January 2008

An Exploratory Study Into the Construction of 'Self' in College-Aged Female Athletes

Lindsey Pilver

University of Massachusetts Amherst, lpilver@som.umass.edu

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE CONSTRUCTION OF 'SELF' IN COLLEGE-AGED FEMALE ATHLETES

A Thesis Presented

by

LINDSEY M. PILVER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

May 2008

Sport Management

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE CONSTRUCTION OF 'SELF' IN COLLEGE-AGED FEMALE ATHLETES

A Thesis Presented

by

LINDSEY M. PILVER

Approved as to style and content by:

_____
Linda Smircich, Chairperson

_____
Todd Crosset, Member

_____
Steve McKelvey
Graduate Program Director
Sport Management

ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE CONSTRUCTION OF 'SELF' IN
COLLEGE-AGED FEMALE ATHLETES

MAY 2008

LINDSEY PILVER

B.A., VASSAR COLLEGE

M.S., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Linda Smircich

With the passage of Title IX legislation women have gradually integrated a
space that had been an exclusively male domain, simultaneously upsetting and
renegotiating the traditional social arrangements found within it (Lipsyte, 1979; Adams,
Schmitke, and Franklin, 2005). This integration is an ongoing process, impeded or
smoothed by the cultural ideologies of the historical moment. Rather than being simply
an athlete, the modifier of 'female' often carries with it expectations of behavior,
appearance, and values that may be in conflict with those same expectations of 'athlete.'
Thus, while social norms and attitudes as well as legal mandates may now clearly
permit and facilitate female athletes' entrance into that historically male space, one can
still question the process through which young women reconcile potentially
contradictory identities.

This thesis reports on a study of thirteen college-aged female athletes at two
liberal arts colleges, that sought to understand the various identities they negotiate in
settings such as on the field, in the classroom, and in the dorm. Using a poststructuralist
framework for discourse analysis, this study explored the self-positions that subjects

adopted and the conflicting discourses they utilized to reveal the multiple subjectivities

the women take up in order to make sense of themselves and their lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW AND STUDY DESCRIPTION

<u>Introduction</u>

In the United States the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments, on

July 23, 1972, marked a radical destabilization of an institution under assault for

decades from outsiders—women, people of color, members outside of the upper class.

The passage of Title IX came as a result of a call for equity of access and resources.

The legislation states "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be

excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to

discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial

assistance" (Carpenter and Acosta, 2005).

While this legislation referred to all programs offered by educational bodies

receiving federal funding, the most profound impact was on America's high school,

college and university sports programs. In 1971, only 294,015 high school athletes were

female—roughly five percent. By 1978, the mandatory compliance date for Title IX,

that figure had leapt to 2,083,040—about 32% of all high school athletes. Between

2002 and 2003, a full 2.8 million girls were participating in high school athletics

(Carpenter and Acosta, 2005). Colleges and universities saw a rapid increase in

participation as well. In 1972, while 170,000 men participated in college athletics, only

30,000 women participated. By 2002, 209,000 men and 151,000 women were

participating in college athletics. That figure only includes NCAA teams. Thousands

more women participated in the NAIA division and at the junior college level as well

(Carpenter and Acosta, 2005). In 2004, the average number of teams offered to women per school was 8.32, a significant improvement over the 1975 average of 5.61, and the 1972 average of 2.50 teams per school (Carpenter and Acosta, 2005).

Participation in sports accrues physical, emotional, and social benefits to those who participate (Women's Sports Foundation, 2000). Though women organized informally and played competitive sports for decades before Title IX, barriers to participation had effectively barred women and other groups from receiving many of the benefits enjoyed exclusively by men. Numerous studies have shown positive outcomes for girls and women who participate in sports. Some of these benefits include a positive impact on self-esteem, increased confidence, more efficient time management (Women's Sports Foundation, 2000), less likelihood of taking up smoking, less incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, less likelihood of unwanted pregnancy, less likelihood of engagement in sexual activity than peers, less depression, and greater likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship (Carpenter and Acosta, 2005), more positive body image (Adams, Schmitke, and Franklin, 2005), better rates of graduation from both high school and college, and better academic performance (particularly in math and science) (Hanson and Kraus, 1998). The explosion in participation rates has undoubtedly impacted several generations of women who have grown up with the opportunity to play within more formal conditions.

Women have gradually integrated a space that had been an exclusively male domain, simultaneously upsetting and renegotiating the traditional social arrangements found within it (Lipsyte, 1979; Adams, Schmitke, and Franklin, 2005). This integration is an ongoing process, impeded or smoothed by the cultural ideologies of specific

2

historical moments. Rather than being simply an athlete, the modifier of 'female' often

carries with it expectations of behavior, appearance, and values that may be in conflict

with those same expectations of 'athlete.' Thus, while social norms and attitudes as well

as legal mandates may now clearly permit and facilitate female athletes' entrance into

that historically male space, one can still question the process by which young women

reconcile potentially conflicting identities.

Thus, the starting place for this study is the observation that despite coming of

age in an era where formal legislation designates their position as 'athlete' to be

unproblematic, college aged female athletes must still negotiate various identity

positions to resolve the conflicting aspects of their lives. The purpose of this inquiry is

to explore those processes of identity negotiation.

On the Gendered Nature of Competitive Sport

Sport sociologists have long examined the institution of sport and its place in

United States culture (Whitson, 1990; Lipsyte, 1979; Frey and Eitzen, 1991). Prior to

the passage of Title IX, sports were viewed as an essential developmental experience for

males, imbuing them with skill sets and personal qualities that would be necessary as

they entered the public sphere (Whitson, 1990). This is a primary assumption of the

function of sport: the transfer of a set of values and attributes—leadership, strength,

self-discipline, competitiveness, teamwork, endurance, responsibility—that are

associated with a certain type of masculinity (Whitson, 1990; Frey and Eitzen, 1991) on

to participants (historically male). Hegemonic masculinity is a dominant masculinity

constructed with an emphasis on aggression, competitiveness, and physical strength and

3

is practiced in relation to women and other subordinated masculinities (Shakib and Dunbar, 2002; Connell, 1992). In what Lipsyte (1979) refers to as the 'varsity syndrome,' competitive sports serves as a process of selection where participation is systematically denied to all but a select few who are deemed to be physically, mentally, and emotionally suitable. Those unable to 'make the cut' are seen as lacking in some essential maleness. During this selection process that starts at youth, these 'talented' and 'gifted' athletes are socialized into the sport culture that has defined itself on a constrained and limited set of behavioral expectations. In this way, gender scholars have framed competitive sport as one institution that maintains and reifies the gender order (Whitson, 1990; Frey and Eitzen, 1991; Kidd, 1990).

Before the passage of Title IX in 1972, competitive sport was primarily a male domain (Carpenter and Acosta, 2005). Therefore competitive sport presents gender scholars with an opportunity to examine the ways in which the structures of this institution maintain and reify the gender order (Messner, 2000; Dworkin and Messner, 2002; Whitson, 1990). Competitive sports reinforce conventional concepts of masculinity, valuing displays of physical strength, domination of weaker bodies, and aggressive and violent performance (Dworkin and Messner, 2002). There is little room for deviation from those ideals (Dworkin and Messner, 2002; Whitson, 1990; Frey and Eitzen, 1991). Women's entrance into the masculine sphere of sports can be seen as a contentious act (Festle, 1996; Adams, Schmitke, and Franklin, 2005). Traditional notions of femininity are in conflict with the prevailing values in sport. How does a docile, fragile, weak, small body execute violent, aggressive, competitive acts? By placing the female body within an institution that is grounded on the value of physical

strength, the resultant athletic female body becomes a site of potential conflict (Adams, Schmitke, and Franklin, 2005; Dworkin and Messner, 2002; Lipsyte, 1979). A muscled, sweating, strong female body that runs as fast or hits the ball as hard as any man can be seen as a threatening, disruptive body. Scholars have argued that in order to rationalize women's participation in sports and maintain hegemonic masculinity, both men and women have actively engaged in a variety of tactics that position the female body in a less-threatening way (Adams, Schmitke, and Franklin, 2005; Carty, 2005; Christian, 2004). An athletic female body, strong, muscled, at times violent, can be used in service of weakening masculine/feminine dichotomies that are reliant on traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity (George, 2005). Carty (2005) suggests that changing cultural values in response to women's participation in athletics have allowed for a new standard of beauty, one that enables female strength to be desirable (by men), thereby putting the powerful athletic body in a less threatening space (for men).

Female athletes are viewed differently depending on their chosen sport. Traditional constructions of gender are played out in certain sports and deconstructed in others. Sports such as tennis and figure skating, with their lack of physical contact between players, revealing uniforms, absence of team play, and de-emphasis on violence, serve as an expression of athletic performance that can reinforce traditional notions of femininity (Klomsten, Marsh and Skaalvik, 2005). Some believe that other sports like basketball, rugby, and soccer call for a different, more 'masculine' athletic performance (Carty, 2005). Many female athletes are discouraged from participation in an activity that exposes them to possibly critical or hostile scrutiny of their gender identity and/or sexuality. Studies of high-school girls have shown greater declines in

5

participation rates in sports that are deemed as masculine (i.e., basketball) than in sports seen as more socially appropriate (i.e., tennis) over the course of a high school athletic career (four years). Further, women's participation in those sports deemed masculine has caused participants to experience more ambivalent reactions from both peers and adults, than peers who participate in typically 'feminine' sports (Videon, 2002).

As both Carty and George suggest, rather than viewing the athletic body as merely a sexualized entity, subject to male subordination, the female athlete's body is also a site of renegotiation of formerly dichotomous gender categories (Carty, 2005; George, 2005). Their scholarship promotes an understanding that the female athlete embodies contradictory stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. The female athlete body is therefore an embodiment of a more fluid construction of gender where masculine and feminine traits are not mutually exclusive. As the female athlete demonstrates, bodies can exist that exhibit any number of characteristics and (perhaps) not be considered deviant. Therefore, as this scholarship suggests, the athletic female body is site that reflects changing notions of both femininity and masculinity. As female athletic participation extends across a range of sports, the specific sporting events themselves may also be released from categories of masculine and feminine. However, both Carty and George do acknowledge that this understanding of female athleticism is not completely accepted. Female athletes do continue to struggle with negotiating both gender and athletic identities.

Becoming a 'Woman' and an 'Athlete'

In the post Title IX era, access to sport enables women to begin their athletic careers at four and five years old and continue organized participation through high school and college. But just as there is an assumption of skill transfer from participation (Hanson and Kraus, 1988; Frey and Eitzen, 1991; Miracle and Rees, 1994; Shulman and Bowen, 2001) —leadership, responsibility, teamwork, competitiveness—the previous studies illustrate the gendered expectations that female athletes face starting from their initial sport experience. How do the expectations and frameworks girls encounter in sport impact their negotiation of the gender order as they transition to adulthood?

Researchers of adolescent development have shown that during adolescence, a time when the transition to adulthood is underway, the gender regimes (Williams, 2002)—the gender relations specific to particular places and times—and expectations that girls encounter in the social world have profound effects on their construction of self (Williams, 2002; Shakib and Dunbar, 2002). Adolescence marks a time when girls are negotiating various identities, experimenting with and practicing different ways of being (Williams, 2002). In L. Susan Williams's study, the researcher analyzes the narratives generated by twenty-six adolescent girls in two northeastern communities to explore the ways in which they navigate the gendering process. Williams posits that during adolescence girls do not 'do gender' as West and Zimmerman (1987) describe in their well-known article, but rather 'try on gender.' Trying on gender is a process whereby a person, in the process of constructing an identity, anticipates, experiments, retreats from, and resists normative gender expectations in service of ultimately

adapting a gendered identity later on (Williams, 2002). Using this framework, adolescent gendering can be viewed as a contextual, on-going process that is actively shaped by social interaction and experiences. The researchers identified three distinct ways in which the girls tried on gender: trying on as tenuous (and relatively unstable), trying on as resistance, and trying on as exaggerated (or subordinated) femininity. First, many girls' trying on gender is tenuous. In this process adult gender roles are seen with ambivalence, and many characteristics associated with 'ideal' femininity, such as dieting, are postponed. Independence is valued but causes conflict with expectations that women be passive (Williams, 2002). Many of the girls tried on gender and resisted gender-traditional norms. This behavior manifests itself in exploration and assertion into 'male' territory, such as career choices and subverting social expectations when they ask boys on dates. Trying on gender also included gender as emphasized femininity. This conceptualization of gender marked the girls' entrance into high school, where social interactions with female and male peers had a significant impact on behavior. The role of appearance tended to constrain the girls' desire to deviate from traditional constructions of femininity and beauty. Further, value was placed on romantic attachments to male peers, and girls expressed decreased interest in activities associated with masculine behaviors, particularly sports.

Interest in the experiences of female athletes has increased since the enactment of Title IX among gender scholars and sports sociologists. Often the athletes' narratives themselves suggest that legislative gender equity may have been achieved, but women's entrance into sport has far-reaching consequences that do not suggest the easy or complete dismantling of traditional social structures and gender regimes. The female

athletic experience is rife with contradictory expectations and pressures that assault these athletes from their very first athletic experience and follow them over the course of their careers.

In a study of 357 high school students, 190 girls and 167 boys, researchers examined the gendered meanings the participants attached to certain sports and physical activities. The researchers also investigated the values associated with the differently gendered sports (Klomsten, Marsh, and Skaalvik, 2005). While the researchers regarded the gendered stereotypes associated with certain sports to be social constructions based upon culturally held perceptions of how boys and girls differ, rather than actual differences, the intent was to explore how those stereotypes impacted adolescents' sporting experiences. Through the use of a survey developed specifically for the project, the Gender Values Scale, and a series of open ended questions, the researchers were able to gauge perceptions of feminine and masculine characteristics within sport and determine to what extent those gendered values related to participation in sport. The findings suggest that sports deemed "masculine" contain one or more elements of danger, risk, violence, speed, strength, endurance, challenge, and team spirit. Examples include ice hockey, boxing, football, basketball, and soccer. Sports thought of as "feminine" had an aesthetic feature, such as gracefulness. Aerobics, dance, figure skating, gymnastics, tennis and riding were thought to be feminine. The open ended question responses confirmed the survey data. Gender stereotyping was perpetrated by both sexes. Boys were generally thought to be tougher, more aggressive, and have a higher pain tolerance than girls. Girls were described as graceful, coordinated, flexible and caring. These gender stereotypes did influence participation in

sport activities. Participants were able to categorize activities as masculine, feminine, or neutral. Participation rates favored gender concordant activities. The researchers concluded that sport participation is stereotyped, and particular sports are gendered. The gender stereotypes attached to certain sports dictated the appropriateness of participation for boys and girls (Klomsten, Marsh, and Skaalvik, 2005).

In Michael Messner's yearlong observation of a recreational boys' soccer team, the salience of gender and normative gender expectations emerge, despite the youth of participants (four and five) and their inexperience with organized sport. In what Messner refers to as a 'magnified moment,' the researcher observed an interaction between a boys' team, the Sea Monsters, and a girls' team (also four to five years old), the Barbie Girls, that illuminated the ways in which gender boundaries are activated and enforced in sport (Messner, 2000).   While both teams were waiting to engage in a league-wide parade, the boys' team became agitated and was prompted to take aggressive action at the sight of the girls team engaged in singing and dancing Barbie-related songs.   Rather than allowing the girls team to celebrate their mascot amongst themselves, the boys took up the chant of "No Barbie! No Barbie!" When the girls' team failed to react to the chant, the boys mobilized and began running into the girls' space, forcing them into a defensive position (Messner, 2000). Parents observed the scene, smiling, and making comments about the innate differences between boys and girls, and with their tacit approval signaled commitment to maintaining those differences. At no point during the season did parents remark upon the similarities between the boys and girls—that they were learning to play the same game, were experiencing turbulent emotions associated with winning and losing, were making

friends and gaining skills such as teamwork and leadership.   Further, when the Sea

Monsters were being inattentive or not playing as expected, their (male) coach would

invoke image of the Barbie Girls, threatening to 'get them' after the boys, presumably

motivating the boys to perform at a higher level (Messner, 2000).

Even at the ages of four and five, female athletes are positioned differently from

male athletes (Messner, 2000).   Messner's account illustrates the notion that it is

perfectly 'natural' for boys to disrupt and destroy the girls' celebration of team unity,

eliciting approval from parents of both the boys and girls. Parental approval and the

strength of group behavior was a powerful inhibitor of dissenting behavior. Male

children who may have been inclined to join the girls in their celebration of Barbie were

prevented from doing so, and female children who may not have identified so strongly

with Barbie were also silenced. Moreover, their mere existence as female athletes can

be used as a motivational tool. Coaches threatened their young male athletes with a

scrimmage against the girls practicing nearby if they did not meet performance

expectations. The coaches conveyed to the boys that lackluster on-field performance

meant they were only worthy of playing (lesser) female opponents.   The organization of

the youth soccer establishment, and presumably other youth sport bodies, does very little

to present alternatives to traditional gendered divisions of labor and power

arrangements. Messner observed the vast majority of all head coaches, across all age

groups for both boys and girls, were men; and virtually all team managers, commonly

referred to as 'Team Moms' were women (2000). Board members were almost entirely

male. Female athletes start their athletic careers learning that men are coaches, women

prepare snacks and organize team parties, and at any moment a boys' team can disrupt,

mock and physically challenge their right to organize as a team. Further, their athletic experiences are not deemed comparable to their male peers. Threats of head to head competition, with the implicit message that a defeat would be humiliating, are used to motivate boys to improve their quality of play (Messner, 2000).

If the initial sporting experience is imbued with coded meanings and structures that enforce normative gender expectations, then the perpetuation of these arrangements in sports goes uncontested (Shakib and Dunbar, 2002). Research on male and female athletes later in their careers suggests that both sexes are complicit in maintaining the gender order (Shakib and Dunbar, 2002). In their interviews of 44 racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse United States male and female high school basketball players, Shakib and Dunbar explored how study participants experience a traditionally masculine sport, using gender as a framework for analysis. Both male and female players actively positioned women's basketball as a modified, and therefore less socially valuable, version of the men's game. The primary distinction between the men's and women's game, is the greater physicality of the men's game. The participants equated physicality to athletic performance—in their assessment male players play a more physically intense game; therefore they are superior athletes. This implication reinforces the values of hegemonic masculinity (Shakib and Dunbar, 2002). In order to be an athlete, one must embody the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity; this framework negates the possibility of a female who is a 'real' athlete. Instances where females and males engaged in direct competition on the basketball court held the potential for reconstituting social arrangements, but for both parties served to reinforce the status quo gender order. If a male wins the competition, it is a matter of course; he

is supposed to. A male player who is defeated by a female is shunned by his peers, humiliated, and most powerfully, has his masculinity called into question. Often, the male athlete rationalizes his loss by stating he did not play his hardest or he let the girl win. He offers no acknowledgement of the female's athletic ability. The commentary of female athletes did little to destabilize normative gender expectations. Many describe taking intense pleasure in defeating male peers, enjoying the seeming praise of other males of 'she plays like a guy' or 'she made him look sorry' (Shakib and Dunbar, 2002). These comments do not praise the athletic ability of the female player. Rather they equate her talent to masculine athletic skill and imply her opponent was weak, neither athletic nor masculine enough to be a worthy competitor. Female athletes reported having their gender identity frequently assaulted, being called 'tomboy' or 'dyke,' as their athletic behavior was seen as a transgression of normative gender boundaries. Often these athletes engaged in behaviors meant to overemphasize their femininity, effectively apologizing for non-normative behavior, through careful selection of attire and compulsory heterosexuality. Shakib and Dunbar illustrated how male and female athletes participate in policing gender expectations in male terrain, monitoring behaviors and responding with peer sanctions to transgressions of the traditional construction of gender (2002).

Following the work of Messner, and Shakib and Dunbar, Cooky and McDonald (2005) investigated the narratives that a group of white, middle-class female athletes, ages ten to fourteen, (co)produced around their sport experiences. Using the Nike's liberal-feminist informed advertising campaigns of "If you let me play..." and "Just do it" as the backdrop for the narratives generated by their adolescent participants, the

authors offer a critical analysis of the varied meanings and effects of sport experience on a life (Cooky and McDonald, 2005).   In their investigation of a recreational youth basketball league in the overwhelmingly White, middle-class, Midwestern town of Midtown, the authors revealed that the liberal feminist (and Nike slogan) call for equal opportunity and access to sport, left the girls in the precarious position of "insider-other."   While the girls were positioned as 'others' within the masculine preserve of sport, their insider status as middle-class and white went unquestioned. Their narratives echoed the discourses of freedom, choice, opportunity, individualism, and the existence of a meritocracy available to them in the context of their mostly White, middle class communities. The girls did not recognize the validity of alternate accounts, experiences of women of color for example, within different institutional contexts.   There were moments when the girls challenged traditional notions of femininity, such as performing female masculinity or actively rejecting the use of makeup. However, the girls who perpetrated those actions were regarded as "one of the guys" (in the sporting context), and/or had their sexuality questioned by peers. Homophobic taunts from peers were the frequent response to aggressive, violent, or skilled (coded masculine) play. Furthermore, rule structures in the league de-legitimized and de-valued the girls' game in comparison to the boys' game. The authors concluded that the girls' narratives, rather than being radical or subversive, often reinforced normative and essentialist gender norms. While there were moments of resistance, those moments did not lead to a reconstitution of sex, gender, or sexuality in the minds of those involved or in the manner in which the league was structured (Cooky and McDonald, 2005).

Current Research on Sport Experience and Gender in Sport

Numerous studies have assessed the effects of athletic experience on a life. Scholars have characterized the impact of sport on athletes through an exploration of issues such as skill transfer, identity, and gender in sports. In *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values*, Shulman and Bowen's analysis of the impact of college sports on the educational environment, academic outcomes, career trajectory, personal development, and relations between the sexes, races and classes, utilized a comprehensive data set of matriculated students spanning nearly four decades. Their quantitative analysis suggested both positive and negative outcomes associated with college sports participation. The authors' conclusions were the based on comparisons between athletes and non-athletes across a variety of factors including academic performance, graduation rates, incoming SAT scores, major selection, earnings, professional rank, and alumni giving. Additionally, Shulman and Bowen attempted to use the data to generalize more subjective characteristics such as leadership ability, self-confidence, political ideologies, work/life balance, personal values, and character. Their findings overall offer an ambivalent view of the contribution of college athletics to the educational system and society at large. Based on their findings, they suggested that athletes were harmed more than helped by their privileged position on the college campus (through lowering of academic standards for admission, athletic scholarships, special help, and prioritizing athletic competition over studies). Elitist attitudes of a 'jock' culture created a results orientation that left these individuals lacking assorted 'soft' skills like empathy and compassion.

Another study utilizing a quantitative, positivist approach to ascribe meaning to the athletic experience for women was conducted by the Mass Mutual Financial Group in 2002. Meant to complement the photographic exhibit, "Game Face: What Does a Female Athlete Look Like?" the Mass Mutual study suggested a correlation between adolescent participation in organized sports and professional achievement. This study consisted of a thirty-four item questionnaire administered to approximately 400 female business executives. The results found that of the four hundred and one female business executives surveyed, 82% had participated in some form of organized sports beyond grammar schools ("From the Locker Room to the Board Room"). Subsequent questions and participant responses suggested strongly that increased discipline, enhanced ability to function as part of a team, development of leadership skills, and a greater capacity for coping with failure could be attributed to athletic participation. Further, 59% of female business executives who participated in organized sports beyond grammar school suggested that doing so had given them a competitive advantage professionally over female peers who had not participated in sports during their youth and adolescence.

The studies presented in *The Game of Life* and by Mass Mutual are representative of current scholarship in the field. The effect of athletic experience on a life is largely viewed in the context of measurement of skill transfer, tracking academic and career outcomes, and as it relates to women, entrance into historically male fields. However, participation in athletics encompasses a diverse range of experiences, settings, and interpersonal relationships. Previous studies ignore the impact of that diversity in their assessment of the impact of athletic participation on individuals' lives.

The manner of understanding the effects of athletic experience in this study diverges from the typical model. Underlying this study is the assumption that women's athletic experience is not a contested one. Removal of structural barriers since the implementation of Title IX has enabled women's access to sport, but access is not equivalent to acceptance. As Messner and Shakib and Dunbar show in their studies of girls' experience as athletes, women's entrance into the gendered terrain of sport has destabilized the values, ideologies, and norms underlying the institution. However, their studies also show that the destabilization brought by female athletes has personal consequences for those who enter that terrain. The intent of this study is to extend their work. As women take up the identity of athlete, do they encounter contradicting expectations of behavior? How do they negotiate the conflicts that come from accessing a contested terrain? What discourses do they voice to make sense of themselves and their lives in and out of the context of sport? These questions provide the frame for the exploration of the effects of athletic experience on a life.

The Study

Thus, the starting place for this study was the observation that despite coming of age in an era where formal legislation designates their position as 'athlete' to be unproblematic, college aged female athletes must still negotiate multiple identity positions to resolve the conflicting discourses in their lives. The purpose of this inquiry was to explore some of those processes of identity negotiation.

Theoretical Framing: Conceptualizing Identity and the Construction of Self

Many intellectual traditions attempt to explain the process by which a self is constituted. In order to provide a context for the theoretical construction of self, several models of identity construction are outlined below. These frameworks are not presented hierarchically, but rather are introduced thematically—starting with identity understood in the humanist tradition, followed by two theories of identity based in social psychology, and finally the poststructuralist understanding of identity. These theories were chosen because of their contrasting constructions of identity and the breadth of identity scholarship they represent.

In humanism, identity is thought to be unitary—the objective core of an individual. It is relatively static, stable, and coherent. Identity theory and social identity theory diverge from humanism. In identity theory, self is defined through a reflexive process whereby an individual may take up one or many roles. The roles available to an individual depend on the structural position that individual occupies in society. In sum, in identity theory, one 'is' what one 'does'. In social identity theory, self is constituted through cognitive processes. People self-categorize into social categories based on perceived similarities in the criteria for group membership. People seek self-enhancement through alignment of their personal characteristics to those of other in-group members. The final framework for the construction of self detailed below is in the poststructuralist tradition. This framework includes both performative and discursive productions of self. In poststructuralism, self is produced in an ongoing and dynamic process. Performativity is concerned with the constitution of self through

repeated acts, both material and linguistic. Discursive frameworks position self as both a subject and an object produced in a specific time and space.

Because of its appreciation for the dynamic nature of self and identity as well as the acknowledgement of language as a site of power, the poststructuralist construction of self was used as the framework of analysis in this project.

The Humanist Tradition

In the humanist tradition the self is understood as a product of experience. Society and all social relations are the result of the interactions between individuals (Sampson, 1989). This process gives rise to an understanding of the self as continuous, rational, and unitary. The unitary self is derived from an individual entity that thinks, acts, and perceives autonomously, functioning in an absolute reality.   The individual's conscious experience is therefore the primary force in forming sense of self.

Traditional notions of self have relied on the humanist approach, which makes several significant assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge making, and the individual. Using humanist logic, it is possible and even desirable to determine objectively concepts such as 'meaning,' 'truth,' 'subjectivity,' 'freedom,' and 'power' (Sullivan, 2003). Objective concepts such as these are created through the existence of what Jean-Francis Lyotard referred to as 'grand narratives'—universalizing accounts of human experience based on conformity to social expectations and norms of a particular historical period and location (Sullivan, 2003). Grand narratives tend to privilege specific beliefs, ideas, practices, and roles and subordinate those that do not conform in service of developing a state of being to an ultimate enlightened state (Sullivan, 2003). The grand narrative serves to constitute and separate the difference from the ideal norm.

19

This dichotomous logic divides the world into binary categories of a privileged term and its 'other. Under this objective hierarchy of dualisms, the humanist 'self' can be described definitively, as a 'thing' that exists and is tangible. The self is understood almost as a physical object or entity and therefore lends itself to discovery and objective analysis (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001). The self is an intrinsic, central, and tangible 'thing,' that is also unitary, bounded, and rational, and not influenced by the body. Rather, the humanist concept of self makes a clear distinction between the mind and the body (Sullivan, 2003). This demarcation is known as Cartesian dualism, which assumes that a concrete and rational self is located in the consciousness. The body is only a means of housing that identity and does not influence the construction of self (Sullivan, 2003). The external characteristics and social perceptions, ideals, and responses to the body have no consequence for the formation of self. Under this view, bodies are ahistorical and decontextualized. For example, the body is secondary to the mind, while the 'self' is cognitive.

Using the humanist framework, an aspect of identity such as gender, is thought to be emanating from a rational and innate core. Therefore, all of a person's actions, gestures, and words are an expression of that inner and unified core (Butler, 1990; Sullivan, 2003). The result is, as Sullivan argues, "[W]e can in a variety of ways, validate or denigrate, punish or celebrate [another's] actions (what we presume to be) their desires, their identity, and in turn, our own. In short then, the notion of an autonomous, unified, coherent and knowable source and cause of action, sustains liberal humanist principles which inform morality, the law, notions of responsibility, contract, and so on," (2003, p.83).

In humanism, the concept of individual subjectivity is paired with an assumption of human agency. The attribution of agency to all individuals results in the presumption that actions, and consequently, outcomes, result from an individual's deliberate choices (Gergen, 1997). In making choices freely, individuals are imbued with both liberty and moral responsibility. Society and the conditions found within it are therefore directly attributable to conscious choices of individuals.

Unlike identity theory (discussed below), which acknowledges pre-existing possibilities of category membership, the humanist tradition does not account for hierarchies and social structures that both limit and dictate the 'selves' that may be constructed by the individual. Additionally, while individuals may have the appearance of human agency, humanism cannot account for situations whereby an individual's conscious choices have resulted in the denial of other's liberty (Gergen, 1997). Humanism does not acknowledge the potential problems in the assumption that an individual has ability to make choices freely. This assumption does not take into account social structures and conditions which may constrain the variety of choices available to the individual. When a 'choice' is made under conditions where liberty is constrained, the freedom of making that choice is doubtful. Other theories of identity attempt to address this conflict.

Identity Theory

Identity theory, while similar to social identity theory, conceptualizes self based on its theoretical roots in microsociology (Hogg, et.al, 1995). Broadly defined, identity theory attributes an individual's concept of self to the roles one takes up (Hogg, et.al, 1995; Stryker and Burke, 2003; Stets and Burke, 2000). In identity theory, roles are available

to individual as a result of a relational relationship between the self and society. As an individual interacts with society, roles become available that the individual may or may not choose to take up. The availability of roles is largely influenced by the structural positions in society that a person may occupy. The taking up of roles includes a process of self-categorization whereby the individual has self-concepts, self-referent cognitions, and self-definitions that they employ, reflexively, to take on roles within groups in society (Hogg, et.al, 1995). Therefore, an individual may have as many identities, or distinct selves, as they have distinct groups who they feel themselves to be a part of.

In identity formation theory, the basis for identity is through a role, or 'what one does' (Stets and Burke, 2000). Under this framework of identity formation, self is constructed through a process referred to as 'identification.' During identification, an identity is constructed reflexively. It can be thought of as an object that is categorized, classified or named in relation to pre-existing social categories (Stets and Burke, 2000, Hogg, et.al, 1995). Self-categorization is aided by the cultural symbols that assign positions. These positions are essentially stable and are points of recognition for self-assignment to structured social categories. An identity is activated by the recognition of these cultural symbols, identification with those symbols, and enactment of the role expectations attributed to the symbols. Under identity theory, the various identities an individual takes up originate from membership in the groups and the resultant roles one must occupy (Stets and Burke, 2000). The concept of identity salience accounts for the likelihood that an identity will be invoked in a given situation. Identities are organized hierarchically; social cues signal to the individual which role (identity) to take up

depending on the context and the individuals' commitment to that role (Hogg, et.al, 1995).

As identity theory has developed, two strands of scholarship emerged which complement each other and account for gaps in each strands' theorizing of identity. One strand, characterized by the work of Stryker, focuses on the linkages of social structures with identities. This approach examines the ways and degree that the social structures affect an individual's structuring of self. The focus on the individuals' reciprocal relationship with society is analyzed externally to the individual (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Stryker's has been criticized for its failure to account for the internal dynamics of identity construction. The strand of identity theorizing characterized by the scholarship of Burke, addresses the internal dynamics of self processes missing from Stryker's work (Stryker and Burke, 2000). In this conceptualizing of identity theorizing, the focus is on how internal dynamics of self processes affect social behavior. By focusing on the processes internal to the individual, this mode of theorizing neglects the manner in which social structures that are external to the individual constrain or encourage those internal processes (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Despite their differences, the two strands of identity theory, taken together, provide a context for each other and provide an explanation of identity that is based on the internalization of role expectations and the acting out of those roles (Stryker and Burke, 2000; Stets and Burke, 2000). Further, because identities are limited to the roles available to an individual, identities can be thought of as relatively stable across time and situations (Stryker and Burke, 2000).

In social psychology, identity formation theory uses a framework for identity construction whereby social categories precede the individual (Stets and Burke, 2000). Like humanism, the individual derives their sense of self largely through membership in groups and categories to which they do or do not belong. While the humanist tradition emphasizes the conscious experience of the individual and human agency as critical to identity formation, identity possibilities are constrained by preexisting conditions in society (Gergen, 1997). Identity theory denies some degree of human agency found in humanism.

In comparison to social identity theory, where group membership is predicated on alignment and uniformity of perceptions and actions among in-group members, identity theory locates the self in differences between the actions of a role that is taken up as it compares to role identities that are not taken up (Stets and Burke, 2000). More specifically, social psychologists are concerned with the meanings of different role occupations and how the roles are enacted in relation to others. They emphasize the adoption of self-meanings that people attribute to the different roles they take up and how various expectations of those roles influence interaction with those who occupy other roles within a group (Stets and Burke, 2000).   Therefore, the core of one's identity in identity formation theory is the manner in which one internalizes the expectations for behavior, attitudes, and values that are associated with a specific role performance (Stets and Burke, 2000).

Social Identity Theory

With its roots in social psychology, social identity theory articulates the development, maintenance, and transformation of a social identity (McNamara, 1997). The intention

of social identity theory is to account for the social self in intergroup relations and group processes. A theory closely tied to identity theory, social identity theory emphasizes the categories or groups that people belong to, rather than the roles they take up (as in identity theory) (Stets and Burke, 2000; Hogg et. al, 1995). Like identity theory, the 'self' in social identity theory is constructed reflexively and relationally depending on the social categories and classifications that the individual perceives to be available to him/her. During the process of self-categorization, a person identifies a social category or group and aligns himself/herself with that group on the basis of similarities in ideology, values, appearance or any number of qualities by which a person may perceive likeness (Stets and Burke, 2000). Those who are deemed similar are members of the 'in-group,' and those who differ from the self are regarded as 'out-group' (Stets and Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1981). All social interactions are then compared and contrasted to the actions of the individual, the members of the in-group, and the out-group (Tajfel, 1981). Under this framework, the individual's concept of self is derived and understood from knowledge of group membership and the attendant values and expectations of that group membership. Further, the individual will seek out new groups and group membership if he/she perceives that these groups will have a positive impact on his/her own concept of self (Tajfel, 1981).

Social identity theory and the attendant self-categorization theory are sociocognitive theories which serve to explain the behavior of group members. During self-categorization, intergroup boundaries are sharpened through the production of group-distinctive perceptions and actions (based on stereotypes and normative beliefs) which are used to assign people, including the self, to the appropriate category (Hogg,

et. al, 1995).   This categorization process is guided by the individual's desire for self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is driven by the individual's motivation to see self positively in comparison to others. The individual achieves self-enhancement through comparisons of their characteristics to the in-group (and a particular out-group) which favors the characteristics of the in-group (Hogg, et. al, 1995; McNamara, 1995). Self-enhancement through perceived similarities to the in-group strengthens the individual's identification with a particular in-group. Social identification leads to depersonalization of the self through the production of an in-group prototype. This prototype based depersonalization is the foundation of social identity processes (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Sluss and Ashforth, 2007). The group prototype is a prescription for how individual group members should act, think, and look. Uniqueness is lost as group members becoming representatives of a social category rather than discrete individuals (Sluss and Ashforth, 2007). Furthermore, social identities have values (based on socially constructed hierarchies) and groups as a whole, not only individuals, compete for relatively positive social identities (Hogg, et.al, 1995).

A critical component of social identity theory is the assumption of a structured society. Categories precede individuals, where available categories are arranged in a binary hierarchy.   Each category has relative status, power and prestige that dictate the ways in which the individual constructs a sense of self relative to others in society (Stets and Burke, 2000). Particular beliefs regarding the relative status and interrelations between groups, for example the stability or legitimacy of a group or the possibility of social mobility or social change, impact an individual's pursuit of a social identity (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg, et. al, 1995). Under social identity formation theory, the

unchanging and static natures of binary categories and the individual's own notion of

self tend to constrict the available constructions of self. A self other than that which fits

into dualistic categories predicated on the concept of 'like' and 'not like' is not typically

available (Stets and Burke, 2000). Such a deterministic view of people and social

processes inhibits fluidity of identity and the possibility for alteration of social

arrangements.

Identity as Discursively Constructed

Performativity

The theory of performativity arose as an alternative framework of linguistic analysis that

contests the logical positivist notion of authentication and verification of statements.

For example, the declaration, "The sky is blue" is descriptively true. However in the

statement, "I promise I will return your car unharmed tomorrow" the speaker has made a

promise, an illocutionary act, which makes this statement a performative utterance. In

the performative category, statements are utterances with no inherent truth value

because their purpose is not to describe the world. Rather the intention of utterances is

act upon the world (Hall, 2000). The success of performative utterances is judged on a

set of felicity conditions (felicitous or infelicitous), rather than the positivist standard of

true and false. As Hall points out, declarations are 'performative' rather than

'constative' because it is the action of making the utterance that results in an act being

performed. In this way, words used in the performative do conform to one's notion of

the world. However, availability and selection of words also alters the world to "fit" the

word choice (Hall, 2000). Therefore, cultural norms are constituted through the

repetition of performative utterances, rituals, and speech acts which are judged

27

felicitous. For example, as Butler points out, gender itself is a performative; as it

constitutes the very act it performs (Hall, 2000; Butler, 1990). Speech acts are

perpetrated under masculine and feminine ideologies. Speakers use such speech acts in

accordance with social norms to produce conforming gendered selves.

      In addition to speech acts, Butler shows how a variety of actions are used to

produce identity. Self is constructed and constituted through methodical, routine, and

recurring acts.   For example, gender, one aspect of an individual's construction of self,

is treated as an essential nature or social category under humanist logic, identity theory,

and social identity theory. Butler is critical of the tendency of both the humanist

tradition and identity theories to use social categories as a mode of identity production.

The mere existence of identity categories, no matter how many there are or the degree to

which an individual 'chooses' to belong to one or many, function as part of a regulatory

regime. She contends that identity categories are normalizing categories of oppressive

structures (Butler, 1990). Butler argues that gender is neither natural nor innate, but like

the notion of the individual, purely a social construct (Butler, 1990; Sullivan, 2003).

Gender is the normative interpretation of the repeated acts. The acts and gestures which

people learn through their relations with others and the world serve to create the illusion

of an innate and stable gender core (Sullivan, 2003).

      Butler's notion of performativity is the manner in which material bodies come to

"matter" in a poststructuralist framework (Rahman and Witz, 2003). In Rahman and

Witz' critique of Butler's work, the authors show that the concept of performativity is

useful for moving social constructionist analysis away from a substantive, ontological

foundation of gender and sexuality. Butler uses performativity as a response to

conceptions of materiality, the actual matter of the body, and shifts the emphasis to the ways in which the body is 'materialized' (or made to matter) through ongoing social processes. The physical matter of the body is not limited by its actual substance, but rather, is the embodiment of lived experiences in a gendered framework (Rahman and Witz, 2003).

Therefore, all aspects of identity are performed through repetitive action. Traditional aspects of a social identity precede and therefore dictate those repetitions creating 'scripted' actions. Identity is understood as situated within specific historical periods, cultures, and so on. Thus identity, as performatively constituted, must be understood as contextual, indefinite, and inter-subjective (Sullivan, 2003). Self is not what one 'is' but what one 'does,' making both behaviors and discursive practices integral to that concept.

The 'Self' as Embedded in Discourse

The poststructuralist tradition offers a further explanation of self that accounts for several limitations of previous theories. A poststructuralist 'self' is not understood as an entity. It is a rejection, or the very least a critique of humanist notions of essentialism and universal claims (Sullivan, 2003). Universalizing explanations of the subject and the world are avoided. Rather, poststructuralist theorists view knowledge claims as the result of very particular forms of thought and ideologies, and the ways of being they engender as culturally and historically specific (Sullivan, 2003). Poststructuralist theory is contextual and local.

Self is constructed relationally, generating a subjectivity that is positioned through the force of discursive practices. Rather than assuming a static, unitary self, the

subjectivity of poststructuralism allows for an ambiguous concept of self. Experiences

can be understood as products of a fluid construction that includes the categories and

concepts of subjectivity available to the narrator. The availability of multiple discourses

in relation to the subjectivity of each narrator enables simultaneous realities. These

realities accommodate diverse subject positions and interpretations of experience

(Weedon, 1997; Calás and Smircich, 1999; Davis and Harre, 1990)

Poststructuralism demands a critical analysis of language and the role it plays

not only in constructing every individual's concept of self, but in establishing and

maintaining the social order. Shotter refers to 'social accountability,' to describe the

imperative of maintaining an individual's status primarily through their use of language

(Shotter, 1989). He contends that individuals use certain prescribed modes of talking to

maintain their status in a desired social group. Maintaining this status becomes a moral

requirement, demanding that the individual express him or herself in a manner which

does not invoke sanction from those the individual considers to be peers. Using modes

of expression that will be met with approval by others, the individual internalizes a

certain reality (Shotter, 1989). Recounting or reflecting upon an individual's reality or

their experience in that reality, is accomplished with limited language resources that

precede the experience. Therefore, in accounting for reality as well as the self in that

experience of reality, the language that is imposed dictates how reality can be

understood and constructed.

Self constituted in this way is subject to the dominant social order through use of

such legitimated speech. Foucault cited the relationship between discourse and power,

outlining specific 'epistemes,' or discursive frameworks that essentially dictated socially

legitimate modes of speech, and as a consequence, thought (Parker, 1989). Foucault

conceived the self as both the subject and object of a speech that is constrained by a

particular time and space. However, individuals and minority groups emerge who

contest this dominant social order. Positions they assume and the discursive practices

they employ subvert society's conventions. While these actions are oftentimes met with

disapproval and peer sanction, they can serve to destabilize social structures and alter

modes of expression.

Understanding Poststructuralist Selves through Discursive Practices

A poststructuralist framework for discourse analysis is grounded in the idea that

the author of a narrative, the creator of a social text, is located within a social context

that evolves in relation to others (Calás and Smircich, 1999). The discourse utilized by

that narrator is simultaneously constrained and enabled through whatever language is

available to the narrator during that moment, constituting the narrator's subject position

(Davies and Harre, 1990). One's subject position, or subjectivity, is not a fixed state. It

is a socially produced phenomenon and must therefore reflect the diversity of lived

experience. Within a poststructuralist framework there is no universal, shared

interpretation of a fixed reality. A variety of discourses exist within any language,

therefore as an individual attempts to make sense of, or construct, their experience, they

may only use the discursive resources available to them (Weedon, 1997). The discourse

available to any individual is reflective of their social position, power, and relative

access within a particular socio-historical context (Weedon, 1997). Therefore,

poststructuralist scholars assert that an individual's subject position reflects the disunity,

conflict and turmoil of a unique subject's lived experience as reflected through their

discursive acts(Weedon, 1997). In the analysis of social texts the focus is not on

judging the 'accuracy' of the identity text, but rather is to examine the social

implications of how self is constituted. For example, an individual may construct self in

a way that serves to reproduce and legitimate social structures that oppress that

individual (Kitzinger, 1989).

The method for expressing one's subject position, for making sense of personal

experience, is through the use of discursive practices. Discursive practices, whether

through speech or action, produce social reality.   Further, discursive practices carry the

speaker's history as well as the history of the signifiers the speaker employs. Therefore,

language serves to establish a position for the speaker as well as reinforce the structures

underlying the existing social arrangements. The words that a speaker does not utilize

in social contexts are just as important as the words the speaker does utilize (Davies and

Harre, 1990; Calás and Smircich, 1999).

The language that constitutes a discourse is itself a series of temporary

meanings. Language is a chain of words (signs) whose meaning (signifier) is assigned

and reconstituted depending on the subject position of the narrator (Weedon, 1997;

Calás and Smircich, 1996).   Language therefore becomes a site of conflict and power,

as different subject positions offer competing discourses of knowledge and reality.

Discursive practices not only reflect the subjectivity of the speaker, but produce,

reproduce or maintain existing power relations (Henriques, et. al., 1998). A narrative,

therefore, serves as a site of conflict against or a reinforcement of social arrangements.

In the narrative, the speaker's discursive practices are the tools for constructing an

identity and a reality within a social space. Analyzing those practices reveals how the narrator negotiates conflicting or complicit identities.

Gender As Constituted Through Discursive Practice

In understanding gender as an aspect of identity that is produced and constituted through interaction, rather than as an essential characteristic based on two available sex categories (West and Zimmerman, 1987), the subjectivity of a narrator can be situated within a gender discourse. How individuals 'do' gender, is critical to either maintaining the status quo or disrupting it. While it is often taken for granted that membership in a sex category results in an 'appropriate' performance of gender, as West and Zimmerman point out, sex categorization does not neatly translate to an accomplishment of gender. The appropriate performance of gender is achieved through an individual's assessment of a situation and a management of behavior so that the outcome—the individual's gender performance—fits within the social expectations of that gender in that situation. Any performance outside the bounds of appropriate gender behavior is subject to scrutiny. Organized sports have oft been cited as a domain where the expression of masculinity is the proper outcome (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Lipsyte, 1979; Whitson, 1990; Dworkin, 2002).

A poststructuralist analysis of gender seeks to explore the discursive practices underlying the development of subject positions that create the 'gendered conditions'(Calás and Smircich, 1999), and enable the internalization of the appropriate gender positionings for every-day situations (Davies and Harre, 1990).   The experience of gender happens through the taking up of a subject position, where the speaker locates

her/himself in a specific cultural space, and his/her particular political and moral prerogatives within that space. 'Appropriate' gender behavior is as fluid and in flux as individual subjectivity. Gender discourse is therefore an important site of conflict as it can either bolster or destabilize existing social arrangements (Weedon, 1987).

In this study the poststructuralist approach to discourse analysis was used in the analysis of interview data. There was a specific focus on the presence or absence of conflicting discourses as participants took up various subject positions in describing the circumstances of their lives.

Methodology

In contrast to existing research on the effects of the athletic experience on a life, this study did not utilize a positivist approach. Shulman and Bowen's study and the Mass Mutual study highlight a common methodology to analyze the impact of sports participation on individuals and the social world in general. Their study takes an objectivist approach. Data are gathered about reality in a concrete, methodical way (as in the use of a quantitative data set) to produce generalize-able results mostly responding to conditions around a sociological phenomenon (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, Morgan and Smircich, 1990). Further, this positivist approach is grounded in a specific epistemological foundation. Within this analytic framework, there exist, hard, concrete, facts that arise out of an objective reality. All individuals function within this same objective reality. Dichotomies of true vs. false, or right vs. wrong are possible under these conditions. Understanding reality in this way enables researchers to utilize quantitative data to assign meaning and insight to lived experiences.

The aforementioned studies were conducted by researchers who sought to explain sociological phenomena through the construction of objective knowledge. Their approach is based on ontological assumptions that the experience of sport is external to the individual, and whose effect can therefore be measured. The researchers' positivist orientation enables them to interpret their findings as concrete facts, allowing them to identify regularities and causal connections which then can be used to predict behavior and outcomes (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This approach to research is characteristic of the field, revealing the objectivist orientation toward understanding social reality and a determinist understanding of human nature.

Instead of looking at reality as an objective, concrete process, this study regards reality as a subjective experience that is unique to the individual experiencing it. Epistemologies under a subjectivist framework are more fluid—they acknowledge the fluid and changing nature of both reality and truth. Instead of relying on quantitative data, a subjectivist approach enables researchers to look at the processes by which individuals create and understand their realities (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). In this study, the data being gathered will be narrative accounts generated through personal interviews. The individual's athletic experience will not be analyzed to gain objective knowledge, i.e. 'what really happened'. Rather, the narratives will offer unique interpretations and understandings of lived experiences, illuminating the identity negotiations and competing discourses individuals utilize in making sense of their realities.

Qualitative research methods offer multiple analytic frameworks grounded in varying epistemologies for the interpretation of narrative accounts. Rather than

viewing the "subject" of the interview as an informer who will provide revelatory information on social processes (that are static and decontexualized), the interviewer and interviewee are mutually participating in a construction process (Mason, 2002). Under this alternative framework, the interviewer presents a situation in which the conversation creates conditions where the interviewee draws upon the resources and discursive practices available to her in discussion of a social phenomenon (King, 2004; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). The narrative texts that are generated by this methodology can be interpreted in a variety of ways. A 'realist' framework assumes that accounts are directly related to lived experiences and practice, and can be used to make inferences about the interviewee's life (King, 2004). In this study, where a poststructuralist theoretical framework underpins the analysis, the narratives will be analyzed using a social constructionist perspective. A social constructionist viewpoint does not consider narrative texts to be representative of the interviewee's lived experiences. The text is a product of a specific setting, an interview context and through this interaction the researcher has access to the ways in which an individual constructs and makes sense of their experiences.

Examinations of discursive practices yield insight into how the social world is constantly being constructed, negotiated, and reconstituted (Jorgenson, 2002; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). In Jorgenson's study of female engineers, the researcher analyzed the discursive practices utilized by her participants to explore how they positioned themselves within or outside prevailing gender discourses. Using narrative accounts from face to face interviews, her aim was to illustrate the ways in which participants managed gender identities and differences in a historically male occupation (Jorgenson,

2002). Her study acknowledges the possibility of living simultaneous realities where one's identity is subject to contradicting demands and expectations. This viewpoint and subsequent methodology allows for the subject to be the author of her own social text, revealing the ways in which she manages conflicting discourses. Generating a social text is an active process that offers, through discourse, insight into an individual's subjectivity, and the social arrangements and institutions that they are constructing and deconstructing in their reality. Furthermore, as language is a site of conflict, with competing discourses, the discursive practices utilized in the generation of a social text illustrate the position of the individual in a social context—how their subjectivity bolsters, is subordinated by, or contests institutions of power (Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Analysis of this type relies on linguistic data and therefore is not possible through the use of quantitative data.

Data Collection

In this project social texts were generated through one-on-one interviews by the researcher and female college student athletes, aged 18-22, at two selective liberal arts colleges in the Northeast United States. One college is co-educational, while the other college is a single sex institution. Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes and was tape recorded. The interviews followed a general format with a list of questions (See Appendix 1) that was meant to generate descriptions of the conditions of participants' lived experiences, related, but not exclusively, to sport. Following the interview, the recordings were transcribed and discursive practices analyzed.

Pseudonyms were used and identifying details were altered to protect the identities of participants.

Data Analysis

Interview data was analyzed using a poststructuralist framework for discourse analysis. Transcripts were read multiple times by the researcher with a specific focus on the identity positions that participants took up as they described their lives (Jorgenson, 2002; Davies, and Harre, 1990). In addition to the self-positionings of participants, the analysis identified the specific gendered discourses they utilized in describing their experiences, as well as the conflicting discourses they employed in making sense of their lives. After multiple, close readings, common practices emerged in the women's narratives.

While the women spoke to a variety of negotiations and conflicts, only the identity positions, discourses and gendered subjectivities that were voiced by at least two women were included in this analysis. The environments in which the women were situated were arguably very different, due to the absence of men on the (mostly) single-sex campus. The researcher aimed to explore the narratives in the context of these gendered environments; therefore, the narratives of the two participant groups (single sex versus co-educational school) were analyzed separately.   While this approach does prioritize certain viewpoints and perspectives by only including themes that were present in more than one narrative, the researcher was concerned with identifying the women's shared concerns and conflicts, despite their diverse experiences.   By reporting

the common themes, the researcher was able to illuminate the negotiations that the women experienced which stemmed from their (shared) identity positions.

Significance

In the thirty years since the implementation of Title IX, several generations of women have grown up with the expectation that they will have access to organized sports if they so desire.   In some social circles, it is expected that girls grow up playing sports. This level of participation sets these girls and women apart from their predecessors, many of whom shared their desire to participate, but were denied the opportunity due to structural barriers and discouraged from participating through conflicting social expectations. With those structural barriers removed, how have social expectations shaped the identities of the daughters of Title IX? It is likely that these athletes have had to negotiate competing demands on their identities. To what extent have they done so?

It is important to consider the conflicts and compromises female athletes navigate as they formulate self in the context of a post Title IX world. Simply enacting legislation and urging compliance does not necessarily result in an ideological shift in sport.   Quantitative data suggests great strides have been made towards achieving parity in sport. But that is an incomplete picture. Society's response to a new generation of female athletes must be scrutinized beyond participation rates. One anticipates that the narratives of these women will speak to the deeply ingrained gender constructs and hegemonic structures they encounter during what still remains a subversive act— participation in competitive sports.   This study examined the processes by which

women may or may not be complicit in maintaining the status quo, despite opportunities to disrupt historical structures. Revealing this complicity illuminates the potential for change. The identity negotiations and discursive tools utilized by these women present opportunities for rethinking gender in sport, and self in general. Further, the experiences of these athletes will not be confined solely to the playing fields. As these women enter different organizational settings, the classroom or the corporate board room, how they have constituted 'self' will inevitably impact the social and cultural spaces they occupy.

Implications

As college aged women leave the cloistered environment of the university campus and enter the larger social world, the conditions under which they have negotiated concepts of self have implications for the choices, actions, and experiences of their professional and personal lives. Further, in an era where the structural barriers and social conventions that have historically barred women's access to organized sport seem to be eroding, the opportunities to participate in, as well as the experience of sport will undoubtedly bear not only on these women's constructions of self, but on the organizational settings which they enter. By studying the women who embody these inquiries, those constructing self and poised to embark on the post-college phase of their lives, one can gain some sense of the negotiations, subjectivities, and positionings they employ within the varied spaces of their lives.

<u>Limitations</u>

This study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants. All subjects were matriculated at private, elite liberal arts colleges in the northeast United States. While this sample was not meant to reflect all college students and all college student athletes, it did represent a selection of students with varying backgrounds and diverse experiences. Because of the limited size of the sample, the results and conclusions were not intended to be generalize-able, but rather enable a deeper understanding of the issues put forth in the study.

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEW DATA AND ANALYSIS

As outlined in the methodology section, the researcher interviewed female

athletes at two colleges, eight women from the single sex college and five women from

the co-educational college. Demographic information is presented in the table below.

Subjects were recruited initially through an email sent out to varsity teams by the team's

coach. Athletes then sent the researcher an email expressing their interest in

participating. The researcher contacted interested parties and arranged to conduct the

interviews in a location agreeable to the participant. Interviews took place in a variety

of locations including an empty coach's office, a gymnasium lounge space, and library

classrooms. Once athletes volunteered, they often recruited friends, teammates, and

acquaintances to take part who would contact the researcher themselves. This method

enabled the researcher to talk to a varied sample of women—women from multiple

sports, class years, and levels of experience. Names and identifying details have been

changed to maintain the anonymity of the women. Interviews typically lasted forty-five

minutes to one hour and were transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

Text from interviews has been presented in multiple forms below. In some

instances, responses have been condensed to form vignettes to illustrate the topic under

analysis. In other examples, the narratives of the women have been presented exactly as

they occurred during the course of the interview. The researcher's questions are

preceded by the designation of [R]. The analysis below highlights the salient issues

that emerged through the women's narratives at both interview sites. That is not to say

that women at both sites did not voice similar concerns; however, despite using the

same interview guide at both of the colleges, certain issues and preoccupations emerged

as more relevant than others at the different sites. The presentation of data highlights

those issues.

Table 1: Participant Details

Name	Age	Race	College Demographic	Class Year	College Sport(s)
Anne	21	Caucasian	Private/Single-sex	2008	Soccer
Jane	22	African-American	Private/Single-sex	2007	Basketball
Mary	20	Caucasian	Private/Single-sex	2008	Soccer
Michelle	21	Caucasian (Portuguese/Italian)	Private/Single-sex	2008	Basketball
Melissa	18	Caucasian	Private/Single-sex	2010	Soccer
Dawn	21	Caucasian	Private/Single-sex	2008	Lacrosse, Squash
Kelly	20	Caucasian	Private/Single-sex	2009	Basketball
Erin	20	Caucasian	Private/Single-sex	2009	Soccer, Lacrosse
Tonya	20	African-American	Private/Co-ed	2009	Ice Hockey
Jennifer	19	Caucasian	Private/Co-ed	2010	Ice Hockey, Rugby
Karly	21	Caucasian	Private/Co-ed	2008	Field Hockey, Lacrosse
Genevieve	21	Caucasian	Private/Co-ed	2008	Crew (1 season), Rugby
Laurie	21	Caucasian	Private/Co-ed	2008	Ice Hockey

College Profiles

In an attempt to contextualize the narratives, profiles of the colleges appear below. The information was taken from each of the college's websites and does not reflect the researcher's impression of the colleges.

Single Sex College

The single sex institution was founded with an emphasis on creating and maintaining: academic excellence, a tight-knit, diverse and international community, a worldwide network of alums, and women who can and should make a difference in the world.   On the college's website, the description reads, "[the college] is a highly selective, non-denominational, residential research liberal arts college for women." The college is "renowned for educating female leaders, from medical pioneers to Pulitzer Prize winning playwrights." The college's approximately 2,100 students hail from forty-eight states and over seventy countries. In the most recent incoming class, thirty-three percent of incoming students were in the top five percent of their high school classes. Academically, the college offers forty-nine departmental and interdepartmental majors and a self-design major option.   Breakdown by majors is thirty-two percent, forty-two percent, and twenty-six percent for the humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences respectively. The Athletic Department fields fourteen NCAA Division III varsity sports teams and seven club teams. The website did not provide student body athletic participation statistics.

Co-Educational College

The co-educational college was originally founded as a men's only institution before admitting women in 1975. The college website purports the school to be "now regarded as one of the premier liberal arts colleges in the nation, enrolling a diverse group of approximately sixteen hundred men and women" on its 1,000 acre campus. The college prides itself on its "talented students, committed faculty, and rigorous academic life." Nearly every state in the union and forty countries are represented in the student body. A bachelors of Arts degree is offered in thirty-three fields of study. The athletic department fields twenty-seven teams, fourteen of which are women's, NCAA Division III varsity athletic teams and ten women's club teams. The college takes great pride in its history of NCAA DIII appearances and championships. Additionally, the college website reported that thirty-two percent of students participate on varsity teams and eighty percent of the student body takes part in club and/or intramural athletic competition.

Interpretation of Interview Data

The content of the women's narratives was richly textured and complex. After multiple close readings of interview transcripts, dominant discursive practices began to emerge. The research organized the women's narratives in three conceptual frames: identity positions, conflicting discourses, and gendered subjectivities. The meanings of these analytical schemes are outlined below.

Identity Position

"Identity position" in this analysis refers to the position an individual takes up in a given context through the force of discursive practice. When an individual takes up an identity position through their narrative, the identity position becomes an aspect of their overall concept of 'self.' Because an individual can take up multiple identity positions depending on the context, an individual's notion of 'self' is dynamic, changing, and relational. In this analysis, the term "identity position" is used interchangeably with the terms "subjectivity" and "subject position." An individual's subjectivity is created in and thru discourse. Therefore (as it is conceptualized here), subjectivity is intertwined and inextricable from one's identity position, or notion of 'self.'

Conflicting Discourses

Participants' discursive practices positioned them within a given context. The women utilized discursive practices to make sense of their experiences. However, the dominant discursive practices employed by the participants in positioning and sensemaking were often in conflict as identity positions changed and contexts took on multiple meanings. Participants' narratives were analyzed to reveal areas where emerging discursive practices conflicted. These contradictory discourses revealed the challenges to participants' identity work, as they negotiated contexts with competing and contradictory norms of behavior and being.

Gendered Subjectivities

A major concern of this study is examining gender within historically male spaces. The women in this study moved in and out of different contexts, some undoubtedly more imbued with gendered meanings than others. Transcripts were

analyzed to explore their experiences as gendered bodies and selves within those spaces. Through the women's discursive practices, "Gendered subjectivities" explores the gendered constructions underlying their notions of themselves, others, and the spaces they occupy.

Overview of Analysis

The women's narratives gave insight into their experiences as women, as athletes, and as students as they moved through various social settings. The table below presents the most salient themes that emerged during those discussions.

Table 2: Overview of Analysis

	Single Sex College	Co-Educational College
Identity Position	Self as diligent athlete	Self as athlete
	Self as the social athlete	Self as social athlete
	Self as ambivalent, yet capable student	Self as mentally aware athlete
	Self as efficient and focused student athlete	Self as constant athlete
	Self as multifaceted individual	
Conflicting Discourses	"Athlete" and "Woman"	"Female participation and "Sports as a requirement"
	"Student" and "Athlete"	"Encouragement and "Discouragement"
	"Student" and "Woman"	"Team membership and "Individual identity"
		"Student" and "Woman"
		"The feminine aesthetic" and "The athlete physique"
		"Athlete" and "Student"
Gendered Subjectivities	Gender in sport	Gender in sport
	Gender in school community/classroom	Female athlete
		Physicality

These women's narratives revealed the complexity and contradictions in their lives. The dominant practices that emerged during the telling of their stories offered insight into the multiple subject positions that they take up as they navigate the varied contexts of their lives. The navigation between identity positions, or subjectivities, was rarely a smooth process. Discourses conflicted as they took up multiple identity positions. Gender was ubiquitous in their narratives. Their construction of gendered subjectivities further emphasized the ongoing process of identity work the women engaged in.

CHAPTER III

DETAILED ANALYSIS—SINGLE SEX COLLEGE

Participant narratives revealed fluidity in taking up various identity positions. As the women told the stories of their lives, the identity positions yielded conflicting narratives and gendered subjectivities that complicated the women's stories. Gender was a salient issue for these women at the single sex college, as they took up identities and understood their environment, their lives, and their experiences in the "absence of men."

Identity Positions

The women at the single sex college took up a variety of identity positions as they negotiated the varied spaces of their lives. Those positions are summarized in the table below.

Table 3: Identity Positions—Single Sex College

Identity Position	Description
Self as diligent athlete	A strong work ethic is the main attribute of this athletic identity. The position provides a direct contrast to the 'natural athlete' whose prowess is the result of natural gifts and talent rather than any extraordinary effort or practice.
Self as the social athlete	Emphasis on the importance of sports as a social outlet. Identity in sport is built upon using the sporting activity as an avenue for forging new and bolstering existing friendships. There are social costs stemming from team membership, such as difficulty in making friends outside of the context of sport and time constraints on socializing.
Self as ambivalent, yet capable student	Participants can clearly articulate internal standards for academic performance, which are then contrasted to the academic performance of others, usually non-athlete peers. Academics are viewed as a site of competition for

	others—a competition which participants decline taking part in.
Self as efficient and focused student athlete	When academics are discussed in the context of how they are managed in relation to athletic participation, this subject position stresses the work ethic and efficiency that is applied to school work.
Self as multifaceted individual	Participants expressed frustration with the label of "athlete" (to the exclusion of other identities) being put on them by others. In response, they stressed their possession of other traits (i.e.: intelligence) that stereotypical portrayals of athletes are typically denied.

Self as diligent athlete

The 'self as diligent athlete' position enabled participants to make sense of the athletic performances of others, while creating a positive space for their own athletic performances. As they positioned themselves as 'the diligent athlete,' research participants stressed their work ethic as a main attribute of their athletic persona. The women described themselves as 'determined,' 'hardworking,' and 'self-less,' qualities that positioned them to 'lead by example.' Kelly, a 20 year old basketball player, *said "I am very determined. I know what I want, as far as sports goes. And I would pretty much do anything to get it."* For Kelly, determination and clarity of goals is exclusive to her diligent athlete self. Anne, a 21 year old soccer player stated*, "I work hard. I care a lot about what I am doing. I try to give everything that I have."* Like Kelly, Anne had significant emotional investment in the sport activity. As both participants 'would do anything' and 'give everything,' they stressed their seemingly limitless commitment to achieving their desired athletic performance.

In the following vignette, Mary, a 20-year old third year student, took up the identity position of "self as diligent athlete." As Mary took up this identity position, she described her role on the team and athletic ability as the result of her effort and hard-work. As Mary demonstrated, aspects of this identity position were taken up in other contexts, including the classroom:

When asked about different kinds of athletes and the type of athlete she was, she framed her athletic identity in the context of the abilities of others, Mary answered: *"I played girls in high school from (other town) who just could play soccer. And it was just like watching ballerinas. Just like effortless. People were just naturally strong, they could just beat somebody."* Mary contrasted her own construction of herself as an athlete, emphasizing her work ethic and the translation of that work ethic to her academic identity, *"Because...yeah, I wouldn't even say that my soccer skill necessarily came naturally to me. That was something also that I had a work ethic to get better. Always trying to sharpen my skills and be better. And I think that in that way it sort of parallels school for me. I would have to keep working through those things for me that might have been limiting me or that seemed like, you know, they were huge hurdles to get over."* Mary reinforced the natural ability of others and her identity position as the "diligent athlete" as she situated herself in a supporting role on the team, *"Playing with people who were really naturally great soccer players and being sort of the, mentally aware person on the team, the person who wanted to assist, the person who wanted to distribute. That was something*

that made soccer so fun for me—making those moments happen for other

people."

As Mary took up the identity position of "self as diligent athlete" she demonstrated her investment in maintaining sharp distinctions between those she deemed to be natural athletes and herself, an athlete whose competency came from hard work and mental acuity. With this identity position, she extended the 'natural ability' framework to other areas of her life, such as academics. Peers' perceived competence in the classroom was an essential ability rather than achieved state, while her performance was the result of diligence and hard work. By taking up this position, Mary was able to dismiss any failure to 'measure up' to the performances of peers as a lack of natural ability rather than inadequate preparation or effort.

The women frequently invoked the archetype of the 'natural athlete,' the antithesis of the diligent athlete subject position. The women referred to their limits and shortcomings as athletes in relation to others whose performance they attributed to a 'natural ability.' Mary, a 20 year old soccer player, remembered facing opponents who "*were just naturally fast, naturally strong. [They] could just beat somebody.*" Melissa, an 18 year old soccer player, invoked a natural athlete/diligent athlete dichotomy, "*I think there are those athletes who are just naturally gifted...And then I think there are those that work really hard for it.*" By constructing this athlete binary, athletic selves could be neatly categorized. Performances and abilities were rationalized and attributed to either inherent skill or persistence. A salient aspect of the diligent athlete subject position was the de-emphasis on personal glory, and focus on serving a support function.

When asked to describe the athlete she aspired to be, Jane, a 22 year old

basketball player, said: *"Very selfless. Just very determined to sort of bring out*

the best in her teammates. To be the that one to help her teammates. Someone

who is just like loving and caring and genuinely cares about wanting people

around her to succeed and look good doing it."

While natural athletes may take on the highly visible position of goal scorer or point

leader, the diligent athlete is concerned with, as Mary explained, *"making those*

moments happen for other people." Through her support role, she countered her

(perceived) lower visibility, confirming the value of her athletic performance.

Competitive sport is an arena where a direct and public comparison of specific

skills and abilities is a constant occurrence. For participants, the likelihood of finding

one does not 'measure up' to the competence of another was a very real possibility.

Rather than suffer a blow to one's perceived athletic competence, the diligent athlete

self was a position which allowed athletes to validate their skills and abilities and

mitigate the impact that more highly skilled others may have had on their perceptions of

their own athletic abilities. The diligent athlete self is a position that emphasizes

emotional and physical commitment, rather than an inherent, 'natural', skill.

Self as social athlete

When research participants took on the subject position of the 'social athlete,'

they emphasized the importance of sports as a social outlet. Participants were able to

draw clear distinctions between sports which were team oriented, and therefore social,

and individual sports which they deemed to be too individually focused:

53

"Basketball is a team sport. Like that's what sort of attracted me to it in

college.

Whereas with track it's just like an individual type of thing, and I like bonding

and interacting with people." Jane, 22, basketball

Participation in sport created opportunities to "meet a lot of people," and "build up

relationships." Participants spoke of the propensity to develop friendships primarily

with teammates, because of mutual understanding of what it is like to be an athlete.

Participants voiced conflicting feelings about their tendency to structure their social

lives around teammate friendships. Michelle, a 21 year old basketball player, stated, *"I*

can be myself around the basketball girls, but I wanted other friends," while Kelly, a 20

year old basketball player, pointed to the insularity of having friendships primarily in the

context of sport, *"Well socially I think you lose the ability to socialize with people who*

aren't athletes."

Additionally, when a participant positioned herself as the 'social athlete,'

enjoyment of sport was diminished when she perceived the situation to be too focused

on winning. Erin, a 20 year old soccer and lacrosse player, stated that *"athletics are*

supposed to be fun and if you are not on a team that's fun there is no point in playing."

Kelly referred to the transition of her recreationally focused basketball league from

socializing and having fun to college recruitment:

"AAU obviously it didn't matter if you won or lost. It was just for girls...to play

outside of their high schools. And it all led up to basically colleges recruiting

you from these tournaments and everything. But up until that point it was just

something that was supposed to be fun. And then once that recruiting aspect

kicked in, it started getting more serious and there was the emphasis on getting

recruited by colleges and it was just a lot more pressure than fun."

The social athlete pointed to instances of social conflict where negotiating friendships with teammates within the context of sport is problematic.

Michelle, highlighted the difficulty of maintaining a friendship within the competitive atmosphere of sport, *"Well, we had one captain, and like, love this girl off the court, like the nicest person ever. But on the court, you'd think she was a different person. Biggest bitch ever."*

Michelle's comment spoke to the multiple subject positions participants took up as they moved through the different spaces of their lives. While the friendship between Michelle and the captain flourished off the court, aspects of the captain's on court persona caused Michelle to simultaneously describe her as the "nicest person ever" and the "biggest bitch ever." The captain demonstrated how teammates perceived her athlete self as "a different person," from her off-court self, illustrating the contradictory expectations implicit in being an athlete and a "nice person."

Positioning self as 'social athlete' involved acknowledging the social costs of this subject position. Anne stated, *"I guess there's time where I might lose part of my social life,"* but spoke to the shared cost that the team experienced, *"We're all in it so it doesn't matter."* While the social athlete was cognizant of social sacrifices she felt compelled to make, her decision to do so was bolstered by the knowledge that her teammates were doing so as well. Just as participants cited the conduciveness of the team organization to developing friendships, the structured practices, time commitment to the activity, and informal and formal limitations on social activities (i.e.: prohibitions

against drinking during season) made forming friendships outside the athletic sphere difficult:

> *"You spend so much time with your teammates it's hard to have friends outside of the team when you are with them so much. I do have friends outside of the team, I do. But not as close as my teammates."* Kelly, 20, basketball

When participants took up the subject position of self as social athlete, they spoke to the importance of competitive sport in shaping their social lives. Sport was meant to be fun, first and foremost, and provided a venue for forging friendships with others. However, once participants were pressed beyond this initial characterization of sport in their lives, they revealed the conflicts, compromises, and negotiations they grappled with as social athletes. Friendships with teammates were strained within the context of sport; behaviors that are valued on the court may not be desirable in a friend. The highly structured nature of sport imposed demands on participants that impeded socializing elsewhere. Acknowledgement of this cost was often followed by strategies to mitigate negative feelings associated with sacrifice, such as insistence that costs are lessened by the fact that everyone on the team experienced the costs together. Further, athletes justified their limited social circle through statements which emphasized the mutual understanding and closeness between athletes, something that is often lacking in friendships outside of sport.

Self as ambivalent, yet capable student

As research participants elaborated on their lives off the field, they took up a variety of subject positions related to school. When positioned as 'ambivalent, yet

56

capable student,' participants clearly articulated standards of academic performance, which then were contrasted to the academic performance of others. Both explicit and implicit in this comparison was the competitiveness of other students, a competition which research participants were not interested in taking part in.

> Anne described her goals and performance in relation to peers: *"I'm an overachiever but I'm not at the point where I'm gonna stress out over every single quiz and test. To graduate from here is fine by me. I don't need to graduate with honors. I don't need to be cumma sum laude or whatever....Some of my friends are really, really overachievers and like get straight As, so on and so forth. And that's great, that's cool for you. I'm not like that...Like, I like to do well, get As and Bs, but I'm not gonna ruin myself over it. Which tends to happened anyways, but I try to avoid it. I mean I am...I am naturally competitive but I am ok with being in the middle. I don't have to be the top, at least here."*

Anne's comment revealed her ambivalent attitude towards grades. While she expressed concern with her academic performance, she opted out of the competition for the top grades. Her 'good enough for *me*' stance was portrayed by her insistence that she would not allow herself to be 'ruined' by the pursuit of grades, and that she was 'ok' with her 'middle' position in the academic hierarchy. Additionally, her comment suggests that the self position of 'overachiever,' with all its negative connotations, was necessary to get As. This is a self position Anne, and other participants, showed no interest in taking up.

Further, in positioning self as 'ambivalent, yet capable student,' participants emphasized the relationship between academic performance, competition for grades, and misalignment of priorities. Jane's comment illustrated this connection:

"Academically, it's really intense. I don't know...some people make me feel like you are just not working hard enough. Like, they give me these silly stories how they were in the library all night, stayed up till five in the morning, wake up going to class at eight. There is just no way I could function on that amount of sleep. I commend you for putting in all that hard work, but there are things that are just more important to me."

Jane's dismissal of her peer's 'silly' stories of academic stamina reinforced her rejection of participating in overt academic competition. Like Jane, the athletic commitments of the participants were a deterrent to participating in all-night study sessions. The necessity of adequate sleep so the body was physically prepared to meet the demands of competition was a recurrent theme. The importance of other "things" effectively removed participants from engaging in this physical manifestation of academic competition.

Participant's subject position of 'self as ambivalent, yet capable student' afforded them a space to explain acceptance of their academic performance. Often research participants demurred from participating in explicit displays of academic competition, such as spending the entire night at the library and foregoing sleep. While a physical feat such as this required a certain amount of stamina, participants were unwilling to expend energy on this type of performance, and deemed it the territory of 'overachievers.' Participants explained their academic achievement by adopting an

identity position that did not diminish their capability as students, and justified their academic outcomes as the results of conscious choices.

Self as efficient and focused student athlete

When academics were discussed within the contexts of athletics, the position 'self as efficient and focused student athlete' emerged as an identity possibility. Dawn, a 21 year old lacrosse player, attributed positive academic performance to being in season, *"But it always helps me in school when I am in season. Whenever I am in season I do really well in school. I think I procrastinate. It is true, I think sports helps you manage your time better."* Dawn's experience with time management was reiterated by Melissa, *"Most of the time I do homework up until the time we are supposed to be in the locker room."* Both Dawn and Melissa were acutely aware of managing their time in relation to the relatively rigid structure of organized sport. In addition to adherence to strict schedules, because of explicit rules regarding drugs and alcohol, and expectations of the coach (and teammates) related to social priorities, the 'efficient and focused student athlete' often declined invitations to social events, preferring to study instead. Erin discussed how some non-athletes were unwilling to "*give up a few parties and stuff like that. I can see how they don't want to deal with things like that."*

As participants took up the position of self as 'efficient and focused student athlete,' they contradicted their previous position of ambivalence toward academic performance within the context of sport, and expressed the importance of excelling in both academics and sport. Further, participants emphasized the relationship and

59

interconnectedness of the two arenas. Jane spoke of her position as a student athlete: *"I never thought of myself as a regular athlete. I've always thought of myself as a student athlete. I take my work seriously, just as seriously as I take athletics."*

For the participants, taking up the 'efficient and focused student athlete' position meant that they were emotionally invested in competence in both athletic and academic arenas. Competence as students and athletes involved managing schedules and commitments to both activities, often to the detriment of their social lives. Participants had initially expressed ambivalence towards academics; however, when academic performance was framed within the context of 'student athlete,' academics emerged as something to be taken 'seriously.' This shift in meaning and importance revealed the relational and changing subjectivities of these women, as well as the discursive practices they employed to express those subject positions.

Self as multifaceted individual

Research participants were questioned at length about their sport experiences and the role of sport in their lives. As college athletes, sport figured prominently in their past and present experiences.   Often they spoke of resistance to characterizations (by others) of themselves simply as 'athletes,' to the exclusion of other identities. As participants took up the position of 'multifaceted individual,' they spoke of desiring to be recognized beyond their sport identity.

Kelly explained her perception that her intelligence was not acknowledged by her peers because of her status as a stand-out high school basketball player*:*

"Because I mean in high school, I think it was, nobody saw past the girl who

played basketball. I mean...I was in all honors classes when I was in high

school. And I am sure people knew that but that wasn't their biggest concern I

guess when they thought about me as a person."

Ironically, participants were unaware of speech and action that would contribute

to this perception. When Kelly recalled her college recruiting trip, she told of how other

perspective students stated their career plans and academic interests in the college.

When it was her turn to state her interest in the college Kelly recalled stating, *"I am just*

here to play basketball." Other research participants were concerned with their

identities as 'athlete', which seemed to preclude taking up other identities. But, like

Kelly, they readily admitted to behavior which reinforced their athletic commitment

while limiting opportunities to negotiate self positions outside the context of sport. Erin

explained, *"I went through a wide variety of activities. So I think that a lot of them*

were eventually cut short because of athletic commitments." Similarly, Michelle

diminished the value of her activities outside of organized sports, *"I had a job. I*

worked in a restaurant. I was a bus-girl. I did peer mentoring and like vice president

of the senate and stuff like that...It was a joke. It was just so you could like put it on

your college application. You didn't do anything."

Further, when participants were pressed to contemplate the end of their

competitive sports careers, they were often fearful or unable to conceive of life without

organized sport. Often they countered the researcher's assumption that their sport

experience would end, recounting plans to coach or to participate in amorphous, ill-

defined recreational leagues. Participants spoke of the importance of physical activity to

their mental and physical well being as the primary reasons for extending participation.

Mary stated, *"Working out and staying active is something that sort of keeps me going at times so I don't really want to lose that."*

Even out of season, Kelly found herself unable to stop going to the gym: *"Even when basketball season's over we all joke about all our free time and stuff but I am still at the gym. Like I have to go the gym. I'll run and I'll lift. And sometimes even if we just go outside that involves physical activity of any kind. I just, I just have to do something. Like everyday."*

Dawn expressed a similar relationship to physical activity: *"I definitely want to do something whether it's like coaching or something...I definitely want to stay active. I think it helps me. Like when I hurt my knee I couldn't do anything I was just so tired and cranky. It helps me mentally and with my energy."*

The position of 'self as multifaceted individual,' found participants resisting efforts to be characterized as 'athlete,' which (they felt) prevented them from taking on other identities. They were concerned with the (negative) perception that they were too focused on sport. However, participants' speech and behavior often bolstered this characterization that their lives were centered on sport. Additionally, participants were unable to conceive of a life without a form of sport in it. Their feelings of mental and physical well-being were too intricately tied to participation in sport to willingly eliminate it from their lives. The end of their college careers signaled a transition to other forms of athletic activity, but not a conclusion of athletic involvement.

Managing Conflicting Discourses

When participants engaged in identity work, they took up various subject positions dependent on specific contexts. The numerous contexts and subject positions lent themselves to contradictory norms, behaviors, and expectations that were expressed through the conflicting discourses voiced by the subjects. The table below provides a summary of those discourses.

Table 4: Managing Conflicting Discourses—Single Sex College
Conflicting Discourses: "Athlete" and "Woman"

Areas of conflict	Description
Winning and performance	The women suggest that the desire to win the athletic contest is an in appropriate motivation for engaging in athletic activity. As an alternative to winning, women construct the notion of "successful" athletic performance (i.e.: the team plays together in a competent/cooperative manner) and the ways in which she, as an individual contributed to overall team performance, as more socially appropriate motivations for participation.
Physicality/being tough	Participants' narratives conflicted when discussing the physicality of sport. They positioned physicality in sport as something to be endured but not enjoyed. Conflicts emerged in their narratives when they described instances where physical play was an enjoyable aspect of the game. A dominant discursive practice was to position their physicality as a reactive defensive response to aggressive actions of others. However, some of the women constructed sport as an appropriate venue for channeling a desire to be physical.
Competitiveness	Participant narratives revealed the women's struggles to maintain what they deemed to be appropriate levels of competition. Several admitted to being "very" competitive and experienced peer censure for being "too" competitive.
Appearance/Image	The women's narratives suggested that the tomboy/girly-girl dichotomy was intensified during and through athletic participation. Depending on the context, the women expressed ambivalence or engaged in compensatory strategies to de-emphasize the contrast.
Physique	Participant narratives revealed the struggle to balance the physical strength and conditioning needs of sport with what they constructed as a pleasing aesthetic appearance.

Conflicting Discourses: "Student" and "Athlete"

Areas of conflict	Description
Regimentation	Participants positioned the highly structured nature of their days and weeks during season as contributing to their academic focus and ability to cope with academic demands. However, conflicts emerged as they tried to reconcile athletic regimentation with social obligations.
Academic costs	The women positioned the time and physical demands of sport as in conflict with meeting their academic obligations.
Post-college plans	Participants' academic performance was constructed as greatly affected by the demands of athletic performance. Narratives relating to post-college plans reflected the conflict between meeting academic commitments and the need to be successful in order to meet long term goals. The discursive strategy most often employed to reconcile the conflict was rationalizing participation in the short term because opportunities to play would be minimal post-college.

Conflicting Discourses: "Student" and "Woman"

Areas of conflict	Description
Academic experience	Participants spoke to the free flow of ideas that was possible in an all female environment. Many spoke to the silencing effect (for other women) of having men in the classroom.
Feminism	Participants positioned that the single sex environment of their school as conducive to producing discussions relating to feminism. Participants often adopted the stance that feminism was irrelevant or an outdated concept, irrelevant to their own lives.
Classroom Conduct	The classroom was seen as a place for the expression of traditional notions of femininity. Athletics were positioned as a "channel" for exhibiting behaviors that may fall outside of that narrow gender construct.

'Athlete' and 'Woman'

As the women took up the variety of subject positions, the discourses of 'athlete' and 'woman' were often in conflict. The discourse of 'athlete', with its concern for winning, encouragement of physicality, competitiveness, specific ways of 'doing gender' and shaping the body, was often in conflict with the discourse of woman. In the

vignette below, Michelle, a 21 year-old third year student expressed the conflict she experienced between being an 'athlete' and being a 'woman.' She articulated the peer censure as well as self-censure she engaged in in order to rationalize athletic prowess with traditional notions of femininity:

Michelle described her experiences in middle school as the tallest person in her class, coupled with her affinity for sports: *"Like in middle school I was the tomboy. My nickname was the Jolly Green Giant because I was taller than...at least four inches taller than the tallest guy in middle school. And I would always get picked like first for the teams in gym and the boys would be like (mimicking) 'Oh, you're such a man cuz they picked you first.' And I would be like, 'You are just jealous cuz they picked me over you.' But then I felt self-conscious."* While Michelle defended herself from the taunts of her male peers, internally she was conflicted over the failure to 'do gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) appropriately. She recounted how she engaged in half-hearted compensatory strategies in an attempt to reaffirm her membership in the female sex category, *"But then at that point I thought maybe I should do girly things. All my friends did girly things. I tried to wear my hair down occasionally. But it just...Like all my friends were into dance. Like the girls who were into soccer like they were my friends because they played a sport but it was like soccer where they wore makeup to like practice and did their hair and I was just like, 'Whatever. I don't care.'"*

As a girl taller than both other girls as well as boys, Michelle's physical appearance was subject to peer scrutiny. She also found that her peers were critical of her actions and

65

behaviors in the realm of sport. To avoid that censure, she engaged in strategies to align herself more closely with female peers whom she identified as doing gender appropriately. She pointed to other female athletes, soccer players, whose accomplishment of gender is detrimental to 'doing' athlete. Her final comment betrayed her ambivalence towards maintaining traditional notions of both female and athlete. Rather, she seemed to have reconciled the conflicts and managed them in a manner that was appropriate for her.

The discourse of 'winning' that is typically associated with sport was conspicuously absent from the women's narratives. Few of the women referred of winning as a factor in or as motivation for their athletic participation. Rather than winning, conversation shifted to focus on 'successful' athletic performances. Success was defined in a variety of ways, but was most often focused on team performance (i.e.: team playing together in a competent manner) or individual contribution to other team member's performances. There appeared to be an aversion to awareness of or concern with individual measures of performance like statistics, with the belief that knowledge of personal performance measures would negatively impact one's ability to play in a manner that was considered 'team oriented.'

When Mary described what she believed was necessary for a 'successful' outcome on the soccer team, she emphasized the efforts of individuals working collectively as a source of her own successful performance. She attributes her lack of confidence in an individual sport, track, to a lack of collective action, "*I think that maybe it was that I didn't have other people to rely on. In order to succeed in soccer it's a matter of the whole participating together kind of being*

66

on the same page whereas when I did track I had to rely on myself and I think

that in that aspect I was much less confident"

As Jane articulated her personal goals for athletic improvement, she posited

them in her accountability to her teammates: "*I saw myself really trying to*

improve like individually. Versus just going out there and playing, having a

good time. I don't know...I felt...I felt like a sense of...accountability. I felt like

other people were depending on me so I had to do sort of what I had to do to

improve my game and try to be the best player I could be, the best track runner

that I could be." While this response suggested investment in individual

performance, Jane's later comments were consistent with the conflicting

discourse of personal performance: "*Umm...my goal was just to uh like lead my*

team to success and so doing whatever that entails. Umm...it's more so doing

whatever I could to help out my team."

The aversion to 'winning' talk was most explicitly articulated by Melissa, who

expressed her criteria for satisfaction with performance, "*If we win, that's great. But I*

am perfectly happy with a tie or a close loss as long as I know we worked hard." These

narratives reinforce traditional notions of femininity that value 'niceness' and being

supportive. Explicit preoccupations with competition and winning are in conflict with

that construction of femininity. The women's narratives illustrated the conflict they

negotiate as they take on identities as athletes while maintaining a specific construction

of femininity.

Participants had conflicted attitudes about the physicality of sport. Some

participants stated that they enjoyed the physical aspects of their chosen sport and

relished the opportunity to engage in aggressive physical contact with other athletes. They tended to position sport as an appropriate venue for expressing these desires. They referred to the inappropriateness of this type of physical behavior outside of sport and used the metaphor of sport as a channel for this type of behavior.

> When asked about her feelings regarding the physical demands of soccer, Erin stated: *"I think I am more mentally tough when I am on the field than in life in general... More cuz it's like I don't mind being pushed around.... And I love during practice to encourage people to get really competitive. Go really hard against each other. Whereas I don't want that throughout the rest of my life. Yeah like it's a nice outlet. To be able to be like really competitive...sports has always been super competitive and to be just like...I don't know I am a lot tougher I think than I am in life."*
>
> Michelle had a similar attitude about basketball: *"I like that it's a contact sport. Yeah. I mean I am just trying to get a lot of aggression out (laughing). It's not like boxing, but you know what I mean? I really like it."*

Both Erin and Michelle's comments suggested that for some women, the arena of sport had become a socially acceptable venue for expressing typically masculine behaviors such as physical aggressiveness. Yet their comments revealed internalized limits to their behavior. For Erin, sport was an acceptable area for her competitiveness as opposed to other areas of her life. For Michelle, basketball had an appropriate level of physical contact, as opposed to another sport—boxing—which she deemed to be too physical.

Other participants suggested that men's sport was a more appropriate venue for physicality, or that other opponents were more (inappropriately) physical. Their physical contact with other athletes was more reactive, and meant as a defense to an offense. They preferred game play that was more skillful and strategic, implying that physicality and skill are mutually exclusive on the sports field/court. These discourses tended to reinforce traditional characterizations of men's and women's sport which position men's as a physical contest and women's as a finesse and skill oriented game.

Dawn explained the modified rules of women's lacrosse and their effect on the amount of physical contact: "*It's actually more physical than people think it is. It always depends on the officials, how much they will let you get away with. But definitely one thing that I have noticed at away games, there are some teams that are pretty aggressive. Like when we play [another college], they are like pretty aggressive. They are like really physical. Ummm...I don't know...I like moderate aggressiveness. But I like the skill.*"

Dawn's comments revealed her conflicted attitude about the physicality of lacrosse. While she suggested the game is more physical than the general perception, her own comments revealed she preferred a less physical version of the game that emphasized skillful play.

When asked about the physicality of soccer, with rules for physicality which are the same for men and women, Anne's response echoed the conflict voiced by Dawn. However, she revealed an alternate strategy for positioning the need for physicality in her game:

"I like hitting people back if they deserve it. I like getting physical and

competitive but not to the point where I hurt anybody."

While Anne positioned her aggressive play in a defensive context, she admitted to

"lik[ing]" to hit people in the field (only if they deserved it). Anne did not elaborate on

what type of on-field behavior qualified as deserving of retribution. However, Anne

was careful to mitigate her comments by imposing a limit—no one gets hurt—on the

extent of her physical play.

The participants had conflicted attitudes about the appropriate level of

competitiveness in a variety of situations. Several admitted to being very competitive in

all sports situations. However, many felt censured by teammates for being "too"

competitive in practice situations. They rationalized this competitiveness by saying they

were playing in this manner in order to provide a more game-like practice atmosphere,

which would benefit the team for games.

Michelle explained what she liked about basketball*: "I don't think there is*

anything I don't like about basketball. I like that it's a contact sport. And like I

am really competitive. Even in practices with my own team, which is bad, but I

am so competitive. And I want to win so bad like I get mad at my teammates and

like I will like play aggressive with the other team, you know what I mean? I

feel like there are grudges on the team with that. People will be like, 'you hit

me,' but I am competitive and just want to win. So I love basketball because it is

competitive; it's fast paced, I don't know I just really like it."

When asked if she was competitive in practice, Jane explained her approach as

beneficial to the team*: "I am not gonna take it easy on anyone. Especially my*

70

opponents. I don't take it easy on my teammates at practice. My opponents,

yeah.   But like, my teammates, they know I am just trying to make them better.

Play better."

Erin had similar attitudes about competition, but felt that sport was a unique

environment*: "And I love during practice to encourage people to get really*

competitive. Go really hard against each other. Whereas I don't want that

throughout the rest of my life."

Participants were critical of what they felt to be inappropriate competitiveness

displayed by their (implied) non-athlete peers in the classroom over grades. They

labeled themselves as strongly not academically competitive. Reactions to academic

competitiveness of peers ranged from bemusement to harsh disapproval.

When she was asked about the importance of physical appearance, Jane shifted

the conversation to the level of competition in the classroom: *"I just don't think*

that people here are that obsessed or concerned with image and appearance. I

think they're more concerned with getting A's than their physical appearance.

Very much more concerned with getting As...my gosh...you'd be surprised but

people get upset when they get A minuses. I'm not that competitive to the point

where I am upset over an A minus or a B+. But I like to do well. I mean I just

think a B minus or higher is doing well for me."

Some subjects positioned themselves as 'tomboys' in relation to their 'girly-girl'

peers. 'Tomboys' were identified through their active involvement and competence in

sport. Being a tomboy created social conflicts, resulting mainly in criticism and

mocking by peers. Additionally, the tomboy label seemed to be linked to style of dress. Participants recalled wearing athletic apparel in non-athletic situations as a marker of tomboy status. This contrasts to 'girly-girl' peers who wear designer jeans or put time and concern into the appearance of their hair and makeup. The tomboy label seemed problematic to the participants and caused anxiety throughout middle school and high school.

In the following vignette, Jane traced the development of her tomboy persona from elementary school to college and the identity position she occupied in relation to her peers: [R]:So when you weren't playing basketball in elementary school, who were you hanging out with?*" (Long pause) Like little girly girls. Umm...I was such a little tomboy. I don't know. Like...I still have some really good friends from elementary school today. There are like so into their physical appearance and like boys, and doing what they have to do to impress people. And that's just not me. I am just completely different from them."* When asked if she still considered herself a tomboy, Jane said: *"Umm...I think I am less of a tomboy...a little bit less of tomboy now. Like it's very rare to find me not in basketball shorts or a t-shirt."* Jane attempted to explain the circumstances that prompted her to identify less as a tomboy: *"(Long pause) I don't know I just felt like...I felt like...growing into a woman. And I think it had something to do with like the job that I had this summer, the past couple summers. Like we really had to dress sort of like...nice. Like business casual attire. I started wearing shoes and heels and fell in love with shoes (laughing)."*

For Jane, 'tomboy' is an identity position that sheds as one 'grow[s]into a woman.' The

gender digression that the tomboy identity represented was tolerable for youth, but must

be left behind as she entered the working world where business casual and heels

replaced sweatpants and sneakers. Jane took on the persona of tomboy while still in

college, admitting that it was rare to find her not in a t-shirt or basketball shorts. Yet

Jane rejected the identity of tomboy once she left the college environment, taking up a

traditional construction of 'woman'—a person who wears high heels and 'nice' clothes.

Jane's vignette illustrated the situational appropriateness of constructing the

tomboy persona and the gendered meanings of that construction.   Unlike the workplace,

where a gender 'appropriate' physical appearance was desired, the attitude in college

toward the 'girly-girl/tomboy' dichotomy was nonchalance. Participants contend that

physical appearance was irrelevant in the college environment and that dressing 'up'

was pointless because there was 'no one to impress.' Clothing choices were made on the

basis of comfort, not fashion. Additionally, they pointed to this lack of concern with

day to day appearance as the result of intense focus on academics, implying that their

grade obsessed peers were too intent on studying to care what they were wearing. The

choice to dress in sweatpants and t-shirts, formerly signals of a tomboy identity, was

meaningless in the context of the college environment. Athletes and non-athletes alike

dressed in that manner. Rather than being an identifier of 'athlete' (as we see at the co-

educational college), or an identifier of tomboy, this style of dress signaled either

overriding commitment to academics or ambivalence towards one's appearance:

Michelle commented on the importance of appearance: "*I feel like everyone walks around in sweat pants, like 'I don't give a shit. Cuz I have no one to impress'.*"

Further, when asked the purpose of getting dressed up, Melissa expressed confusion over who those few who 'dressed up' were dressing up for: "*Not for myself but I definitely see it around campus. You see girls getting dressed up or trying to put on this, you know, I don't know who they are putting it on for per se, but you know, you can tell there is something that they want you to think.*"

However, the participants pointed to differences in dress when the purpose was going out (presumably there is someone to impress when going out). They contrast their outfit choices with those of 'girly-girl' peers who wear designer jeans and makeup. Most subjects adopted the attitude that clothing choices were irrelevant to who they were as people and that they did not care what their peers thought.

When asked to describe her friends, Michelle answered: "[They are] *in my dorm. Very girly. Which I am not. Like designer jeans... Like if we go to a party like we have to wear shoes and nice jeans and a top. And I'd be like, 'ok, I am just wearing my jeans and my flip flops, like whatever.'*"

Michelle's comment revealed the conflicting attitude towards appearance, where 'girly girl' peers dressed up to 'go out,' yet Michelle took a firm stance that that identity was not her and she would make outfit choices that revealed her ambivalence toward 'dressing up' in the context of college social outings.

Participants spoke to using their bodies in service of sport. Most engaged in in-season and off-season training to prepare and maintain a level of physical fitness that

they felt would support their athletic performance expectations. All of the subjects

expressed a keen awareness of balancing the needs of sport with a desirable aesthetic

appearance:

> *"I am just trying to get stronger. Basketball, because I am the center and*
>
> *everyone else is like beastly, like muscular, wicked strong."* Michelle, 21
>
> basketball

Many expressed concern that training regimens of coaches or athletic trainers, if

followed precisely, would result in undesirable, overly-muscled, masculine physiques.

Each subject was able to articulate both sport goals for her body and the physical

aesthetic she would like to (or had already) achieved.

> When asked why she worked out, Dawn said: *"I don't know, just like to help me.*
>
> *Not really. I don't want to really be like fat (laughs). No, not really. I mean I*
>
> *don't really care. I am just trying to look you know, muscular."*
>
> Jane echoed Dawn's comments: *"I don't want to look too manly (laughing). I*
>
> *can gain some weight, but I don't want...like muscular."*
>
> Anne also voiced similar concerns: *"Because I've noticed since I began lifting*
>
> *people haven't been able to push me off the ball. I'm stronger and...yeah.*
>
> *That's pretty much it. Ummm...I don't want to be wall...Ok, I want to be a wall*
>
> *but not a wall that's like, seems to be a wall. There are people that I see like*
>
> *that and they scare me...It's really intimidating. Yeah, I would rather have tone*
>
> *and strength than like big bulk, which is hard to get when [female trainer] does*
>
> *your training. Because she's all about muscles. "[Trainer's name], you're*
>
> *gonna turn us into men." (laughs) She goes for overall strength, and I*

understand that you're gonna gain muscle and that everybody's different but at

the same time, its like, well I kinda want to resemble a female. No. I mean,

strength is good, tone is good, but I wouldn't want to get any bigger than I am

now."

The comments of Dawn, Jane, and Anne revealed a concern with sport training

regimens that shaped bodies (as they perceived) to resemble the physiques of men too

closely. A strong sporting body was to some degree at odds with the feminine aesthetic

they aspired to maintain. This discourse of 'woman' and the discourse of 'athlete'

conflicted when participants tried to make sense of the physical demands they placed on

their bodies.

'Athlete' and 'Student'

At the small, highly competitive liberal arts college that the women attended,

they grappled daily with their identity as athletes, an identity that was not a privileged

one in the campus environment. As participants attempted to meet their athletic and

academic demands, the discourse of 'athlete' was often at odds with the discourse of

'student.'

Participants frequently attributed academic improvement to participation in

sport. Their reasoning was that the structure and regimentation of their lives while in

season (due to daily practices and multiple games per week) helped them to schedule

and utilize their time more effectively. The isolation of athletes from the rest of the

campus community as result of schedule alignment and commitment to the activity

(teams eating together after practices and games, living together, taking classes together,

76

socializing together, not socializing because of athletic commitments) led to a social circle largely composed of other athletes. The identity position 'self as social athlete' emerged out of this aspect of the conflicting discourse of 'athlete' and 'student.'

The student athlete culture was one that acknowledged that social costs as well as academic costs that were associated with team membership. For instance, many athletes expressed frustration with their inability to spend as much time as they perceived their peers did working on their academics. They cited the time commitment and the exhaustive physical demands of participation as having a negative effect on their grades. When asked if they had considered quitting sport in order to more fully focus on academics they responded as if quitting was not a possibility. Sports were too central to their lives and they would be giving up something that they valued too highly. They adopted the position of the 'ambivalent, yet capable student self.' In doing so, they emphasized their academic capabilities and asserted that their academic performance was a result of taking a more balanced approach to their lives. It was testimony to their ability to balance academics and an activity that was important to them. Taking this approach, the subjects implied that they were more well-rounded than peers who were singularly focused on academics.

> Michelle articulated this conflict when she explained the balance she maintained
> between athletic, academic, and social commitments: *"Ok, like if I want to go*
> *out, or if there is something I want to do—I want to go visit my friend—like*
> *during season, we can't do any of that. Because like, Friday you have practice,*
> *Saturday you have a game, and by the time Saturday comes around, like*
> *Saturday night, we don't do anything. And everyone's like, "this isn't the*

college experience." And sometimes I'm like, well sometimes I want to go out,

and I'm like this sucks I have basketball I can't do anything. And sometimes I

am like this is what I want to do, like I love the sport and I want to focus on

academics, so I shouldn't go out. So it just depends on what mood I am in."

When asked about her long-term aspirations, she positioned her athletic

participation to be at odds with academic and future plans: *"I like always wanted*

to do...like wanted to be a doctor. And then I realized that's not gonna happen

because you have to be an A plus student, MCATs. Like I don't have time to

take an MCAT course even. So like, those dreams are shot."

Michelle's comment revealed a direct conflict between her athletic identity and her

student identity, with competing demands and expectations that she was unable to

balance.

Many of the participants were unsure of their desire to play college athletics

when they were contemplating their college options. Many expressed concerns about

the ability to balance their sport commitment and meet their academic performance

expectations. They seemed to acknowledge the potential for their lessened academic

performance, but ultimately decided to continue playing, further evidence of the

centrality of sports to their sense of self-definition.

Dawn described the extent to which opportunities for athletic participation

factored into her decision to attend this college: *"I didn't actually want to play*

any sports in college. I don't know...I kinda wanted to like...just do college.

And just focus on academics. But then I heard about the team and I thought it

would be kind of weird if I like came in and I wasn't playing." Dawn elaborated

on what gave her the impression that athletic participation would impact her ability to "do" college, *"When I came to visit I stayed with a friend who went here and she, she did crew her first semester, and like academically she couldn't really pull all-nighters because she had practice in the morning, stuff like that. And I don't know it just seemed like a lot more kind of like freedom if you're not playing a sport. You don't have if you have practice everyday after class."* In a similar manner to Dawn, Erin expressed her hesitancy towards participating in college athletics: *"Ok, so I did not actually play my first year in the fall. Because I just didn't want to. But also because I just didn't know....I wasn't like ready to play I don't think. I didn't get....I get really pumped up in the competitive atmosphere...I just wasn't ready my first fall coming in to play. I think social, academic. I think I was a little overwhelmed by everything. I mean I balance things really well, but I wasn't really sure. [This college] academically I was concerned with everything being really hard and so I think it was a combination of factors."* When asked whether the ability to participate influenced her college choice, Erin was adamant: *"No. No. I did not want that to be a factor in my decision. I didn't want to go to school just to play sports. I didn't want to go to school feeling that I had to play."*

The preceding vignettes illustrated the conflicting discourses of athlete and student that participants negotiated in the college environment.

Those who were recruited to play sports in college were also conflicted about balancing the demands of student and athlete. Their decision to attend this college was largely influenced by their impressions of the team and their expectations for their

college athletic careers. Some felt disillusioned with their academic experience in college and express confusion and anxiety about post-college career prospects.

Michelle responded to questions related to her satisfaction with her academic performance: "*I don't know, in high school I was a good student and I knew I would like have to work my ass off. But like...girls will be like, "Oh my god, I am getting a B in this class and it's so awful. I can't believe I am getting a B in this class." And I am like, I am getting a B minus in this class and I am happy about that. I mean, I worry about my grades all the time cuz I want to go to grad school. And I am like, if I went to [other college], I would probably get A minuses in all my science classes, not have to worry about grad school, not have to take summer classes. And I'd be fine. And now I am like, what am I gonna do with my life? Am I gonna get into grad school? Do I need to take summer classes? And I continuously hear all the time, "Oh my god, I only got an A minus in this class." And I am like, shut the hell up, like that's my biggest pet peeve here. I hate that. It just stresses me out.* When I asked Michelle if sport commitments were causing her to compromise her academic goals, she stated: "*Ummm...its...sometimes I feel like if I didn't have practice every day, if I wasn't gone all weekend, if I wasn't tired all the time getting back to my dorm room at 8:30 after being in class from like 9 to 4, that I could do so much better. I feel like that all the time. Cuz I love it too much. I just love it. I'd miss it. Like I care about my future, like getting good grades, whatever. But, there's no basketball for me after this, so...I'm gonna play as long as I can...and then...*"

Kelly described the impact of how the athletic opportunities influenced her college decision. She recounted her mother's fears that those concerns would be her singular focus: *"She was very big on the fact that she didn't want me picking a college because of sports. And she knew that I was gonna do that."* Kelly expressed disillusionment with her collegiate athletic career: *"Basketball's changed a lot for me. It used to be somewhere that I could just forget about everything, kindof. Like I said, I met a lot of my really good friends there. And now that AAU's over, I still have my really good friends, but basketball's just...it hasn't been the same, it's more...Since I got to college its more than work than enjoyable for me."*

In negotiating the conflicting discourses of student and athlete, participants sometimes took up the position of 'self as multifaceted individual' where they wrestled to present a self that was both intelligent and an athlete, which rejected society's construction that the two are mutually exclusive. In the following vignette, Kelly illustrated the difficulty in negotiating her identity as an athlete and managing the conflicting discourses that arose from that identity:

When asked how she thought she was perceived on campus, Kelly stated: *"I think people see me here as I see other people here. I mean we obviously know that everyone here is intelligent and I think that people see me as that instead of the athlete."* Kelly elaborated on the conflicted meaning of "athlete": *Well, we pay millions of dollars for people to play sports professionally and they don't even need a college education. I mean that's fabulous if you are that talented that you can go right from high school. But I just feel that someone who's went*

through college athletics is just...it's just so different from professional. I mean

personally, I just enjoy watching college sports more than I do professional.

Just cause I think that as a society we are portraying athletes as people who

aren't smart or don't need to be smart or don't need to work as hard as say...a

surgeon who has to go through hours and hours of school, hours of tests. And

these kids are coming out of high school, probably not even doing that well and

just being handed money."

'Student' and 'Woman'

The college the women attended prided itself on its tradition of producing leaders in a

variety of fields. The academic environment encouraged students to be 'strong women'

and to act confidently and with purpose. Yet this discourse of 'student' was in conflict

with the discourse of traditional femininity. The negotiation of that conflict came

through in the women's narratives.

The participants sometimes felt that competition in the classroom was taken to

inappropriate and unseemly levels. They were openly critical of study habits and

classroom conduct of what they perceived to be grade-oriented peers. Their 'good

enough for *me*' or 'best *I* can do' approach to academics firmly situated them out of the

competition for the best grades. Participants did not hesitate to admit to being

competitive on the field, a socially sanctioned venue. However, in keeping with

internalized notions of traditional femininity, subjects were critical of peers who were

exhibiting competitive behavior in a venue where they felt it was not appropriate. The

conflicting discourses of student and women suggest the need to critically examine how

82

athletics may be used to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes rather than transgress them. As athletics served as a 'channel' area for these women to safely express typically masculine behaviors like competitiveness, is that behavior limited to the playing fields? Are female athletes more likely to adhere to traditional standards of behavior in other areas of life that they do not consider to be a channel area (i.e.: the classroom)?

Michelle described the single sex college experience: *"Well they are like "Oh we are preparing you for the real world." Are we just gonna compete against women in the real world? Like, no we're not. Like everyone here is just in competition with one another. Like even in the classroom. It's just so unhealthy. Everyone's out to get each other, not just in class. Everyone...even professors I feel like just trying ways to make you feel stupid or make your life suck even harder. I just...I don't know..."* I asked Michelle to describe herself as a student*: "I go to class. Like if I have something to say I will say it. I don't just say things so the teacher thinks I am participating.   I do my work; I never hand anything in late. Like if it's due on a certain day like I always hand it in. I try my best on stuff; if I need help I will ask the professor. I don't know. I don't compare, like "What'd you get on this?" Or...I don't know. One time a girl raised her hand in chemistry, and she got a 99 on the friggin' exam. And like...was...I would never speak to a professor the way some of these girls talk to them. And she was like "You told us this, this and this. I want my one point." And I was like, you got a friggin' 99 and I am sitting at my desk with like my 60*

and I am happy about that. I don't know...I feel like everyone here...like since

I've been here I have lost so much confidence and I feel worse about myself."

What Michelle has perceived to be an ultra-competitive academic environment has

caused her to lose confidence in herself and her academic abilities. This admission was

particularly telling in that during no other point in her narrative did she betray a lack of

confidence in the athletic arena.

Kelly's attitude was one of disbelief when asked about her peers*: "It's so*

different. I have never met women like the girls... women I go to school with in

my life. I've never met women who are so sure of what they want to do, so

determined to do what they want to do. Ummm...it's just unbelievable. I go

home and hang out with my friends from high school and it's, they're totally

different. And its not that my friends from high school aren't determined and

strong. I mean I met a girl here who is positive she is gonna be the first female

president of the United States...I think it's insane (laughs)."

Rather than speaking to the toxic competitiveness that Michelle referenced, Kelly

classified her peers as different from any other women she had met. While she is

impressed by that difference, her classmate's aspiration to be president of the United

States was met by laughter and disbelief.   Kelly did not reference herself or suggest any

similarity between herself and her female classmates. She positioned them as 'different'

because of their determination and goal orientation. Ironically, these are qualities which

Kelly and other participants used to describe themselves as athletes. Yet when used in

the academic context, these same adjectives mark these women as different.

As students at an all-female college, the participants were initially reticent to acknowledge gender in their lives, particularly within the context of their academic lives. Most claimed that the decision to attend their college was not impacted, either positively or negatively, by the school's single sex status. However, they were eager to underscore the benefits to the learning environment (for others) by the absence of men.

Dawn described the effect of men's presence in the classroom: *"Well, I just think that, at least the girls that participate, girls are like, a lot more likely to say how they feel and really like, say what they know. And they kind of show it off. But when there are like boys in the class they are more likely to argue with them. Which is stereotypical."*

Dawn and other participants echoed this stereotypical attitude about the silencing effect produced by having men in the classroom as students. Participants did feel that the free flow of ideas and the ability to share openly was critical to the learning process. However, they felt that the ability of women to do so was hampered by men. The vignette below illustrated that perception:

When asked about her experience in the single sex classroom, Melissa responded, *"You know, being in my classroom in high school we had both of them, and I remember a girl would say something and turn and look at the guy sitting next to her to see what his reaction was. Ummm...it never did occur to me to turn when I said something and I think it's silly for somebody to care."* When asked if she felt more comfortable, Melissa stated, *"I don't know...it's just...I can't say that I am more comfortable in it. That's not really the right word for it but ummm...I feel the people around me are a lot more...free spoken*

or...ummm than they were in high school. I don't know if that's because the

average student here is more intelligent than they were in high school. But its

just...the flow of ideas is a lot easier here and I don't know if that's attributed to

it being a women's college maybe people are more comfortable. I don't know."

These comments suggested that the free sharing of ideas was to be done in an

unselfconscious manner, where the speaker should be unaffected by the opinions of

(female) classmates. References were made to the condition that there was no one to

impress in the classroom or that it did not matter what anyone (any woman) thought.

This attitude suggested that participants were unconcerned with judgment by other

women; that it was inconsequential or irrelevant what female peers think and negative

reactions from other woman were not important enough to affect behavior. The

implication is that the presence of men would impact other women's behavior as

students

In characterizing their school, participants positioned their college by its absence

of men, rather than the presence of women. This absence was often viewed as a

situation to be overcome and made the most of, contradicting participants' previous

position that there were benefits to be realized from a single sex environment.

Jane described her disbelief in her decision to attend a single sex college, *"I was*

like what in the world am I doing? Never in a million years could I have

imagined that I'd be at a women's college. Just like my experience with my high

school, like, I felt like I made the most of it and I could do the same here. Like I

didn't think it would be a problem. Umm...there have been moments that have

been isolating. But umm...It's a small college town, but I am gonna make the most of it while I'm here."

Erin explained strategies to overcome the perceived limitations of the single sex environment, *"I think a lot of people who complain about guys not being on campus are just like...do not expand their horizons and just do not go to other schools. We are in a valley with five schools and there are guys everywhere, always. I have friends that go to [nearby co-educational college] all the time and they have [other college] boyfriends or this or that or [other university] boyfriends or whatever. If you depend on your personality then I think there is always an outlet for whatever you want to do. You just have to find it. No. Cuz I have guy friends. I...that has never been a complaint of mine. Your friends are who your friends are. It shouldn't matter, the like...I don't know."*

Both Jane and Erin's comments reinforced the notion that the single-sex environment was something to deal with, but could be overcome.

Erin described her impressions of the single sex experience including conflicted attitudes towards feminism and 'empowerment'*: In the sense that's like my whole thing about...I think that people take feminism much too far particularly at an all women's college. Its 'empowering', so people think it's like empowering to be at an all women's college. You're learning that women are also really important. But we like... we know that women are really important. Historically, like if we really look back at history we can really see throughout history that women are really important. And we don't necessarily need an all women's college to tell us that. I think that having all women's colleges are*

87

really nice because you are more... probably going to learn these things about

women but if these things are really important to you, you will learn that."

While Erin acknowledged that there was value in learning about women's historical

achievements, she also felt that those achievements were often self evident and not

worthy of remarking on specifically. Feminism is taken' too far' and women's

empowerment is misplaced.

Gendered Subjectivities

The identity positions that they women took up in their daily lives helped them

to grapple with the conflicting discourses of their lives. Examining the ways in which

the women have constructed the gendered nature of those subjectivities further insight

into the struggle to reconcile contradicting identities. The table below provides a

summary.

Table 5: Gendered Subjectivities—Single Sex College

Subjectivity	Description
Gender in sport	Participants took up several identity positions related to sport, yet were resistant to take up the identity of 'female athlete' in a meaningful way. Discussions of gender in sport were focused on articulating the difference between men's and women's sports. This understanding of difference was extended to illustrating differences between female and male athletes. A contradiction emerged as the women understood sports and sporting bodies to be gendered, but did not want to position themselves as gendered (within a sport context)
Gender in school community/classroom	Participants expressed the belief that men silenced (other) women in the classroom. They said that (other) female students sought male approval and deferred to men in academic settings. However, they positioned the single sex environment to be more conducive to free expression of ideas in the classroom because "there is no one to impress."

Gender in sport

The subject position of 'female athlete' was one that participants were resistant to take up. However, participants were eager to elucidate the ways in which sport was gendered, and the ways in which female and male athletes were different. They were hesitant to acknowledge differences between male and female athletes that suggested men were more physically suited to athletics, as normative constructions of gender would suggest, while they simultaneously emphasized the finesse and mental aspects of the women's approach to sport. The following vignettes simultaneously deconstructed and bolstered the gendered nature of sport:

> When asked how she defined a 'female athlete,' Anne, a 21-year old third year student articulated the definition of a female athlete in relation to the perceived differences between male and female athletes: *"I don't know...I definitely notice the differences between female and male athletes. More on the biological level—they can run faster. From what I've been told and read, men are naturally built for that because...stupid crap...It's really funny cuz I tried out for the baseball team; it was a farm league. I was the only girl on the team and they were all complaining about it until we ran bases and I could run faster than them and they shut up."* Anne acknowledged physical difference but provided an anecdotal account that discounted that difference.

Other participants spoke to the physical nature of men's sports and contrasted it to the women's game, which they felt relied more on finesse than power.

Mary explained: *"I think you know, to be a female athlete, I think a lot more in terms of the mental aspects of the game."* And: *"Men's soccer I think is too much of a physical game for me. It's not as much skill or finesse. It's more of a power struggle. You know, who can kick it the farthest. Whereas women are more technical in their game. And kind of ironically, I enjoy watching men's lacrosse and ice hockey because it is more physical. Checking is allowed in hockey and you can't hit somebody with your stick in women's lacrosse. For me that's the more entertaining game to watch."*

While the participants could point to instances where they had physically outperformed men, *"I could run faster than them"* their resistance to the gendered subjectivity of sport was not consistent. Participants affirmed traditional gender construction through their assertion of men's reliance on strength and power for successful performance and women's emphasis on mental focus and finesse. Many pointed to structural constraints in the women's game, rules against checking for instance, that oriented the game towards development of skillful ball handling and frequent passing, rather than shows of force to overcome opponents. The women's comments betrayed frustration with the perception that their play was any less physical than that of their male counterparts, lest their game be seen as a lesser version of the men's game, but they reinforced gendered constructions of sport through their emphasis on their more skillful, mentally focused approach to play.

Gender in the school community and/or in the classroom

Several participants insisted that the fact that their college was a single-sex institution did not factor in their decision to attend the college. They downplayed the importance of the single sex environment to contributing to any particular qualities of the college beyond two stereotypical gendered attributes.

When asked if the single sex status of the college was a factor in her decision to attend her college Melissa said, *"No. It didn't really affect my decision either way. I didn't have an intent to come to a women's college and I didn't have an intent to go to a co-ed school either. It didn't really factor into the decision either way."*

In their descriptions of the campus community, participants pointed to the welcoming, non-judgmental, comfortable environment of the college, adjectives that are used in describing a traditional construction of femininity. Most were reluctant to attribute this feeling to the fact that their school was a women's college but, do eventually suggest this quality was a result of the 'people' on campus.

Anne responded to questions related to whether or not she thought the all-female environment made people more willing to speak out in class*: "I think that has to do with it; I think it has a lot to do with the people that are here. I think the fact that we are all female helps. Because a lot times in classrooms and so on guys can take over and have their power trips. I mean, girls do it too, but not to the extent that guys have to answer for you. And it's nice to know, well "You're not better than me."*

Participants pointed to the lack of men in the classroom as a condition that was beneficial to other women because it allowed them to speak up and share their opinions without fear of censorship or judgment. Many point to experiences in co-educational high schools or told anecdotes of friends at other colleges who were unable to express themselves fully in the classroom because of the either the tendency of men to dominate classroom discussion or the choice of these women to stifle their opinions for fear of male reprisal. The implication was that either female peers did not judge, or that their judgmental opinions did not matter and did not compel the women to self-censor. This perception of classroom dynamics was always referenced in the context of 'other people'. Subjects reiterated that this did not speak to their experience as female students and have always been able to express themselves freely, if they so choose.

Mary described the qualities of her college that she liked, *"I really, really enjoy the fact that it's just an all women's college. Because I think again it sort of allows women to speak out more. I know that at coed schools sometimes girls sort of diminish their voices if there are guys there."* When asked to elaborate on that experience she stated, *"Yeah, high school was coed. I always would speak out. My view was about sort of the male...I would be pretty confident in saying that girls speak up a lot more being in a group of all women."* Jane commented on her experience in the single sex environment: *"I think some women feel more self confident being here because you are not in the presence of men and like, I am fully functional in here. I can do anything I want. I am the center of attention, its all about me. Umm...and...I don't know it's just.... I think its distracting from their ability to sort of focus in and concentrate on what's*

really important. And that's school and like your education and doing what you

have to do to do as well as you can do."

Erin had an ambivalent attitude toward the single sex environment of her school:

"I have had [men] in my studio classes and my politics classes. And I

don't...the thing is like I don't really see a big difference between having guys

there. Because I am not a person who was intimidated to speak up in class

originally with guys, it has never been a problem for me. So...but some women

who feel that they would be judged or this and that or whatever would I am sure

would get better I am sure, but that's never been an issue for me."

Discussion

The women at the single-sex college took up five identity positions—each with

unique attributes and qualities which served to position the speaker within a certain

space and context. The identity positions, while distinct, share the qualities of the

centrality of athletics and the notion of 'athlete' to their identity construction. Even

when the women attempted to dislocate themselves from their various athletic identities

('self as diligent athlete,' 'self as the social athlete,' 'self as efficient and focused

student athlete'), as was the case with 'self as ambivalent, yet capable student' and 'self

as multifaceted individual,' an awareness of athletic concerns and preoccupations crept

into their narratives, shaping these seemingly un-athletic identity positions.

The centrality of the athletic identity and the subsequent identity positions that

the women take up had consequences for the discourses they voiced. Those discourses,

the ways in which the women told their stories and made sense their lived experiences,

were the means by which they constructed self. The discourse of 'athlete' was often in conflict with discourses of 'woman' and 'student.' Further, the participants negotiated the conflicts between 'student' and 'woman.' It became clear that taking up any or all of the subject positions available to these women would compel them to undertake a negotiation of the conflicting discourses that were associated with elements of each identity position as well as essentialized subject positions (i.e.: 'woman,' and 'student'). The gendered nature of their subjectivities emphasized the overarching relevance of binary sex categories and the performance of gender in their adoption of identity positions. Ultimately, the selves that were constructed were gendered and the women grappled with the social consequences of that gendering.

CHAPTER IV

DETAILED FINDINGS—CO-EDUCATIONAL COLLEGE

Participant narratives revealed several identity positions that the women adopted

as they negotiated the different spaces of their daily lives. These identity positions

carried with them expectations of behavior, ways of being, that were often at odds.

Identity positions generated conflicting discourses and the women struggled to reconcile

them. For these students at a co-educational college, gender was not a central issue in

their narratives, and was often ignored in favor of other markers of 'difference.'

However, the participants' struggles to reconcile identities and understand their

environments, their lives, and their experiences, was apparent.

Identity Positions

The identity positions that the women took up are summarized below.

Table 6: Identity Positions—Co-Educational College

Identity Position	Description
Self as athlete	"Athlete" becomes an essentialized identity category that is taken up in reference to distinguish self from an Other (those who do not participate) and align the speaker with all the individuals on campus that do participate in athletics. This identity is essentialized and ignores individual differences between athletes, yet participants found it a useful and oft taken up identity position.
Self as social athlete	Identity as an athlete serves a social function. Team membership facilitates social interaction. The friendships that are formed are meaningful and long-lasting. However, on some teams and playing situations, the women found difficulty managing friendships within the context of the team. Overall, when taking up this identity position, participation in athletics is meant to be fun and enjoyable.

Self as mentally aware athlete	Participants took up the subject position of 'self as mentally aware athlete' throughout the course of their narratives. This identity position was similar to the identity position of 'self as diligent athlete' but lacked specific references to the archetype of the 'natural athlete' (as a point of contrast) and was not grounded on the premise of extraordinary effort as the source of athletic competence. When participants adopted this identity position, they emphasized their understanding of their chosen sport—their awareness of the technical aspects, rules, and strategies of play. This position was used as a foundation for explaining their competence as athletes and justification for leadership roles on the team.
Self as constant athlete	When the women took up this position, they framed their lives in the context of preparing for or participating in sport. Athletics occupies a central position in their lives.

Being an "athlete"

At the coeducational college, the participants did not appear to take up as many identity positions as their counterparts at the single sex college in order to make sense of their subjectivities as athletes. One could argue, based on the culture of the school and the perception that athletes were a majority faction on campus, that the identity position 'athlete' was unproblematic. In their narratives, the women were constructing an essential notion of 'athlete' just as one may construct an essentialized notion of 'woman.' However it is important to keep in mind that 'athlete,' as a subjectivity, encompasses a diversity of bodies and experiences. Indeed, to do 'athlete,' one also 'does' sport, competitive level, not to mention the more familiar doings of gender, race, class, age, sexuality, etc. However, in speaking of their identities as athletes, the women seemed to have constructed a notion of 'athlete' that included them and encompassed all the other 'athletes' on campus—from a female tennis player to a (male) football player. This position was bolstered by visible markers of the 'athlete' identity

that individuals displayed on campus to make this identity visible. One such example

was the grey "issue" sweat-clothes that "all" the athletes wear that were not generally

available to the student body.

> *"People wear their sweats all the time. There is sort of like an athlete...we have*
>
> *these 'issue' sweats. They're all grey. People don't wear their sweatshirts so*
>
> *much, but you see athletes all the time wearing their grey sweatpants. And you*
>
> *just sort of ....I don't know if other students can get those sweatpants or not but*
>
> *you see athletes wearing them all the time, so you go, "Oh, they're an athlete."*
>
> Laurie, 21, ice hockey

Self as social athlete

These women, like their counterparts at the single-sex college, took up the

identity position of 'self as social athlete.' This subjectivity positioned their

construction of an athlete identity within a social space. The team facilitated social

interaction—from forming their primary friendship circle, to dictating the frequency and

character of their social interactions with the campus community at large. Participation

was meant to be "fun" and enjoyable. Friendships with teammates were perceived as

meaningful and lifelong. The following vignettes illustrated the social aspects of team

membership:

> Jennifer, a 19 year old ice hockey and rugby player explained, *"It was nice*
>
> *because I got a solid group of friends and people I knew I could count on and I*
>
> *never really had that in my life before."* When asked about the benefits of team
>
> membership, Jennifer pointed to the social aspects: *"Ummm...more than*

97

anything just people that you know you can count on. For the rest of my life.

And I know that I am gonna be friends with the girls on the rugby team for the

rest of my life. And I know that I am probably gonna be friends with most of the

girls on the hockey team for the rest of my life. So...that's invaluable to me. I

have always been a relationship oriented person and I like knowing that I have

people I can count on and I think that playing sports has always made that a lot

more a part of my life than it would have been had I not played sports".

Karly, a 21 year old field hockey and lacrosse player elaborated on the social

significance of athletic participation: *"We have team parties basically. A lot of*

my best friends—my roommates even—I met through sports. One plays rugby,

one plays ice hockey, one used to play ice hockey and is now a firefighter. All

girls. A lot of my friends are athletes." Regarding friendships outside of

athletics, Karly responded, *"I have a couple of friends who aren't athletes but*

definitely on the weekends do stuff with your team before you go out to other

parties. And my core group of friends are other girls who are on my team or

friends of girls who are on my team."

The identity position of self as social athlete was not unproblematic. The

utopian portrayal of team membership, with its warm feelings of belonging and

acceptance, was revealed to be just that—a construction. A conflicting discourse

emerged as athletes discussed feelings of alienation, of not fitting in, with their

teammates. This discourse cited the failure to connect with female (and oftentimes

male) teammates for a variety of reasons. This discourse was in direct conflict with the

prevailing discourse surrounding the social benefits of athletic participation. Athletes

utilized a variety of strategies to resolve this conflict, attributing the cause of their disconnection from teammates to geographic distance, personal style of play, puberty, and the character of the sport itself.

Genevieve, a 21 year old rugby player, tried to explain her mixed feelings about playing on the tennis team in high school: *"Ummm...you know I am not totally sure what I liked about tennis. Oh actually that's not really true. The team was kind of annoying. They were all very preppy kind of girls."* [R]: Did you get any team interaction playing tennis? *"I did but...one of my really good friends played tennis but....I didn't like all of the girls on that team as much as I could have."* When the conversation moved to explore why Genevieve did not elect to participate in college, the negative social aspect of team membership re-emerged in her narrative: *"I knew a few of the girls on the tennis team and I wasn't really necessarily down with that social scene at all."*

Laurie, a 21 year old, ice hockey player recounted which teammates comprised her social group as a child: *"Pretty much all my friends played soccer with me and then I had a lot of friends from Little League. And then for hockey I wasn't really close friends with the boys that I played with because that was a separate team league from where I lived but ummm....when I started playing with the girls we ended up playing with each other for so long, we all became really good friends."*

Self as mentally aware athlete

Participants took up the subject position of 'self as mentally aware athlete' throughout the course of their narratives. This identity position was similar to the

identity position of 'self as diligent athlete' but lacked specific references to the archetype of the 'natural athlete' (as a point of contrast) and was not grounded on the premise of extraordinary effort as the source of athletic competence.

When asked how she described herself as an athlete, Genevieve responded by emphasizing her mental understanding of the game: *"I'm not...I've never been the most athletic person on the field. Like I am athletic in that I can run and I have really good hand-eye coordination but I have never been one of those people where you are like, "Wow, athlete." But I've always had a really good understanding of the game. Like when I used to play soccer I was always the sweeper because like I sort of, would just sit back, and I was good at getting in at the right moment. Ummm...and that was when I was in seventh and eighth grade. And for tennis and softball, like I've always understood like the way the game worked. I always positioned myself really well. And so...in rugby the same thing. I sort of understand the flow of the game."* This mental competence emerged later in her narrative, reinforcing Genevieve's position of 'self as mentally aware athlete: *"I would say that I am one of the people who is technically pretty good. Like, I understand it, and I love it, so I guess I am part of that."*

At the time of her interview Karly was weighing the merits of participating in her final season of lacrosse during the spring semester of her senior year (she has since elected not to participate). Plagued by injury, her ability to play was uncertain. Karly used the 'self as mentally aware athlete' identity position to explain her anticipated position within the team: *"Because I will have more of a coaching role because I know a lot of the technical aspects of the game because I have been*

playing for so long, but I don't know whether or not I am going to be able to play

and not sure if I want to put myself in that role. "

When participants adopted this identity position, they emphasized their

understanding of their chosen sport—their awareness of the technical aspects, rules, and

strategies of play. This position was used as a foundation for explaining their

competence as athletes and justification for leadership roles on the team.

Self as constant athlete

A subject position that emerged in several of the participants' narratives was the

'self as constant athlete.' When the women took up this position, they framed their

lives and activities in the context of preparing for or participating in sport. The

following vignettes illustrated the centrality of athletics in their lives and emphasized

that this identity position emerged in relation to that centrality.

Tonya, a 20 year old ice hockey player explained the role of athletics in her life:

"I'd say it dictates. I mean I'm always at the gym preparing for the season and

after the season, over the summer. Practicing, games, take up a significant amount

of time." When asked why she was so focused, Tonya's response emphasized the

competitive nature of sport at this level: *"I mean the competition is better so you*

have to prepare better. And you can't just show up to practice and just be there.

You have to be like prepared. And it's a lot more demanding on your body and on

your mind too."

Jennifer echoed Tonya's sentiments: *"(Athletics) take over my life pretty much. I*

am playing rugby in the fall and hockey starts middle November but we still have

the captain's practices. So between the athletic and social aspects of both teams I

am just completely consumed by sports here." Jennifer, like Tonya, was devoted to

preparation*: "I don't think the process ever really ends. It's continuous. You*

prepare...when the last game ends you start preparing for the next thing."

As participants took up this subject position, they revealed the importance of the

identity of 'athlete' and the multiple ways in which self was positioned in the context of

'athlete. Given this importance, these subject positions set the context for the gendered

subjectivities and conflicting discourses that emerged within the course of their

narratives.

Managing Conflicting Discourses

As the women took up identity positions as part of the ongoing process of constructing

'self,' these self-positionings lent themselves to discursive practices—the linguistic

strategies the women employed in making sense of their experience—that were often

contradictory. Those conflicting discourses are summarized below.

Table 7: Managing Conflicting Discourses—Co-Educational College
Conflicting Discourses: "Female participation" and "Sports as a requirement"

Areas of conflict	Description
Expectation of participation	In the post-Title IX era, girls are seen to have the opportunity to participate in sports and as a result, are expected to participate.
Naturalization of participation	Sport positioned as a requirement in some institutional settings because dominant discourse in a post-Title IX era tells women that sports are just what girls "do."
Inadequate infrastructure limits opportunities	Women and girls have the opportunity to play some sports and not others. Ice hockey, for instance, lacks the infrastructure for girls-only teams and is positioned in many communities as an unacceptable form of female sports participation.

Conflicting Discourses: "Encouragement" and "Discouragement"

Areas of conflict	Description
Opportunities for participation	In the post-Title IX era, female sports participation is understood as an expected and encouraged activity. However, this participation is often limited by structural constraints (lack of female team opportunities in certain sports like ice hockey). The women's narratives suggested that the discourse of participation was in conflict with discourses they encountered beyond adolescence. They perceived to be subtly discouraged, as was evidenced by a lack of encouragement by coaches to pursue athletics beyond the high school level.
Sport Selection	The women's identities were generally not seen to conflict with a gender construction that allowed for athletic participation. However, some sport selections were positioned as in conflict with (reconfigured) notions of femininity and participation became problematic.

Conflicting Discourses: "Team membership" and "Individual identity"

Areas of conflict	Description
Belonging	As participants engaged in identity work, the requirements for identity subordination that team membership entailed created problems for individual construction of 'self.'

Conflicting Discourses: "Student" and "Woman"

Areas of conflict	Description
Academic experience	Participants spoke to the free flow of ideas that was possible in an all female environment. Many spoke to the silencing effect (for other women) of having men in the classroom.
Classroom Conduct	The classroom was seen as a place for the expression of traditional notions of femininity. Athletics are a "channel" for exhibiting behaviors that may fall outside of that narrow construct.

Conflicting Discourses: "The feminine aesthetic" and "The athlete physique"

Areas of conflict	Description
Using the body for sport	As participants took up the various identity positions in their narratives, conflicting discourses emerged regarding their physiques. The women's conversations about using their bodies in service of sport and the need for a pleasing (feminine) aesthetic were rife with conflict.
Pleasing appearance	Participants spoke to the conflicts involved in maintaining a pleasing (read: feminine) appearance while achieving what was constructed as the 'proper' level of fitness for sport.

Conflicting Discourses: "Athlete" and "Student"

Areas of conflict	Description
Athletes are be competent students	Perhaps as a response to negative stereotypes of the "dumb jock," participants were eager to express their competencies in the classroom.
Meeting academic and athletic demands	Participants' narratives spoke to the difficulty they perceived in meeting demands placed upon them as athletes and as students. This conflict emerged as they were frequently asked to choose to devote more time and energy to one activity at the expense of another.

'Female participation' and 'Sport as a requirement/the naturalization of participation'

The initial motivation for this study was to illuminate and explore the subjectivities of college aged female athletes who have grown up in an era where, seemingly, their identity as 'athlete' would be unproblematic. Through a structural change, the passage and implementation of Title IX legislation whose purpose was to enforce gender equity in access and opportunity in educational institutions, a space was created for female athletes. However, the need for a structural change in order to create this space suggested cultural conditions which may not fully embrace the notion of an athlete who is also female. In the pre-Title IX era, the discourse of female participation was one of non-participation. The conversations with these women suggested that the structural change of Title IX had, in fact, signaled an ideological shift. The discourse of "sport as a requirement/the naturalization of participation" suggested that, at least in youth, girls could and were expected to participate in sports as a part of their development. The vignette below acknowledged the conflicting discourse of pre-Title IX women's participation with the post-Title IX era expectation of female participation:

Genevieve explained her mother's role in her youth athletic participation: *"She actually was my softball coach. Umm...for my entire youth summer softball career. She's umm pretty rockin'. We won the championships four of the six years that I played and we came in second the other two times."* Given the substantial level of Genevieve's mother's involvement, I asked Genevieve about the extent of her mother's sports participation*: "She just played softball I think when I...She's not non-athletic. It just was never really encouraged of her. In her high school the only women's team that they had was golf"*. Genevieve briefly acknowledged the lack of opportunity and access her mother experienced in her youth, and did not have to experience it herself. When I asked Genevieve if she was encouraged to play sports as a child, she responded: *"Oh yeah. I mean part of my childhood deal was that I had to play sports. Ummm....and it wasn't really like I was required to play sports; I really liked it. But I don't know, my little sister wanted to quit playing sports and they told her that she couldn't."*

Genevieve's narrative spoke not only to access to sport but to the expectation of participation. Laurie echoed those same conditions when she recounted the role of parents and community in getting children, regardless of gender, involved in sport.

"Well soccer is really big in our community so all my friends were, they were playing, so my parents just signed me up. And so hockey, my dad used to take me to Badgers Men's Hockey games, when they would have a Christmas tournament in Milwaukee." When I asked Laurie how and why she started playing ice hockey, the narrative took a different turn. *"Well, its cold where I*

105

live. And lots of kids ice skate. And my mom signed me up for figure skating

lessons (laughs) and I didn't like the toe picks and I didn't like the little tutus.

And I told her I wanted the black skates. And she yelled at my dad and he said,

"Well, whatever. It's fine." So they got me hockey skates and signed me up

with like a little recreational league and I was the only girl on the team, or the

only girl in the league, maybe. Maybe there was one other."

Laurie's narrative illustrated some resistance on the part of her mother to participation

in a sport, ice hockey, which had not pervaded youth sport in the same manner as

soccer, for example, had. Yet, despite limited opportunities, with support Laurie was

still able to take part in the sport of her choosing.

The naturalization of female athletic participation was made most visible by

Karly's experience at an exclusive female private boarding school where sport

participation was a curricular requirement: *"In sixth grade they had...if you didn't play*

any type of sport or didn't have any type of activity than you had to join a sport."

The women's narratives suggested that they were engaged in an ongoing

negotiation where there was a post-Title IX expectation of the opportunity to play which

coincided with the remnants of the pre-Title IX era where the infrastructure (i.e.: female

youth hockey teams) was limited. While certain communities expected their daughters

to play, the expectation was that girls play only certain sports. As Laurie illustrated in

her anecdote, she still had to demand the opportunity to play ice hockey. The only

opportunity available to her was to become a member on a boy's team, a situation which

likely discouraged many girls from participating (as was evidenced by Laurie's lone

female status for much of her youth). Further, the attempt to reconcile conflicting

106

discourses of 'female participation' and 'sport as a requirement/naturalization of participation' seemed to have created a situation, according to Karly's narrative, where non-participation for girls was not an option. It is doubtful that the intention of Title IX was to require participation.

'Encouragement' and 'Discouragement'

Further investigation into the women's narratives revealed conflicting discourses of 'participation encouragement' and 'participation discouragement.' The following vignette illustrated Genevieve's experience as a high school varsity athlete. By her own report, her high school has a tradition of successful girl's athletic teams.

> When asked if she had considered playing sports in college and using her athletic status to help her gain admission, Genevieve answered, *"No. I actually was purely looking academics when I was looking at colleges. I didn't realize until after I got accepted to college that I could have been sort of like, "I am an athlete. Let's see what that can do for me." So I didn't really know about that."* When asked if her parents or coaches ever encouraged her to pursue athletic recruitment, Genevieve stated, *"My high school coaches tended to be...well one of them was a science teacher at our school who was like, ok, but not great. But...and my tennis coach never really thought about it either. That was, it was never really seen as something that I would do competitively after high school. I am not totally sure why that is."*

The preceding vignette begs the question, should the lack of encouragement (at the high school level) to pursue college athletics be understood as an implicit discouragement

from participation? None of Genevieve's high school coaches presented her with the possibility of playing college athletics—which arguably was part of their duties as head coach. Surely in a school which Genevieve described as very prestigious academically, there would be an awareness of the competitive advantage recruited athletes at all levels have in the admissions process.

From a young age, typically five or six years old, participants were encouraged to participate in sports. They reported that they did not encounter barriers to participation, parental or otherwise. For many of these women, sport participation was a de facto condition of their childhood. Participants were unable to point to specific incidents where they were denied access to participation. It was telling that no participants cited the lack of availability of girl's teams (specifically for ice hockey) as an implicit barrier to participation. Several participants anticipated an interest on the part of the researcher in gender based discouragement, and unprompted, structured their narratives to refute that perception.

[R]: So did anyone ever discourage you along the way from playing sports? *"No. Umm....no actually.* [R]: *"Never?" "I don't think so. I mean I am sure I got some people who were like "Wow, you play a lot of sports." But in my town girls played a lot of sports. Ummm...soccer was huge at my high school. We had a really phenomenal cross country team. We had a lot of girls who were doing a lot of sports. So I never really felt like I had to fight for my right."* Genevieve, 21, rugby

[R]: So what did your mom think, your mom and dad actually, about you playing hockey*? "Well, my mom was super tomboy when she was a kid and she*

played football thru middle school and so my mom was always big on me

playing on boys teams and doing non-girly things." Jennifer, 19, ice

hockey/rugby

These narratives position girls' athletic participation as 'natural' and expected.

Genevieve clearly stated that she never had to "fight" for her right to play. She came of

age with the assumption that girls would not only be able to play, but their participation

was normalized. Further, their teams were perceived as successful—clearly the teams

were comprised of skilled athletes. While Jennifer also had the expectation of

participation, her comments positioned playing certain sports as a 'non-girly' activity.

Jennifer attributes her mother's encouragement to her position as a 'tomboy' in her

youth. Therefore she was supportive of Jennifer's non-traditional (read: male) sport

choices.

In the following vignette, Tonya echoed the conflicting discourse of

encouragement and discouragement surrounding athletic participation. While she was

encouraged to play sports, her mother also encouraged her to pursue "traditionally

feminine" activities such as ballet, dance, and gymnastics. Tonya interrupted the flow

of her own narrative to defend her mother's motives:

[R]: Did anyone ever discourage you from playing any sports? *"Ummm...Not*

that I can recall. Ummmm...Not...I can't recall like a specific incident. I

think...growing up or in general? [R]: In general if you think of an incident.

"Umm...I can't think of someone saying oh yeah you shouldn't play sports or a

girl shouldn't play sports. I know when I was younger I did like gymnastics and

dance and ballet and things like that. Ummm...and my mom kinda pushed me

towards that." [R]: Any reason why? *'I think she had been...she had wanted to*

Broadway when she was younger and she was I guess just following the

*traditional feminine roles with society you know...dance...*Tonya began to shrug

her shoulders in a dismissive manner, and was asked why she was making a

dismissive motion, Tonya's response was somewhat defensive, "*Ummm I mean I*

don't....I think was fun. I don't see anything wrong with it."

With leading questions, Tonya was able to articulate multiple incidents when her

athletic participation was questioned on the basis of her race.

[R]: Now you said that no one ever discouraged you because you were a girl.

Did anyone ever discourage you from what you called those white sports,

playing because you are a person of color? *"Ummm...yeah. I have had lots of*

experiences with that over the years. I have been told that black people can't

play hockey. Hockey is my main sport so I can speak from that a lot.

Umm...yeah I have been told "yeah you shouldn't be playing hockey." [R]: Any

reason why? *No. Just because.* [R]: Who said that to you? Black people or

white people? *"Umm. When people ask me what sport I play, speaking to black*

people they, they are just surprised. But not really discouraging...they are not

discouraging. They are just like, "Really?" They don't have a problem with it.

[R]: So it's white people giving you negative reaction to it? *Yeah."*

Why these incidents did not immediately come to mind was unclear, but the initial

inability (or unwillingness) to speak of discouragement suggested that participants may

be invested in the larger issue of maintaining that their identities as athletes are

unproblematic. Revealing instances where they had to defend their right to take up the

identity position of athlete would force them to acknowledge the potentially disruptive

nature of the identity they were taking on. Awareness of this disruption may be a

challenge to their sense of self—a challenge they were unwilling to address.

'Team membership' and 'Individual identity'

The narratives changed as participants left the teams of their youth behind. The

women gave voice to their specific "identity work" projects that were often framed, at

least in part, within the context of their subjectivities as athletes. The vignette below

suggested that constructing a self that was both 'athlete' and 'woman' had elements

which subjected the individual to a kind of double jeopardy—where their identities were

under attack on multiple levels.

> When asked about her experiences as the lone female in her hockey league,
> Jennifer stated: *"Oh, I was like the only girl in the state playing ice hockey for*
> *like five or six years basically."*[R]: How was that experience? *"It was hard at*
> *times. It wasn't really hard when I was younger when I was eight to like twelve*
> *it was fine. I was just one of the guys and nobody cared. But then everybody hit*
> *puberty and it started being really awkward. And I really...I almost quit hockey*
> *at one point because it was just a really frustrating experience. But I got a lot*
> *out of it...so...."*[R]: So who was making it hard? *"The guys on my team were*
> *making it really difficult for me."* [R]: In what ways? *"They would just say*
> *really rude comments to me all the time and just ummm...yeah..."*

Jennifer's comments suggested her membership on her all-male hockey team was

unproblematic until she and her teammates reached puberty. Jennifer alluded to

111

conditions which threatened her comfort on the team and almost forced her to quit. Her comments suggested that her male teammates suddenly found her presence as a woman on a male team to be undesirable. As Jennifer negotiated adolescence, a difficult path on its own, the added pressure of exploring womanhood in the context of a male athletic space was almost too much to bear. One expected that some of that pressure was alleviated when Jennifer transitioned to an all female team at a private boarding school for high school, but the conflict of athlete and women emerged anew as Jennifer struggled to find a place for herself within a female athletic space:

> *"I was this really really violent aggressive tomboy. And then I realized that I annoyed a lot of people so I toned it down. But umm...I just...I used to look like a little boy and act like a little boy all the time.* When asked if violent and aggressive tendencies were helpful for hockey, Jennifer stated: "*Not really because I am a goalie so I just get hit. But never really helped me".* Jennifer explained the reason why she changed her style of play when she joined an all girls team in high school: "*I was always even really aggressive and I would hit people and knock them down and trip them when I could get away with it anyway. But the girls would get really annoyed with it so I had to stop that (laughs)."*

Jennifer spoke of her 'tomboy' persona which she modified upon arrival to boarding school. This persona, which had served her in the past, enabled her to be 'one of the boys' both socially in her largely male peer group in school and on her all-male hockey team. However, in the context of her northeast private boarding school environment, she felt the identity she had constructed was a hindrance to her, both socially and athletically. She felt that her on-ice behavior provoked censure from her peers. She

attempted to regulate this behavior in order to gain acceptance from her female peers. She described her behavior as 'overly aggressive' which seemed ironic given the context—ice hockey. It was telling that Jennifer did not feel her behavior was inappropriate for executing her role as the team goalie—she modified it in order to gain social acceptance. This anecdote clearly illustrated the delicate balance one must achieve between maintaining one's own identity and subordinating that identity in order to facilitate team membership.

In her description of the reasons she chose her college, Jennifer said she felt confident that her chosen college's campus would provide her with a "comfortable" environment for "figuring herself out." Jennifer referenced her identity as still very much in flux. She concluded that while this process was ongoing, that the rugby team provided a venue for her to be "herself."

> *"I knew [this college] would be a place that I be comfortable. I just felt it when I was here and when I visited I felt that I would be socially comfortable and athletically comfortable and academically comfortable as soon as I can figure myself out (laughs).*

Her comments illustrated that rather than reaching some definitive endpoint of identity construction, Jennifer found contexts and environments where she allowed aspects of her identity to emerge. As ice hockey became less of a place where her desire to be physically aggressive was appropriate, she found another venue (also in an athletic context) where she felt she could express 'herself.'

> [R]: Do you enjoy the physical aspects of rugby? "*Yeah, yeah I do.*" [R]: What about it do you like? "*I just...I don't know...When you just...absolutely lay*

someone out it's a really good feeling. I have never really gotten that playing

goalie. I don't hit anyone. Sometimes you just gotta hit someone."

These anecdotes highlighted the on-going, situational aspect of identity

construction. Despite her own internal conception of 'figuring out' her 'self', Jennifer

illustrated the situational and relational aspect of identity negotiation through her

selection of activities and environments where her construction of self would be

embraced and not censured (as it had been and continued to be in other contexts).

'Woman' and 'The natural athlete'

A discourse that seemed particularly revelatory in a post-Title IX context was the

use of the 'natural athlete' archetype.   The participants utilized this archetype in a

manner that differed from that of their counterparts at the single sex college. Rather

than use the 'natural athlete' as a foil to their own subject position, the women at this

college spoke of the natural athlete's existence purely to illustrate a particular type of

athlete. The 'natural athlete' archetype emerged in response to my inquiries about

different 'types' of athletes.

When asked about whether or not she felt there were different types of athletes,

Genevieve explained: *"Yes. I think in both in terms of commitment and in terms of*

skill. Like I feel like there are definitely people who you watch and this person was

just meant to play sports. Like one of my friends...I go to all the hockey games and

there is one woman who plays on that team who you just look at and you're just like,

yeah I don't necessarily see you as an athlete but she gets on the ice and you're like,

'Oh...my...God. That is absurd. What you can do with yourself right there.'

Ummm...so you know. I think that there is actually you know this sort of person who has this beautiful game, who has this, you know, beautiful way of playing. And then I think that there are also people who might not be as natural but play technically really well too. And then I think there are people who just play because they like it and maybe they are not good at all and maybe they don't really understand it but they have a good time and I think that that all is pretty acceptable."

This narrative was significant in that it revealed the possibility of a cultural and ideological shift. Women—female athletes—can be 'natural athletes.' In decades past, there was nothing 'natural' about women playing sports. In their narratives, these women created hierarchies of athletes which included the 'natural athlete'—and used the female pronoun to describe her attributes. The participants' narratives revealed conflicting discourses and subjectivities to make sense of 'athlete' as an aspect of identity. While their description of the playing style of a natural athlete who was female was gendered using the traditionally feminine adjective of 'beautiful,' the construction of a female natural athlete was a significant creation. The existence of a 'natural athlete' who is also a female, was an identity position, whether participants chose to take it up or not, that arguably did not exist in the past.

'The feminine aesthetic' and 'The athlete physique'

As participants took up the various identity positions in their narratives, conflicting discourses emerged regarding their physiques. The women's conversations about using their bodies in service of sport and the need for a pleasing (feminine) aesthetic were rife with conflict. The following vignettes illustrated the delicate

115

negotiations the women undertook as they balanced the physical requirements of participation with maintaining a feminine aesthetic.

When asked if she lifted weights and engaged in strength training, Laurie answered, *"(Laughing) Yeah but not as much as I am supposed to be doing, but yeah, I do do it.* [R]: Any reason why? *I don't mind the sort of lighter lifting— toning your muscles. I don't like doing like the huge squats. I just think it's not fun.* [R]: Are you worried about getting big? *I mean sort of, but I just really don't like doing it (laughs)."* Laurie explained her perception of the intention of the coach in implementing a strength training regimen, *"It's not really explicit as bulk but we have a lifting program that we're supposed to do. And we talk to our trainer all the time. We say, "[Trainer's name], we don't want to get enormous." And [the trainer] says, "You're not gonna get enormous from the lifting program so just do it." So [the coach] doesn't really push, push anything. He just wants us to be stronger. I don't think he really considers whether or not it's gonna bulk us up or not. As long as we're stronger and we can hold people off in front of the net. Or you can push them off so they can't score a goal.* [R]: Do you feel like it helps? *Uh yeah."*

In Laurie's narrative, her concerns to the trainer were essentially unrecognized. Coaches and trainers did not seem invested in addressing the women's concerns about the effects of the lifting program; rather, their focus was on the on-ice performance. Laurie admitted that the lifting program did serve her athletically. This conflicting discourse of 'feminine aesthetic' and 'athletic physique' was interesting when juxtaposed with the women's discourse relating to the differences between male and

116

female athletes. In this instance, coaches and trainers adopted an un-gendered approach to conditioning—build muscle, build strength. Here was an opportunity to bring the men's and women's game closer by increasing the physicality of the game and the need for strength. But the women were resistant, feeling pressured by non-athletic concerns that resulted in limited their commitment to the lifting program. Social and cultural expectations of a feminine appearance were in conflict with activities that may add bulky muscle. This discourse illustrated the conflict women faced as they took up the identity of 'woman' and 'athlete' simultaneously.

> When asked why she worked out, Tonya responded*: "I think it's a mixture of everything. I mean, obviously, to be a successful, productive athlete you have to work out. I understand that. But I also don't do certain things, like to...well right now I am a little bit on the injured side, I have a bad shoulder but I don't do squats with the bar. I haven't done bench presses with the bar. I used to not bench press at all because I didn't want it to influence my chest in any way. I didn't want to look like one of those gross women body builders."*

Tonya's discourse spoke to this conflict most specifically. Tonya readily admitted to spending the most time in the gym of any of her teammates lifting weights. She took great pride in her muscular physique; at one point she expressed the desire to become an athletic apparel model. Yet Tonya had clear limits to the extent of her weight lifting and expressed revulsion towards women who she felt had exceeded those limits. Furthermore, Tonya's account of the physique of her idol, Serena Williams, echoed the conflicted discourses she expressed related to her own physique.

117

"Umm..well...traditionally historically, I feel, take Venus and Serena. Venus is tall and skinny like the traditional white girl and Serena is a little bit thicker. She has a toughness to her body. She dresses differently. She is more outspoken. She's more...she has a little bit more attitude as a person, like outwardly. Not like speaking but just her actual being. People will attack that. Where Venus is a little bit more reserved. [R]: Do you identity with Serena? *I do actually. (later)*[R]: Does Serena look gross? *No. I love Serena.* [R]: Do you want a body like hers? *To an extent. She's a little bit too thick. She's too thick.* [R]: Meaning muscled? *No, she's just large now. She needs to lose a little...she needs to tone it up a little bit. She's gained a little weight over the years. I can say that she was an inspiration to an extent. The fact that she could balance like the traditional beauty aspect of women and the muscular aspects that are usually associated with men."*

Tonya admired Serena's ability to have a muscular physique and also "have the traditional beauty aspect of a woman," yet was highly critical of Serena's perceived weight gain. Tonya's standards for muscle and beauty included a standard weight that she felt Serena had exceeded, thereby rendering Serena's body an inappropriate aspirant physique. Initially read as admiration for a non-traditional female body, Tonya criticisms revealed the delicate balance the female athlete must negotiate between size, strength, and beauty.

'Athlete' and 'Student'

The participants expressed difficulty in negotiating their identities as athletes and students. The conflicting discourses that emerged revealed that taking up the identity position of student involved negotiating contradictory expectations and behaviors.

> *"There are so many athletes here that I don't think its really its ever been something that's focused on where people are, "Oh that meathead," or...I would say that most of the school population plays a sport so its not...I think everybody is pretty much a student first and an athlete later here."* Jennifer, 19, ice hockey/rugby

In the preceding quote, Jennifer positioned herself and fellow student athletes as students first and athletes second. Jennifer's subsequent statements contradicted that position. Her exasperation with the demands of 'doing' athlete came across. She pointed to the sacrificing academic performance in order to meet her athletic commitments. She elaborated on the nature of those sacrifices, again showing that athletes were not, in fact, exclusively students first and athletes second.

> *"Yeah, I mean, you, I feel like you can lose time to just calm down and take care of yourself sometimes. I mean I have just been going, going, going, for thirteen years. And it gets tiring. You can't have a social life sometimes and you can't do what you need to do academically and you can't always...I can't always take the steps I need to for my future sometimes because hockey gets in the way. But I don't know that it's a trade I wouldn't want to make.* [R]: Are you invested in getting good grades*? For the most part.* [R]: For the most part? Are you happy

119

with your academic performance? *Ummm...(long pause) when I think about it I am not really as happy as I would like to be but ummm I know that there are some times when I know that I should study and I sleep because I am so physically worn out....*[R]: From? *From sports. From just being everywhere all the time. And I'll pick two hours to sleep over two hours of studying. And I know that its something that I need to do for myself but at the same time its frustrating because I know that had I studied that extra two hours I would have a better grade...so...It can be frustrating."*

The conflict between 'athlete' and 'student' discourses was furthered by Karly's account of the imperative of meeting athletic demands despite being too injured to participate:

[R]: Have you considered quitting to devote more time to academics? *Yup. So...I haven't been able to do it yet. I have told everybody I am not going to think about it till after season. But yeah that's a huge thing that I am debating. Like when I got injured last year and I had to have surgery on my thumb I didn't even want to go back to practice. Because I said "I am behind in stuff" and I had to talk to coach and she wanted me to come and show up and it was really hard for me to send an email and say, "No. I can't. I should do my academics." Because everyone else on the team has their academics too. So while she was sympathetic to that she would also say," Well, these people have papers and they are still coming. Like aren't you gonna regret not going to the athletic commitment?" Maybe but at the same time I know that I could do so much better if I had these extra couple of hours."*

120

Karly's difficulty in reconciling the discourses of 'athlete' and 'student' were apparent in her story. Her coach was perceived as more concerned with Karly's athletic identity than her student identity. Her academic obligations were seen as secondary. The coach used Karly's teammates as exemplars to reinforce the coach's position that academics could be managed while fulfilling athletic commitments. However, Karly's ability to even take up her athletic identity in this episode was questionable. She was injured and not able to play. Therefore, how valid is the identity position of athlete (if it is really only useful as a designation of participation status)? The coach relied on Karly taking up the position of 'self as constant athlete' in order to compel her to attend practice even though all she could do was watch. In this instance, taking up that identity position would have had clear negative academic consequences. Karly's struggle to miss practice and devote attention to her school work illustrated the centrality of the athletic identity (in whatever form it took) and the conflicting discourses and subjectivities that emerged from taking up that identity.

An aspect of the conflicting discourse of athlete and student was the perception that certain athletes had to validate their identities as students to both professors and peers.

> *"I went to an all female boarding school where the majority of people played sports but I think that...especially when I was getting into [the co-educational college] ummm...people like the valedictorian of my school also applied and she got waitlisted. So then it became an issue of did you just get in because of your sport.* [R]: Were you recruited? *Well I came in as a lacrosse recruit but I applied early decision so that the coach wouldn't have to use a spot and if I*

didn't get in then we could have done something else. It was frustrating but at the end of the day I don't care (inaudible) other girls. It's definitely annoying when you are one of the only athletes in the class and you have to leave or something and everybody judges you because you are leaving..." Karly, 21, field hockey/lacrosse

Yet when asked if her academic plans were compromised by her athletic commitments, Karly explained the compromises she made:

"There are definitely some classes...or I will try to take...I used to try to take a heavier course-load in the fall instead of the spring because lacrosse is more demanding of time but I would still end up having to come at 5 some days or trying to work out with coaches and professors specific times to meet during office hours that weren't during practice times. Most of the professors are nice about that. But if you make the effort which is funny because one of the things that is...some of the non-athletes have a commitment they also have to make the effort, you don't think about that because you are putting yourself out there because you are an athlete, but it could be that they have to go to office hours too they just don't have..[R]: Are you satisfied with your academic performance? *Ummm....I am. I think I could do better if I weren't doing sports although I say that and I know when I get out of season I spend a lot more time goofing around and I don't have anything to make me organize my time. And I think that were I not involved in sports all the time I would have a lot more time."*

Karly's vignette revealed the complexity of reconciling an identity position of athlete with an identity position of student. Prevailing stereotypes of the 'dumb jock,' even at an elite private college, influenced the classroom dynamic to the extent that participants often cited feeling comfortable as students because of the presence of other athletes in the classroom

> "[R]: How are the classes for you here? What has the experience been like for you as an athlete or just as a student? *I haven't ever had a problem with it. There has always been another athlete in my class."* Karly, 21, field hockey/lacrosse

While Karly struggled to be viewed as a student, just as qualified as her non-athlete peers, her own narrative revealed the academic sacrifices student athletes are routinely expected to make.

Gendered Subjectivities

Regardless of the identity position that the women took up, gender influenced their subjectivities in a variety of ways. The gendered subjectivities of the participants were most strongly expressed in their discussions of sport and are summarized in the table below.

Table 8: Gendered Subjectivities—Co-Educational College

Subjectivity	Description
Gender in sport	Gender in sport is constructed to highlight difference. The women spoke of differentiation between men's and women's sports and attribute the difference to structural constraints, like different rules. However, cite differences between athletes using gender as the point of differentiation. Rather than being transgressive, an athlete identity incorporates traditional notions of gender in the description of male and female athletes. Subjects did not typically take up the identity 'female athlete' in a meaningful way.
Female athlete	Participants were largely reluctant to take up the identity position of female athlete, primarily because of negative connotations they attached to women's sports. Participants expressed the belief that the legitimacy of women's sports was often in question were therefore reluctant to use female athlete a subjectivity.
Physicality	The 'appropriate' level of physicality in a sporting context is dependent on the gender of the participants (even for the same sport).

Gender in sport

Participants' gendered subjectivities emerged in their discussions of the place of gender in sport. To the women, sport participation was imbued with gendered meanings. In the following vignettes, ice hockey players discussed the perceived differences between the men's and women's games.

When asked what it meant to be a female athlete, Tonya responded with an analysis of rule differences between men's and women's sports, *"I think that obviously the rules are different....on paper. [Men] can check. That might be the only different rule actually. They can like physically go after someone.* [R]: And women can't? *"No."* [R]: Well, you've played both. Do you notice a difference in the playing? *Ummm...I think a lot of guys won't come and hit you.*

[R]: "You" as a woman? *Yeah. I think they kind of look at it like, "What for?"*

And I actually...well this summer I definitely got cross checked from behind by

this man, like 300 pounds, 35 years old. I think he, a lot of guys, I think...well

actually in hockey, you protect your goalie at all costs. And I was probably like

five feet from this goalie. Someone took a shot and I went in for the rebound. I

wasn't too close or anything. I kinda skated past the goalie. I was not...I could

not even reach out and touch him. And this guy cross checked me from behind.

A huge fight kinda started after. And he was like, 'You know, I don't care if

you're a girl. I am just protecting my goalie.' To an extent...I guess he wasn't

nice about it but he was just, not an idiot about it either."

Tonya's comment constructed 'female athlete' by pointing to structural differences

between the men's and women's games. She ignored the possibility of 'female athlete'

as an identity position that she could take up.   In her account of the altercation she was

involved in during a co-ed hockey game, she resented the fact that the male defender

came after her when she did not feel she had violated the rules, but appreciated the fact

that he did not care that she was a "girl" in his attack. For Tonya, being attacked on the

ice by a male opponent validated her identity as an athlete, albeit an un-gendered one.

Jennifer spoke to the difference in the speed of play between the men's and

women's games, and the personal adjustment in her style of play that she had to make

once she started to play with women. While Jennifer was critical of the women's game,

she was pleased with the social benefits it brought:

"It was different. It was a lot slower. So it took a lot to get used to, but I like

being on a team with girls and feeling comfortable all the time and not have to

deal with the crap of boys hitting puberty. It was just a breath of fresh air. It

was nice because I got a solid group of friends and people I knew I could count

on and I never really had that in my life before."

The ice hockey players had the unique experience of starting their athletic

careers participating in sport where they were typically the only female participant.

When they reached adolescence, the opportunity to play on girls' ice hockey teams

presented itself. Having versions of both men's and women's ice hockey, the women

voiced an awareness of the difference in the two games—attributing those difference to

a structural cause—different rules for the two sexes. At this point the women expressed

the prevailing discourse surrounding men's and women's sports where men's sports rely

on physicality and women's sports emphasize finesse and technical skill:

 [R]: As a hockey player you are kind of in a unique situation. Unlike a lot of

your peers who play other sports you have gotten to experience the men's game

with the women's game. How has is that experience for you, doing both? *It was*

really hard at first because I got so used to relying on the physicality at times

knowing that if somebody came down past my defense than I could just knock

them over and take the puck away. It became...I had to become a lot more

aware of my surroundings playing women's hockey because I couldn't always

rely on the physicality of the game." Jennifer, 19, ice hockey/rugby

Female athletes

In the excerpt below, Genevieve responded to the prompt of whether or not she

used the term 'female athlete' to describe herself. Genevieve, like several other

participants, was reluctant to take up this identity position because of negatives

connotations Genevieve perceived surrounding the legitimacy of women's sports. While

Genevieve expressed this stereotypical assessment of men's and women's sports, she

felt frustrated by the need she and other women felt to validate their game.

> [R]: What about describing yourself as a female athlete? Do you ever use that
>
> description? *Ummm...I don't...I don't use that as much. Because....Ok, well this*
>
> *is one of my pet peeves about athletics. I hate it when boys are like, "Girls*
>
> *sports, you know, they're just not as exciting. They're just not as awesome."*
>
> *Ok, well I understand that there is an aspect of that. For example, I am a*
>
> *hockey super fan. My roommates play hockey and I go to all their home games.*
>
> *And when I go to a men's game, I am like "Wow, it's a lot faster pace. It's a*
>
> *much different game." But I think that, I don't think that it means it's any less*
>
> *of a game when the women are playing hockey. And ok, I do hate in women's*
>
> *lacrosse that you can't check, and that just kind of bothers me and I get really*
>
> *angry about that. But I think that, in general, yes the women play a different*
>
> *kind of game but that doesn't mean it's any less athletic. That doesn't mean that*
>
> *it's any less exciting, I don't think. Umm...and I could be biased because I am a*
>
> *female athlete but that's one of the things that really angers me when people*
>
> *are talking about women's sports. Hey, women's basketball I think is*
>
> *phenomenal but I know a lot of guys who are like, "Oh, women's basketball*
>
> *really sucks." And it's like " Why? Because they don't slam dunk every four*
>
> *seconds?" It just stops being exciting after a while." And I feel like...I mean I*
>
> *guess that's something that I do think—that women's athletics are more...well*

127

not more of...well I sort of feel that there is a technical aspect that I think is really important in women's athletics that men's athletics is...you have sortof...but the people who watch them don't really understand that. [R]: What about rugby? You could make the argument that it's an equally violent, non-technical game for both genders. What about that? How would you respond to that? *You know honestly, we do quite well for ourselves. And I think that...I think that that actually gets us a lot of respect in a lot of ways.* [R]: From? *Well partially from the men's rugby team and partially from people who don't really understand anything about rugby but they see that women play the same way as the men do. But yeah...I still have some of my friends...some of my male friends are sort of like, "Uhh...I hate the women's sports blah blah blah." However I would like to say that I went with some of my guy friends to a women's volleyball game and they were like, "That girl has air time." Like they were getting really excited about it and I could see them engaged in it. They sort of like understood that this is athleticism, this is like a hard thing to do.* [R]: How does this make you feel as a female athlete though, this sense of validating the game? *It gets hard to fight that, for a long time. I think that generally...yeah...it pisses me off. It makes me feel...it doesn't make me feel like less of an athlete. It just makes me feel like people are ignorant and that's never a feeling I really enjoy having."*

The strategy Genevieve employed to validate the game—the suggestion that men's basketball depends too heavily on slam dunking (a physical feat)—relied on the traditional notion of difference between men's and women's sports. Genevieve's

narrative emphasized her desire to dissociate 'different' from 'lesser.' Genevieve was engaged in a circular logic where she was frustrated by the construction of women's sports that puts it in a subordinated position to men's sports, yet is using that same construction as an argument for the validity of women's athletic performance. She faulted the uninformed spectator who was unable to perceive the subtle athleticism and nuance of the women's game. The conflict of this logic was exposed when Genevieve was asked to analyze men's and women's rugby, which structurally, is the same, and results in an equally violent game for both men and women.

Genevieve felt frustrated that her male peers did not value the women's game or see it as comparable to the men's version. This discourse refuted the participants' construction of the essentialized identity of 'athlete.' The articulated differences between men's and women's sports and the subsequent subordinated position of female athletes revealed that the participants were unable to exclusively take up the identity position of 'athlete.' This discourse revealed that conceiving self simply as 'athlete' was not without conflict and the identity position was limited in the diversity of experiences it could represent. 'Athlete' as an identity may only have been appropriate in relation to designating a participation status binary (those who play/those who do not). The gendered nature of sport emerged to complicate notions of self in relation to identity construction, making the un-nuanced identity position of 'athlete' not a possibility in most situations.

When the conversation moved in a direction which would give participants the opportunity to confirm the violence of their game, they were conflicted:

"[R]: Hockey seems to be a pretty violent game. What do you think about that? *Ummm...I really don't think it is. First of all, we're wearing like hundreds of dollars of equipment.   Takes the violence way down. Shoulder pads, shin guards, we're wearing hockey pants with padding all over them. Not very fun. And men's hockey has checking in it. Women's hockey isn't supposed to have checking in it. There is sort of a fine differentiation called "playing the body" for women which means you can't really step into someone and crush them but if they sortof skate into you, you are allowed to push them.*[R]: It sounds complicated. Would you rather just be allowed to check? *No because I think that is complicated too. I mean you have to learn how to do it safely. I mean they teach from a really young age how to take a check, how to give a check without giving your opponent a concussion or breaking their neck—anything like that. And for us, I think, I like the game more as more sort of slow and finesse, not people just crashing into each other. And we still can be really physical, to a certain extent, it's not all that different. But I think it ends up being about skating and stick skills, stick handling skills more. I like that about it.* [R]: Are you comfortable with the physical aspects of the game?] *I have to be as a defenseman (laughs).* [R]: What about when you were younger and you were playing with all guys—did you learn how to check? *No. In youth hockey checking doesn't become part of the game until I think around maybe 10 or 12 for the boy's league. And not a lot of girls play in that and I didn't. So I never learned how to check in the traditional sense."* Laurie, 21, ice hockey

This vignette illustrated a participant's resistance to this opportunity, relying on the male-physicality/female-finesse discourse as the justification. This discourse illustrated the investment some female athletes have in characterizing their game (and game play) in a manner which does not disrupt traditional notions of femininity (in the context of sport).

Perhaps in an effort to combat the perception of the subordinated status of women's sports, participants were largely reluctant to take up the identity position of 'female athlete.' However, they were able to provide a definition of 'female athlete' that was relevant to their lives. The identity of 'female athlete' was an embodiment of the discourse they voiced regarding the difference between men's and women's sports.

When asked if she described herself as a 'female athlete,' Tonya responded:

"Umm...I would say that if someone asked me, I would initially, I would probably say that I am just athlete. Ummm...but I do realize that, I honestly believe there are differences between female and male athletes and I think that I exhibit some of those differences. I definitely think that to an extent guys are like competitive. They like trying to show themselves kinda at...think of football practice. Like, practicing in the hot sun and they are like dying out there. And I have always thought, I just couldn't do it. But then I also think sometimes when I am working out like running or conditioning especially, I get this thing like in my mind like, I have to kill myself. You know what I am saying? One, like, I am not gonna die. I just might be sore and tired, something like that. But to have that drive, a lot of females, just don't have that. To just like kill themselves."

Jennifer's response to the identity of female athlete is presented below:

"[R]: Ok, so what does being a female athlete mean to you? *Well I've never*

really thought about that...(long pause)...Well I don't know that I would describe

it any more than being an athlete and a female. I don't think its anything,

completely different in and of itself. [R]: Some people might say that women

don't play the same kinds of games that men play or the games are different... *In*

some sports the games are different. Women's ice hockey is different than men's

hockey. And it's more about making plays not powering people off of the puck

and just...it's not a power sport. But women's rugby is the same as men's rugby.

The rules are the same. The level of the game is obviously is different. You take

an average woman and the average rugby woman is not going to be as strong as

the average man, but the levels are consistent within the sport. [R]: So

controlling...the physicality is the same? *Yeah. But I think across different*

sports it's different. [R]: What sports are different? *Well like non-contact sports*

like ultimate Frisbee, cross country skiing, stuff like that...I think in sports where

the rules are the same for men and women...I don't know, ice hockey,

lacrosse...the rules are different. It's more like two sports for men and women.

Its gonna be a lot...it's gonna be a different game. It's gonna be about the skills

a woman can bring rather than the power of the male athlete." Jennifer,19, ice

hockey/rugby

Laurie articulated the meaning of the female identity category as a practical construction

for eliminating confusion when claiming team membership.

[R]: Would you ever describe yourself as a female athlete? *Definitely I would.*

I mean when I tell people I play hockey they say, "Field or ice?" And I say,

"Ice." And in that case I don't really have to say "women's ice hockey." People just sort of assume I am on a women's ice hockey team. [R]: Does it mean anything special to you to be a female athlete?]*Ummm...(long pause). I don't really think so. I mean when I do other activities like running or skiing, I don't really think there is much of a difference. I wouldn't say I am a female skier or a female runner. I think in the context of college then there are two teams that's where you would have 'women's ice hockey team' and that's when the differentiation comes in."* Laurie, 21, ice hockey

Physicality

The gendered nature of sport was revealed as participants elaborated on their attitudes and approaches to the physicality of their chosen sports. In the following vignette, Tonya explained her approach to the physical aspect of ice hockey.

When asked if she played a physically aggressive game, Tonya said,*" No, I'm not into that. Mainly because it's like females and I kinda like...I get hit from behind a lot. I draw a lot of penalties. But it's kinda like I feed off of it. Because I think it's more of they couldn't do anything legal to stop me so that had to do something illegal."* I asked Tonya if others fouled a lot or took their aggression out in hockey*, "Yeah. They like to take their anger out. I mean, I look at it as...I don't try to hit girls because I just think they're...I mean...we're all, as females, I feel like we're all like...I mean I don't know...We talk a lot and get aggravated by each other a lot, but...*[R]: Women in general? *Yeah. But I would probably hit a man before I hit a girl because a girl... you know we're*

133

just bitchy, you know. I would just brush her off. It's like, she's not worth it." I asked Tonya if she had different experiences playing against men, *"Yeah. I mean I started off playing against guys. In the summer time you do pick ups, or drop-ins, we call it. I played. I actually played this summer in a summer league, it was Friday nights with these guys. My most memorable of the experience of the summer was actually getting thrown out of a game for getting in a fight with this guy.* [R]: Why did you get in a fight? *Well there were three girls on our team. Only three girls in the league. Well, a lot of the other girls actually got a lot of penalties over the course of the league, the summer. They kinda thought that that was funny, that they would like fight back, and get angry. And this guy was giving me a really hard time the entire game. And there was probably like twenty seconds left in the entire game, we were already losing, and I went around him and he proceeded to like push me into the boards, after I had gotten past him. And he like slashed me. I was like, 'Nooo.' So I got in his face, kinda like pushed him. Swung at him."*

Tonya's narrative spoke to an internalized construction of feminine identity (even within the context of a violent sport), which she rejected. She spoke of 'female' hockey competitors in a manner which suggested they were unworthy in engaging in physical altercations with because they were women. She dissociated her own identity as a woman from that of her other female competitors. Her anecdote conveyed men's indifference to hitting women (in co-ed hockey games) because women are 'not worth it.' Tonya adopted this position herself in her comments regarding physicality, aligning

134

herself with male athletes in her belief that female competitors were 'not worth' hitting, further denying the possibility of the identity position of female athlete. Conversely, Tonya almost gleefully recounted the fight she engaged in with a male competitor during a summer league game. She spoke of the willingness that these male competitors played aggressively against her. This narrative spoke to the need for validation, albeit in a different way, that Genevieve spoke to as well. The women's game was validated by men, not other women. However, Tonya's commentary complicated the need for validation, presenting conditions of validation that do not present themselves for most female athletes.

Discussion

The variety of identity positions that these women took up during their narratives resulted in the emergence of conflicting discourses and gendered subjectivities. While the women clung generally to an essentialized 'athlete' identity, as they elaborated on the issues in their lives, that position became problematic. Additional identities emerged, but the most noticeable result was the women's conflicting discourses. These discourses: 'Female participation' and 'Sport as a requirement/the naturalization of participation'; 'Encouragement' and 'Discouragement'; 'Team membership' and 'Individual identity'; 'Woman' and 'the Natural Athlete'; 'The Feminine Aesthetic' and 'the Athlete Physique'; and 'Athlete' and 'Student' illustrated the conflicts and compromises these women grappled with. Their gendered subjectivities further emphasized the delicate negotiations they engaged in during their daily lives.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

"Importantly, [female executives] credit sports with teaching them skills and

lessons that have advanced their ability to succeed in the workplace. It's clear:

the road to the boardroom frequently begins in the locker room."

Frances B. Emerson, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications at

Mass Mutual (Mass Mutual, 2002)

"The benefits of playing golf clearly extend beyond the sport itself. The results

demonstrate, for instance, that many women who regularly play golf leverage it

as a forum to build business relationships."

Sue Tongas, Assistant Vice President for Sports Marketing at Mass Mutual

(Oppenheimer, 2003).

Observations and Implications for Management

After reading over hours of transcripts, attempting to piece together these

women's stories in a meaningful way, I hope to have engendered a greater

understanding of the subjectivities of this group of women, in this particular

environment, during a unique time in their lives. While the intention of this study was

never to produce generalize-able results, I do believe that it has yielded some relevant

insights that can inform discussion and guide additional analysis. These women have

revealed, unequivocally, that identity work is an ongoing process, fraught with conflicts

and compromises. Choices can be made to facilitate that identity work, while at other

136

times it is only an illusion of choice that may exist. And while I would appreciate the

opportunity to continue studying women at this stage in their lives, my thoughts turn to

larger questions: How is this study relevant to the management field and organization

studies? In what ways do the stories that these women tell enable us to question our

ideas about the relationship between sport, participation, and women's career

trajectories?

I assert that this study has significance for management and organization studies.

In order to frame the relevance of this study, I would like to return to an existing

exploration of the questions I posed above—the 2002 Mass Mutual Studies of Women

in Sports: "From the Locker Room to the Board Room—A survey of sports in the lives

of women business executives". This study intended to prove a relationship, a causal

connection, between women's adolescent and collegiate sports participation and their

career outcomes. The Mass Mutual study explicitly touted the benefits of participation.

In the Mass Mutual study, of the four hundred and one executives surveyed, the three

hundred twenty seven women who played sports after grade school reported that sports

participation helped them to "be more disciplined, function better as a team, develop

leadership skills that contributed to their professional success, deal with failure and give

them a competitive edge over others" (2002). These results are intended show that these

female executives associated sports participation with relevant skill transfer. Their

impression of sports participation and its translation to assimilating into corporate

culture is most clearly revealed in the following statistics from the survey. Of the four

hundred and one women, three hundred and twenty-seven women participated in sports

after grade school. Their survey responses are informative: 27% thought there was too

much discussion of sport in the workplace, 32% thought that there was too much use of sports language and metaphors at work. Of the original four hundred and one women surveyed, 21% said they had been excluded from a business opportunity as a result of not participating in a particular sport (Mass Mutual, 2002). The authors of this study position this data as an improvement, where *only* one-third of the female executives feel the presence of sport in the workplace as negative or excessive. This interpretation of the data was echoed by Frances B. Emerson, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications at Mass Mutual, who stated, "The stereotype is that sports are used to exclude women from conversations and opportunities at work, but the facts just don't bear that out. The reality is that women are more involved then ever in sports—both as participants and observers. Women are familiar if not comfortable with the vernacular of sport. When it comes to sport talk, we got game," (Mass Mutual, 2002). Emerson's comments, complete with an appropriation of urban basketball slang, suggest that women can engage in informed conversations with (presumably male) co-workers and clients about the current events of sport, rather than remaining silent and ignorant in the background. This ability is supposedly advantageous in the work setting and will create opportunities for professional advancement that had been previously lacking.

Another study addresses the connections between women, sport, and business. The study, featured in the October 2003 issue of Golf for Women Magazine, "From the Tee to the Top," equated golf prowess with business success. In this study, sponsored by Oppenheimer Funds and Mass Mutual financial group, the Golf Digest Research Resource center conducted interviews with a nationally representative sample of one thousand career women in order to analyze their attitudes towards golf and business.

The study defined the "typical" career woman golfer in the United States as approximately fifty years old, and more likely to be unmarried and childless (than non-"career women"). The career woman golfer had an average and median household income in excess of one hundred thousand dollars annually, with one third of respondents not living in "traditional multi-earner households (married)," (Oppenheimer, 2003, pg.6). Twenty-seven percent of respondents were employed in executive level positions. Healthcare, education, and financial services were the most well represented industries employing eighteen, thirteen, and ten percent of those surveyed, respectively.

Survey data include the following results: 73% agree that golf has helped them develop new relationships and to network; and 70% believe that conduct on the course is a predictor of how people do business (Oppenheimer, 2003). Further, the study reported that, "The better the golfer, the more successful women are at using golf as a business tool. Those with handicaps of twenty or less are more likely to close business on the course, espouse the benefits of the game, and, as a result report the highest household income and personal investment activity" (Oppenheimer, 2003, p.2). The results assert that women will experience positive business outcomes if they play golf. The study does address issues of women's experience in a male domain. The study reports that fifty-one percent of those surveyed encountered "overt" discrimination on the golf course and forty-nine percent argue golf is still a "good old boys" sport and is less accessible to women (Oppenheimer, 2003, p.4). These results appear under the heading "Acceptance on the golf course continues to be an important issue for career women!" (Emphasis in original) (Oppenheimer, 2003, p.4). Of all the issues facing

women in the workplace, including "overt" discrimination, it is ironic that limited accessibility to golf is defined as an important business issue to be remedied.

Both explicit and implicit in these studies is the presumption of skill transfer through sport that aids women in negotiating the business world. Sport develops confidence, competitiveness, leadership, and teamwork that will benefit women in the corporate world. Further, these studies suggest that sport participation grants women access to an inner world of sport, enabling them to speak the language and play the necessary games. The studies are a call to action. Parents need to sign their daughters up for youth soccer so that they will be able to engage in informed water cooler conversations on Tuesday mornings and close the deal on the green as adults.

I contend that these are misdirected motivations for encouraging athletic participation. Health benefits and increased self-esteem are valuable and worthwhile outcomes of sport participation. The ability to engage in "sports talk" at the office or attend the golf retreat are not. Rather, we should rethink how business is organized. Why is sport—sports metaphors, sport talk, sport ability—so central to business? Teaching women to play golf does nothing to address the lack of access to this 'essential' business 'skill' that is denied many others including men, people of color, people outside the upper class, and those with physical disabilities. By positioning a working knowledge of sport and some sport ability as a requisite skill to climbing the corporate ladder, we are doing a serious disservice to both men and women. We are not dismantling historical structures and barriers that have kept the corporate world the domain of rich, white men. Instead, we are using sports and women's increased participation in sports to bolster those structures and doing nothing to disrupt the status

quo. As long as we continue to use sport as a "common currency" in business, we are not dismantling any of its restrictive structures.

So let us return to the narratives of the thirteen women that were presented in the previous chapter. The women's narratives revealed that identity is neither stable nor fixed. We see that in order to make sense of oneself as an "athlete," other identities, such as woman or student, are negotiated simultaneously.   Further, how gender is "done" in the context of any one of the multiple identities the women are living at any particular moment is constrained or enabled by a host of expectations—expectations that may contradict one another as the women negotiate different subjectivities.

If their athletic participation is to benefit their careers as was described in the Mass Mutual and Oppenheimer studies, then these women (and conceivably their teammates) should be poised to embark upon their upwardly mobile corporate careers. Yet, as their narratives suggested, this ascension may not proceed in the manner that is put forth in the two studies. How does one reconcile Mass Mutual's finding that sixty-nine percent of "active" (read: involved in sport or exercise) businesswomen believe that sport has given them a competitive edge over other women with Anne's (single-sex college, 21, soccer) competitive ethos: *I am naturally competitive but I am okay with being in the middle. I don't have to be the top, at least here*"? It is problematic.

The content of their narratives is undeniable—the realm of athletics has contradictory and competing expectations of the women who have the opportunity to participate.   Their response to those contradictory and competing expectations is not simplistic. The women's narratives do not suggest that the identity work they undertake is an easy task. We see very real sacrifices—social, academic, personal—they make in

service of those negotiations.   And there is a cost to those sacrifices. Perhaps in the

short term, the cost is 'merely' a B on test when she could have gotten an A, because

she went to practice instead of studying. But we must ask ourselves, is the same woman

who 'settles' for that B because she feels conflicted over managing her athletic identity

and her student identity, the same woman who is critical of female classmates who

compete for grades? If female athletic participation and competitive sport create a space

for behavior that transgresses the boundaries of traditional femininity, does it also

confine and constrain that gender transgression to a specific space and time (i.e. the field

or court)? If the women's narratives are any indication, than the so-called skill transfer

from the field to the boardroom touted by the Oppenheimer and Mass Mutual studies

does not occur seamlessly. Furthermore, how does a female athlete make sense of her

identity as a 'corporate' woman? If one supposes that the formerly male domain of

sports shares many qualities with the male domain of the business world, it is highly

likely that the corporate environment is fraught with competing and contradictory

expectations of women's behavior. A female athlete may be more familiar with

negotiating those expectations, but the 'success' of that negotiation is hardly as clear-cut

as the Mass Mutual and Oppenheimer studies seem to suggest.   Ending the explanation

for female athlete's performance in the business world with 'participation in their youth'

presents an incomplete picture. It would be informative to take the findings of those

studies further and find out the sacrifices that the businesswoman makes—social,

professional, personal—(sacrifices she has had practice in making before) in service of

negotiating her multiple subjectivities. That investigation may yield a deeper

understanding of the qualities of female athletes that make them "successful" businesswomen.

The stories of the college-aged women in this study ultimately tell that their identities are rife with contradictions. Simply allowing access and encouraging participation, as other studies suggest, perhaps eases the contradictions, but does not eliminate them. As women continue to integrate traditionally masculine domains— including the corporate world—they will grapple with additional conflicts and contradictions. As organizational scholars, it is our responsibility to expose how the institutions we have constructed—from both inside and out—shape and guide the process of identity negotiation. We must not look at sport, or business, and see the increased presence of women as a sign that there is equity or that women's place in these spaces is unproblematic. Rather we must be diligent in how we position that presence and critically analyze this so-called "progress" we are making.

On the Role of the Researcher

All data gathered during this process was produced through face to face interaction, a conversational exchange between me, the researcher, and a participant, the researched. Therefore the text that is generated is not necessarily representative of the women's day to day lived experiences, but the product of an interaction between two people. The elements of that conversation under analysis here are the discursive practices the women use during the retelling of their experiences. In my analysis of our conversations, my interpretation of the discursive content prioritizes my construction of that interaction.

All of the women who took part in this study volunteered to do so. The motivations underlying their willingness to be interviewed may have included an interest in the project, a desire to reflect on their experiences to an audience, and/or to engage with me about the subject matter of the project. In the recruitment process, I made clear my position as a graduate student in a sport management program and my specific interest in the experiences of female athletes. Upon meeting me, many of the women asked if I had played college athletics and where I had gone for my undergraduate degree. As a four year varsity athlete at a Division III liberal arts college, my experiences as a female student athlete gave me an initial starting point from which I could engage them in a conversation about shared experiences. In some ways, my background in college sports at the Division III level gave me the linguistic resources and experience-based knowledge to engage with them in a two-way exchange, rather than a conversation that more closely resembled an interrogation. I was cognizant of the ways in which my background would shape the course of our conversations and my approach to the analysis. Therefore I made a concerted effort to allow the women to tell their stories in their own voices, and interject my experiences and impressions as little as possible. I must also add that I was employed as a graduate assistant in the athletic department at the single-sex institution. My duties involved overseeing the issue and maintenance of varsity team equipment and required interaction, albeit limited, with most of the athletes on campus. While I would not say that I was very well acquainted with any of the women in the study, the women at the single sex college recognized me as part of the campus community. The women at the

co-educational school met me for the first time when we sat down to have our conversation.

I am also aware that my own presentation of 'self' influenced the content of the conversations. As a White, mid-twenties, middle-class woman, on a superficial level, I 'resembled' many of the women I interviewed. Perceptions of 'like-ness' may have encouraged a rapport to develop that aided the conversation. However, as a researcher whose appearance does not conform to traditional ideas of femininity and whose stated interest was gender issues in sport, the women I interviewed may have anticipated an ideology or agenda on my part and structured their comments in response to that. A particular incident stands out: Tonya started to describe her impression of her mother's motivation for encouraging her to do ballet (wanting her to participate in traditionally feminine activities) but caught herself mid-sentence, stating, "I mean I don't....I think it was fun. I don't see anything wrong with it." There were other incidents where I felt the women were responding to me personally as a researcher. When they adopted an apologetic or embarrassed tone when expressing an idea that they perceived to be un-feminist and might be in conflict with their perception of the feminist agenda of my research i.e.: going to a co-educational school to meet boys, wearing make-up, or wanting to lose weight, I felt they were concerned about my reaction to these comments. In general however, I was struck by the candid nature of their conversations, willingness to share personal experiences, and reflect on potentially difficult subject matter.

The setting of this study, two colleges, had many commonalities: both were private, academically challenging, liberal arts institutions. However, a demographic difference between the two colleges, the sex composition, should be addressed. One of

the colleges was single-sex. The single-sex institution was not entirely free of men, men are members of the faculty and staff, and male students from neighboring institutions frequently took courses at the single-sex college. However, the clear majority of people on that campus were female. 'Doing college' in an environment so clearly different from the social world beyond the campus must have had an impact on the women studying there. This idea was manifested in conversations claiming the differences in female behavior on campus versus off campus (i.e.: the necessity of getting 'dressed' to go out off campus, but wearing pajamas to class because there was 'no one' to impress on campus; the women also claimed that they felt classroom discussions were facilitated by the absence of men). Of particular interest to me were the conversations (or lack of conversation) related to gender. Overall, I noticed that the women at the single-sex college were more willing to engage in discussions about gender than the women at the co-educational institution. That is not to say that the conversations of the women at the single sex institution were aimed at dismantling traditional social constructions of gender or were rallying against patriarchy. In fact, their stories often reinforced traditional gender hierarchies and normative gender expectations of behavior. But they were willing to have the conversation. The women at the co-educational college preferred to talk about bodies as un-gendered, "people," who they interacted with and responded to as individuals. In many respects, my impression was that gender was rendered invisible at the co-educational college. Perhaps because of the single-sex college's stated institutional ethos of "women's empowerment" students are socialized to be more aware of gender. Even if the conversations were not particularly transgressive, gender was visible and a part of their

146

lives. I do, however, need to return to my discussion of my position in these

conversations. The women at the co-educational college may have attributed motives to

my research that caused them to resist my efforts to make gender visible. The women at

the single-sex college may also have anticipated an agenda on my part, their response

was manifested differently.

Regardless of the reasons underlying their responses, the place of gender in all

women's lives is an interesting concept to me and one I sought to explore in this study.

As women move about the world in gendered bodies, their constructions of gendered

selves inform their experiences.   In my attempts to extend what I have observed here to

the business world, I question how women conceptualize gender in workplaces which

most likely are composed of men and women. Do the strategies of the women I spoke

to, making gender visible and making gender invisible, translate to the corporate

setting? What is the effect of those strategies? What other strategies exist to facilitate

women's existence in the organization? The authors' conclusions in the Mass Mutual

study and the Oppenheimer study seem to reinforce the strategy of making gender

invisible. Women's taking up of 'male' skills—knowledge of and proficiency at

sports—can be used in service of making gender invisible (as women become 'one of

the boys'). The danger here, with this particular strategy, is that as gender becomes

invisible, the default way of being is gendered male. The status quo is untouched and

patriarchal structures that keep women in a subordinated position remain. Discursive

practices that deny the speaker the linguistic resources to make their experience of

gender matter are problematic. I propose that making gender visible creates more

opportunities and flexibility for a speaker to make meaning of their experiences. And

this ability can create the opportunity to affect change.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

We will be covering general topics over the course of this interview related to your background as well as your collegiate sport, and college experiences. Each topic has several parts to it, so we will go through all the general topics and follow up on specific points during the course of this hour interview.

General questions:

How old are you?

Where are you from/where did you grow up?

How would you describe the community you grew up in?

What activities did you participate in as a child?

At what age did you start playing sports?

What influenced you/what prompted you to play sports?

What caused you to participate in this sport/sports?

What do you like about this sport?

Did anyone encourage to play sports? What were their reasons?

Did anyone discourage you from playing sports? If so, why?

Was sports a serious activity in your adolescence or more for recreation?

What sports did you play in high school?

Did sports connect with your social life?

Did your friends play sports?

What activities did your friends participate in?

Re: College and Sport

What made you decide to play sports in college?

Where do sports fit in to your life at college? Is it a more/less serious activity for you now than in the past?

How would you characterize your collegiate athletic experience?

Is there any specific incident that embodies the college athletic experience for you?

What other activities do you participate in here?

What do you think you gain personally from sports? What do you lose?

Does sports connect with the rest of your life?

Does sports impact your personal life i.e. relationships with parents, significant others etc

How would you describe yourself as an athlete?

Would you describe yourself as a female athlete? What does it mean to be a female athlete?

Are there different kinds of athletes?

How do you prepare for a game, how long does it take?

How long does it take you to get ready to go out? What do you do?

Describe an experience were being an athlete caused a conflict in your life. How did you respond?

How you would describe yourself generally?

Do you plan to participate in organized sports after college?

How did you choose this college?

What qualities of this college made it attractive to you?

Comment on your college experience. Would you choose to come here knowing what you know now?

- Image

- Appearance

- Where do you put yourself?

What do you see yourself doing post-graduation?

SAMPLE OF ANALYZED TEXT

R: How did you get into those? Were you the one saying I want to play or people were asking you to play...or some combination?

T: Well, with hockey I said I wanted to play. With lacrosse and soccer people would ask me to play. All my friends played soccer and said you should play, its really easy.[i]

R: Were these white friends?

T: Yeah. Lacrosse I picked up in high school at my first year at a prep school. It was different than my grade school and junior high. And all my hockey friends, I played hockey in high school at my high school. And all my hockey friends said I should play lacrosse cuz I would be good at it. So I played lacrosse.[ii]

R: So what sports did you play varsity in high school?

T: Lacrosse, basketball, lacrosse, and hockey. And softball.[iii]

R: Four sports. I take it you were pretty busy.

T: I was. In Michigan, softball and lacrosse are spring sports. They are here too. I didn't play every year. I alternated.

R: What age did you start playing?

T: Ummm...I guess it depends on each sport.

R: What was your first sporting experience? It doesn't even have to be organized. Just when you first started playing.

---

[i] Access to opportunities. Easy entry to sport of choice. Speak to discourse of participation
[ii] Perceived competence at one sport as reason for easy access to other sports. No barriers to participation

T: Probably...ummm...really young...like maybe five or six[iv]. My brother, who is seven

years older than me is the closest sibling um and we grew up together kindof. And he

played sports and I kindof followed behind him.[v]

R: Did anyone ever discourage you from playing any sports?

T: Ummm...Not that I can recall. Ummmm...Not...I cant recall like a specific incident.

I think...growing up or in general?

R: In general if you think of an incident.

T: Umm...I cant think of someone saying oh yeah you shouldn't play sports or a girl

shouldn't play sports. I know when I was younger I did like gymnastics and dance and

ballet and things like that. Ummm...and my mom kinda pushed me towards that[vi].

R: Any reason why?

T: I think she had been...she had wanted to Broadway when she was younger and she

was I guess just following the traditional feminine roles with society you

know...dance...[vii]

R: Ok, you're shrugging your shoulders. How do you feel about that?[viii]

T: Ummm I mean I don't....I think was fun. I don't see anything wrong with it.[ix]

R: But you stopped....

[iii] Varsity participation
[iv] Age of first sporting experience
[v] Brother as primary influence for taking up sport
[vi] Question is not gendered. Response is. Anticipating research agenda? But then
follows with mother's encouragement of traditionally feminine sport. Previous salience
of race in sport participation...why don't we see any resistance to African American
playing hockey (traditionally white sport)?
[vii] Doing gender. Mother's agenda to do gender correctly.
[viii] Resistance
[ix] Positioned as a negative "wrong with it". Resisting researcher here?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, N., Schmitke, A., and Franklin, A. (2005). Tomboys, dykes, and girly girls: interrogating the subjectivities of adolescent female athletes. *WSQ: Women's studies quarterly, 33 (1,2),* 17-34.

Benefits - Why Sports Participation for Girls and Women: The Foundation Position (14-Aug-2000) available at   http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/body/article.html?record=577. Accessed March 20, 2008.

Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*, (1-37). Portsmouth: Heineman.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble.* New York: Routledge.

Calás, M.B. and Smircich, L. (1996). The 'Woman's Point of View: Feminist Approaches to Organization Studies. In S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy, and W.R. Nord (eds), *The Handbook of Organization Studies,* 218-57. London: Sage.

--------Past postmodernism? Reflections and tentative directions. *Academy of Management Review*, *24 (4),* 1999: 649-671.

Carpenter, L.J., and Acosta, R.V. (2005). *Title IX.* Illinois: Human Kinetics Books.

Carty, V. (2005). Textual portrayals of female athletes: liberation or nuanced forms of patriarchy? *Frontiers, 26 (2),* 132-156.

Christian, S. (2004, July/August). The radical potential of women in sports. *Off our backs, 34(7/8)*, 26-29. Retrieved January 1, 2007 from Proquest database.

Connell, R.W. (1992). A Very straight gay: Masculinity, Homosexual Experience, and the dynamics of gender. *American Sociological Review, 57 (6),*735-751.

Cooky, C. and M.G. McDonald. (2005). "If you let me play": Young girls' insider-other narratives of sport. Sociology of sport journal, 22, 158-177.

Davies, B., and Harre, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 20, 43-63.

Digeser, P. (1994). Performativity trouble: Postmodern feminism and essential subjects. *Political research quarterly*, 47(3), 655.

Dworkin, S.L. and Messner, M.A. (2002). Just do...what? Sport, Bodies,Gender. In S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Gender and Sport: A Reader*(17-29). London: Routledge.

Festle, M.J. (1996). *Playing Nice: Politics and Apologies in Women's Sports.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Frey, J.H., and Eitzen, D.S. (1991). Sport and society. *Annual Review of Sociology, 17,* 503-522.

From the locker room to the board room: A survey of sports in the lives of women business executives. (2002). *Mass Mutual Studies of Women and Sports*. Mass Mutual Financial Group. New York.

From the tee to the top. (2003). *Golf for Women Magazine.* Oppenheimer Funds, Mass Mutual Financial Group. New York.

George, M. (2005). Making Sense of Muscle: The Body Experiences of Collegiate Women Athletes. *Sociological Inquiry, 75, (3),* 317-345.

Gergen, K.J. (1997). In J. Greenwood (Ed.), *The mark of the social.* New York: Rowman and Littlefield. Retrieved October 8, 2007 from http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/web/page.phtml?id=manu9.

Hanson, S.L., and Kraus, R.S. (1998). Women, sports, and science: do female athletes have an advantage*? Sociology of Education, 71(2),* 93-110.

Hall, K. (2000). Performativity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 9(1-2),* 184-187.

Henriques, J., W. Holloway, C. Urwin, C. Venn, and V. Walkerdine. (1998) *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation, and Subjectivity* (91-118). New York: Routledge.

Jorgenson, J. (2002). Engineering Selves. *Management Communication Quarterly,15 (3),* 350-380.

Karreman, D. and M. Alvesson (2001). Making newsmakers: Conversational identity at work. *Organization Studies, 22 (1),* 59-89.

Kidd, B. (1990). The Men's Cultural Centre: Sports and the Dynamic of Women's Oppression/ Men's Repression. In M. Messner and D. Sabo (Eds.), *Sport, Men, and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*.(31-44). Champaign: Human Kinetics Books.

King, N. (2004). Using interviews in qualitative research. In Cassell and Simon (Eds) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kitzinger, C. (1989). Liberal Humanism as an Ideology of Social Control: The regulation of lesbian identities. In J. Shotter and K. Gergen (eds) *Texts of Identity* (82-98). London: Sage.

Klomsten, A.T., H.W. Marsh, and E. M. Skaalvik. (2005). Adolescents' Perceptions of Masculine and Feminine Values in Sport and Physical Education: A Study of Gender Differences. *Sex Roles, 52 (9/10).*

Hogg, M., D.J. Terry, and K.M. White. (1995). A Tale of two theories: a critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 58(4),* 255-269.

Hogg, M.A. and D.J. Terry. (2000). Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts. The *Academy of Management Review*, *25 (1),* 121-140.

Levy, S.S. (2002). Women and the personal meaning of competition: A qualitative investigation. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal, 11(1).*

Lipsyte, R. (1979, September). Varsity syndrome: the unkindest cut. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 445, 15-23.

Mason, J. (2002). Qualitative interviewing: Asking, listening and interpreting. In T. May (ed), *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage.

McNamara, T. (1997). Theorizing Social Identity: What do we mean by social identity? Competing frameworks, competing discourses. *TESOL Quarterly*, *31(3),* 561-567.

Messner, M.A. (2000). Barbie girls vs. sea monsters: children constructing gender. *Gender and Society, 14(6),* 765-784.

Miracle, A.W. and Rees, C.R. (1994). *Lessons of the Locker Room.* New York: Prometheus Books.

Morgan, G. and L. Smircich. (1980). The case for qualitative research. *Academy of Management Review, 5(4),* 491-500.

Pelak, C.F. (2002, February). Women's collective identity formation in sports: a case study from ice hockey. *Gender and Society, 16(1),* 93-114.

Rahman, M. and A. Witz. (2003).What really matters? The elusive quality of the material in feminist thought. *Feminist Theory, 4 (3),* 243-241.

Sampson, E.E. (1989). Chapter 1: The Deconstruction of the Self. In J. Shotter and K. Gergen (eds) *Texts of Identity* (1-19). London: Sage.

Shakib, S. and M. Dunbar (2002). The social construction of female and male high school basketball participation: Reproducing the gender order through a two-tiered sporting institution. *Sociological Perspectives, 45 (4)*, 353-378.

Shulman, J.L., and Bowen, W.G. (2001). *The game of life: college sports and educational values.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Shotter, J. (1989). Chapter 9, Social Accountability and the Social construction of 'you.' In J. Shotter and K. Gergen (eds) *Texts of Identity* (133-151). London: Sage.

Sluss, D.M. and B.E. Ashforth. (2007). Relational identity and identification: defining ourselves through work relationships. *Academy of Management Review, 32(1),* 9-32.

Stets, J. and Burke, J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *63 (3),* 224-237.

Stryker, S. and P.J. Burke. (2000).The past, present, and future of an identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *63 (4),* 284-297.

Sullivan, N. (2003). *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: New York University Press.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: studies in social psychology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, S., and Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: the search for meanings*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Thomas, R. and Linstead, A. (2002). Losing the plot? Middle managers and identity. *Organization*, *9 (1),* 71-93.

Videon, T.M. (2002). Who plays and who benefits: gender, interscholastic athletics, and academic outcomes. *Sociological Perspectives*, *45(4),* 415-444. Retrieved January 5, 2007 from JSTOR database.

Weedon, C. (1997*). Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory 2nd edition*. Boston: Blackwell Publishing.

West, C. and Zimmerman, D.H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender and Society, 1 (2),* 125-151.

Whitson, D. (1990). Sport in the social construction of masculinity. In M. Messner and D. Sabo (Eds.), *Sport, Men, and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*.(19-30). Champaign: Human Kinetics Books.

Williams, S.L. (2002). Trying on gender, gender regimes, and the process of becoming women. *Gender and Society, 16 (1),* 29-52.