The purpose of this paper is to examine why athletes do not dope in sport. The research treats the ‘problem’ of doping as an issue of ‘control’ and draws on control theory (Hopwood, 1974; Byers, 2013) to analyze athletes choices not to engage in doping. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with current Canadian athletes, former athletes, coaches, and officials from seven different sports that competed in the CIS (Canadian Interuniversity Sport), national and international events, professional sport, Pan American Games, provincial teams, and World University Games. In total, 20 interviews were conducted with 7 female and 13 male participants. Results indicate that an over-abundance of administrative formal control mechanisms may be creating confusion and inefficiency in the doping control system. More powerful control mechanisms such as social and self-controls seem to be operating amongst athletes and issues of trust and the role of emotion are significant concepts that require further research in this context.

Key Words: Doping, Control, Trust, Administrative Control, Social Control, Self-Control
Introduction

Doping in sport is ‘a well-known phenomenon’ that has been studied from various perspectives including bio-medical and social science (Morente-Sanchez, 2013). Increasing interest in doping research is in part due to a rise the prevalence of doping in sport as has been illuminated in recent years by the media. Strongly opposed by a growing number of organizations and stakeholders in the sport industry, the control of doping behavior has largely been addressed by global policy makers and sport governance organizations (i.e., institutions) through the reliance on attitudinal studies of stakeholders such as athletes, coaches, support staff and sponsors (Backhouse & McKenna, 2011). In the fight against doping, the tendency has been to understand an athlete’s motives for taking Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) and how to improve policies and regulations to prevent doping in sports (Smith et al., 2010).

Increasingly sophisticated detection methods and anti-doping policy, education and research has done much to raise awareness of doping and its detrimental effects on human health, the integrity of sport and the core values of sport participation, there is a need to reconsider the management of drugs in sport (Mazanov & Connor, 2010). Costs of anti-doping programs are increasingly complex and difficult to manage (Pipe & Hebert, 2008) indicating the sustainability of current anti-doping interventions techniques and tools may be questionable. In addition, the increasing commercialization of sport has meant the potential for more money, national pride and prestige for elite athletes through sponsorships and media exposure. Drug suppliers obviously see the market for their products, evidenced by the recent $10m steroid bust in Alberta, Canada where officials and law enforcement were exploring a suspected link to Canadian athletes (Westhead, 2014). Yet, the majority of athletes are estimated to escape the above mentioned pressures to dope with some estimates of the prevalence of performance enhancing substance use being as low as 2% (Petroczi & Aidman, 2008).

We propose that the ‘problem’ of doping in sport is multi-dimensional and a question of understanding the control mechanisms which account for an athlete’s decision ‘not’ to engage in doping behavior, rather than attempt to address why they ‘do’ or their attitudes toward the act of doping. Building on Byers’ (2013) study on control of volunteers in sport clubs and indirectly drawing on Byers, Anagnostopoulos and Brooke-Holmes’ (2015) holistic approach to governance, we present an innovative approach to the anti-doping literature, to understand why athletes choose not to engage in doping. Little research has been done on why an athlete would choose not to dope, despite the immense pressures from commercialization and other stakeholders for increased performance and the factors that influence an athlete’s choice to avoid the use of PEDs.
The purpose of this study is to explore why ‘high performance’ athletes would choose not to dope when participating in competitive sport to provide suggestions to policy makers and governance organizations for a sustainable solution to doping in sport. To explore this purpose we have taken a case study approach that examines the athletes (current and former), coaches, and officials that have competed in seven different sports that competed in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS; highest level of competition within University sport in Canada), national and international events, professional sport, Pan American Games, provincial teams, and World University Game (FISU). Furthermore we examine the above empirical setting by using the concept of organizational control as a theoretical framework.

The paper is structured in four parts. The next section provides a literature review which outlines existing approaches to anti-doping in sport, a brief overview and critique of current anti-doping prevention research and a conceptual framework that we use to provide a new perspective on doping prevention. Next, we outline our methods of data collection and analysis. We then report the results of our study and discuss the implications to policy makers and governance organizations. Finally, conclusions are drawn and thoughts for future research using a multi-level approach are highlighted. The multi-dimensional aspect of our study and use of literature on control of and in organizations has yet to be applied to the context of doping in sport and will examine this issue from a new perspective.

Literature Review

Existing Doping Prevention Strategies

Doping prevention is formally led by WADA (World Anti-Doping Association), an independent organization set up following the World Conference on Doping in Sport convened by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1999 (Hanstad, Smith & Waddington, 2008). According the WADA website:

“WADA, as custodian of the World Anti-Doping Code (Code), has the duty to monitor stakeholder activities in relation to the Code and act to ensure the integrity of the Code. WADA oversees and works in cooperation with each stakeholders groups as well as understanding the roles and responsibilities of each these goups to ensure the success of the fight against doping in sport and the respect of the Code.”

https://www.wada-ama.org/en/who-we-are/anti-doping-community
WADA identifies the ‘National Anti-Doping Community’ as inclusive of athletes, international federations, national anti-doping organizations, regional anti-doping organizations, Olympic & Paralympic Committees as well as major event organizations, governments, laboratories, the pharmaceutical industry and the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Of these stakeholders, the International Federations (e.g., FIFA, International Ice Hockey Federation) and National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) provide strategic direction to the systems of doping prevention and detection. The existing process of controlling doping in sport involves extensive testing of athletes in and out of competition, coupled with variable sanctions/bans from competition for positive tests.

NADOs work within their countries to administer the policies and regulations of WADA as well as enforce any sanctions due to athletes for failing a drugs test or failing to take a drugs test. Athletes have the option of appealing to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the international, independent tribunal for dispute resolution dedicated to resolving conflicts within the sporting world that are not the jurisdiction of national or international law.

As Chatzigianni (2006) indicated, contemporary global governance is both complex and necessary due to the increasing globalization and connectedness of economies, societies and world politics. As such, WADA is an important organization in the control of doping as it leads and directs a variety of National Organizations on key trends, intervention strategies and education programs. However, given there are many different methods of strategic planning in sport organizations (Kriemadis & Theakou, 2007) the implementation of WADA policies and directives may not always evolve neatly into National, regional and local organizations due to their diversity, different resource capacities, goals and cultures.

**Doping Prevention Research**

As indicated in the introduction, doping in sport and recreation has been an extensively research phenomenon within various fields (Morente-Sanchez, & Zabala, 2013). Some of these fields include medical (e.g., Backhouse & McKenna, 2011; Dodge & Hoagland, 2011; Wood & Stanton, 2012), sociological (e.g., Hanstad, Smith, & Waddington, 2008), sport management (e.g., Huybers, & Mazanov, 2012; Mavromati, 2014; Schubert & Könecke, 2015), and psychological fields (e.g., Dodge, Stock, & Litt, 2012; Hauw & McNamee, 2015; Whitaker, Blackhouse & Long, 2014). Morente-Sanchez and Zabala reviewed 33 articles, of which 27 studies used a questionnaire/survey to gather data; while one article conducted a focus group, nine used interview methodology, and three took a mixed methods approach to collecting the data. Understandable, the vast majority
of research conducted on doping within sport focuses on the athlete (e.g., Laure, Binsinger, & Lecerf, 2003; Morente-Sanchez, & Zabala, 2013; Yusko, Buckman, White, & Pandina, 2008) as they are the primary actor. Of those studies that have been conducted in this area, there are some themes that emerge that have been commonly discussed among scholars, which includes: athlete decision making, behavior, performance, and the elite athlete.

In analyzing the athletes and doping the research was positioned by scholars in the field of psychology, sociology, and medicine. Psychology was the prominent field of study. These reasons for doping includes achieving athletic success, financial gain (Striegel et al., 2002; Backhouse et al. 2007), an aid in recovery from an injury (Bloodworth & McNamee, 2010), and to maintain health and prevent nutritional deficiencies (Erdman et al., 2007; Nieper, 2005). Sociological perspectives indicate that social support refers to “an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient” (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984, p. 13). Whereas Albrecht and Adelman (1984) suggest that social support “serves to meet a recipient’s needs for venting feelings, reassurance, and improved communication skills. It also serves to reduce uncertainty during times of stress, provides resources and companionship, and aids in mental and physical recovery” (pp. 8-9).

Pines, Aronson, and Kafry (1981) as paraphrased in Rosenfeld, Richman and Hardy (1989) identify four forms of support that often do not require expertise:

(1) listening-others who actively listen without giving advice or making judgments, with whom the joys of success as well as the frustrations of failure may be shared;
(2) emotional support-others who support an individual during an emotionally difficult time without necessarily taking her or his side;
(3) emotional challenge-others who can challenge an individual to do her or his best to overcome obstacles and fulfill goals; and
(4) shared social reality-others with similar priorities, values, and perspectives who can serve as reality “touchstones,” through whom perceptions of the social context can be verified. (pg.24)

In addition, Feltz (1989) suggested that athletes use their coaches, trainers, sport psychologists, and teammates to assist in identifying and coping with their life stressors. Rosenfeld et al. (1989) extended Feltz’s work by describing the social support network of athletes that were experiencing stressful situations. One such situation that was explored was the student athlete, where Rosenfeld et al. (1989) interviewed male and female collegiate athletes and found that they were four main support networks for an athlete; (1) Friends, (2) Teammates, (3) Coaches, and (4) Parents. In the context of Doping, Pitsch et al. (2007) found that some of
the support networks identified in Rosenfeld et al. (1989) study were the reason that athletes started doping. For example, 5.1% of the participants in their study indicated that they were encouraged to engage in doping practices by their coaches (5.1%), while 6.5% of the study participants were encouraged by their family members and friends.

In terms of doping in sport, institutions play a significant role in the promotion and implementation of anti-doping education programs and procedures (Thomas, Dunn, Swift, & Burns, 2011). Streigal et al. (2002) found that 74% of the athlete’s interviewed in their study were in support of government interventions in anti-doping efforts.

Overall, the research on doping in sport has taken a diversity of approaches, including examination of the psychological, sociological and biomedical aspects. Some research into the management and prevention of doping has been conducted and this has focused on the role of organizations and institutions in implementing anti-doping education programs. We suggest this research has been useful in examining different facets of doping behavior but that a framework which provide a multi-level approach, examining the relationships between the sociological, psychological and management/organizational aspects is needed to make progress on doping prevention. We now provide such a framework before demonstrating how this was used in our data collection and analysis. We then present our findings which illustrate the benefits of this approach and the implications for the management of doping in sport.

**Conceptual Framework: A multi-level analysis of doping**

Understanding doping in sport is a complex phenomenon which requires examination at multiple levels of reality and a variety of stakeholders. Hopwood’s (1974) categorizations of organizational control are used as a starting point to analyze what control mechanisms are significant in explaining and athlete’s decision not to engage in doping behavior. Hopwood (1974) outlined that there are three levels of control that operate in organizations: administrative, social and self. For the purposes of this study, administrative controls are the formal mechanisms designed by organizations such as WADA and National Anti-Doping organizations such as anti-doping education programs, online courses, policies and procedures for tests and detection and sanctions applied for positive dope tests. Social control mechanisms are the factors that arise as influential in an athlete’s decision not to dope occurring through interaction with other stakeholders such as teammates, parents, friends, coaches and support staff. Self-control mechanisms are the individual personal motivations and reasoning behind a given behavior. These
may be psychological, emotional and individuals are ‘controlled’ at this stage through making their own choices based on ethical, moral or subjective reasoning rather than because of some external administrative mechanism or social pressure/support. Self-control is when an individual chooses to do something rather than is told/forced to do something. Hopwood (1974) suggested that for organizational mechanisms to be effective they must become internalized, self-control mechanisms due to the individual’s values/norms being the same as the organizational administrative systems and control mechanisms.

Methods

Qualitative research methods were used to collect data on exploring why ‘high performance’ athletes would choose not to dope when participating in competitive sport. Qualitative research methods are understood by Patton (2002) to be used as a “discovery-oriented approach” (p. 39) that uses a “form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” (Shank, 2002, p. 5). As a result, data were collect by conducting semi-structured interviews with open ended questions with a sample population that compete at a competitive level of sport in Canada. The sample population selected for the interview process consisted of current athletes, former athletes, coaches, and officials from seven different sports that competed in the CIS, national and international events, professional sport, Pan American Games, provincial teams, and World University Game (FISU). In total, 20 interviews were conducted with 7 females and 13 males. A combination of team and individual sports represented the sample population. For ethical agreements between the researchers, academic institution, and the study participants the seven different sports will be identified as Sport 1 through to Sport 6. Similarly, the study participants were provided with pseudonyms names to ensure anonymity. For example, a quote maybe referenced from Jack of Sport 1 or Melissa of Sport 4. Table 1 provides a list of the study participants below.
### Table 1. A list of study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Sport 4</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ella</td>
<td>Sport 5</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Sport 3</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>Sport 6</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Sport 4</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Sport 2</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>Sport 2</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braelyn</td>
<td>Sport 4</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darcy</td>
<td>Sport 2</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Sport 2</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Coach/Former Athlete</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Sport 1</td>
<td>Official/Former Athlete</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Sport 3</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>Sport 3</td>
<td>Coach/Former Athlete</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with open ended questions. Questions were created based on Hopwood’s (1974) categorizations of organizational control: Administrative, Social and Self-control. Interviews commenced in September of 2014 once ethics approval was granted, and was completed in March of 2015. The number of interviews was determined when data saturation was achieved. All the study participants were asked to complete consent form prior to the start of the interview process. Interviews lasted between 20 to 60 minutes in length, which
was contingent up on the study participant responses. All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants. Interviews took place in an office setting.

**Data Analysis**

With the consent of the study participants, all interviews were transcribed. The analysis had five stages, pursuant to the work of Miles and Huberman (1994), refined by Edwards and Skinner (2009) and used by Edwards and Washington (2013). These stages consisted of:

1. Familiarization – the researchers reviewed over 200 pages of transcripts from the data collected.
2. Thematic Framework – transcripts are examined and thematic content that is based on Hopwood’s (1974) categorizations of organizational control: Administrative, Social and Self-control. During this stage the frequency at which the themes appear is documented to determine the significance to the theme.
3. Indexing – once the researchers has accumulated the themes, than codes are assigned to the themes and, also, to the data collected.
4. Charting – the data and themes is then organized into a manageable format, through the use of the computer software: QSR NVivo10.
5. Interpretation – the data and themes are interpreted using the theoretical framework (i.e., Hopwood [1974]).

**Results & Discussion**

The findings revealed that there is an overabundance of administrative mechanisms that are costly and time consuming to enforce, and that there is seemingly a disconnection between the Administrative control and Social and Self-control. Hopwood (1974) suggested that for administrative mechanisms to be effective they must become social and then self-control mechanisms so that individuals internalize and identify with the administrative mechanism and therefore behave in a way which fits their own values. Without internalization, there is a reliance on sanctions to enforce administrative mechanisms which becomes unrealistic and costly. This finding has particular importance for gaining an understanding of athletes ‘don’t dope’. Of the study participants, 11 of the 20 indicated that they were exposed to doping. They explained that exposure meant seeing a syringe, seeing a fellow athlete testing positive, or the act of injecting the banned substance into another athlete. The study participant’s first exposure to
doping was indicated to occur between the ages of 14 to 20, and was dependent upon the sport. Initial exposure to doping control testing for most of the athletes occurred at the Canada Games. It was also suggested that there is more pressure on male athletes to dope than female athletes.

The study participants that indicated that they were not exposed to doping, made reference to the perception that it was happening in their sport, but could not provide any evidence. For example, Lucy of Sport 1 indicated that “We hear rumors of it all the time and sometimes we make jokes about it. I’ve never witnessed anyone personally doing any sort of doping. But yeah when I was in university you would hear about it”. Furthermore, their understanding of Doping differed between the study participants. For example in some cases the study participants included recreational drugs (i.e., marijuana), nutritional supplements, or over the counter drugs (e.g., Tylenol) in their discussion. While the study participants understanding of doping varied, it was still apparent that Hopwood’s (1974) categorizations of organizational control: Administrative, Social and Self-control could be used to explain and athlete’s decision not to engage in doping behavior (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept or Type of Control</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Control</td>
<td>Online Educational Course</td>
<td>Athletes are required to complete an online educational course. This was consistently administered for all five years of eligibility within the CIS. The consensus from the study participants was that the online program was un-informative and in a lot of case boring. This resulted in seemingly the ineffectiveness of delivering the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing Procedures</td>
<td>The governing bodies (e.g., CIS, NSOs, or PSOs) require that the athletes be randomly tested and always be prepared to be tested at any point in time. Managers are seemingly attempting to control the actions of athletes and the study participants felt that in some cases, organizations went too far and there was an invasion of privacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Penalties and sanctions

It was apparent that study participants had a knowledge of the consequences of being caught. In addition, some of the participants explained that they would not take anything, because they were afraid that elements would be on the banned list and they would test positive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Social Control</strong></th>
<th><strong>Athletes/Teammates/Competitors</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This theme was found to have less of an impact on the individual athletes, as evident by 20 references comparatively. Those study participants that did reference this theme discussed in the context of a team mentality. The reasons for not doping was then attributed to not letting down the team and risking disqualification. The term competitors were discussed in the context that study participants perceived that the athletes that they were competing against were doping, which lead to internal conflict as to debating whether they should or not. Overall, doping was not typically not discussed among athletes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Coaches** |
| Coaches was referenced the second most times as being influential in the decision process of athletes (i.e., 62 times). The coach was found to discuss with their athletes the negative aspects of using drugs or doping. In cases where the sport was individual performance, the study participants described the situation as the coach taking on a parental role. In team situations, the coach played less of an influential role. |

<p>| <strong>Parents/Families</strong> |
| Parents and family had the greatest number of references at 66 times. It was really no surprise that parents and family had a fundamental impact on the decision process of an athlete. We would argue that this is where the relationship exist with Self-control, where parents and family instill values and morals into to the athletes. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>The findings revealed that friends were supportive of the athletes, but in often cases doping was not a specific topic of discussion. Though the study participants did state in most cases that they would not want to let their friends “down”, if they were caught doping.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>Officials was an interesting theme that emerged with two of the study participants. As Lucy and Oliver of Sport 1 indicated, officials were perceived to be supportive of athletes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role models</td>
<td>Role models was referenced 20 times throughout all of the transcripts. Of those 20 times, only 6 indicated that they had role models going through their pathway. Some of the different types of role models included: coaches, parents, other amateur athletes, and professional athletes that were typically highly visible in the media.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Self-Control  | **Ruining the athlete’s legacy**

The stigma surrounding doping within sport is one that is considered to be negative. As a result, the study participants that contemplated doping had internal conflict with doping tarnishing their legacy that the athlete is creating at a national, international and at the CIS level. |
| Winning at all Costs | All of the study participants explained that winning was a significant part of why they competed. Winning at all costs meant that the athletes would often contemplate doping as a means of winning. It was explained that “winning at all cost” emanated from the athlete experiencing an injury, their fifth year eligibility is coming to end, wanted to expend the competitive career by transition to professional sport or international success (i.e., Olympics), or the competitive level facilitate a “winning at all costs” attitude. |
Administrative Control

As indicated above, Administrative Control was a prominent aspect of the discussion with the study participants. We found that at the CIS level, athletes were required to complete an online educational course for each year that they are eligible to compete (athletes have five years of eligibility). Jack of Sport 1 described the online program as, “They’re educational and then they quiz you but they’re very brief. I don’t know, they’re boring, dry…” and Todd of Sport 6 explained, “The first year when you go through it it’s good. It goes in depth on what you are allowed to do and what you’re not allowed to do and I like that. The second year onwards it is kind of lacking. I feel like there’s a lot more areas that you should be reminded of.” Mike of Sport 4 corroborated Todd’s sentiments by saying stating that, “It’s not terrible, it’s just like, it’s not effective”.

Another indicator of Administrative Control was testing procedures. Tim of Sport 4 explained that, “I’ve been warned about testing my whole life up until Grade 9. Grade 9 through to now probably was provincial sport; because they’re pretty big on it”. This indicator could be argued to be a scare tactic for athletes and deter them from doping. For example, “So we were all super paranoid about if we were downtown or anything if anyone was smoking anything around us, we are like ‘oh my gosh’, we have to stay away from everyone” (Melissa of Sport 1). Oliver of Sport 1 provided a story where a female athlete that was pregnant and in the hospital having her baby was scheduled randomly by the National Sport Body to provide a drug test. Due to the fact that the athlete was not at her house, she failed the test. Another example by Samantha of Sport 3, indicated that as a coach the CIS had not come and do any random testing for the team, and it was becoming a challenge to explain to the athletes that there was a rigorous systematic random testing system.

In terms of penalties and sanctions, it was apparent that study participants had a knowledge of the consequences of being caught but that there were so many rules, banned substances and procedures that it was difficult to fully consider these in their daily lives or training regimes. The degree to which the participants knew of the sanctions and penalties differed. For example, Chris of Sport 1 stated, “Yeah, in terms of getting caught for doping or steroids, I don’t know the exact penalty, I just know not to do it cause if you got caught you’d probably get kicked out of your sport”; whereas Lucy of Sport 1 explained that:

I think the sanctions are relatively weak. In Canada specifically, because our athletes that test positive, what, they get a 2-year ban maybe. It’s rare that you would see a lifetime ban, but it does happen, but a lot of them would be like, oh, a 2-year ban and then you’re not going get any funding.
In addition, some of the participants explained that they would not take anything, because they were afraid that elements would be on the banned list and they would test positive. Melissa of Sport 1 provided an example where, “... my mom and I were at the store the other day and there was this protein powder and she like oh look it’s on sale, this looks good, but the first thing I have to do is check to make sure it’s WADA approved”.

Overall, interviewees indicate that administrative mechanisms are not interpreted or enforced consistently which provides a significant barrier to these rules/regulations becoming social or self-control mechanisms. This is not uncommon in large, complex organizations and systems such as WADA, NADOs and the many regional and local sport organizations involved in the anti-doping movement. Hopwood (1974) also noted that increasing use of administrative mechanisms can result in greater use of social and self-controls to circumvent the excessive formal controls. In fact the more a manager or systems employs administrative controls to manage ‘deviant behavior’, the more likely it is that people will find alternative methods of working so that the controls do not impact on their outputs or working environment.

Social Control

Social mechanisms that were commonly found to have an influence on the decision making of athletes with regards to not doping were evident through coaches, athletes/teammates, officials, parents and family, role models, and friends. It was really no surprise that parents and family had a fundamental impact on the decision process of an athlete. We would argue that there was a strong relationship between social and self-control, where parents and family instill values and morals into to the athletes. For example, Oliver of Sport 1 explained that the athletes that he coached he believed their perceptions of doping had “a lot has to do with probably how they’re brought up from their parents”. George of Sport 2 stated:

I mean parents have an influence just the way you were brought up. I mean it’s not like my parents were telling me every day don’t dope, don’t do that but that is just the values they instilled in me, obviously I have a good support system with friends and family and then just to believe in myself that I don’t feel that I need to be doping or anything to give me an extra edge.

The study participants provided mix reviews of the impact that coaches had on decision making process for athletes. In some cases, coaches really did not provide any guidance for athletes;
Well, all of my coaches the whole way through have been like don’t dope, you shouldn’t dope, it destroys the aspect of competition so that’s kind of just been something I’ve been socialized into, like even my basketball coaches going back 10 years now. We are always don’t dope, shouldn’t dope, don’t take steroids. I mean no one expects a 12-year-old to take steroids but there is still like that environment and even now with my high school track and field coach, she still pushes don’t dope and whenever I’m around her that is still the vibe I get from her. Less so at the university. There’s obviously the you don’t dope talk that you get at the beginning of the year, not really any big push towards it I would say at the university level. (Todd of Sport 6)

In other cases, the coach did discuss with their athletes the negative aspects of drugs or doping; for example, Samantha of Sport 3 was one of those coaches that took the time to talk with her athletes. However, this was only done typically at the beginning of the season. In the individual sports the coach played a prominent role with the athletes, as there was a lot more one communication involved in comparison to team sports. Jack of Sport 1 explained that when he was younger, athletes were doping in the facility that he was training. Jack’s coach found out the scenario and found a new training facility. In this case, the coach takes on the role of a parent.

The study participants described their experience in the sport as being part of a big family, where their teammates looked after one another. For example, Lucy of Sport 1 explained that her team would stick together:

[…] in Montréal the teams sticks together. When we go to major competitions, it becomes interesting because some people will socialize with other clubs whereas certain clubs will not socialize with anyone, which is just the dynamic of the coach controlling the situation, but there is a social aspect to it that they all, you know, even if I was to pick up and go to BC as an athlete, those athletes still have the same ultimate goal that I have so you can relate to them, which allows you to be social with them.

Ultimately, the presence of the social control mechanisms is contingent upon the type of individual with regards their personality. Some of the study participants we found that friends were very supportive of the athlete; for example:

Definitely my friends and stuff like that, I’ve a lot of supportive friends and they drove all over western Canada to watch me play in the [Sport 2] league and they’re pretty proud of me and I don’t really like to let
them down so I guess that is probably one of the reasons why I don’t do some doping and things like that” (George of Sport 2).

It is evident that social control mechanisms such as emotion (i.e. pride, from parents/friends, in oneself) are important in an athlete’s decision not to dope. Emotion is a relatively unexplored concept in the management of sport and in how it plays a role in the anti-doping movement. Byers (2007, 2013) highlighted the importance of emotion as a social control mechanism in voluntary sport organizations and our data on why athletes do not engage in doping suggests this could be an important consideration. Fineman (2000) highlighted how emotion in organizations often served as a more powerful control mechanism that any amount of administrative controls and can be influenced by the unique contextual features of the work relationship.

**Self-Control**

Self-control emerged from the data 109 times from the 200 pages of transcribed data. Our analysis revealed that the athlete’s morals and values were shaped by their parents. When the study participants were asked if the sanctions were removed from their sport and doping was legal and would they consider it, 55% said that they would consider it. Exploring this response further, some of the study participants felt that the position they played in the sport or the type of sport were the reason that doping was less prevalent, PED or other illegal substances would not provide any benefits. This is the case for at one sport and one of the positions that the athlete plays. We can make the argument that this has an effect on the response rate of 55%.

The reasons for not considering it was: health risks; “letting down” parents, friends and society; and the negative associations with doping. In considering doping, the study participants indicated that “winning” was the primary reason for considering doping and that if everyone was doing it then it only made sense that they should do it to create a competitive playing field. Some of the participants went on to suggest that the only way they would agree or consider doping was if a medical physician was able administer and monitor the activity. What was interesting was that the study participant’s response was more towards Social control rather than their own morals and values.

The stigma surrounding doping within sport is one that is considered to be negative. Jack of Sport 1 explained just that:

A lot of times there’s a negative look that’s a look at steroids right now in Canada especially because of like you only hear about the people
whose kidneys fail. You only hear about the people who get caught. You don’t hear about all of our champions that everybody celebrates who’ve been doing steroids forever. And their friends know, their teammates know, their opponents know because their opponents are on it, their teammates are on it.

Tim of Sport 4 corroborated Jack’s explanation by stating, “Probably one of the main reasons I wouldn’t do it is the negative feedback from others”. Jack of Sport 1, then, went on to explain that:

[I]f you get your legacy ruined because you got caught for steroids I think is heartbreaking. I think that person was doing it for their legacy and then they’re remembered for all the wrong reasons. I think that they should be remembered for the time they put into it, the sacrifices they made to their body, not that they cheated. Cause really, at this point doping is 10 steps ahead of the testing.

The broader implications of what Jack is suggesting in the above quotes, is that the underlying theme of the morals and values is a reflection of “winning” and “winning at all costs”. Arguably this mindset can be attributed to the level of competition that the athlete is competing.

Conclusion

This paper highlights a new perspective on doping in sport by focusing on why athletes choose not to dope and we offer a three layer approach to understanding this decision. Through the lens of control, we identified that there are an abundance of administrative mechanisms of control designed to influence athletes. These formal mechanisms, consistent with the literature, are proving difficult to enforce and call into question what can be done to control doping in sport. While the formal controls are somewhat effective, there are other forms of control that are rarely explored in the literature. Our data points to a number of concepts that have yet to be explored but that we suggest may provide interesting further research such as the relationship between control mechanisms and the emotionality of control.

Athletes in our sample expressed a lack of trust in doping control systems and this is an area for concern that should be considered – how to rebuild their trust and understand how the variety of mechanisms (administrative, social and self) contribute to their behaviors and attitudes may be a more fruitful exercise that focusing only on developing more sophisticated detection methods and tougher
sanctions. Our data also indicates that some reflective practice on the part of sanctioning bodies, commercial stakeholders in sport and governing bodies may be useful. To what extent have sport administrators, managers and stakeholders created the immense pressures and ‘win at all costs’ values that comes with elite performance and has sport been managed in a sustainable, responsible way to ensure the longevity of athletes or has a system that values commerce and glory emerged as more valuable than the traditional values of sport such as fair play, equality and good natured competitiveness? Further research could concentrate in more depth on identifying the variety of control mechanisms operating within doping control, draw on the extensive literature of over one hundred years of research that has illuminated how control operates within and between people and organizations in order to provide new insight and innovative solutions to tackle the problem of doping in sport.

References


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