (Dries, 2013). In ***context-dependent approach***, talent is seen as arising from the interactions between individual and the context, and thus the focus is on fit and talent identification is only done after a period of time (Dries, 2013). There has been research indicating that talent is not always transferable, and “a lack of fit” might be one of the reasons for this (Dries, 2013).

2.3 Talent management practices

TM practices are another important part of the current TM research and an area that is identified by Thunnissen et al. (2013) as one of three key issues discussed in TM literature (the other two being the definition of talent discussed above, and the intended effects and outcomes of talent management). Thunnissen et al. (2013) also found that it was the most discussed area in the literature and that the most focused practices were recruitment, staffing and succession planning, training and development, and retention management. According to Al Ariss et al. (2014), TM processes are commonly driven by TM visions focused on performance. Literature and theory on the different TM practices are discussed below, the focus being on recruitment and development activities.

2.3.1 Identification and recruitment

Talent recruitment and *talent identification* are processes that are defined here to refer to seeking out talent. *Recruitment* refers here to the external hiring of talent (i.e. seeking out talent from outside of the organization). *Identification* is more general term, and also refers to the processes that are meant to discover talent that already exists within the organization, (i.e. internal talent).

As mentioned before, the way talent is defined in the organization can affect what practices the organization concentrates on: As Meyers et al. (2013) indicate, when an organization is inclined to think of talent as *innate*, the organization often concentrates in practices such as recruitment and identification. Organization’s focus on TM activities such as recruitment and identification can also be linked to a strategical approach also referred to as *buying talent*, i.e. company concentrating on hiring talents developed by other organizations for (pivotal) positions, rather than developing potential individuals within the organization (Groysberg et al., 2004).

For both external talent recruitment and internal talent identification, one important area to consider is how a decision is made on who qualifies as a talent: whether the decisions are more

based on 'objective factors' or 'subjective opinions'. For example, Mäkelä et al. (2010) studied how an employee is identified as a talent in multinational companies and proposed a model that suggests that the talent identification and evaluation (for inclusion of a talent into talent pools) is a two-stage process, in which the first stage, performance appraisal evaluations, are experience-based: based on, and limited by, the experiences of the decision maker. The second stage, talent review and the actual decision on whether a person is to be included in talent pool, is cognition-based, "a more elaborate cognitive assessment of the different alternatives that are thought to maximize pay-off" (Mäkelä et al., 2010, pp.139). Silzer and Church (2009) also study the factors in assessing talent. They suggest three potential dimensions: foundational dimensions (e.g. cognitive and personality; hard to change), growth dimensions (e.g. learning and motivation; facilitate or hinder development), and career dimensions (e.g. leadership, performance, knowledge; early indicators of skills needed in specific career). In addition to these, there are contextual factors that affect the talent classification process: past performance, mobility, background demographics, cultural fit and readiness (Church and Silzer, 2013).

2.3.2 Development and training

One question in talent development is the inclusiveness and exclusiveness: whether to aim the development and training activities towards all employees or some segment of employees (cf. inclusive or exclusive approach). Yost and Chang (2009) suggest that in the volatile business landscape it is risky to only invest on few individuals in an organization (i.e. act very inclusively): organizational strategies can change fast and the type of talent required change along with it. Other authors are comfortable suggesting a more exclusive view on TM (e.g. Mellahi and Collings, 2009).

Talent pool activities are one part of talent identification and development activities within an organization: they often contain the employees that are targeted by the development activities. Collings and Mellahi (2009) define talent pool as a "pool of high potential and high performing incumbents that the organization can draw upon to fill pivotal talent positions" (pp. 307). In talent pool strategy, most often the company identifies and recruits the most talented people and then finds the right positions for them, rather than looking for specific people for a specific position (Stahl et al., 2007).

In case of an organization's talent definition leaning towards *acquired* talent approach, it is likely that the focused processes are those within talent development area (Meyers et al., 2013). Organization's emphasis on talent development can also be linked to the approach of *growing* your

own talent (i.e. hiring people with potential and then developing them to “stars” or talents within the organization) (Groysberg et al., 2004). Since the attitude the decision-makers have on talent can affect the way talent is assessed as well as the practices undertaken, it is good for organizations to define what their approach is, and whether they are more concentrating on talent identification (and recruitment), i.e. buying talent, or talent development, i.e. growing talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).

2.4 Talent in sports

Talent, for obvious reasons, is an area of interest in sports as well. In sports, much of the focus has been in finding out ways of identifying and predicting potential in young individuals, and in finding out ways to develop these individuals to release the full potential through training. Different aspects of these are discussed below.

2.4.1 Talent identification and talent development

In sports, talent identification (TID) and talent development (TED) are processes that go hand in hand. It is widely thought that in order for a “talented individual” to rise to their full potential, support and training is needed (Abbott and Collings, 2002; Abbott and Collings, 2004). Thus effective TID is seen as a precursor to TED: a good identification process is necessary to find the individuals that have the greatest potential to be successful (Abbott and Collings, 2002). Vaeyens et al. (2008) define talent identification in sports (TID) as “the process of recognizing current participants with the potential to excel in a particular sport” and talent development in sports (TED) as “providing the most appropriate learning environment to realize this potential” (pp. 703). However, though TID and TED are essential activities in sports, there is still a lack of uniformly accepted definitions and frameworks in the area (Vaeyens et al., 2008).

According to Abbott and Collings (2002), TID models have traditionally been based on physical and performance variables that have been determined to be essential for success (in a sport in question). However, assessing physical features can be tough when talking about children: early maturity can lead to advantage at the time of selection but might not last into adulthood (Abbott and Collings, 2002). There is also a link between early maturity (and advantageous physical features) and performance, and thus it can be concluded that these variables are not sufficient to predict success in senior level sports (Abbott and Collings, 2002). Due to these discrepancies, Abbott and Collings (2002) propose another approach to TID where *the emphasis is put on the capacity to develop*

instead of current performance, and integration of TID and TED process so that opportunities are provided prior to selection for children to “develop the psychomotor and psycho-behavioral factors that are proposed as precursors to successful development” (pp. 160). In the past, many models of TID have been based on (too) early identification and selection of talent (Abbott et al., 2005, Vaeyens et al., 2008).

Furthermore according to Abbott and Collings (2004), psychological behaviors and characteristics (such as goal settings, realistic performance evaluation, imagery and commitment) are important for determining individual’s growth potential, but have been neglected in the traditional TID and TED approaches. Appropriate learning strategies and motivation are required for an individual to interact with their environment and development opportunities effectively and reach their full potential (Abbott and Collings, 2002).

2.4.2 Model for talent identification and development in sports

Abbott et al. (2005) present a model for multidimensional approach to TID and TED in their paper, based on previous research. In this model, within TID there are *determinants of potential* and *determinants of performance*, which include three different dispositions: psychomotor (such as balance), psycho-behavioral (such as goal setting), and physical based (such as height). As individual grows and develops, the concentration moves from monitoring potential to monitoring performance within these areas (Abbott et al., 2005).

TED in the model is built of four different stages: *initiation stage*, *development stage*, *mastery stage*, and *perfection stage*. The first three stages describe the development required to reach a “world-class performance”, whereas the last stage describes the perfection of the talent after reaching the top. According to Abbott et al. (2005), true potential is only shown by an individual who can transition from one developmental stage to another. This ability to transition is supported by psychological factors (e.g. goal settings, realistic performance evaluation and self-reinforcement). Physical and motor performance dispositions, on the other hand, can either facilitate or hinder the process of moving from stage to stage (Abbott et al., 2005).

In the model, the emphasis is also on continual monitoring and development of all components (i.e. performance dispositions), and thus TID and TED are not to be seen as separate from each other (Abbott et al., 2005). Figure 1 depicts a model of TID and TED in sports, adapted from Abbott et al. (2005), for the purposes of this thesis.

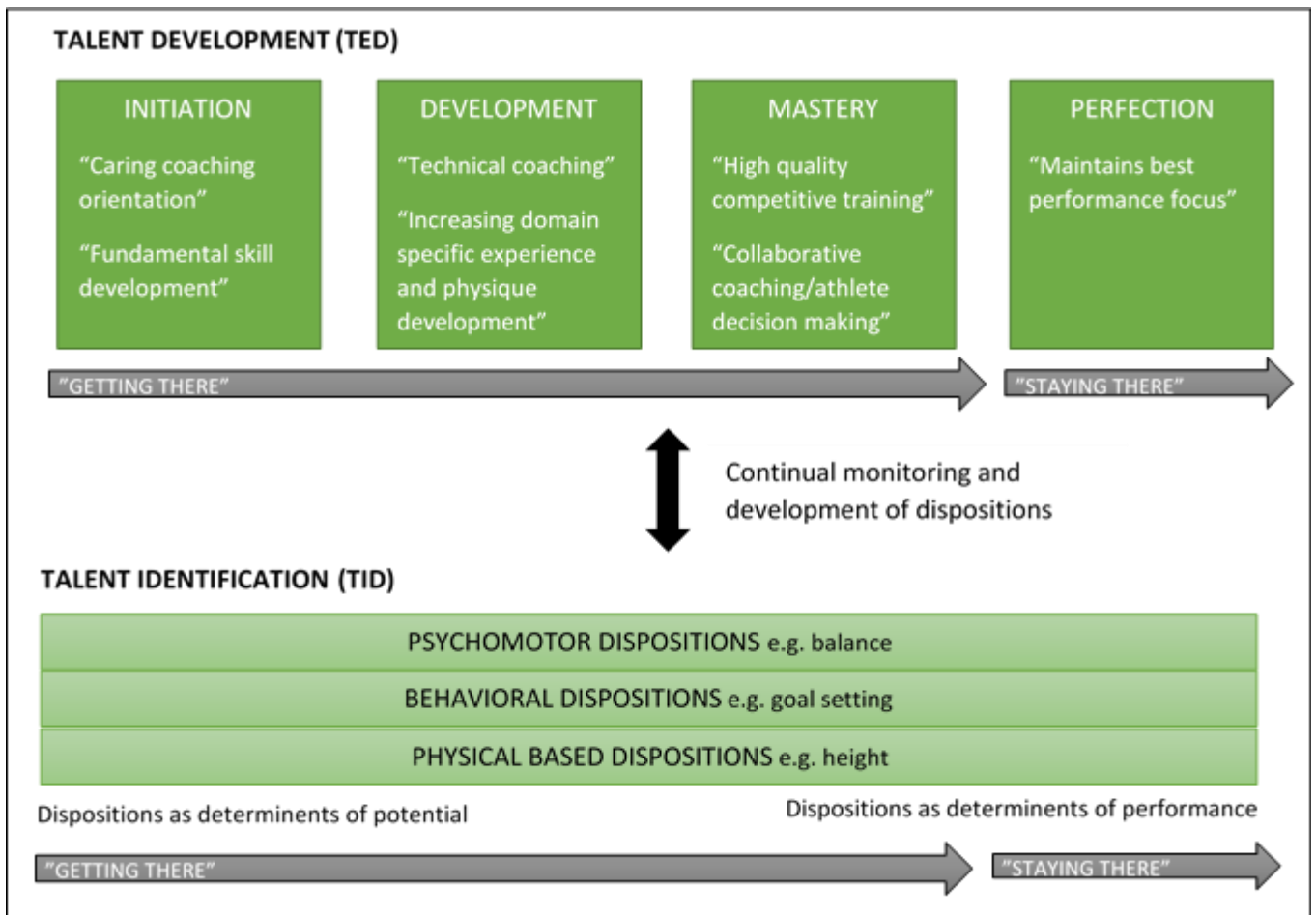


Figure 1. A model of talent identification and development in sports (adapted from Abbott et al., 2005).

2.4 Theoretical framework

The following model summarizes the elements discussed previously to illustrate the theoretical background that exists behind the analysis of the cases presented later in the thesis.

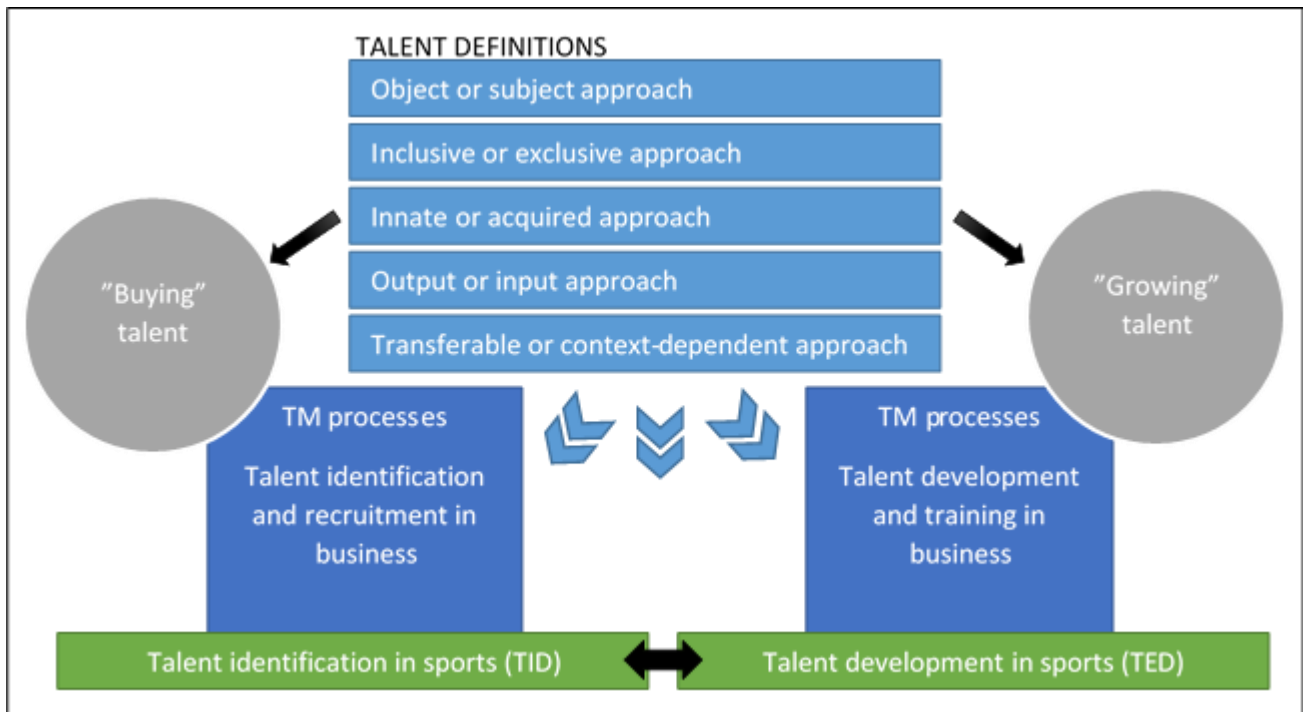


Figure 2. Theoretical framework.

3. Methodology

This section describes the methodology of the thesis. The study presented in this thesis is part of a larger research project at the center of sports and business in Stockholm School of Economics. Thus some of the methodological decisions have been made in collaboration with this larger research project.

3.1 Research method and approach

Edmondson and McManus (2007) suggest that the state of theory in management research can be viewed as a continuum between mature and nascent theory. The design of the study should be therefore chosen based on the maturity of the theory. As mentioned before, the research in the field of TM is still in the nascent end of theory maturity, and multiple authors identify it as being in either infancy or adolescence (e.g. Thunnissen et al., 2013; Collings et al., 2011, cited by Thunnissen et al. 2013). Based on this, appropriate research approach was determined to be one with open-ended inquiry, with qualitative data collection (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). The chosen research approach is explorative and abductive in nature. According to Krishnaswami and Satyaprasad (2010), “exploratory research is preliminary study of unfamiliar problem about which the researcher has little or no knowledge” (pp. 12), and thus useful for researching fields that have previously not been well-researched and documented. Deductive reasoning starts with theory and uses empirical research to confirm a hypothesis based on the theory, whereas inductive reasoning starts with the empirical research and aims to formulate theories based on it (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Abductive reasoning, on the other hand, is “inferential process”: it gives a discovery an “explanatory status” (Thietart, 2001, pp. 53-54). It is thus useful for discovering new hypothesis that further research can explore and confirm. Qualitative research was chosen due to its fit to explorative, open-ended study: qualitative research is interpretivist and it stresses “understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants” (Bryman and Bell, 2003, pp. 402).

In order to allow better understanding of the intended research environment, two preliminary interviews were conducted with a former player who is working as a scout for an NHL club (National Hockey League, the highest ice hockey league in North America), and a development and national youth team manager from the Swedish Ice Hockey Association. This information was used in designing the case study and the data collection methods.

3.2 Case design and selection

According to Yin (2014), a case study is an appropriate approach when “how” or “why” questions are being asked and when the study is about contemporary events over which the researcher has little control. It was thus determined that a case study would be a well-suited approach for the study to be conducted. A multiple-case study was chosen with the reasoning that the different cases could be compared with each other, with the potential of getting contrasting results (i.e. theoretical replication) (Yin, 2003). The ice hockey organizations studied were chosen based on a common knowledge preconception of people interested in hockey (involved in the research project at Stockholm School of Economics) that there could be differences between these specific clubs. Ice hockey as a sport was chosen as the target of research partly due to convenience: as mentioned, the study was done as a part of a larger research project, and the contacts were established through the people working on the project. In the clubs, either the CEO or the sports director of the club was contacted and asked about their willingness to participate in the study. Altogether five clubs were contacted to be interviewed, however one of the contacted clubs declined for unknown reasons.

3.3 Data collection

As mentioned before, qualitative research approach was adopted and within that unstructured, or qualitative, interviews were chosen as the method of data collection. According to Yin (2014), interviews are one of the most important source of evidence in a case study. Unstructured interviewing is a form of interviewing that is often guided by an interview guide, but is not strictly expected to follow it, the interviews themselves often resembling a conversation (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Due to the multiple-case design of the study, however, the aim was on collecting answers to all the questions in the interview guide over the course of the interviews in a specific club (in order to assure comparability). Qualitative/unstructured interviewing is a good method for gaining a genuine understanding of the world view of the people interviewed, with less likelihood that the interviewer is interfering with that world view with their own expectations (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Other approaches such as observations might have been advantageous to add to the study but challenging to conduct within the time frame and the possibilities available. In addition to the data gathered through interviews, the websites and for example the yearly reports of the clubs were examined.

For the interviews, an interview guide was created based on current theory and the two preliminary interviews. See Appendix 8.1 for the interview guide used.

3.3.1 Interviews and interviewees

The decision on who would be interviewed at each club was based on recommendations of the club representatives, and the participants were chosen in collaboration with the clubs. This was done due to the fact that the clubs were structured bit differently, and thus it was thought to be best to trust the club representatives on which people would be best suited for interviewing. The club representative were presented with the basic focus of the study, and they chose the employees to be interviewed based on that. Appendix 8.2 lists all the people interviewed. The interviewed people included sport managers, coaches of either the junior or the senior team, and people responsible for development in the clubs.

With the exception of Djurgårdens IF Hockey, five people were interviewed at each of the clubs (four in DIF's case; one person was interviewed twice). Altogether 19 interviews were conducted with the clubs. The language of the interviews was English, except for one of the interviews which was conducted in Swedish. As mentioned previously, the interviews were qualitative/unstructured and guided by an interview guide. The aim was to gather answers to all the interview guide questions during the course of all the interviews at a club; thus, not all questions were asked from all the interviewees. The desire was to conduct face-to-face interviews for best interaction. However, in two cases the original interviews were cancelled, and thus phone interviews were conducted at a later date. The interviews took between 50 minutes and 1,5 hours, 1 hour being the average time taken.

All the interviews were recorded, and transcriptions or summaries were made of the recordings. The data gathered during the interviews was formulated into the form of four cases presented in chapter four. Club representatives from each club were given a chance to review and suggest changes to the cases of their respective club, in order to give them a chance to correct mistakes or withdraw information they deemed to be confidential. Only minor alterations were suggested by the representatives.

3.4 Analysis

Coding describes the process of interpreting data that has been collected. It is an important step towards analyzing qualitative data such as the interview material gathered during the study conducted for this thesis. Saldaña (2009) lists several methods of coding that can be applied either

for first cycle coding (i.e. during the first time going through the data), or for second cycle coding (i.e. reorganizing and reanalyzing data after first cycle methods have been applied, when necessary).

A couple of different first cycle coding methods were applied. The first step was taken with *holistic coding*, in which the interview data was first coded as “clumps” to get an overall picture of each interview (Saldaña, 2009). *Structural coding* (i.e. applying a question-based code to the data, in sense labeling parts of the data that are relevant for certain questions) was done regarding interview guide questions deemed important, for facilitating comparison of interviews (Saldaña, 2009). *Descriptive coding* was the main method used in creating the basis for the written cases in chapter four. The method was used as the aim was to answer what was essentially happening in each club, and to let the reader understand what the author had observed (Saldaña, 2009). A few other coding methods were used to a lesser extent, for example *attribute coding* (i.e. noting the basic descriptive information) for mapping out the basic attributes of each club, and *in vivo coding* (i.e. taking note of the actual words and phrases used), used especially regarding the attributes of players (Saldaña, 2009). In addition to the initial first cycle coding, some level of second cycle coding was done with *pattern coding* when aiming to answer some questions on why certain differences or similarities existed (Saldaña, 2009).

For further analysis and comparison of the cases, cross-case synthesis was used. Cross-case synthesis is a technique applicable for multiple-case studies (Yin, 2014). Each case is approached and analyzed first individually, and the results then compiled. Different techniques can be applied to analyze the findings. When only few cases are available, good option for further analysis is gathering the findings of the cases into word tables that follow some uniform framework to compare the data (Yin, 2009). This kind of approach was chosen for this thesis. After the data for each case was compiled and analyzed, the findings were collected into a word table which compared the different cases regarding different topics that had come up, to determine commonalities and differences.

3.5 Limitations

Following limitations apply to the study. Firstly, due to gathering information through interviews, the author has had to ‘trust the word’ of the interviewees. It has to be considered that the interviewees might have their own agendas and might have a reason for answering in a certain way and depicting their respective clubs in a certain way. The selection of the people interviewed was

partly affected by the clubs, so there is also the possibility that the person contacted presented people who comply with their ideas of how they want to present the club, and people with opposing views were not included. There is also no guarantee that the information that has been given is actually applied in practice, as no observations of the actual practices were made.

Secondly, it should be mentioned that all except one of the interviews were conducted in English, which was not the first language of the interviewees. This might have made it harder for some of the interviewees to express themselves in the best possible way. And lastly, as the empirical research is based on qualitative data, the limitations often attributed to qualitative data collection apply: mainly, the research might be seen as too subjective, being potentially too affected by the views of the author on what is significant.

4. Presentation of empirical data

The following section presents the empirical data collected during the study. The section starts off with an introduction to Swedish hockey, covering basic concepts that are important for understanding the context of the cases.

4.1 Ice hockey in Sweden

4.1.1 The structure of ice hockey organizations

The structure of Swedish ice hockey organizations can be roughly divided into three sections: *the youth organization/program*, which is responsible for children and youth up to the U16 team (players who are 16 years old and under); *the junior program* and *the ice hockey gymnasium*, for people up to 20 years old (U18 and U20 teams); and the professional level, i.e. *the elite/senior team*.

The *youth program* is the first introduction to hockey for children, and its goal is often described to be getting as many people as possible interested in and playing hockey. Getting people involved in hockey serves the clubs for multiple reasons: having large number of children starting hockey makes it more likely to discover the very talented ones and gives a larger pool to select from later on; having many children playing and many people interested in it makes it easier to get support for the sport from, for example, city officials; and the clubs will have better commercial results if people are attending the games (e.g. DIF1). The next level, the *junior program*, is a step towards more professional hockey, and thus often the first step during which the players will go through a selection process to see who can move forward. The last step is the *elite teams*, in which the players will move to play in one of the men's hockey divisions in Sweden.

Hockey organizations can be described as hybrid organizations. For example, while the clubs' professional hockey teams and the junior programs are run through for-profit organizations, the youth programs are part of separate organizations, which are run as non-profit organizations. Due to this, the clubs often have multiple goals that can seem conflicting (e.g. promoting hockey for all but having strict selections starting from the junior program). Finding a balance between hockey as fun and professional hockey is one of the challenges faced by hockey organizations (DIF1).

4.1.2 The Swedish Ice Hockey Association

Svenska Ishockeyförbundet, or the Swedish Ice Hockey Association (SIHA), is the national association responsible for how ice hockey is generally developed and viewed in Sweden, and is also

responsible for the Swedish national teams at different levels. SIHA is connected to many aspects of ice hockey training and development in Sweden: it, for example, provides training for ice hockey coaches, provides guidelines for children's hockey, and is involved in the hockey gymnasium program (Tre Kronors Hockeyskola, 2015; Hockeygymnasium, 2015; INT2). It also organizes the TV-pucken, the most important tournament for young players in Sweden (TV-pucken, 2015). Often the players who are chosen for hockey gymnasiums and who become professional players have taken part in the TV-pucken (INT1).

4.1.2.1 Ice hockey gymnasiums

The current model of junior development relies in so called ice hockey gymnasiums (i.e. ice hockey high schools). In this system, major hockey clubs have a collaboration with a local gymnasium, allowing the players chosen for the program to better combine their gymnasium studies with practicing ice hockey for potential professional career. In the collaboration, the gymnasium takes care of the academic side while the ice hockey club is in charge of the hockey side, organizing the training and providing personnel, and also selecting the players for the program (within certain restrictions, e.g. GPA required by the gymnasium) (e.g. DIF1, DIF2a). There are 31 elite ice hockey gymnasiums in Sweden, from which 27 are for boys, and 4 for girls. (INT2; Hockeygymnasium, 2015)

Nationally, SIHA is responsible for providing general guidelines for the ice hockey gymnasium programs, e.g. how many players can be admitted each year, and making sure that the quality of the hockey education is good in all the participating schools (INT2). Each program is allowed to take between 10 and 14 new students each year, with the clubs themselves deciding the exact number (e.g. FBK1).

In 2015, the last day for students to leave their applications for gymnasium is on 1st of December, meaning that the clubs need to also know by then who they encourage to apply for their schools (since the clubs make the decision, they often tell their first choices to put their school as first in the application) (Hockeygymnasium, 2015). This also means that the process of scouting players for junior programs starts at least a year before they actually start in the gymnasium (confirmed by interviews; e.g. DIF1).

There are three practice sessions in the morning during the gymnasium, and these practice sessions concentrate on the skills of the individual players. During the afternoons, the teams usually have their team practices. These practices are not technically part of the gymnasium, but as the coaches

in the junior programs are usually involved in the hockey gymnasium program as well, there is continuity throughout the different practice sessions (e.g. FBK2; LHC2).

4.1.3 Ice hockey divisions in Sweden

Svenska hockeyligan, or the Swedish Hockey League (SHL), is the highest ice hockey division in Sweden. The league was established in 1975, under the name Elitserien, and initially had 10 teams participating: AIK, Brynäs, Djurgården, Frölunda, Färjestad, Leksand, MODO, Skellefteå, Södertälje and Timrå. In 1988 the number of teams was increased to 12, and in 2013, the name was officially changed from Elitserien to SHL (Om SHL, 2015). For the 2015/2016 season, there are 14 teams participating: Brynäs IF, Djurgårdens IF, Frölunda HC, Färjestad BK, HV71, IF Malmö Redhawks, Karlskrona HK, Linköping HC, Luleå HF, MODO Hockey, Rögle BK, Skellefteå AIK, Växjö Lakers HC and Örebro HK (Svenska Ishockeyförbundet – SHL, 2015). The winner of the SHL is considered the Swedish ice hockey champion, and awarded the Le Mat trophy (Fahlman, 2008). The second highest division in Sweden is Hockeyallsvenskan. The team that finishes last in SHL after a season is at a risk of being relegated to Hockeyallsvenskan, while the winner of Hockeyallsvenskan has the chance to move up to SHL (Så spelas SHL, 2015). The third highest league is Hockeyettan, formerly known as Division 1.

4.2 Djurgårdens IF Hockey

Djurgårdens IF Hockey (DIF) is a Stockholm-based ice hockey club currently playing in SHL. DIF made a comeback to SHL for the 2014/2015 season, having played in Hockeyallsvenskan for the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 seasons after relegation. DIF was playing in SHL (Elitserien) from the establishment until the relegation, and has won the championships six times during that time: 1983, 1989, 1990, 1991, 2000 and 2001 (Fahlman, 2008). Over the past few years, the relegation has had direct consequences to the financial situation of the club, reducing the funds available and forcing the organization to cut costs (Djurgården Hockey AB Årsredovisning, 2015; DIF2a). Thus one of the current challenges of DIF is to re-establish and stabilize its position again in the highest division, as the club has only been back for one season, and as a new relegation would undoubtedly hinder the efforts of the organization to develop and grow in the future (DIF2a). Also, as an organization situated in Stockholm, DIF has to compete against many other activities and sport organizations, and the city is not seen to be as accommodating as maybe in some smaller cities (DIF2a). One of the challenges for DIF is also the lack of resources in the form of ice rinks, and the lack of support from the city in building new ones or renovating the old ones (DIF1).

The club has and is going through some changes (e.g. new managers) and is currently developing their strategies and thus many of the things discussed with the club representatives have just been implemented or are to be implemented in the future.

4.2.1 Youth hockey, the junior program and hockey gymnasium

Like many other clubs, DIF is participating in the Svenska Ishockeyförbundet's Tre Kronor Hockeyskola project and thus organizes a hockey school that functions according to project's standards for the youngest kids (DIF Vinterhockeyskolan, 2015). The youth sections expands up to the U16 team, after which the U18 and U20 teams are part of the junior organization (Djurgården Hockey, 2015). DIF has an interest in developing their youth and junior programs, and has a vision of providing the best possible hockey education for children (Djurgården Hockey AB Årsredovisning, 2015). Stockholm's model (Stockholmsmodell) is something brought up in the interviews as well as mentioned in the annual report: the ambition for the future is to be a role model for the other organizations in Stockholm regarding good youth development (DIF2a, DIF3).

When talking about development in the youth program, the focus is on teaching children the basics of hockey. Starting from the age of 5, the aim is to create a base skill-wise (e.g. learning to skate), building up on the previously learned each year and adding little bit more as the players grow (DIF2). The first time DIF starts to pay more attention to players as potential recruits is about a year or two before the gymnasium, when the players are around 15-years old and playing in the U15 and U16 teams (since the actual application process for the gymnasiums also start a year before the players actually enter the school) (DIF1; DIF2a). At DIF, the scouting process for gymnasium is largely carried out by external scouts, who map out and find interesting players for the club to consider. Based on the players mapped out by the scouts, the club starts the actual selection process, in which the decisions are made (DIF2a). All the players the club is interested in are then interviewed, along with their parents (DIF1). In the end, 10 to 12 players are chosen to be admitted into the gymnasium (DIF1). The sport managers and the junior coaches (mainly U18 coach) are involved in choosing the players (DIF1; DIF3).

It's pretty much important for us that they're going to have the right character to be in Djurgården" (DIF4).

According to one interviewee, character and ambition are the two most important factors when selecting players, while technical skills would only come after them (DIF1), while another talks about character and attitude before technical skills (DIF3). With juniors, the mix should be about 50

percent on character and 50 percent on skill level (DIF1). According to another listing, the most important factor to look for in a player is mentality, or winning mentality, i.e. the player likes to compete. The second most important thing is that the player can take responsibility for their own development and drive themselves to do better. Third factor considered is being a team player and if the player is willing to put the team before themselves. Finally, the technical skills of the player are considered (DIF2a). This criteria has also been conveyed to the scouts working on the recruitment (DIF2a).

With juniors, DIF has a saying “you are not here for what you are, you are here for what you can be” (DIF1). This also means that when players are recruited for the junior program, future development is taken into consideration (DIF1). It can be difficult due to people developing at different pace: some are physically mature before others, and then it will be difficult to see if the players are actually more skilled or if they are just getting advantage over the less develop players (DIF1). In the gymnasium age, the players do not have to be the most skilled because it is something the club can work on with the players (DIF2a).

One reason why character is thought to be important is the change towards more individualistic or egoistical attitude among the players in recent years. It was felt that previously being part of the team and following team rules was more readily accepted, whereas now players were often more concentrated on “what’s in it for me” (DIF1). It is mentioned that leadership is important in working with the individuals, and making them understand that in order to be successful, they need to work in a team; “to be successful you need the guys around you” (DIF1).

In order to assess the character, or mentality and willingness to take responsibility over their own development, many different sources are used: interviews with players and parents, discussion with people who have worked or played with them, for example previous coaches and teammates, and observation (DIF1). It is admitted that this assessment is not simple, and as the players are still young, they might not be mentally mature even if they are already physically mature (DIF1). In addition to player’s character, the interviews are also used to learn a little bit about the player’s parents, as the attitude of the parents is also seen as important (the parents need to understand how it works at the club) (DIF1). In the past, for example the assessment of players has been very subjective, based on individual views of people and thus the current aim in the whole club is to establish “Djurgården-owned” standards for assessing players (as well as to develop them) (DIF2a).

Still having a level of feeling-based decisions is seen as something that should be included when assessing and selecting players, since “you’re working with people, not robots” (DIF1).

In addition to the factors mentioned previously, DIF also has a goal to have most of the players hailing from Stockholm, a core idea that has existed even before the establishment of the hockey gymnasium. In addition to this, the aim is to have at least half of the players who are chosen for junior program from DIF’s own youth program (DIF1).

There is one full-time and one part-time coach working with the U18 team, the same being true for the U20 team. The full-time U18 and U20 coaches are also responsible for the hockey gymnasium. In addition, there is a goalie coach (who works part-time) working with the goalies in the team and in the gymnasium, and a skill coach, who works with the ‘individual skills’, for example skating technique, stick handling, passing and receiving (DIF3). For development, the players work on the actual hockey skills, physical shape and tactics, but also on understanding the way DIF wants to play hockey (DIF1; DIF3). The character and expected behavior is also something that is further discussed and explained to the players in the program, to make the players understand how to behave according to the standards DIF expects from them (DIF1; DIF3). Since there are many things to learn, it is important to work step by step, not putting too much on players right away (DIF3). It is important not to push the player up too soon; it is not important how fast things go, but how long you can be successful; this is something that needs to be also taught to the players and their parents, so they would not feel the need to push to the next level too early (DIF1).

Some training is set, i.e. you are expected to learn together with the team, but when working with individual skills and development, you work with the individual progress; different players might be on different levels (steps on stairs) at each given time (DIF3). Overall, you always work towards both the team goals, and the individual goals, and the coaches help the individuals to work towards these goals and to balance between them (DIF3). In general, the younger the players are, the more they practice individually, individual skills, from 100 percent with small children to about 10 to 20 percent by the time player is in the senior team (DIF2a). In hockey, some things are seen easier to develop, whereas for example (hockey) sense is seen as something that is very hard to develop if the player is lacking in the beginning (DIF1; DIF5). In general, producing players that are good enough to be drafted by NHL is also something that is found important at DIF, and what they have been successful in (DIF1).

For tracking individual development, DIF does not have a “systematic” way of following it, e.g. no system where you would add information on individual players’ development and later update it to follow players long-term (DIF3). There is some documentation though in the form of assessment that is filled after practices, and which can be used when they have the discussion with the players about their development (DIF3).

Sometimes to develop players, you need them to get experience playing senior hockey, and thus DIF sometimes rents the player to other teams who are playing in the lower divisions (DIF5). DIF is also currently looking into establishing some collaborations with an NHL club and with a college in the US, which would allow sending players to college in US and have US players who are not good enough for NHL come play in Sweden, extending a little bit the possibilities to train players (DIF1).

4.2.2 Professional hockey and senior team

As with the junior program, the vision for the senior team is to have most of the players from Stockholm and furthermore have half of the senior team come up from their own junior program. The rest of the spots should preferably be filled with players from Sweden, and when looking for players outside Sweden, they should be particularly competent, and not just hired “to fill the group” (DIF1). Having as many players from their own junior program is seen as a point of pride, and is also something DIF has been quite successful in doing, having had more than half of their men’s team come up from their own junior program at times (DIF1). The senior team has four full-time coaches: the head coach, assistant coach for forwards, assistant coach for defense, and a goalie coach who is also responsible for video analysis.

Some of the reason for preferring players from the Stockholm area are very practical, e.g. not having to worry about the players adjusting to new environment and finding housing (DIF1). Stockholm also has a large number of hockey players (25 percent of hockey players in Sweden come from Stockholm), so it is relatively easy to find qualified players to recruit (DIF2a; DIF4). When it comes to preferring players from own youth and junior programs, one of the reasons that comes up is that it is easier to work with children in making them understand the philosophy of the club, as well as to work with their character (DIF1). Hiring young players from own junior teams is also usually cheaper (DIF1), and make sense for the organization since a lot of resources have gone into the development process of young players (DIF2b).

The decisions for who is hired for the senior team is made by the sport managers (mainly the strategic sport manager). The sport managers also scout for the players (DIF2b). When looking for the players, emphasis is put on finding out more about the character of the player, since the technical skills are easy to see and assess (DIF2b). This is done by for example asking people who have previously played with or coached the player (DIF2b). One major difference to junior selection is of course salaries, and how much you can pay for players can limit your choices, and also require some tactical thinking (e.g. where to use the money and where you can save) (DIF1). Another difference you need to deal with is the age structure and balance of the team, as there is an ideal age structure where you do not have too many young, inexperienced players or too many older players who are soon retiring and leaving the team (DIF1).

The priorities for requirements for the senior team are quite similar as to the junior program, the same factors are considered with recruiting players to the senior team (DIF2a). Character is described to be number one, and by one interview, even more important at this time than previously (DIF1). This is due to the demands in the professional level; a player that can handle failure and keep going is what the club wants (DIF1). "Talent for us is to have the [patience] to come and practice every day over a long time"; it is important to work hard every day, and (aim) to set personal records every day. This is also something that is talked about in the junior program (DIF1).

For player development, one area that is being looked at are statistics, and finding new ways to assess the data gathered from them (DIF1). Some statistics are already being used all the time, but the emphasis is on the part about finding new ways to interpret the data, and then utilize the information when planning on how to play and practice. Statistics is also seen as something that might be useful for recruitment in the future, but is not majorly used these days (DIF1; DIF4). DIF is working quite a lot with statistics: "it's more like a tool for us to see if we are on the right path or if we are on the wrong path" (DIF4). The statistics can be used to confirm that the team is for example working well together, and for example test out if replacing player will affect the results, and also assess performance on individual level (DIF4). In general, statistics are seen as a good way to predict results: after having collected certain amount of information (e.g. on 20 or so games) you can start to see whether a team will be winning or losing against another team (DIF4). Part of using statistics is also learning to read them, and turn them into something you can use on the ice, i.e. if you know a team is good, based on statistics, how do you find out what it is actually that is making the team so good (DIF4).

At DIF, the different parts of the club are quite closely connected, and for example there is not separate person handling the junior program and the elite team (there is however a person responsible for the youth section), but the two general managers for the team overlook both, with different areas of responsibility (“strategic” and “technical”) (DIF1). The overall goal is to have an organization that is well-connected with same vision from the youngest youth players to the senior team (DIF2a). As a club, DIF emphasizes developing good players, both as players on ice as well as people off ice, moving players up in the organization to the elite team and finding new ways to develop the organization to stay on top of things (DIF1; DIF2a).

4.3 Färjestad BK

Färjestad BK (FBK) is an ice hockey club hailing from Karlstad in the Värmland County in Sweden. FBK was founded in 1932 and has been playing in the SHL (Elitserien) since the league’s establishment in 1975. FBK has won the Swedish championship nine times during its time in the highest division: 1981, 1986, 1988, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2009 and 2011 (Färjestad BK Vår historia i korthet, 2015). In the history of SHL and Swedish hockey, FBK has been one of the most successful clubs.

4.3.1 Youth hockey, the junior program and hockey gymnasium

The youngest children entering the youth program at FBK are 5 to 6 years old, and start with play school type of program: FBK is collaborating with Svenska Ishockeyförbundet’s Tre Kronors Hockeyskolan as with the other elite clubs (Färjestad BK Ungdom (2015); Tre Kronors Hockeyskola, 2015). The goal during the first years is to learn basic skills such as skating and in general how to be a good person and how to behave as a member of a team (FBK1; FBK2). The club policy includes all the details for what should done with which age group, how you should work with them (FBK3). At around 14-years old, the players should be dedicating bit more time to hockey than other sports and when they are 16, they should drop other sports and concentrate on hockey exclusively (FBK1; FBK5). At 16-years old, the players also go through some selection: prior to this, there are two teams for 14-year-olds and 15-year-olds, but for 16-year-olds, there is only one team (FBK1). Having two teams has not been always possible, but the goal is to have two teams as long as possible, to have as many players playing as long as possible (FBK3). Lack of resources is one thing currently limiting the club; at least one ice rink would be needed if they wanted to do everything they want (FBK1).

At FBK, there are two people working with the youth and juniors: one of them is responsible for five teams, from U14 to U20, and another for the youth below that (U13 and under) (FBK1; Färjestad BK Junior/ Ungdom, 2015). In addition, there are U16 coach, U18 coach and U20 coach who work full-time with the youth and juniors. The U18 coach is the main responsible for the hockey in the gymnasium (though the U20 coach also works with the teams there), while the U16 coach is responsible for the hockey school (between grades 7 and 9) (FBK1; FBK2). There is a lot of collaboration between the different people working with the youth and juniors: they sit close to each other, and often discuss together what should be done in different situations (FBK1). Most of the time they also share similar views on things, possibly due to the fact that for example few of them have played together (FBK1; FBK2).

The hockey school mentioned before refers to collaboration FBK has with two local school, between 7th and 9th grade. The collaboration facilitates practicing hockey, allowing practices twice a week during the normal school hours and making it easier for the players to attend training camps and tournaments (FBK1; FBK5; Färjestad BK Hockeyhögstadium, 2015). Working together with the school (and the gymnasium) is seen as making it easier to teach the values the club wants to promote to the players, as the same message is sent from the different sources that work with the players (FBK3). All the players playing in the FBK youth teams between grades 7 and 9 attend one of these schools (FBK1).

After the U16 team selection, hockey gymnasium is the next step of selection the players go through. There is no formal scouting for the players for the gymnasium: for finding players outside the club, the potential recruits are often seen playing against the team in tournaments, and the top players also take part in TV-pucken (FBK2). The decisions on who is admitted to the gymnasium program is made by the person responsible for the youth and juniors, the U16 coach and the U18 coach (FBK1). The final amount of players admitted depends on the structure of the current U18 and U20 teams, i.e. if there are many players leaving the team, you can pick more players to the gymnasium. Usually the number of players chosen is between 12 and 14 every year (FBK1). Since the U16 team has 22 players, only about half of them have the possibility to make it to the gymnasium: FBK tries to help their youth players that are not selected for the gymnasium other teams to play, so they would not have to stop playing (FBK1).

When selecting players, there are different things you might be looking for. According to one interviewee, the first thing you in general would look for in a player is the skills but character is also

important: if you have to decide between skills and character, character would come first (FBK2). According to another interviewee, commitment is the most important factor as it tough handling the practices and school and other things at the same time, and it is also important to have the character for becoming an elite player (to go all the way) (FBK5). The reputation and the behavior of the player can affect the decisions made, so if a person is known to have behaved in badly before, they might be turned down even if they are good players: the team needs to be able to work well together (FBK1). It is also very important to see ambition in the players (FBK1). It is easier always when you are talking about your own youth players, since you have seen them, and know them (FBK2). For choosing the players, it is always important to see the players to form your opinion on them, more so than for example following statistics (FBK2). Also, you should try to see few steps ahead to assess how the players might develop when they grow (physically, as well as skills-wise) (FBK2). It can be however tough to assess the potential and compare it to the current skills in the selection process (FBK1).

Until two years ago, FBK's main idea was that they were looking for the best players in Sweden for their gymnasium (FBK1). Currently however the club is concentrating on the Värmland region, and the fall 2015 was the first year when all the players starting in the program were from Värmland (FBK1). This it is something that FBK is proud of, and it is thought that it is good for the region to know that the "big club" is looking for only this region when choosing the players (FBK1). Also, since FBK ideally would have 1 or 2 players in the elite team each year, they think it would not make sense to have full team of best players in Sweden in the junior team, since they would not be able to provide them a place in the senior team (FBK1; FBK2).

Working with the youth and the juniors, it is important for the players to be happy, and have fun when playing; "our responsibility is to make the kids think this is the best place on earth" (FBK1). If the kids are not enjoying coming to practices, that is a sign that something has been done wrong (FBK1). The aim is to teach the kids to work hard, but also try to encourage and give positive feedback to them (FBK1). Furthermore, you need to take things step by step with the kids, and cannot train "16-year old kid as a 25-year-old" (FBK1). You should be careful not to move players up too fast, but sometimes individual players are ready for fast-tracking: last year, there were two players who were good enough to jump straight from U18 team to the senior team, playing in the senior team when they were 17 years old (FBK1). In the development, there is discussion also on whether to concentrate on improving weaknesses or to concentrate on honing strengths (FBK1).

The collaboration with the schools and the gymnasium makes this easier, as you have the practices during school time to work on details, and then the evenings on the team practices (FBK1). Usually in the hockey gymnasium, you practice individual skills in the mornings, and in the afternoon, you practice more tactics and how you play together as a team (FBK2). In the beginning of the gymnasium year, the coaches and the players go through where the players currently are and what the goals for those players are and then see later on how they have developed (FBK2).

FBK has many good players in each age group right now and they feel confident in their talent development. They know that their players still continue playing hockey even if they do not get into FBK's teams: this year, all of their youth team players who did not get chosen for the gymnasium still got into other hockey gymnasiums and continued playing (FBK1). The same was true for the players who left the U20 team and did not make it to FBK's senior team (FBK1). The club in general tries to help the players to continue playing elsewhere and feel that is a good thing to do (FBK2).

FBK promotes collaboration between the professional team and the youth and junior organization: in order to facilitate the collaboration between the professional side and the junior/ youth section, the junior coaches work sometimes take part in the senior team practices (FBK1): every 3rd week the U20 coach takes part in the senior team practices and follows the games "behind the scene". U20 also has the U18 and U16 for one week following him (FBK2). "It's very important we have open doors, you know, so we... we are the same, same club, different teams but the same club" (FBK1). Also, every second Monday, the coaches from the junior side as well as the person responsible for the youth and junior side, the general manager, sport manager and the coaches for the senior team have a meeting to discuss about, for example, the players and development plans (FBK1).

4.3.2 Professional hockey and senior team

The recruitment process for the senior team begins with assessing what is needed for the team (e.g. goal scorer, defense men) (FBK4). How you assess player depends somewhat on what type of player you are looking for, though some requirements are the same for all (FBK4). For example, everyone need to be good skaters, but for "team guy who is always there", the most important point is character, whereas if you are looking for goal scorer, you are looking for speed and shot (character is still important, but not the first thing to consider) (FBK4). It could be said that you have three different priorities when it comes to what you look for in a player: speed, character and size (FBK4). There are also other kind of things you might be looking for: for example, sometimes what you look for is the type of players that become the unofficial leaders: players who have leadership

qualities and could potentially lead the younger players for example (FBK3). In general, the first thing you should look for in the players is the hockey skills, but if you are lacking a bit, you can compensate with social character (FBK3).

Loyalty is very important, and finding the players who will be loyal to what the team stands for and will maybe stay in the club for a long time, supporting the club in more permanent way than bringing success for one or two years before leaving (FBK3). Players move around and switch teams much more now than they used to before, and stay with one club for shorter period of time (FBK1; FBK3). As you only have few months before the team needs to be really ready to play for the club in the tournaments, finding the players with a character which allows them to set themselves up for working hard for this specific team in that short period time is important (FBK3). Positive mind set is also something that is sought after (FBK3). As with the junior recruitment, FBK is currently aiming to have bit more players from Karlstad or players who have connection to Karlstad, or players from Värmland (FBK4). One reason for doing this is for the identity: people feel more connected to the team if the players are people with connection to the city (FBK4).

When choosing and hiring players for the senior team, it is the general manager and the sportchef who make the decisions, and the coach in case the coach has a contract for the year the player is going to play in the team (FBK3). External scouts (who are not full-time and not employed by FBK) are used for getting information about the players in different markets (countries), as it is hard for the club to keep up on everything in many markets as there are many things to consider (FBK3). The sportchef is responsible for the scouting and gets in contact with the external scouts to inquire about players before he travels out to see them and interview them (FBK4). In addition to the information gathered from other people, statistics is also used, but the feeling about the person (is this right person for the club) is important; FBK tries to find players for Färjestad BK, not just for hockey (FBK4). A star in one team is not necessary successful in another team (FBK4).

FBK's goal is to deliver two players every second year from their junior program to the senior team, meaning it might be for example one each year, or two one year, and none the second (FBK3). If two players are at the same level, there is a preference for a player from their own junior program. There is not however special emphasis on having players from own juniors (FBK1). The dream would be to have all players in the senior team from FBK, but that is not realistic (FBK1).

One thing to consider is that if you have to replace the players in the first and the second line often, you lose the heart of the team: It takes almost half a year for the new players to settle in (FBK4). You should try to plan the contracts so that you do not have to replace many players at once (FBK4). With hockey, it is also important to have the team working well together, and sometimes you have situations where a player is good but does not fit in the team (FBK5).

4.4 Luleå HF

Luleå Hockeyföreningen (LHF) is an ice hockey club from the city of Luleå in the Norrbotten County, and is the “northern-most elite hockey team” in the world (Luleå Hockey Föreningen, 2015). LHF was founded in 1977 as Groko Hockey after a merger between IFK Luleå and Luleå SK and changed its name to Luleå HF in 1979 (Fahlman, 2008). Luleå was promoted to SHL (Elitserien) for the 1984/1985 season, and has been playing in the highest division since then (Fahlman, 2008). Luleå has won the Swedish championship once in 1996, and has been in the finals 4 times: 2013, 1997, 1996 and 1993 (Fahlman, 2008; Luleå Hockey Spelartruppen, 2015). LHF won the Champions Hockey League in 2014/2015, the first year the tournament was played (Champions Hockey League Season 14/15, 2015).

Starting the 2015/2016 season, the men’s elite team had several new players, and one of the challenges for LHF has been getting the players settled and the team dynamics working again. When you have a team with many new members, adjustments are required in order for the team to play well together and learn to win games together: even if the players are good skill-wise, they still need to learn their roles in the team, and the more changes there has been to the team, the more difficult it is to get the team dynamics working again (LHF2).

4.4.1 Youth hockey, the junior program and hockey gymnasium

Luleå Hockey Unga is the youth section of LHF and comprises of the youth teams up to the U16 team. LHF participates in Svenska Ishockeyförbundet’s Tre Kronors Hockeyskola project, and runs a hockeyskola for the youngest children (Tre Kronors Hockeyskola, 2015). The vision for the youth section is to be one of Europe’s best youth and junior organization, and the overarching goals include such goals as growing elite level talent for the A-team, to be Sweden’s leading youth program in hockey, to be a “motor” for Norrbotten and get many people involved and interested in hockey (Luleå Hockeys Ungdomspolicy, 2015). In the youth section the keywords for the LHF is joy, passion and pride (LHF4). LHF is currently working to emphasis the club values even more to the

children and coaches in the program, instead of just having them on paper and have people read it and then throw the paper away (LHF4). LHF has a club strategy for what is done in what age group: it is not the coach's decision what is done, but the club's decision, and the same things are done every year for an age group (LHF3). In the past it has also often been that individual coaches have their opinion, but currently the aim is to change is more away from coaches having their own individual philosophies to having a club philosophy that carries through and gives frames within which the coaches can work (LHF4).

With the youth, it is important that they have fun: if they have fun, they will also continue playing (LHF3). When the players are around 11 or 12 years old, they start learning bit more about for example passing and shooting. When they get bit older, they work on improving these skills, and finally in the senior team the results become important: the idea is that you should be growing all the time, step by step (LHF3). The youth program is not to win; it is to learn hockey (LHF3) and the main goal for the youth hockey (for players between 5 and 15 years old) is to make good citizens: get many people to play hockey and not only learn about the game but be also a good person (LHF4).

The "elite" level in the club begins with the U16 team: for U15, there are three teams (one with LHF, then two teams with two other clubs), but for U16, elite team is formed from the players from these three teams (LHF4). The same year the players also need to start making hockey a priority as it will not be possible for the players to for example play two different sports at "elite" level (LHF4). As with other teams that have a hockey gymnasium, after the U16 team the next step for players is the hockey gymnasium and the junior (U18 and U20) teams. Compared to youth program, in the junior program winning becomes bit more important: the players should start to learn how to win as well (LHF3). Still the winning is not the most important part of the junior program, though this is not spelled out for the players: they should be still aiming to win (LHF4). The main goal for the elite level, starting from the junior level, is to develop elite players for the elite team, so thus the "philosophy" for the youth section in the club and for the elite level is a bit different (LHF4).

For the gymnasium, 10 to 14 players are admitted each year (LHF1). The scouting is done mainly by the sport chef for the youth and junior sections, and by the U16, U18 and U20 coaches (LHF2). For the recruitment of players to the gymnasium, there is a list of criteria the people who are making decisions assess, according to their opinions. The list includes technical skills, physical status and character (LHF1). The recruitment and scouting for gymnasium started only some years ago, before that active scouting was not a practice in the club (LHF2).

LHF aims to first and foremost have as many players as possible from Luleå (LHF2; LHF5): “Our vision and the goal is to have so many players as possible from our club and our district” (LHF1). The next most important goal is to have as many players as possible from Norrbotten and if after this there is room for one or two players from other parts of Sweden, they should be really good players to be considered (LHF2). In general, players who are from Luleå or Norrbotten are more likely to stay with the club as professionals (or for example come back after playing in NHL or other teams), whereas players from the south often move closer to home later on (LHF2; LHF3). It is important for the club to have good players coming up for promoting a good education in hockey in the region, and it is good for the team to have players in the team from the region, “our own guys”, for many reasons, for example for fans as well as sponsors (LHF1). Picking own players is also cheaper for the club, with juniors for example because due to not having to arrange separate accommodation (since the players are living with their parents in the area) (LHF1).

When choosing the players, while technical skills are considered and are important, there are also other deciding factors that are maybe even more important. According to one interview, drive (e.g. that the players really wanted to do it, for themselves and not for example for their parents) was the most important thing to look out for. Technical side (e.g. skating, puck handling and how player sees the game) was the next most important, while physical status (e.g. being in good shape) being the last thing to look out for (LHF1). Reasoning for the last was that as you can work with the physical status after you get the players in, it is thus more important to know the players love the game and really want to be there (LHF1). Another interviewees defined the (possibly) most important thing to be the attitude (towards practicing), and will to work “If they are ready to do everything to be a hockey player (LHF2)” (LHF2; LHF4; LHF5). You need to dedicate a lot of time for sport to become professional, so it is important that you are ready to work hard (LHF4). The experience has also been that players that work hard, even if they did not start out as the best in the program, can “fly in the improvement” and become good players (LHF2). Furthermore, the skills are often very even with the prospective players, so then the attitude can become the deciding factor (LHF4). For physical attributes, the size of parents is one thing that can be looked at; in the general, in the choosing players the club tries to see four years ahead, to see what the player could become (LHF5).

Though drive, attitude and willingness to work come up as the most important things, they are also hard to see. For example, many players love the game when they are on ice, but they also need to be dedicated enough to work on it when they are off-ice (LHF1), and when talking to the players,

they always tell what you want to hear (LHF4). In order to find more about the attitude of the player, it is necessary to talk to people who have worked with the players before and know them, such as previous coaches (LHF2; LHF4).

The coaches for U16, U18 and U20 work full-time, and two of them are teacher by profession; the intention in the program is to have a “learning environment” (as opposed to tough leaders that is thought to be the norm in sports) (LHF4). The aim in the club is to play the same way from U16 team to the senior team, so the coaches from U16, U18, U20 and the men’s and the women’s team meet weekly to discuss how the club wants to play (LHF4). In the youth teams, the coaches are usually parents who are volunteering so it is not possible to put the same kind of demands on the parent coaches as it to the coaches employed (LHF4).

Most of the players in the juniors teams are part of the hockey gymnasium, but not all (LHF4; LHF5). Sometimes you have to leave out players because you are not sure if they can make it in the team for the whole three years of gymnasium but want to still see if they can make it and thus have them in the junior team (LHF5). For development, in the junior team practices they sometimes have the players grading themselves after games, and this is used then in the discussion with the coaches to compare how the coach has seen the performance to be and how the players themselves have thought they have done (LHF2). Individual players are also involved in creating development plans for themselves during the gymnasium (LHF4).

The goal for moving players up from the junior program to the elite team has been set as one to two players from each age group (LHF2). Currently LHF has not still quite reached the level they want moving their own juniors that are from Norrbotten up to their senior team (LHF2). They have moved players up from their junior teams to the elite team, but they have been originally from somewhere else before moving to LHF for the gymnasium (LHF2). One important thing for developing and bringing the own juniors to the elite team is to get them experience in playing in the professional level, though LHF has been rather conservative in giving junior players time in their professional team (compared to some other clubs) (LHF4; LHF5). Also, moving juniors up can be difficult because of the high level in the senior team, and for example having a farm team can be useful for making transition easier (LHF3). It can also be a big step for the players themselves, moving to a new team where they do not know the other players well and being possibly demoted from being stars with a lot of playing time in the junior team to a newbie member in the new team (LHF3).

4.4.2 Professional hockey and senior team

Over the history of LHF, there has not always been money to hire the best players, and thus the club has had to look for the players that the club could improve (LHF3). Investing in the club and building a professional organization was preferred, to be able to improve the players (LHF3). The last year was a new kind of situation for LHF in that they had enough money to go bit more for the “star” players (LHF3).

What you look for in a player that you are recruiting to the elite team is said to be a bit different than what you look for in a player for the junior team, but attitude is still important: you would like to have good people in the team. One reason for wanting “good people” in the team is that player cannot be just good by themselves, but also has to be able and willing to help others (LHF3). It is important to know and accept your role: some players are going to have smaller roles than other, you cannot only have 20 “stars” in the team (LHF3). Another aspect to consider for the elite team is also player personality or what kind of role they take in the team outside the game. For example, LHF’s elite team recently lost a player that had been “a voice” and a leader in the team, and one issue in that kind of situation is to find a replacement for such a player (LHF2).

For the elite team, you start out the recruitment process by looking at what your team is missing, and then start scouting for players that have the skills and other attributes (e.g. strong physical player or good skater) you require (LHF2; LHF3). If you find a player that has the right skills you need, but has a bad attitude, you need decide whether the team can handle the player or not (LHF2). Statistics are used in the recruitment and the information that is checked depends on what you are looking for (LHF3). In hockey, it is open competition with other teams about the players: statistics for example are available for everybody (LHF3). It is important to have many sources for information when you are making decisions, to help you make the right information and for example former players that are working as volunteers are helpful (LHF3). In LHF, when the club is interested in a certain player, several people from the club go and see the player (playing) life (LHF3).

Statistics from games are also used in development, for example for assessing how the games have gone. The performance of players in games is not graded by the coaches (in the same way that they do in the junior program) but there are discussion of course what has been good and what needs improvement. When giving feedback it is important to not only give negative feedback, but also give positive feedback, LHF talks about 80-20: 80 percent positive and 20 percent negative (LHF2). Video is used for demonstrating points when discussing how the performance has been (LHF). Giving

positive feedback has been also worked well for the team: for example, once after a bad game, the team was shown a video of all the good things in the game, and the following practice was very good (LHF2). Showing the good parts of the performance in the game lifts the players mentally; most often, the players know when they have not performed well anyways (LHF2). You follow up the player development on daily basis, but you also have a bigger meeting with the players, talking about development and for example goals for the season, basically a development discussion (LHF2). This is done in the beginning of the season and at the end of the season (LHF2).

Lastly, overall for LHF as a club one of the defining ideas is that it is a hardworking club, and they want to promote that idea (LHF1; LHF2). It is also important players have energy: that the players play with energy and bring energy to the team, not take it (LHF3). It is also important for the club that even if they are not winning the most (in SHL), they are developing players well (LHF3). When working with players and people, it is important for the club to think that even the players that do not become professionals leave ice hockey with good memories: some of them can become coaches, some sponsors, some bring their children to play (LHF3).

4.5 Linköpings HC

Linköpings HC (LHC) is an ice hockey club from Linköping. Established in 1976, LHC first played in SHL (Elitserien) for the 1999/2000 season, though they were relegated back once before finally establishing themselves in the highest division during the 2001/2002 season (Fahlman, 2008; Linköping Hockey Club, 2015). Linköping is thus one of the more recent additions to SHL, and has yet to win the championship with the men's senior team, though the club has won the Swedish championships with U16, U20 and women's senior team (Linköping Hockey Club, 2015).

4.5.1 Youth hockey, the junior program and hockey gymnasium

The youth section of the club is similarly built as in other elite teams. Tre Kronors Hockeyskola is offered to the youngest children (Linköping Hockey Club Tre Kronors Hockeyskola, 2015). The goal for each year is to have 100 children starting in the youth program (LHC1). The biggest step in hockey is the step from under 16 to the junior teams: during the time in the youth teams, parents often take care of the players going to the games, but in the junior teams, the players are expected to carry the responsibility themselves (LHC1).

For the hockey gymnasium, LHC starts to look into the players when they are in the U15 team (LHC1), or about 1, 5 to 2 years before (LHC2; LHC3). This is just to get a feeling of the skills of the players in

the team, and to see how many of them could potentially enter the hockey gymnasium program (LHC1). The more serious scouting starts with the players on the U16 team (LHC1).

Scouting for the potential players is done through checking out tournaments and games to see how the players play (LHC1). There are six to seven people in the club that are involved in the scouting. In addition, the people at the club have informal networks around Sweden which can be used for finding out information about potential recruits (LHC2). The scouting process starts with observing the players in the youth teams, to see what sort of players are missing after which you go out to look for those players (LHC2). The goal in seeing the players play is to try to get the feeling of their hockey skills, e.g. puck control, physical game (LHC1). Geographically, LHC is concentrating roughly on players between Stockholm and Malmö or about the areas that are between 2 to 3 hour trip from Linköping (LHC1; LHC3).

The scouts make list of their top players, and ranks them based on different criteria (LHC2). For scouting purposes, the club is currently using an app to make it easier to follow up on information on players they are interested in (LHC1). The people involved in the process can put in information on players they find interesting, and the other people can see what they have put in (LHC1). The plan is to use the data that is tracked about player to not only keep up with individual players but also to learn from it, and for example find patterns (LHC3).

The players who the club is interested in are invited to visit Linköping, and see the school and how it would be playing and living in Linköping, and interviewed along with their parents (LHC1). It is important to get the feeling that the player is right for the club and will handle living in Linköping, both from the club side as well as for the player and the family (LHC1). Not all the players visiting LHC are offered a spot: the invitations are based on the hockey skills that have been observed, after which meeting the players and interviewing them is used for learning more about the person (LHC1). It is important that the player is ready to be committed to hockey (LHC1). It can be hard to assess this though: sometimes you just have to trust your feelings that it's going to work out, but there has been times when in the end the players have not made it in the end (LHC1). When you are assessing players and things such as seeing who has passion, it is a lot about experience: working for a long time you develop understanding how it works (LHC5). As another interviewee put it: "I can see it in their eyes". Through experience you developed a feeling for who is going to be a good (LHC4).

When choosing the players, the most important factors are hockey sense, i.e. the vision for the game and understanding the game, how they play with the puck and skating (LHC1; LHC5) These are the general things you look for, but you can also find individual skills in players, for example a defense man that might not be a very great skater but is very good at defending (LHC1). Also important is mentality or passion for hockey, as the time during gymnasium is not easy (LHC5). According to another interviewee, the most important thing in a player is the competitiveness and willingness to work hard. They are not going to be driven enough to work constantly on getting better if they lack this (LHC2). How they see the ice (and the game) is also important (LHC2). A hockey player that has good hockey sense and good attitude but has less muscles can be better than a player that is similar but has more muscle, as hockey today required speed and explosive power which can be developed within the gymnasium (LHC5). Hockey sense is something that can be developed, but developing it can be slow (LHC5). Overall, the technical skills are the least important part when choosing players for gymnasium: you need basic skills, but other parts can be taught (LHC5).

Yet another set of definitions defines the most important thing as finding good people: "come here every day with a smile on their face, can work hard, have patience in what they are doing and have a good trust in themselves and in our organization too" (LHC3). Many guys say that they are going to do that but in the end fail (LHC3). No one can know if a player is going to be good when they are 16-years old, but you can see if they are good people (LHC3). For example, recently there was a player that was not thought to be top player when chosen for the gymnasium program, but who then ended up playing in the elite team when he was 17-years old (LHC3). For the goalies, the most important factors are physical status, game knowledge, competitiveness (competing hard every day) (LHC4).

Sometimes you have to make consideration regarding players that you think might be good in five years, but are not at the right level right now. In these cases, you have to balance between taking in players that might be good in future, and having enough players that are good right now: if you do not win enough games with the team, you will lose the chance of playing against the best teams, and thus lose the experience the team would get from that (LHC1). In general of course you believe that all the players you take in have the potential to be good in five years, and that is also the goal (LHC1; LHC5). There has also been discussion in the club about whether you should always look for the top players, or maybe you should intentionally look for the players that are not thought to be in the top ten before gymnasium: smaller clubs often cannot compete for the top players, and thus

look for the players a little bit below them in the listings, and sometimes you see these players getting better during the junior programs and ending up for example in the national team (LHC1).

Though LHC would prefer to move as many players as possible from their youth teams to the junior teams and the gymnasium, the main goal of the junior program is still to move players up to the senior team, and it is sometimes necessary to look for players from other areas to ensure that goal is reached in best possible way (LHC1). Usually the gymnasium will end up with two to five players from other clubs (LHC1). In total the club usually takes in about 11 to 12 players, depending on how many players they are moving up on the junior teams, as it is important for all the players to have enough ice time (“we don’t want to have like 25 guys on the under 18 team and have eight guys looking on the game from the stands”) (LHC1; LHC3). Currently, the junior teams are a bit short on players, and it can be challenging during the practices, but on the other hand, everyone gets a lot of ice time during games, so there are also benefits: “But I think in the end it's better for the guys to play a lot” (LHC1). The goal for moving players up from LHC’s own youth team (to junior team) is 10 (LHC1).

The players are tracked starting from U16, to keep up with the individual player’s development. The information is for the coaches, it is not used with players themselves (LHC5). When you are practicing individual skills in in the gymnasium in the mornings, you aim to get the players to become really good at what they are good at (LHC2). The evenings are more about team development (LHC2). The hockey gymnasiums in Sweden have a good plan: when the players start out, they have to create themselves goals that are then followed up on during the junior program (LHC2). Video is one commonly used tool which is used on daily basis, and the players can see videos of themselves, their team and also of top players in Sweden: it is good to show the players what the top players are doing (LHC2). Video is good for combining methods for enforcing teaching: it is more effective to show than to just say what to do (LHC4). Statistics are used quite often in the development, mostly in keeping track how things are going (LHC5).

Patience is very important in development. Many of the players starting out think they are ready already when they have been chosen for the gymnasium, but have to face that there is still a long way to go. Also, many players used to be stars in their youth teams, while in the gymnasium program all of them are the same (LHC3). It is important not to send out players to higher teams too early: they most likely get less ice time on those teams, and in the end, end up behind players who stayed in lower team but got more time to play (LHC3). Patience is also needed from the club side, and this

is something LHC has been good at (LHC3). For example, the club has been good with giving chances to junior players, and having had patience for mistakes (for example not pulling a young player away right after first mistake) (LHC3).

The head of the development and the coaches for U20, U18, U16 and goalies, as well as a person who works with the gymnasium meet every week, and talk about for example the different players in the team. For the club, it is important to follow up all the players (LHC5). One of the strengths of LHC is that they have a tight group (of leaders and coaches) that has been working together for a long time. They have also tried out many things, learning while doing (LHC3; LHC5).

4.5.2 Professional hockey and senior team

The general manager of the elite team and the head of the development work closely together and try to have a common philosophy on how to develop players to the elite team (LHC5). It is important to have open doors to the elite team for the juniors that are being developed: some teams in Sweden have a great junior program, but the elite team is not opening up for them, not believing in the players and not giving them the chances to prove themselves (LHC5). The goal for moving juniors up to senior team is one per year (LHC1; LHC5). Currently 9 of the 22 players in the elite team are from the hockey gymnasium (LHC5). Having many players from own hockey gymnasium is good for identity and beneficial for example when talking with sponsors (LHC5). The junior teams and the elite team try to keep it so they have the same way of playing hockey (LHC5).

What you are looking for in the players for the elite is quite the same as what you would look for in younger players (i.e. understanding the game and passion) (LHC5). The biggest difference is maybe that you consider the role the player is taking more, i.e. do we need a big, strong defenseman or smaller more technical guy; also, most players who have made it there already have a lot of passion, so fitting into the team becomes more important (LHC5). It can actually be easier to look for a player for the elite team: you have a more specific role you are trying to fill, so you go out to find a player that can fill that specific role (LHC5).

When scouting the players, especially within Sweden you usually have good contacts, and can call someone when wanting to know more about a player you might be interested in. You also see a lot of players when you play against different teams (LHC5). In LHC's elite team, the scouting is done mostly by the coaches and the general manager; external scouts are formally employed (LHC5).

All in all, the junior organization in LHC is very good and the club has invested a lot into it. Through the program the club has produced many players for their elite team, and for national teams (LHC2). During the past few years, LHC has moved towards having players that are very willing to work hard: the current players are skillful but also very hardworking (LHC4). LHC aims to create a positive atmosphere around the club, for all the people involved (LHC5). With the players, it is important to give positive feedback (LHC5).

5. Analysis

This section analyzes the four cases, referring back to the theory presented in chapter two and attempts to answer the research question defined in chapter one. The aim is to explore how the four organizations introduced in the previous section compare with each other, and also how well the existing theory fits in with the findings.

5.1 Comparison of the clubs

5.1.1 Similarities between the clubs

Similarities were clear in the youth and junior development and in the hockey gymnasium programs. In general, all the clubs were structured in the same way, the clubs began to follow up on interesting players around the same age, and the actual scouting activities started around the same time. There was a small divergence regarding the youth sections at FBK: compared to the other three clubs, FBK had their youth and junior sections a bit differently organized, the biggest difference being the “hockey school”. Though this could indicate a difference in what age it is seen as appropriate to start the “elite sport” thinking, the school does not seem like a major deviation: for example, no strict selection processes were applied to the players entering the school.

All the clubs invest in their youth sections, and have a goal of being good or the best in developing youth. Positive atmosphere, giving positive feedback and having fun are regularly mentioned when talking about the development with youth and juniors (and in some cases with seniors). Patience, taking things step by step and having development guided by the club principles are also common to all the clubs.

All the clubs also felt that it was important that the youth, junior and senior sections of the club work well together, and that they are connected by, for example, having the same way of playing hockey. The clubs actively worked on this by either having a close collaboration between the youth and junior sections and the senior section, or by having the same people responsible for both of the sections.

The similarities can also be seen in the way the clubs talk about the attributes they look for in players (and how they, in a way, see talent). The vocabulary used by different clubs varies a bit, but in general attributes such as “character”, “attitude”, “ambition”, “willingness to work hard”, “drive”, and “passion” appear on the list of the most important things to consider. These are especially

important with juniors, i.e. when the clubs choose players for gymnasium. The same attributes are mentioned regarding the elite teams as well, but skills and consideration to aspects such as the position the player plays (e.g. forward), or secondary characteristics such as how they fit into the team become more important. Regarding choosing players, all the clubs also have an interest in getting as many players as possible from the nearby areas to the team. This is an interesting point, as it is a preference that regionally limits the talent pools. However, how much this in actuality affects the selection is not clear, as still many other attributes are considered when selecting the players.

The way a player is assessed is similar in all the clubs. It is often based on the personal judgement of the people deciding, and formal assessment criteria based on hard data like statistics seem to be less highlighted: at least in the interviews it was rarely emphasized on, and only seemed to be more emphasized if the area was of personal interest for the person interviewed (such as in the case of DIF).

5.1.2 Possible explanations for similarities

One quite apparent factor which can explain the similarities observed between the clubs is external influence: especially in the youth and junior development, the Swedish Ice Hockey Association (SIHA) has much power. For example, the Tre Kronors Hockeyskolan project that all the clubs participate in is guided by SIHA, as is the hockey gymnasium program. In order to be qualified for these, the clubs need to follow the guidelines given to them by the association. The association gives guidelines regarding many matters such as how many players can be accepted each year to the program, what sort of things should be taught in the program and how many practices there should be during the week.

The concentration on youth development can at least partially be explained by resources: in general, hiring your own juniors with junior contracts will be a cheaper way of filling in positions in the senior team than looking for established professional players from outside. Also, youth and junior development is costly for the clubs, so it is natural that the clubs hope for as many players as possible advancing up to the senior team. Developing players that are good enough to go to NHL will also generate some income for the clubs, giving an additional incentive.

5.1.3 Differences between the clubs

Even though all the clubs are investing heavily in their youth and junior development, some differences can be observed in the details. For example, LHC has invested a lot in terms of people being involved in scouting, and is the only club that is systematically using a data base and collecting information on potential players for the hockey gymnasium selections. The data collection aspect also applies to the development side, and keeping track of player development: LHC was the only club that was found to be using a systematic way of collecting information about the players.

Most of the teams have a goal of moving one to two players a year from the junior program to the senior team. Regarding this, at least the language used by DIF differed from the other teams: they had a goal for the whole team composition, rather than looking at it from the point of view of a yearly entry rate. DIF in general emphasized getting their own players up a great deal, and had the smallest investment in external recruitment, at least based on the personnel involved.

One interesting point of difference that arose was between LHF and LHC: in both of the clubs, the benefits of allowing young players to get experience by playing with a team above them (i.e. the senior team when talking about juniors) came up, but the experiences of the people in the two clubs were opposite: whereas LHF had not been keen on doing this, LHC on the other hand had been supportive of it.

5.1.4 Possible explanations for differences

The differences between the clubs were more subtle than the similarities and the explanations for why the differences existed were not always obvious. Variations in organizational culture likely explain some differences: for example, in the case of the different approach to having young players in the elite team, LHC is emphasizing more on their youth section and development, so it is natural that they would have more open minded approach to pushing young players up. Choosing investments in one area over the other can also be due to strategic choices and funds available. Of the clubs included in the study, DIF is likely the most limited in resources due to the relegation, and this could explain the emphasis on moving own junior players up and lesser emphasis on the external recruitment.

All in all, it can be concluded that the clubs have much in common with each other. One of the assumptions held at the beginning of the research was that there could be significant differences

between the clubs, but that seems to have been a misconception, at least with the four clubs studied.

5.2 Findings in relation to theoretical framework

5.2.1 The view on talent in Swedish ice hockey

'Talent' itself seems to be a term that encompasses many things and can be approached from different angles when it comes to hockey, reflected in the interviews (and confirming what is seen in the literature). For example, in hockey one can see talent as the technical skills, like skating. What is reflected more on in the interviews though is the less tangible parts of talent. Within the topic of what talent is, five "tensions" were previously presented in the literature review. Some introductory conclusions can be made based on these and the results of the study on how talent is viewed in Swedish hockey.

Firstly, is talent seen more as the characteristics of a person or is the person as whole seen as a 'talent' (object vs. subject)? As mentioned previously, a distinction between the two approaches can be hard to make. The focus on attributes such as character and attitude when selecting players, and the interest in developing 'good people' as a whole, seem to correlate with the idea of seeing talent as *subjective*, i.e. seeing the people as whole as 'talent'. The main focus is not to be so much on developing skills and attributes of the people, but developing the people as whole.

Secondly, is the approach to talent inclusive of all the people in the organization or does it only apply to a segment (inclusive vs. exclusive)? The clubs invest heavily on each and every player that makes it to the gymnasium level and beyond. Thus it is quite easy to conclude that the approach the clubs have adopted is *inclusive*: all the players receive the same training and attention, and the aim is to train them to be the best players they can be. However, the situation in hockey organizations is different from many other organizations: there is an absolute limit on how many players a club can support at the same time due to the team having a set number of available positions. Thus being "inclusive" is easy: the clubs already have gone through strict selection processes to only have the people they consider to be the most talented ones.

Thirdly, is talent seen as something a person is born with or as something that can be trained (innate vs. acquired)? It can be interpreted from the interviews that there is a strong believe in development and training. Talent as *acquired* approach thus seems to have a solid foothold in hockey. However, it could be argued that talent is also seen as *innate* to some extent: for example, one reason for

wanting as many children as possible starting hockey was to make discovering all the ones that can become very good at it possible. This indicates that while training is thought to be necessary for success, the players also need have an inner aptitude for the sport.

Fourthly, is talent mostly dependent on motivation and ambition, or are performance and results the most important factors to consider (input vs. output)? In the literature, it was mentioned that motivation has been underappreciated in TM research and practice (Dries, 2013). Contrary to this, it seems that especially with the young players, motivation and ambition are highly sought after and valued in hockey, supporting a more *input* approach. It is also possible to argue that a different approach is applied at different levels of the organization: when selecting players for the elite teams, the *output* approach might be more dominant, as their selection is more heavily based on past performance than with the young players.

And lastly, is talented person always talented or does the talent manifest only in the right environment (transferable vs. context-dependent)? During the study it was discovered that a newly recruited player did not always end up playing as good as expected in the team, even if they had been exceptional in their previous team. It was also discovered that the clubs looked for not only players that were talented, but players that would fit in. It can thus be said that at least to some extent talent is seen as *context-dependent*.

5.2.2 Talent Management practices and strategies applied in the studied clubs

All the studied clubs invested significantly on both talent identification and recruitment, and talent development. During the gymnasium selections, both internal talent identification and external talent recruitment were practiced: the clubs aimed to finding as many players from their own youths as possible, but also resorted to external recruitment to fill in positions. One question considered during the study was whether the decision-making was more based on subjective or objective factors. As mentioned before, even though some objective measurements such as statistics were used, the overall picture was that much of the decision-making was based on rather subjective factors. The talent development activities were more emphasized with youth and juniors, which is natural as by the time the players become professionals, they are expected to have developed all the necessary skills. At each level of the organizations, the development activities were inclusive: all the players in the teams were taking part in all the training.

In the theoretical framework, two strategies that companies could apply regarding talent were included: “growing” talent within the organization or “buying” talent from other organizations. Organizations focusing on talent identification and recruitment were seen as having a “buying” talent strategy, whereas the organizations focusing on development and training were seen as having a “growing” talent strategy. All of the studied clubs seemed to engage in both of the strategies by investing on both developing players through their youth and junior programs, and by hiring externally for their senior team. As mentioned before, some variation could be seen in how invested the clubs were at the different activities (e.g. LHC having a lot of personnel working with youth and DIF emphasizing on having as many players from their own junior program as possible), but the findings were not indicative enough to conclude that the clubs would have been following completely different strategies and that the differences were not due to other factors such as lack of resources.

5.2.3 The practices of the clubs in relation to the theories about talent in sports

The findings of the study mainly fit in and support what was discussed in the literature about talent in sports. One of the main ideas presented in the literature was that selection should not be done too early, and that the selection criteria with children should emphasize more on capacity to develop than current performance. All the clubs promote the idea of not applying strict selection on the players until the gymnasium selections (or a year prior to that), thus allowing a large pool of players to develop up until that point. Also, motivation and the ability to work hard were valued highly, indicating a focus on capacity to develop. Furthermore, it was stated that TID and TED should be integrated so that the individuals participating in the sport have the opportunity to develop the dispositions the selection is based on prior to the selection. This is essentially what the current organizational structure of the clubs is doing. The difference though is that the process is not purely constant interaction, but rather made up of phases of development and identification, and phases of elimination (the gymnasium selection and selection for professional teams).

The model on TID and TED offered (see figure 1 on pp. 15) also seems to apply well to the studied clubs. In the model TED is divided into four stages. These stages go rather well hand in hand with the current development in Swedish hockey. The *initiation stage* can be roughly seen as describing the youth organizations and developing the fundamental skills in hockey; the *development stage* during the later developmental years before the gymnasium; the *mastery stage* when the players train seriously in the gymnasium towards professional hockey; and the *perfection stage* after they

reach the level of professional hockey. However, based on the study, with hockey in Sweden the stages might be better visualized as continuous process of development, with the two make it or break it elimination phases that reduce the numbers of people moving forward.

The different dispositions described in relation to TID apply quite consistently to what was described as attributes evaluated in players. The biggest difference compared to the literature was the prominence of psycho-behavioral dispositions, such as the previously mentioned motivation and willingness to work hard. Also consistent with the model, the initial focus is a bit more on using dispositions to assess potential (gymnasium selection), which changes into a focus on performance (senior team selection). Overall, the study seems to have validated the proposed model as something that could be useful as tool to analyze TM practices in sport organizations.

6. Conclusions

The following research question was defined in the beginning of the thesis:

How do Swedish hockey clubs handle talent management?

- *What sort of talent management practices are present?*
- *Are there any distinguishing differences between clubs?*

It was concluded that the clubs take part in several different TM practices, including talent identification, talent recruitment and talent development. The practices were also found to exist on different levels, and take slightly different forms on the different levels. It was also shown that the similarities between the clubs were overwhelming and that very little distinguishing differences came up within TM practices or strategies applied. While the findings of the study mostly were coherent with the existing literature, and even worked to reinforce some ideas presented (such as with the model of talent identification and development in sports), there were some points where the findings slightly differed from the ideas presented in the literature, for example in that motivation is “underappreciated” within TM practice, or that physical and performance variables are overly focused on within talent identification in sports.

6.1 Recommendations for future research

There is still need for further research in the area, and hopefully the discoveries of this thesis can be used as a basis for creating further research agendas. For future research, a more in depth study into Swedish hockey is suggested, potentially including more clubs to see if the findings of this study still apply (i.e. the TM practices and strategies in use are very similar in all the clubs). Also, as this study was only based on interview data, it is suggested that other data collection methods such as observations would be utilized to gather information. Further research could be also conducted in hockey in other countries to see if there is variance in the practices, or the research could be expanded to include other sports, such as football, to see if similar talent concepts apply there.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Appendix: Interview guide

Introducing the project

The Department of Management and Organization at SSE is conducting research on talent management in Swedish organizations. How do they define performance and potential? How do “objective” measurements and “subjective” factors come together in talent assessment?

Since talent is a word that is frequently used in sports, and since sport and business have a great potential to learn from each other, we decided to also do a study in sports, starting out with hockey. Elina’s Master thesis is part of this research program.

Structure of the interview: your background, recruitment activities, talent development, final questions concerning the club.

Interviewee’s current role

- What is your “hockey background”? (Player? Previous roles?)
- What is your current role?
 - What are your tasks and responsibilities?
 - Your responsibilities compared to other key roles in the club?

Recruitment activities

- At which age does the club start to look into the individual players and their skills and development as a potential future recruit? When the players apply to gymnasium or even earlier?

Gymnasium (the gymnasiums seem to be an important part of developing/ growing the talent)

- The clubs choose the players for the gymnasiums: how does the process work?
 - Who is responsible for choosing the players who get admitted?
 - What sorts of things are considered?
 - Is there a formalized list of criteria that you use to assess talent?
 - What sources of data are used to assess the different criteria?
 - Do you use statistics?
 - Do you use own measurements?
 - What, if anything, cannot be measured? (e.g. hockey sense, character, passion)
 - How do you assess these unmeasurable things?
 - How much is there consideration for potential, what the player could develop into (versus what they are at the moment of admission)?
 - Would you say the decision making is more data driven or more subjective, based on opinions of the people who decide?
 - Would you say talent is “objective” (a talent is a talent wherever he/she is) or does talent always have to be viewed in relation to a specific club (the player has to “fit in” to be a talent)?

- How do you track players during the gymnasium?

Professional level

- After gymnasium, the players are up for being signed-up: what kind of process is this?
 - Who is responsible for choosing the players who are signed up?
 - What sort of things are considered? Main differences compared to the above.
 - How much is there consideration for potential, what the player could develop into (versus what they are at the moment of signing up)?
 - Would you say the decision making is more data driven or more subjective, based on opinions of the people who decide?
 - Would you say talent is “objective” (a talent is a talent wherever he/she is) or does talent always have to be viewed in relation to a specific club (the player has to “fit in” to be a talent)?
- Is there a preference for players from your own gymnasium or do you just try to get the best ones?
- Does the process for hiring externally (established players from within or outside Sweden) differ from signing up juniors (other than maybe the amount of salary)?
- What is the ratio of your own ex-juniors playing at the professional level at your club compared to the ratio of players acquired from other clubs (Sweden or internationally)?
- What sort of things drive the club to hire externally?
- Do you see any benefits for hiring externally versus hiring own juniors after gymnasium?

Talent development

- How organized is the talent management/ development in the club?
 - Who are the people responsible for it (at each level)?
- Are there systems in place for tracking players and their abilities and development?
 - If so, what age do you start?
 - If so, what sort of data is collected and in which form?
 - If so, how is the system used; is it actively used for development of players?
- How closely knit is the junior development and the professional side of the clubs?
 - For example, does the club’s current performance and possible future needs affect the training at the junior level?
 - If so, at what age does it start?
- What sort activities are there for developing talent?
 - Are there development programs that are directed towards certain players group? (e.g. top performers, players needing to improve)
- Basically you will always know in hockey that the very best players are going to be recruited to NHL: Is the club somehow taking this into consideration when developing talent?

Final questions

We have already talked a great deal about the recruitment and development of talent. But if you were to summarize:

- In a few words, what type of talent management strategy does your club have?
 - What type of atmosphere or culture do you try to create?
- Is your strategy different from that of other clubs? If so, what are the main differences?
- What are the specific strengths and weaknesses (challenges) of your strategy? The strategies of other clubs?

What other persons would you recommend that we interview at your club?

8.2 Appendix: Interviews

'Introduction to the topic' interviews

Interview 1; INT1	Scout for Columbia Blue Jackets	2015-04-29
Interview 2; INT2	Utvecklingschef och chef för ungdomslandslagen på Svenska Ishockeyförbundet	2015-05-28

Djurgårdens IF Hockey (DIF)

Interview 1; DIF1	Vice VD (Vice CEO)	2015-09-03
Interview 2a, 2b; DIF2a, DIF2b	Strategisk sportchef (Strategic sport manager)	2015-09-04; 2015-09-10
Interview 3; DIF3	Huvudtränare J20 (Head coach U20)	2015-09-10
Interview 4; DIF4	Teknisk sportchef (Technical sport manager)	2015-09-22

Färjestads BK (FBK)

Interview 1; FBK1	Ansvarig junior och ungdom	2015-09-24
Interview 2; FBK2	Tränare J20 Elit	2015-09-24
Interview 3; FBK3	General manager (ansvarig för all FBK's sportsliga verksamhet)	2015-09-24
Interview 4; FBK4	Sportchef elitlaget	2015-09-24
Interview 5; FBK5 (Phone)	Sports manager Champions Hockey League	2015-10-08

Luleå HF (LHF)

Interview 1; LHF1	Sportchef Damverksamheten och huvudtränare Dam-laget (Riksserien)	2015-10-06
Interview 2; LHF2	Assisterande tränare A-laget (herrar) och tidigare Sportchef Juniorer- och Ungdom	2015-10-06
Interview 3; LHF3	Sportchef A-laget (herrar)	2015-10-06
Interview 4; LHF4	Utvecklings- och Sportchef Juniorer och Ungdom	2015-10-07

Interview 5; LHF5 (In Swedish)	Huvudtränare J-18	2015-10-07
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Linköpings HC (LHC)

Interview 1; LHC1	J18 Coach	2015-10-22
Interview 2; LHC2	J20 Coach	2015-10-22
Interview 3; LHC3	Ansvarig Individuell Spelarutveckling	2015-10-22
Interview 4; LHC4	Målvaktsansvarig	2015-10-22
Interview 5; LHC5 (Phone)	Utvecklingsansvarig Elitverksamheten	2015-11-05

8.3 Comparison of the four clubs

	DIF	FBK	LHF	LHC
	Stockholm	Karlstad	Luleå	Linköping
Start time for following and selecting young players	Following players around U15 and U16 U16 for scouting for the gymnasium	For U16, two teams are combined U16 for scouting for the gymnasium	For U16, three teams are combined U16 for scouting for the gymnasium	Following players starting from U15 U16 for scouting for the gymnasium
Hockey schools collaborating with the club	Gymnasium (High school)	Högstadium (grades 7 to 9) Gymnasium (High school)	Gymnasium (High school)	Gymnasium (High school)
Structure and people working with youth/ juniors	Youth up to U16, Junior U18 and U20 (much interest in developing youth)	One person responsible for U14 and U20 under; another for U13 and below	Youth up to U16, Junior U18 and U20 (Aims to have one of the best youth sections in the world)	Youth up to U16, Junior U18 and U20 head of development, U16, U18, U20, goalie coach all work closely together
Development of youth and juniors	Step by step, building on previously learned; the speed of development doesn't matter, but how long you can stay successful (guide by club)	first years emphasis on learning skills, good behavior, team work (guide by club) Important to have fun, positive feedback, be careful not to move people up too fast	Club plans for what is done at what age Aim to have more club philosophy behind it key words are joy, passion and pride, important to have fun Growing step by step learning environment	A lot of emphasis on the club, especially with the recruitment to gymnasium patience is important; not moving players up too fast, and also telling this to players and parents Important to give young players chance (in the elite team) Positive feedback is important

<p>Selection criteria for gymnasium</p>	<p>Character, ambition</p> <p>Character, attitude, skills last</p> <p>Winning mentality, Responsibility (for own) development, team player, last technical skills</p> <p>Skills not the most important at this level</p>	<p>skills, character more important if have to choose</p> <p>commitment</p> <p>reputation and behavior, ambition</p> <p>seeing the players more important than following statistics</p>	<p>drive, physical status, technical skills</p> <p>attitude (towards practicing)</p> <p>physical factors</p> <p>drive, attitude, willingness to work can be hard to see</p>	<p>Commitment</p> <p>Passion</p> <p>Hockey sense</p> <p>Sometimes is relative to what position the players is playing</p> <p>competitiveness, willingness to work hard</p> <p>technical skills are least important: you need basic skills but other parts can be developed</p> <p>Good people in general</p> <p>Physical status, game knowledge, competitiveness</p>
<p>People involved in selection</p>	<p>2 scouts, sport managers, junior coaches (mainly U18)</p>	<p>the person responsible for youth and juniors, U16 and U18 coach</p>	<p>sport chef, U16, U18, U20 coaches</p>	<p>6-7 people in the club involved</p>
<p>Selection process</p>	<p>Scouting, interviews with players and parents, talking to people who know the players and observing them</p>	<p>No formal scouting; potential recruits are observed during for example tournaments.</p>	<p>Scouting by people involved; talk to people to find out about the players</p>	<p>Checking tournaments and games for players, observing players, talking to people who know them, then inviting players to visit and to be interviewed</p> <p>People scouting rank the players based on different</p>

				criteria, using an app for it now
Number of players admitted	10-12	12-14	10-14	
Formalized criteria or based on personal judgement?	Yes, a list of things to be considered, listed by order of importance; how you assess them is though up to a person; aim to make things "Djurgården owned"	-	List of technical skills, physical status and character, graded according to the personal judgement of people involved	A lot of assessment is based on experience you have accumulated
Is potential considered?	Yes for some features, does not need to be ready physically, skill-wise (but has to had the right attitude)	Should see few steps ahead how the players might develop (physically, skills) Can be tough	Physical status: can look at parents	A balance: you need to balance the players that are good now with players who have potential for good enough performance in teams Might be even more important than it is now (playing with the idea of going for the not-top-ten players)
Are the players tracked before and/ or during gymnasium?	No systematic way of tracking (i.e. data base)	-	-	Yes, starting from U16, following up on individual development; for the coaches, not for the players
Is talent objective, or context-dependent?	to some extent context-dependent; easier to get own players to fit in	Can be: a good player in one team is not necessary successful in another	-	
Talent development	Work on hockey skills, physical	In hockey gymnasium,	Sometimes players in junior	In hockey gymnasium,

activities in gymnasium	<p>shape, tactics and how DIF plays hockey; explanation of what kind of behavior is expected also outside rink</p> <p>Work both on individual and team goals, in general younger the player is, more time is spend with individual skills</p>	<p>individual practice during mornings, team practice during evenings</p> <p>in the beginning of year, the coaches and players go through goals and where the player is now, later see how the development has been</p>	<p>teams grade themselves after games, compared to coach grading then</p> <p>Players make development plans for themselves</p> <p>(in general in development:) positive feedback is important, 80% positive, 20% negative</p>	<p>individual practice during mornings, team practice during evenings</p> <p>in the beginning of the year, players create goals for themselves</p> <p>Video is used a lot</p>
Learned skills or natural ability?	Some things are easier to develop than others, for example hockey sense can be hard to develop	-	-	-
Goal for senior team players from own youth and junior program	50% from own juniors (50% of juniors from own youths); as many as possible	1-2 every second year to senior/elite team (more not realistic,)	2 per year to senior/elite team	<p>10 players from youth to junior; 1 per year to senior team</p> <p>Currently 9 out of 22 from the gymnasium</p> <p>Important to move players up</p>
Ways to facilitate juniors moving up to professional hockey	Players sometimes rented to teams in lower divisions	-	<p>Giving players chance to play and get experience in the elite team (conservative in doing that though)</p> <p>Farm team can be useful to have</p>	Have patience and let young players try out in the elite teams (been good at doing this)

Preference for players from 'home region'	As many as possible from Stockholm	Now trying to increase the amount of players from Värmland	First, as many as possible from Luleå. Then, as many as possible from Norrbotten	Concentrates on players that are situated about 2-3 hour trip to Linköping; roughly players between Stockholm and Malmö
Structure and people working with seniors	4 full time coaches: head coach, assistant coach for forwards, assistant coach for defenders, goalie coach Scouting for elite team done by sport manager(s)	scouting done by the sport chef (their main job), decisions made by general manager and sport chef	-	Scouting done by coaches and the general manager, as well as scouts
Selection criteria for senior team; differences compared to youth/ juniors	The same list; concentration on character since skills are easy to see; character even more important than skills	more emphasis on the role/position of the player, different roles have bit different requirements but some are the same: could say there are 3 different things you look for: speed, character, size, and the order changes Sometimes you also look for players with qualities such as leadership in general, hockey skills are first, but can compensate with social character	Bit different, but attitude is still important: want to have good people in the team Also need to consider the role the players have off ice, i.e. unofficial leaders Sometimes have to decide if can handle player with challenging attitude but sought-after skills	Pretty much the same things as for junior, i.e. understanding of the game and passion Biggest difference is that you consider the role/ position they play more By then, most players have passion so fitting into the team becomes more important

		<p>loyalty, positive mindset</p> <p>important to find players for FBK, not just hockey</p>		
Collaboration with youth, junior and senior sections	Close, working on making the very connected, important that they share vision	<p>People working with youth and juniors work closely together; also close with the senior team management</p> <p>coaches follow practices of teams above them,</p> <p>every second Monday meeting with people on the junior and senior side</p>	Coaches for U16, U18, U20 and senior men's and women's team coaches meet weekly to discuss how the club wants to play	<p>Head of development and the coaches for U16, U18, U20 and goalies work closely together, meet weekly</p> <p>Aim to have the same way to play in the whole club, general manager of elite team and the head of development work closely together</p>
Tracking of senior team members	-	-	To some extent, have the yearly development discussion	-
Talent development activities in senior team	-	-	<p>(in general in development:) positive feedback is important, 80% positive, 20% negative</p> <p>Meeting with the players at the beginning and end of season to discuss development</p>	-
Attitude to "hard data" and statistics	Actively working on utilizing statistics more and finding new	Using statistics in for example external recruitment but	Statistics are used to some extent in recruitment, based on what	Statistics are used a lot, most often to keep track of things

	<p>ways to use it for advantage, high interest in it</p> <p>Good way to see if the club is going to right direction</p>	not really emphasizing it	<p>you are looking for</p> <p>Statistics are also used to some extent in development</p>	
Club's selling points, defining characteristic, or important values	<p>Developing good players, good people both on ice and off ice, moving player up to senior team, finding new ways to keep up</p>		<p>Hardworking</p> <p>Playing with energy</p> <p>Developing players well, and making sure even people who do not become professionals leave hockey with positive mind</p>	<p>Have tight group of people who have been working together for a long time</p> <p>Heavy investment in the youth section</p> <p>Hard working players</p> <p>Positive atmosphere</p>