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A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONAL STUDY
OF SPECIFIC NARRATIVES ASSOCIATED TO MEN'S EXPERIENCES
IN ONE INTERUNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM

by

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B.A., Concordia University, 1991

THESIS

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Human Kinetics

School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa
1995



John G. Colatosti, Ottawa, Ontario 1995



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ABSTRACT

The social production and reproduction of traditional forms of masculinity has been associated with various sports including football. The purpose of this case study was to examine language as one particular feature of an all-male football environment. More specifically, the study focused on the narratives accompanying interactions on the football field, in the locker room, and at team social gatherings for one Canadian interuniversity football team, and examined the function of these narratives as well as their interpretation by the players. A triangulated methodology was used and information pertaining to the narratives was gathered through: (a) a content analysis of official documents including guidelines regarding the behavior and language of interuniversity football players; (b) a participant observation of the players' interactions and narratives; and (c) in-depth interviews with a sample of the players. The participant observation took place during the 1993 season and field notes were transformed into computerized HyperCard cards containing the pertinent information regarding the narratives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample (N=19) of the players (N=65) and later transcribed on computerized HyperQual cards. HyperCard and HyperQual softwares were used to facilitate the data analysis. Results of the study indicate that racist narratives are very rare, but that sexist, homophobic, violent and macho narratives are prevalent within this football subculture, as well as narratives related to pain and injury. The main functions or reasons identified for those narratives were: (a) conformity or peer pressure, (b) insecurity, (c) need to demonstrate superiority over teammates, opponents, and selected social groups, (d) male bonding and need to have a common language, (e) need to uphold the stereotypical tough "masculine" football image, and (f) isolation associated with an all-male environment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the problem.....	2
Theoretical Framework	3
Methodology.....	3
Significance.....	4
Delimitations	5
Limitations.....	5
 II REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	 7
Literature on Sport and Gender	7
Literature on Sport and the Social Construction of Masculinity.....	11
Literature on Sport Subcultures	17
Literature on the Football Subculture.....	19
Literature on Narratives Within Sport Subcultures.....	21
Literature on Narratives Within the Football Subculture.....	22
Conclusion	24
 III THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	 25
British Cultural Studies.....	25
Historical Background	25
Main Concepts	28

	Culture	29
	Ideology	29
	Hegemony	32
	Power.....	33
	Socialist Feminist Theory	35
	Historical Background	35
	Main Concepts	37
	Gender.....	37
	Patriarchy.....	39
	Sexual division of labour.....	42
	Oppression	43
	Conclusion.....	44
	Feminist Cultural Studies	45
IV	METHODOLOGY	48
	Research Protocol.....	48
	Triangulated Method.....	48
	Sample	49
	Instruments	50
	Data Collection.....	51
	Data Analysis	53
V	RESULTS.....	55
	Contextual Overview of the Football Subculture.....	55
	Player's Narratives and their Function.....	58
	Types of Narratives.....	58
	Sexist episodes	61

Homophobic episodes	61
Violent episodes.....	62
Macho episodes	62
Episodes related to pain or injury	63
Context of the Narratives.....	63
Function of the Narratives	65
Players' Reactions to the Narratives	69
Players' Interpretations of their Subculture and Narratives.....	72
Players' Interpretations of the Football Subculture.....	72
Players' Interpretations of their Narratives	76
Sexist episodes	82
Homophobic episodes.....	88
Violent episodes.....	92
Macho episodes	93
Episodes related to pain and injury	96
 V DISCUSSION.....	 99
 VI CONCLUSION	 105
 REFERENCES.....	 109
 APPENDICES	
A Interview Protocol	120
B Participant Observation Consent Form.....	125
C HyperCard Example.....	127
D Interview Consent Form.....	129

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We reside in a world which produces and reproduces cultural practices that organize but also limit the actions of human beings. In the sporting world for example, males have traditionally been taught to be tough, violent, and aggressive (Whitson, 1990), while females have often been discouraged from sports participation, and when they have participated, they have often been instructed to act within the norms of behaviour set by our patriarchal society (Hall, 1988).

Sheard and Dunning (1979) have recognized sport as a male preserve, an environment that has consistently excluded and degraded women. Through their examination of the rugby football club, they have described how male players' crude lyrics in drinking songs and other practices that surround the rugby tradition devalue women. Sheard and Dunning (1979) have concluded that the reason for the existence and support of these male practices is due to males' need to use these sporting spaces to reaffirm and reproduce male dominance and female subordination.

Today, the sporting environment is no longer viewed as a static system, but as a social matrix produced through human agency and reproduced through ideological work (Gruneau, 1983). Sport, it is argued, has been an institution created by men for the benefit of men in order to enhance male superiority and masculine hegemony (Messner & Sabo, 1990). It is only in the early 1970's that reasons for inequalities and women's low involvement in sport began to be examined by feminist scholars. It is mostly women scholars who began to question the sources of difference between women's and men's style of

participation (Cole & Birrell, 1986; Birrell, 1990). Hart (1979) revealed how sport is a predominantly male cultural territory that puts pressure on individuals to conform to certain cultural stereotypes. Gary Shaw, an ex-football player, has described how this occurs within the football environment. Football players are not stupid or insensitive, but restrict their behaviours, attitudes, and conversations in order to comply with the stereotype of the macho football player (Shaw, 1972).

Statement of the Problem

The aim of this particular study was to examine the narratives associated with the football players' experiences and the function these narratives play in the processes of exclusion and reproduction of traditional masculinity. From the few studies conducted on the football subculture there is consistent evidence to recognize it as the premier "macho" or "masculinizing" sport (Curry, 1991; Messner 1987a; 1987b; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Shaw, 1972). Curry's (1991) investigation of sexist and homophobic narratives in the locker room gives us a first hint at the process which renders the football environment an exclusive one. Curry's conclusions that the locker room in fact promotes homophobic talk, talk that refers to women as objects, and any talk that is aggressive towards women (in other words, all talk that promotes what has sometimes been labelled "rape culture") has led to the establishment of five unique categories of narratives to be investigated in the present study: sexist narratives; homophobic narratives; violent narratives; macho narratives; and narratives involving issues related to pain and injury.

The focus of this study was the understanding of a feature particular to males in a football environment. More specifically, the study was concerned with the following questions: (a) what are the unique narratives accompanying interactions within the football field, locker room, and team social gatherings; (b)

what are the reasons for these particular narratives; (c) what are the functions of these narratives, for instance, how do they reinforce the environment as an exclusively male one; and (d) what are the players' interpretations of these narratives.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist cultural studies was chosen as a theoretical framework to study the players' narratives within the football subculture. The feminist cultural studies framework, an amalgamation of British cultural studies and socialist feminist theory, helped to uncover and understand the reasons for the existence of the unique narratives found in one interuniversity football environment. Feminist cultural studies' main emphasis is on understanding how social and cultural norms, symbols, and values are reproduced in our world. The main concepts within British cultural studies are culture, ideology, hegemony, and power. Within the socialist feminist theory, the important concepts are gender, the sexual division of labour, oppression and patriarchy. These concepts, theorized by Althusser, Gramsci, Foucault and others, were chosen as tools to better understand the existing practices and ideology within a university football setting. Furthermore, these theoretical concepts were selected in order to better contextualize the results collected from both the participant observational and interview phases within the day to day societal relationships.

Methodology

In the selected interuniversity football subculture, the players' narratives were examined through the use of a triangulated method. The latter included three distinct parts: (a) a content analysis of official documents; (b) a participant observation of the players' interactions and narratives; and (c) in-depth interviews

with a sample of the players. A participant observational method was used to collect the players' comments in the football locker room, team meetings and social functions during the 1993 season. All players on the team (N=65) were observed and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of the players (N=19) to obtain information on the various reasons and functions of certain narratives in the football subculture. Field notes were used to collect data from the participant observational phase and interviews with the selected players were recorded.

Post-facto, field notes from the observational phase were transformed into Computerized HyperCard fiches in order to record the player's narratives and the circumstances surrounding them. As for recorded interviews, they were transcribed on computerized HyperQual fiches. HyperCard and HyperQual software programs were then used to organize the data and facilitate their content analysis. The content analysis was executed by deconstructing the texts and parts of the texts in segments to which "meaning units" were attached (Côté, Salmela & Baria, 1993).

Significance of the Study

This study should contribute in various ways to the body of knowledge in the sociology of sport. First, it will focus on the narratives of athletes in the football subculture, at a time when those narratives have rarely been investigated. Second, by concentrating on Canadian amateur athletes rather than on Canadian or American professional athletes, the study will provide much-needed knowledge on the student-athletes' experiences in Canada. Third, few studies have investigated the football subculture and how it has aided in the production and strengthening of traditional masculinity. This study will help to fill the gap in that respect.

From a theoretical point of view, few studies have examined the narratives present in the football subculture and fewer have accomplished this within a feminist cultural studies framework. The use of this perspective will be an important contribution of the present study.

From a methodological stand-point, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge by featuring a triangulated methodology including document analysis, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. Invaluable insights on the amateur football subculture should result from this particular qualitative methodology.

From a practical stand-point, this study will hopefully contribute a better understanding of the players' narratives and the function they play in the social production and reproduction of traditional masculinity, as well as the implicit or explicit exclusion of social groups such as women, visible minorities and openly gay men. In that sense, the study may provide clues on how to transform sport so that it becomes more accessible and inclusive.

Delimitations

The study was delimited in several ways. First, it focussed on one Canadian university football team during the 1993 season. Second, with respect to the methodology, the study was limited to the analysis of official documents from the investigated university team, to a participant observation of the players' narratives, and to interviews with a randomly selected sample of 19 football players from that team.

Limitations

The delimitations mentioned above limited the study in several ways. Using a sample of football players from one Canadian interuniversity team signifies that

the results cannot be extrapolated to all athletes participating in intercollegiate sports at various universities in Canada or in other countries.

The presence of a single participant observer limited the study to one perspective or point of view: The data gathered in the observation phase was limited to those interactions witnessed by the observer. Furthermore, the study relied on the analysis and interpretation of one single individual.

The use of hand-written recordings limited the study in the sense that at times some comments made by the players were not fully heard therefore producing only partial narratives. Considering the role of the researcher as participant (not always having paper readily available to jot down notes), it was at times difficult remembering all the players' comments during practices and social functions.

The data collected from the interview phase are not necessarily representative of the thoughts, opinions, and beliefs of players on other Canadian universities or other universities abroad. Understanding the dynamics at play within interviews, it should be mentioned that the players may not have divulged all the pertinent information with respect to their behaviours and narratives within the football subculture.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature begins by focusing on feminist research in the last few decades and its impact on the study of sport and gender. The next section deals with how closely the sporting environment and the fraternity subculture resemble each other, and how they have both helped in the social construction of masculinity. The last sections centre on the literature regarding the various sporting subcultures, the literature specific to the football subculture, and finally the literature on narratives in the overall sporting subculture, as well as in the football environment.

Literature on Sport and Gender

The acknowledgement of sport as a predominantly male institution has recently caught the attention of many sociologists. Sport is understood by many as a male preserve reflective of our patriarchal society (Bryson, 1990; Dunning, 1986a, 1986b; Hargreaves, 1986; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990). Dunning (1986b) has argued that the sports domain has since recently been unquestioned because modern sport has been tightly secured as a male institution. Dunning has also explained that sport as a mechanism for male hegemony has been challenged by a few feminist writers who have concentrated their efforts on discrimination against women, rather than on theories explaining the various forms of male dominance seen in sport. Since this claim by Dunning (1986b) there has been a considerable amount of feminist writers who have provided important studies to the sociology of sport.

The terms sex and gender have often been confused and this issue has been addressed within feminist scholarly work. While sex is generally defined as the biological and anatomical characteristics distinguishing men from women, Hall has defined gender as: "the psychological, cultural, and social dimension of maleness and femaleness" (1988, p. 81). She has also argued that we can only begin answering sociological questions about gender inequality in sport by dissolving the notion that gender is a dichotomous category. Hall (1985) has mentioned that while sport exhibits the essential body-subject, our patriarchal culture continues to define women as the essential body-object. Hall (1985) has explained how this label of body-object makes incompatible the sporting world and the participation of women. Along similar lines, Cole & Birrell (1986) have explained how patriarchy helps to preserve the gender differences between males and females (sexual division of labour), which inevitably produces concepts such as femininity and masculinity. Hall (1985) has added that even when women do participate in sport, the sports they play are not called true sports or, in other instances, women athletes are not considered real women.

In western culture the idea that all individuals fit into a specific gender category is a taken for granted assumption (Frye, 1983; Kessler & Mckenna, 1978; Lewis, 1987). Davis and Delano (1992) have argued that the gender order is supported through many of the anti-drug campaigns observed in sport media texts. They have further stated that many of the anti-drug campaigns (e.g., anti-steroid use in athletics) assume that bodies naturally fit into unambiguous bipolar categories of gender, and that steroid use disrupts the supposed "natural" order of the female and male bodies. Lenskyj has similarly asserted that whenever "women in sport have threatened the gender order, tactics to reinforce physical gender dichotomization have been employed" (1986, p. 87). According to Whitson, "sport continues to bolster hegemonic masculinity by ritualizing and

embedding aggression, strength, and skill in the male body and linking it with competitive achievement” (1990, p. 18).

One constant in the above studies is the understanding that a definition of gender must take into account the fact that gender relations are constantly changing, never static and based on certain negotiations and contestations. Flintoff (1993), for instance, has explained through her study on a British physical education class that the process by which negotiations are made are dominated by certain groups who have more resources and power. Connell (1987) had previously demonstrated that men learn to use their bodies in skillful and forceful ways in order to demonstrate and publicly display their physical prowess. In the British physical education class, Flintoff (1993) found that indeed, games such as rugby and football enabled many of the male students to display hegemonic masculinity. Jackson (1990) has shown how for most men, it is important to try to participate in these types of sports in order to fit in as one of the boys, even if they are not too comfortable in being involved. Flintoff (1993) has also eluded to the fact that hegemonic masculinity is reinforced through some all-male settings such as the boys’ locker room, the initiating ceremonies for incoming male students, and after game socializing. In the British study, another important aspect in the social construction of masculinity was the practice by many of the boys of verbally putting down other male students who were said to play like a “real nancy” or like a “girlie.” Again, masculinity was defined in terms of what boys were not, that is, not feminine and not homosexual. In the British class, most males would interrupt other groups, laugh, and mock feminine activities such as dance (Flintoff, 1993). Activities such as dance and gymnastics which required male students to dance with other males made many of the boys feel uneasy and provoked homophobic comments and gestures. Comments such as

“Ooh, honey, don’t touch me there” or “Lovely do that again” were common expressions made by students to cover up for their embarrassment.

When men speak of “real” sports, figure skating is usually not perceived as part of this category. Adams (in press) has argued that sports such as figure skating are viewed by many (females as well as males) as “sissy” sports because they are defined by aesthetic characteristics such as appearance, musicality, and grace. Adams has found that males who do participate in figure skating are often perceived to be “sissies” and “faggots.” Adams has stated that even though figure skating is seen by most men as a sissy or faggot sport, specific forms of masculinity do exist within it. Adams has described how male professional skaters such as Kurt Browning and Elvis Stojko are now beginning to project the “tough guy” image, a contrast with the docile image of previous male skaters. The world of figure skating certainly plays a role in the construction of gender. Although male figure skaters are strong, athletic and coordinated they present images of masculinity that fall outside the dominant representations of gender (Adams, in press). Adams states that in order to fully understand the dynamics of gender we must come to grips with the distinction between femininity and masculinity and we must understand the process of hegemonic masculinity which envelops sport.

Bryson (1987) has analyzed the Australian sporting scene and concluded that there are four processes that contribute to sport as supporter of masculine hegemony or as an arena where male hegemony is produced and reproduced: (a) the process of definition or when sport is defined as something in which men and children participate; (b) the process of direct control or when men not only control men’s sports but women’s sport as well; (c) the process of ignorance or when women’s sports are ignored and women athletes are recognized only if they excel in sports that are controlled and defined by men; and (c) the process

of trivialization or when women's feats and performances are equal to or surpass that of males' but are trivialized and not recognized. This processes lead to the continued stereotype of women as the "frail females" Bryson (1987).

Sport as a male dominated institution has for the most part been studied by women, but in the last few decades has become an important topic of study for men (Sabo, 1985; Messner, 1988, 1990b; Dunning, 1986b; Whitson, 1990; Pronger, 1990; Curry, 1991; Kimmel, 1987; Klein, 1990; Brod, 1987; Connell, 1983; Craib, 1987). This realization that men have been the cause of women's oppression has influenced many male sociologists to contribute to the already existing body of feminist theoretical research. Kimmel (1987) has explained how men are changing their views on the traditional role of the male, and how this is a direct result of the feminist movement which has challenged traditional male practices. Male scholars who have begun feminist work have added a unique dimension to the sociology of sport in that through feminist theory, they have begun shying away from studying women and commenced the examination of how *males* have excluded and oppressed women in sport. Indeed, in order to fully understand why sport is still male-dominated and helps in the construction of a traditional form of masculinity, it is crucial to study men because they are the ones who control sport. Change in sport may surface from a change in men's traditional view of women and the sporting domain.

Literature on Sport and the Social Construction of Masculinity

Acknowledging that sports is male-dominated, Whitson (1990) has explained how the socialization processes occurring in sport can not be seen as natural but rather as social practices: boys learn to become and understand what it is to be masculine through institutions such as sport and men can prove their

masculinity through the exclusion of women from sporting activities. Messner's (1986, 1987) articles on "The life of a man's season and the meaning of success" and on "The athletic experience and the development of male identity" have demonstrated how historical events such as women's gradual entrance into the workforce and changes to the family structure have undermined the man's role as the "breadwinner," and how this has resulted in many men becoming defensive since men had long associated male identity with being the sole provider in the family. To defend against these changes, Messner has argued, men have focused on their participation in sport and hence demonstrated their strength, power, and dominance - a way to struggle against what they perceived as the "feminization" of sport and society. In general, the sports world is a cultural arena where boys are socialized through hierarchical competitiveness and the learning of aggressive values. Messner has shown that for boys it is difficult to define masculinity but easy to understand what it is not: masculinity is simply everything that is not feminine.

Many sports such as football and rugby teach boys to associate power, strength, and dominance to being a man. Sports are often associated with violence and this is expressed by Messner (1990a) through his concept of "sporting bodies as weapons." In the game of football as well as other sports, players totally disregard their bodies in order to win or prove that they are tough and aggressive. Possessing masculinity is learning to use the body in a forceful and space-occupying way (Connell, 1983). Players view injuries as just a part of the game that helps to develop character (Messner, 1990a). Being violent in sports is learned and socially constructed behaviour which has a tendency to provide players with a certain status (Connell, 1985; Messner, 1990a). Connell (1987) has argued that men in our society do enjoy power at the expense of women, although not all men share this need. Messner has stated that the game

of football reinforces the notion that women are in fact weaker and inferior to men and has described this naturalized construction in the following fashion:

based on the most extreme possibilities of the male body, [football] is clearly a world apart from women, who are neglected to the role of cheerleading/sex objects on the sideline [...] In contrast to the bare and vulnerable bodies of the cheerleaders, the armoured male bodies [...] are elevated to mythical status, and as such, give testimony to the undeniable fact that here is at least one place where men are clearly superior to women. (1990b, p. 213)

In the sporting domain, men have usually been the initiators of violence, and have abused and neglected their bodies to the extent that it has caused them serious injuries resulting in death. Many football players in the professional and university ranks are now faced with permanent injuries due to the insistence on playing while being hurt. A recurrent theme from these examples is that although men are the initiators of violence, they also seem to be the victims of it (Connell, 1987). For an average football player, the life expectancy is about 56 years, which is 15 years less than the average American male (Connell, 1987).

Through experiences of men who belonged to fraternities, Sanday (1990) investigated the fraternity structure in universities and found that, similarly to sports such as football, it legitimates abuse, sexism, and homophobia as part of masculinity and admission in the brotherhood. The rituals in fraternities reproduce an oppressive social order, construct a hatred for women, and promote an environment where the brothers degrade, demean, and dehumanize women (Sanday, 1990). In the fraternity, anyone considered weak or vulnerable is considered a "wimp" or feminine. Degrading, demeaning, and dehumanizing behaviours are not exclusive behaviour to the fraternity. For example, Curry

(1991) has examined the various interuniversity sport teams (including a football team) in one American university and found that within the teams environments, women are rarely seen as people but rather as objects with various body parts (Curry, 1991). Fear of damaging the fraternal bond in the locker room influences the players' comments towards women. The locker room promotes homophobic language, conversations that refer to women as objects, and any talk that is aggressive towards women and promotes what has been called a "rape culture" (Curry, 1991).

It seems that a number of things can be learned from the all-male fraternity structure, a structure which has been labelled by some as the ultimate breeding ground for sexism, aggressivity, and masculinity. According to Sanday (1990), new members trying to join the fraternity (i.e., the pledges or initiates) are constantly ridiculed and brought to the level of infants and they are seen as girlish, filthy, and sexually frustrated. The rituals focus on degrading and demeaning the initiates to the extent that they can no longer endure the abuse. Fraternity members utilize the initiation ritual to turn or transform "wimpy, and girly, and infant-like" pledges into "powerful, strong, and fearless men." The brothers' perception of the pledges as women confirms to pledges that they are in fact weak, vulnerable, and inferior. According to Sanday (1990), the ritual in the fraternity is believed to help the pledge become part of the brotherhood and become a "real man" by dissolving the inner-woman (i.e., femininity, dependency) as well as the inner-man (i.e., the nerd, homosexual, or less masculine man). Sanday has reported that one ritual or way to dissolve this inner-woman or "not real man" label is through sexual conquest. This finding allows to consider similarities between the fraternity structure and the football environment: both reward sexual promiscuity (Curry, 1991; Sanday, 1990). Sanday has argued that in the fraternity, brothers are not interested in developing intimate relationships,

they are mainly interested in sex. But can this be proven? A case could be made that men have feelings although most often they are forced (through peer or social pressure) to repress them. It could also be that brothers are interested in intimate relationships but cannot have them because this would show their vulnerability and need for intimacy.

Hoch's (1972) study has shown how football players must continuously prove their masculinity through their play on the football field and through sexual conquests. Gair and Baker (1983) have also claimed that players prove their masculinity through violent and aggressive action on the football field, but go one step further by suggesting that aggression is a result of the coach questioning their manhood. Indeed, it is common practice that the coach will criticize a player's manhood rather than his performance (Gair & Baker, 1983). Hoch (1972) has concluded that football players are constantly taught to avoid demonstrating real emotion, and that this transfers to the act of intercourse. Hoch's study has not only reported aggressive actions and attitudes by football players on the field but in relationships with their wives or girlfriends. At least, this is what the narratives of the players in Hoch's study suggest: "I'm really going to punish my ole lady tonite" and "Put the wood to her. Make'er suffer" (1972, p. 15). But how can he be sure that Hoch's players were not talking in this demeaning fashion only to impress the other players on the team? Is it possible that these football players made these comments in order to demonstrate their manliness and superiority.

If abuse is more difficult to move, it remains that researchers seem to agree on the fact that many players prove their manhood through sexual conquests. The situation is similar in the fraternity: sex is not for enjoyment, but for the feeling of acceptance and proving one's masculinity to the rest of the brothers. Members or pledges who are not interested in sexual conquests are often times

labelled as homosexuals or supporters of homosexuality (Sanday, 1990). Sanday has further argued that the viewing of pornography, sexual jokes, and having a "good time" tightens the bond between brothers and validates their masculinity.

Farr (1988) has studied an all-men's social group and concluded that "good women" such as wives and girlfriends are not included in the groups' events but that "bad girls" such as strippers are admitted to bolster the males' sense of heterosexuality and dominance over women. This group which is not so different from many other "good old boys sociability groups" is unified through chauvinistic, class, and local traditions that provide its members with certain privileges (Farr, 1988). Farr has defined "dominance bonding" in the following way: "a process of collective alliance through which the group and its members affirm and reaffirm their superiority" (p. 260). Parallel to this, Sanday (1990) has stated that men portray their dominance because they are insecure about their masculinity and they compensate by gathering with other males and harassing women. The group members' behaviour and comportment is quite different when they are inside compared to outside of the group. Outside the group, men may demonstrate less commitment to their traditional sex roles (Farr, 1988). Curry (1991) has expressed the same point and concluded that in most all-male groups, one can degrade, mock, and ridicule others, while outside of this sphere, it would be considered inappropriate. In the presence of women, men don't voice the sexist comments that they would in a sex-segregated group. With respect to the language used in the locker room, many sportsmen have argued that it is not harmful to women because through it men do not physically hurt women. Some have defended this language on the basis that it creates bonding among men. An obvious problem with the language though is that the attitudes and opinions underlying it often present themselves and flow into many other social

environments. Indeed, if men do degrade and inferiorize women, homosexuals, and less masculine men in the locker room, there are no guarantees that their underlying attitudes are not demonstrated in other social settings as well.

Male bonding is reinforced through involvement in sexist action and through adopting a stereotyped masculine role: aggressive, hostile, and insensitive (Messner, 1990a). Gary Shaw, an ex-football player has explained how football players are not insensitive or stupid, but restrict their behaviours, attitudes, and conversations in order to comply with the stereotype of the macho football player. Shaw has asserted that upholding this manly image is not a temporary activity but a way of life that forces many football players to surrender their identities to “some stereotypical stallion gone mad.” The social construction of traditional forms of masculinity through male bonding is evident in many sports. In the professional baseball’s past, there was evidence that sexist pranks and rituals existed, with “beaver shooting” (Bouton, 1970) being a good example (this involved baseball players sneaking under the seating of the stadium and looking underneath the dresses of women as the Star Spangled Banner would be playing). Bouton has explained how on the one hand, citizens would be incensed by this type of behaviour and, on the otherhand, how this type of action would be supported and promoted by players in the baseball environment. Evidence tells us that some things have not changed so much.

Literature on Sport Subcultures

A number of studies have focused on sport teams or leagues as a type of “subculture,” with their own values, norms, languages and practices. Wheatley’s (1986) study, one of the few that has analyzed women’s sport subcultures, has focussed on the playing, partying, and the creation process of the women’s rugby group. Wheatley has characterized the women’s rugby subculture through three

categories: (a) image; (b) demeanour; and (c) argot. She has argued that there are problems with subcultural analysis in general, one of them stemming from the fact that the level of an individual's involvement in the subculture is not always revealed. Donnelly and Young (1988) have addressed this problem. They have examined the socialization process present in subcultures from an interactionist approach. Donnelly and Young have argued that through a variety of means, individuals learn to adopt the manners, behaviours and values of the subculture (e.g., style, dress, and speech). They have used the concepts of confirmation and construction to examine the development of an individual's role and identity in two specific subcultures: rugby and mountain climbing. According to them, there are four stages that one must go through in order to become a full fledged member of a subculture: (a) presocialization; (b) selection and recruitment; (c) socialization; and (d) acceptance or ostracism (Donnelly & Young, 1988). Others such as Cohen (1965) have explained that the subculture emerges as a solution to commonly experienced problems. It is simply a response to the values and beliefs imposed by the dominant group. If this is so, can we label the football environment a subculture? Suggested here is the fact that football is an environment that is unique in many respects, although it must be acknowledged that it has much in common with our patriarchal North American society.

Wheatley (1986) has suggested that in order to examine the language, comportment, rituals and traditions of a subculture, researchers must use the participant observational method. She has also explained that the women's rugby subculture resembles men's sport subcultures in some respects, but is different in many others. In terms of profanity, Wheatley (1986) has found it as being common place on and off the field. Other descriptions of the women's rugby subculture included songs which were profane, spoke of lesbianism, and of homosexual and heterosexual activities. The rugby players viewed pain and

toughness in a manner similar to that reported by men in football. The women valued bodily bruises, expressing the groups' tolerance for pain and physical toughness. Wheatley has recognized that women rugby players are in control and view themselves as subjects, not objects; they are "subjects who's identity and experience is self-determined and female defined" (p. 623). These women perceive men in the same light as men view women in the sports domain. Men are seen as inferior, as external participants, they are ignored or mocked, and they are viewed as subordinate to the women participants. It could be argued that women's rugby is a solution to a commonly experienced problem. These women are no longer satisfied being an outside oppressed group in a patriarchal society. Wheatley has agreed that it is doubtful that they are just that, but within the confines of the rugby subculture, women definitely feel free from the restrictions put on them by a heterosexual and male-oriented society.

Literature on the Football Subculture

The football subculture has been a difficult domain to infiltrate and examine because of its exclusiveness. One of the few studies examining Canadian professional football was conducted by Stebbins (1987). His ethnographic study aimed at understanding the lifestyle of football players in their chosen vocation. Although this is one of the few ethnographic studies providing a detailed description of the Canadian football subculture, it did not identify the role played by language in the construction of the stereotypical football player.

Sabo and Panepinto (1990), through in-depth semi-structured interviews with former football players, have examined the relationship between the coach and his players in order to understand how football contributes to the social reproduction of masculinity. According to Sabo and Panepinto, football supports a hegemonic model that promotes competitiveness, success, aggression,

violence, and superiority over women. In addition, football teaches young boys to become manly and masculine and prepares them for life within the established sex-gender system. This system consists of two dimensions: sex inequality and inter-male dominance (males coming together to oppress women). The football subculture is sex-segregated in the sense that the coach forces players to eat together, travel together and sleep together. Women are usually excluded from these all-male activities unless they take on subservient roles such as cheerleaders, stewardesses, and fans (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990). The exclusion of women in many of the players' daily activities emphasizes traditionally masculine traits and devalues the traits of women. In the words of one of the interviewees: "after home games, and, even then, the coaches said they'd prowled the bars to catch somebody drinking or breaking curfew. The only thing we had time for was going to class, playing ball, and jerking off" (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990, p. 121). Not only are women excluded from activities, the coach promotes or in many other situations commands that the players avoid sexual relationships with women. Any intimate relationship formed by players is shunned by other players, and are usually teased as being "pussy-whipped" or "hen pecked" (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990). Degrading and inferiorization of women is not only evident among players but through some of the tactics used by the coaches. Coaches gain conformity and control by using homophobic and misogynist remarks.

Foley (1990) has examined the "great American football ritual" and found how deeply implicated a community sport (high school football) is in the reproduction of class, gender, and racial inequality. He concluded that in the studied community, white ruling class and its patriarchal system were preserved (Foley, 1990). Foley has argued that from a historical perspective, sport is less of a progressive and counter-hegemonic institution than some scholars would have hoped. As part of his high school football study, Foley has also found that gender

differences are reproduced during what is called the “powder-puff football game.” This ritual was performed before every senior final football game at the high school and consisted of the football players dressing up as girls and acting as cheerleaders while the young women dressed up like football players and played against the junior girls. Foley has suggested that this ritual expressively demonstrated and reproduced gender differences: males wore high heels, put on lipstick and flaunted their bodies in a provocative manner while females wore the uniforms with helmets and shoulder pads and began acting tough and aggressive. When one of the males was asked what the ritual meant to him, he answered: “I don’t know. I guess it gives guys a chance to have a little fun with the girls [...] It makes the girls see how rough it is to play football [...] maybe show her who’s boss” (p. 118). When a female was asked the same question she responded: “It gives us a chance to show the guys that we can compete too. We aren’t sissies. We can take getting hit too [...] Girls are athletic too” (p. 119). According to Foley, this whole ritual was used by the high school males as a symbolic inversion to parody females in a ridiculous manner. Foley has concluded that the young boys’ power to toy with female symbols of sexuality demonstrated males’ social and physical dominance.

Literature on Narratives Within Sport Subcultures

The study of males and sport is becoming more popular among academic circles. One obvious strategy to understand the essence of masculinity is to concentrate on examining the lives of these males through their own recounted experiences. Klein (1990) has argued that much research has been quantitative and has not discussed the status of the athletic man. In fact Klein has criticized male scholars for not contributing enough to the examination of the male, or more specifically, of the macho world of sport.

With respect to sporting practices, Klein (1990) has argued that gender patterns and differences are seldom consciously intended. One could counter-argue that males are conscious of discrimination and the promotion of gender differences since some of these practices have been in place for centuries, and since a good number of men and women have struggled to make men realize that their actions and attitudes are indeed problematic. It could similarly be argued that many men are conscious of their support of gender differences since they are overtly pressured by others to conform to this type of thinking. Consciously or not, it remains that through sports like football males learn what it is to be masculine, in the traditional sense of the term. Klein (1990) has shown how male sporting practices revolve around going to extremes to win, and often neglecting any personal considerations such as ethical behavior, anxiety or fear. In this regard, David and Brannon (1976) have developed a four part role which explains what is expected of men within many sport subcultures: "no sissy stuff" (i.e., no femininity), "the big wheel" (i.e., success and status), "the sturdy oak" (i.e., an air of toughness) and "give' em hell" (i.e., aggression and violence).

Literature on Narratives Within the Football Subculture

There are have been very few studies which have examined the dynamics and intricacies of male bonding in athletic locker rooms. Kane and Disch (1993) have examined a specific locker room incident concerning a female reporter (Lisa Olson) covering a story on an American professional football team. While trying to conduct an interview with a player, Lisa Olson was sexually harassed by members of the football team with various invitations including one to "take a bite" out of a player's penis. Later on, Olson was accused by the players of coming into the locker room specifically to look at them. Kane and Disch (1993) have

suggested that the players' narratives and later on, their accusation, were their way of challenging women's gradual entrance into a predominantly male-dominated institution. As males have had an exclusive hold and rights on the sporting environment, the athletic locker room has not been different. Understanding that interactions within the locker room play an important role in male bonding and the social construction of traditional forms of masculinity, Kane and Dish have argued that Olson's presence may have been perceived as threatening. By discrediting Olson as a journalist and reassigning her to the role of sexual object, players were able to reaffirm the locker room as an exclusive male environment.

Another study focussing on narratives has been that of Curry (1991), who has examined how fraternal bonding, male domination and masculinity have been strengthened through sexist and homophobic jokes. Curry has found in sports what has been found in a number of other all-male environments including prisons, grade schools, universities and the work force, where narratives are often including references to women who are characterized as "cunts," "gash," "pieces of ass" and other such terms (Hoch, 1972; Sanday, 1990; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990). According to Curry (1991), in the locker room women are rarely seen as people but rather as objects with various body parts. Fear of damaging the fraternal bond in the locker room fuels the comments that players make about women and gay men.

In many all-male sport environments, talk about serious intimate relationships with women is not accepted, but talk referring to women as objects, homophobic talk, and any talk that is aggressive towards women or gay men is acceptable (Curry, 1991).

Conclusion

There have been few studies focusing on sport subcultures, but fewer have actually centered on the football subculture, probably because of the difficulty in entering the football environment. The few available studies have provided information on teams in the United States, particularly professional teams. A number of questions, however, are left unanswered: What is the subculture characterizing Canadian football at the amateur level? How do players act and behave in this subculture and why? What are the narratives of the players involved in such an environment? Are the homophobic, sexist, racist, and macho narratives found in some all-male environments also found in Canadian amateur football? If yes, what are the functions of these narratives? How do players interpret these narratives?

The goal of the present study is to begin to fill the gap in the body of knowledge in sociology of sport by providing some answers to the above questions. The theoretical framework, methodology and results of this inquiry are presented in the chapters to follow.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework used for the study of the football players' narratives. This framework is "feminist cultural studies" which is an amalgamation of British cultural studies and socialist feminist theory. The first part of this chapter provides an overview of the historical background as well as the key concepts associated to British cultural studies. The second part addresses the history and key elements found in socialist feminist theory. The last part of the chapter focusses on the points of convergence of the two previous theoretical perspectives and the manner in which they have been amalgamated into feminist cultural studies. The essential properties and elements of this approach are presented, as well as their relevance for the present study.

British Cultural Studies

Historical Background

The development of British cultural studies began with the first issues of the "working papers" in cultural studies which appeared in 1972 out of the British Cultural Centre in Birmingham. At its inception, British cultural studies did not have a disciplinary base. British cultural studies borrowed from various disciplines in order to provide the required knowledge for a particular project. It is between the 1950's and 1960's that British cultural studies manifested itself as an institution. Its founding fathers were William Hoggart through his Uses of literacy, Raymond Williams' Culture and society, and E.P. Thompson's The making of the English working class. These texts were written to provide an understanding of

their own time and acknowledged the historical changes taking place in British society and culture.

The Uses of literacy by Hoggart (1957) attempted to document the process of change occurring within the traditional culture of the urban working class in England with the methods used by Lévi-Strauss. Hoggart drew from Lévi-Strauss and tried to rearrange his procedures and methods so as to apply them to the analysis of living class cultures. He utilized literary criticism to “read the emblems, idioms, social arrangements, the lived cultures and languages of working class life” (Hall, 1980, p. 18).

In its early stages, British cultural studies was a continuously changing framework, trying to find itself in academic circles. It is through Williams’ text, The long revolution (1961) that British cultural studies underwent one of its more important transformations. Williams suggested a shift in emphasis from a literary to an anthropological definition of culture. Through this theoretical shift, Williams redefined culture as “the means by which meanings and definitions are socially constructed and historically transformed, with literature and art as only one kind of social communication” (quoted in Hall, 1980, p. 19).

Just after Williams’ Long revolution (1961), another text was written by Thompson (1963), The making of the English working class, which also added to the break of intellectual fields in which it was situated. Thompson emphasized that unique class formations were a result of historical agency. He defined culture as “the collective experience which formed the class in its larger historical sense” (quoted in Hall, 1980, p. 19).

In essence, these writers addressed the changes and developments caused by the second world war and the depression. These two historical moments were unique in that they caused a critical break with earlier development in British society and they “appeared to bring economic, political, and cultural forces into

new kinds of relations, into a new equilibrium” (Hall, 1980, p. 17). In the early stages of British cultural studies, a number of questions were being discussed. For instance, was Britain a capitalist or a post-capitalist society? How did the early phases of capitalist development in Britain produce a distinctive type of social formation? These issues helped in the establishment of the “New Left” and set the stage for the beginning of the post-war “cultural debate.” British cultural studies incorporated a set of various disciplines in its analysis of important issues in contemporary society and culture. This engagement created tension between British cultural studies and the various disciplines from which it borrowed knowledge. Hall (1980) has argued that it is this tension between political and intellectual concerns that have shaped and molded British cultural studies. Its lack of respect for the social division of knowledge forced the supporters of British cultural studies to ask the following question: “Could this work (the work or objectives of the British cultural studies framework) be pursued in a disciplined, analytical way, yet break from some of the founding propositions of the intellectual fields in which it was situated?” (Hall, 1980, p. 18).

The impact of structuralism on the development of British cultural studies was immense. The work of Lévi-Strauss helped to view the cultural as a set of practices and displaced “ ‘man in general’ from the full intentional centre of the cultural project” (Hall, 1980, p. 31). British cultural studies looked towards structuralism for theoretical guidance, and then to Durkheimian and Marxist thought. Such Durkheimian and Marxist inflexions, positioned language as a social practice which could not be reduced to individual speakers, but which should rather be understood in terms of systems of relations which make a speaker’s individual utterances possible.

Since British cultural studies has been described as interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and at times counter disciplinary, it has drawn from a variety of

fields to produce knowledge and does not have a distinct methodology that it can call its own: "Its methodology, ambiguous from the beginning, could be best described as bricolage" (Nelson, Treichler, & Grossberg, 1992, p. 2). The type of methodology chosen for a particular research in cultural studies depends on the questions one wants to ask within certain given contexts. Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg (1992) have argued that it is problematic for cultural studies to adopt a specific methodology on the grounds that formalized practices carry with them an heritage of disciplinary investments and exclusions as well as a history of social effects.

The major works mentioned above all aided in breaking away from previous traditions of thought and moved towards a definition of culture which was understood through the field of social practices and historical processes. Today British cultural studies has developed its own set of themes, issues, and direction. The study of culture no longer focuses on the examination of texts and artefacts because such texts were written in a specific historical period which must be studied before analyzing the meanings of the texts (Hall, 1980). Hall (1980) has explained that a particular order of culture is sustained through a certain set of practices and relations. Recognizing a particular cultural order as dominant means suppressing an alternative order the struggle against this particular order. British cultural studies then, has defined culture as problematic and made subordinate cultural alternatives visible.

Main Concepts

Obviously, culture has been a central concept within British cultural studies. This concept, as well as that of ideology, hegemony, and power are briefly presented in the following paragraphs.

Culture. The problem most often associated with British cultural theory regards the definition of “culture.” Proponents of British cultural studies have moved away from the accepted concept of high culture to a notion of culture which is defined by ideological, economic, and political practices. British cultural studies’ aim is to question all theories, to move away from reductionist theories, and to develop a “universal discourse” where a variety of discussions are forged (Hall, 1980). British cultural studies’ main focus is on understanding the relationship between culture and power, and the production and reproduction of these cultural practices. British cultural studies is interested in understanding the emergence of radical social and cultural transformations. Its practitioners see themselves not simply as scholars but as politically engaged participants who strive in identifying and understanding the links between past and present cultural practices.

Because culture is no longer confined to texts or artifacts, questions concerning the evolution of a specific society and the resulting struggles and resistance found in it are brought forth. Recognizing cultural practices as a site of struggles forces one to view the deterministic Marxist view of society as a limited one. The new view of culture has led many to perceive it as being an element on its own, instead of a result of other forces.

Ideology. Louis Althusser’s (1971) work on ideology has had a unique impact on British cultural studies. There are similarities between Althusserian and Marxist views of ideology, both contending that ideology has no history, that ideology is a pure dream described as “nothingness.” Although Althusser agrees with Marx that ideology has no history, he interprets it not in a negative sense but in a positive one. Althusser has presented us with one definition of ideology: “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (1971, p. 36). According to Althusser, ideology is simply

how we, as unique individuals, understand and make sense of the world we reside in. Althusser maintains that ideology has the function of molding concrete individuals into subjects.

Various communicative practices are needed in order for an ideology to exist within a society: language, gesture, imagery and technological processes of the mass media (Cormack, 1992). These various communicative practices strengthen an ideology. Althusser (1971) has emphasized that ideology exists and is embodied in the structures and institutions of a society. Ideology also operates at the individual level and Althusser adopted the term “interpellation” to explain this process. Interpellation is defined as the presence of ideology in the individual. It is how, through an individual’s own consciousness, norms and values become an unquestioned part of that person’s existence: “the process whereby a social representation is accepted and absorbed by an individual as his own representation, and so becomes, for that individual, real, when it is in fact imaginary” (Althusser, 1971, p. 11-12). Individuals do not realize (are not conscious) that their actions, thoughts and behaviours are a result of, and structured by, the ideological relations present in society. An individual’s identity, and the specific role he or she plays in society has been molded through an ever-present ideology. The maintenance and support of this ever-present ideology is exercised through what Althusser describes as “Repressive State Apparatuses” (RSAs) and “Ideological State Apparatuses” (ISAs) (1971). The RSAs refer to the State’s means of using overt force over its subjects through the police, the military and the penal system. The ISAs are the State’s means of exercising covert force. This is the manner in which a dominant ideology is maintained through institutions such as the church, schools, the family and the media. These various ISAs, explains Althusser, function primarily under one ideology because these ISAs are in tune with a unified ideology which functions “beneath the ruling

ideology, which is the ideology of the ruling class" (Althusser, 1971, p. 12). Althusser has acknowledged that ideology is an extremely powerful phenomenon which is necessary for social existence: "Ideology is not an aberration or a contingent excrescence of History: it is a structure essential to the historical life of societies" (Althusser, 1984, p. 232).

Althusser has argued that State apparatuses utilize cultural or political ideology to naturalize ideas that help suppress the masses' interests. Ideology, as Althusser explains, works within a culture and helps to legitimize ideas that work to benefit the dominant class. Although Althusser's concept was an important element in the development of British cultural studies, the Centre never recognized it as a fully consistent notion. Althusser viewed ideology as "the framework of understanding through which men interpret, make sense of experience and 'live' the material conditions in which they find themselves" (quoted in Hall, 1980, p. 32). Althusser also conveyed that ideologies could be materially located and examined in the common day practices and actions through the ISAs which secured them, although they were unconscious forms and categories which could eventually (through definite historical forms) develop into conscious forms.

Althusser and others who supported his concepts, I have looked at the relationship between ideologies, culture, and class formations. By understanding culture as the lived practices of social groups in a definite society, they theorized that a capitalist society also formed and developed its own specific social formations: class formations (Hall, 1980). Althusser argued that class formations are not simply based on economics, but formed through politics and ideologies (Hall, 1980). He refused to reduce the notion of ideology to the economic base and, in fact, maintained that ideology is not simply a reflection of the economic system but a phenomenon with a certain amount of autonomy. Ideology is not

determined by one single element, but it could itself alter the economic system of things. Althusser saw the economic system and ideology not as separate entities, but as intertwined elements in a complex social system.

Overall Althusser's notion of ideology was important in the development of Cultural studies because it provided an understanding of how ideology reproduces the conditions and relations necessary to maintain the production of class societies. His essay on ISAs was unique in that it spoke to the dominant ideology and to the reproduction of that ideology by State apparatuses.

Hegemony. Gramsci's concept of social formation through class hegemony is another important element in the development of cultural studies. Gramsci's work revolved around the nature of the State and how civil society is developed within the capitalist system. Gramsci (1971) defined the State as the source of coercive power in society, and civil society as the site of hegemonic support or maintenance. When Gramsci spoke of hegemony he directly linked this notion to the concept of ideology and added that they are inseparable and ineffective without each other. Gramsci claimed that producing a unitary and coherent ideological unity within an entire social bloc is a difficult struggle and that class hegemony is the process by which the dominant class uses political and ideological means to rule the lower classes. In essence, Gramsci described hegemony as the process whereby a fundamental social group has gained authority over the economic means of production and is able to expand this into the social, political, and cultural spheres throughout civil society. Gramsci avoided speaking of a ruling class and instead described the development of a dominant social group. The hegemony of a fundamental social group forms through class ideological confrontation and conflict. This conflict continues until one group or a combination of them prevails and gains "the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society- bringing about not only a unison of economic

and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 181-182). In order to retain its hegemony, the dominant group will incorporate some of the ideas and values of the subordinate classes within the dominant ideology.

For Gramsci, hegemony is never a permanent state, it is always in constant flux. Hegemony develops through a struggle which articulates itself into a tendency. These tendencies (direction in which social forces are heading) do not necessarily profit the ruling group but aid in forming the conditions whereby society may be conformed to specific national tasks (Hall, 1980). Hall (1980) has argued that Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is important in analyzing the capitalist society in which we reside in. Its relevance to our society is in how political power has been structured through a political system, which allows for the mass development of cultural institutions sustaining the hegemonic relations that exist between social groups.

Power. The last major element in British cultural studies is Foucault’s concept of power. For Foucault (1991), power is always at the centre point of relations between individuals or groups. Power is conceived through normal daily practices, and this is the reason why Foucault’s concept of power functions at the personal level. Foucault explains how, in our modern society, power flows through finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, their bodies, their mannerisms and their everyday actions. This new formed power is theorized in dispersion and is not seen as being monopolized at the State level or at the level of the ruling class. Cole (1993) has elaborated this by stating that the body has become a central ideological resource in the “management of a raced sex-gender system in late capitalism [...] in other words, the contemporary political situation has amplified the need to (re)theorize the body as the site of cultural politics” (p. 22).

Cole & Birrell (1986) provide us with an understanding of how Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham's concept of "panopticon" to illustrate this difficulty of locating power in society. The panopticon is a circular prison where inmates are under surveillance by guards who cannot be seen in a central tower. Not knowing if they are watched or not, inmates resort to self-surveillance. Foucault sees society as a giant panopticon where the State uses ideological means to influence individuals to discipline themselves in a specific manner. The modern State, he maintains, is not an entity developed above individuals and ignoring what and who they are, but on the contrary "a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns" (Foucault, 1980, p. 214).

Foucault suggests that we begin to analyse and understand the economy of power relations by considering the forms of resistance taken against various forms of power. He explains further that this is important so as to "bring to light the power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used" (1980, p. 211). Foucault (1980) has described, for instance, a series of struggles which have developed over the last few decades: opposition to the power of men over women, parents over children, psychiatry over the mentally ill, medicine over the population, and administration over the ways people live. He concludes that these struggles are, "a refusal [...] of economic and ideological state violence which ignores who we are as individuals, and also a refusal of a scientific or administrative inquisition which determines who one is (1980, p. 212).

Foucault assertively states in The subject and power that power cannot be exercised over things, only over people. Also one cannot exercise power over individuals who do not have power or are helpless. He continues by explaining

that power is not simply a relationship between individuals, but a manner in which certain actions modify others. Power exists only when it is put into action, in other words, exercised over a space that has the possibility of reacting back: “It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their or being capable of action. A set of actions upon their actions” (Foucault, 1980, p. 220).

Socialist Feminist Theory

The theoretical framework used in this study borrows from a recent theoretical tradition: that of socialist feminist theory. In this section are discussed the historical development of socialist feminist theory and the key elements of this perspective.

Historical Background

In order to begin explaining the major concepts of feminist theory we must understand its historical base. Feminism began as a politics (“the personal is political”) which focused on how women have been discriminated and oppressed in society. Feminism fought for the struggle of freedom of choice for all women in all issues in society. Not only did feminism present these injustices to the public, it actively played and continues to play a major role in raising women’s consciousness about the oppression that women are faced with.

After the 1950’s, a feminist theoretical framework began to emerge from feminism. It was this feminist theoretical framework (socialist feminist theory) which took into account the gender/sex differences that were produced and reproduced in society. Socialist feminist theory stems from the interventions by feminists into socialist and Marxist theories. Socialist feminist theory has

included what socialist and Marxist theories have excluded: a consideration of women, race, and colour in their analysis. Socialist and Marxist thoughts make no mention of gender relations in their theorizing. Engels, a long time colleague of Marx, recognized the presence of women and, in the analysis, tied this question to the family and class relations. Barrett has recognized that "whatever its failings, [... Engels].has provided the starting point of a materialist analysis of gender relations" (1980, p. 48). For Engels, men's power over women was understood in terms of men's need to control material resources and influence how these resources were disposed. Socialist feminist theory recognized the work of Engels as a positive starting point but disagreed with Engels' assumption about the natural differences which divided men and women (Johnson, 1990).

In the second wave of the feminist movement, it was radical feminist thought which focused on explaining women's oppression and organizing movements. Socialist women at this point were caught up in this similar activity, but soon began to concentrate their efforts on other factors dealing with "The woman question." It is Mitchell's essay in 1966 which moved the socialist discussion of the woman question on the feminist agenda (Johnson, 1990). This new found discussion presented by Mitchell (1966) was based on the various concepts within the New Left and radical feminism. Mitchell added that the focus now was on women as a specific group, a legitimization of concerns for "personal life" and a focus on biological and social reproduction (Mitchell, 1966).

Donovan (1985) illustrates how the contemporary women's movement influenced Marxists to locate a material basis for women's subjugation within a capitalist system and integrates this into a more wholistic interpretation of Marxist theory: socialist feminist theory. In other words, attempting to develop a Marxist theory of women's oppression helps to recognize the links between the realms of production and reproduction (not only biological reproduction but women's role in

the maintenance process that keeps workers functional - provide them with emotional as well as physical care).

Socialist feminist theory has gone one step further in modifying the analysis of Marxist theory by incorporating the key elements of the radical feminist framework. Socialist feminist theory differs from Marxist theory in that it views patriarchy as a central unit of analysis while Marxist feminist theory focuses on gender relations within the constraints of an economic determinism. The socialist feminist framework integrates a variety of theoretical underpinnings from radical feminist theory but avoids a reductionist position by demonstrating how other levels of social formation such as race, class and culture have affected social beings. Within the radical feminist theory there are important elements to consider but it as a whole has often been criticized for being a meta-narrative: assuming that all women have similar interests, goals, and endure and struggle against the same forms of oppression (Collins, 1990; Hooks, 1984, 1989; Spelman, 1988). Mitchell (1971), for instance, recognizes that of the oppressed groups in our world, women are distinct in that they reside in two worlds of oppression: the worlds of production (labour market) and the world of reproduction (the family).

Main Concepts

This section focuses on four of the main concepts developed within the socialist feminist framework: gender, patriarchy, sexual division of labour, and oppression.

Gender. In the last few decades there has been a focus in feminist theory to make the distinction between sex and gender. The term sex refers to the most basic physiological differences between males and females (e.g., differences in genitalia) while gender is defined as culturally specific patterns of behaviour

which may be attached to either sex. This sex/gender system has only recently been recognized as a new visible object. Individuals are born male or female but are created and socialized to become a man or woman, in other words, socially constructed genders. When one speaks of gender one automatically implies a power relation whereby dominance and subordination help to define what it is to be a man or a woman (Pronger, 1993). Epstein and Straub (1991) argue that the sex/gender systems are: "historically and culturally specific arrogations of the human body for ideological purposes" in which "physiology, anatomy, and body codes (clothing, cosmetics, behaviours, miens, affective and sexual object choices) are taken over by institutions that use bodily difference to define and coerce gender identity" (1991, p. 3). Harding, in her explanation of the emergence of the sex/gender system in our society, argues that there exists:

a system of male-dominance made possible by men's control of women's productive and reproductive labour, where "reproduction" is broadly construed to include sexuality, family life, and kinship formation, as well as the birthing which biologically reproduces the species. (1983, p. 311).

In other words, the sex/gender system has been an object that has played an integral part in making individuals aware of the existing differences between men and women. Harding (1983) questions why the sex/gender system has only recently been recognized and demonstrates how the discovery of sex/gender has implications beyond the need for revision in our scientific understandings. Harding continues by emphasizing that the reason why the sex/gender system is only understood now rests with the limitations imposed by empiricism, functionalist/relativist, and Marxist epistemologies on acquisition of new knowledge. Harding (1983) argues that throughout recorded history the

sex/gender system has been a fundamental factor in influencing the social life of individuals in all cultures. Taking this into consideration, we can assume that there has only rarely been a human act or thought produced on its own without being limited or influenced by this socially constructed sex/gender system. The system's effect on the individual is similar to that of classicism and racism in that it limits and provides certain opportunities within which are constructed the social practices of daily life.

Many come close in claiming that the sex/gender system is universal and apparent in all cultures. Of the cultures known throughout history, all have been characterized and by a sex/gender system which has influenced the structure of social interaction (Leacock, 1981). Rubin (1976) continues to claim that how people meet their sexual needs, how they reproduce, how they learn to be masculine and feminine, and how it feels to be a man and woman all operate within a sex/gender system. Understanding the implications of the sex/gender system helps us to recognize how much of an influence this may have on other social institutions.

Patriarchy. The word patriarchy was a term first used by Kate Millett (1971), in her now classic work Sexual politics to describe a type of social system. Many have criticized her for even suggesting that we live in this type of social system, but users of her concept have recognized that even though there are differences distinguishing the experiences of women in various political and economic systems, male domination over women is evident in all societies (Eisenstein, 1983). Socialist feminist theory has developed from two positions. The first position focuses on the works of individuals such as Eisenstein (1977) and Mitchell (1966), which are based on a revision of Marxist concepts to include women's position within the family under capitalism. This position was based on the reproduction of labour, power, and the dual systems approach which viewed

capitalism and the patriarchal system as separate but related (Cole in press). The second approach emphasized by Rubin (1976) in her book The traffic in woman, explained patriarchy as a specific aspect of a larger structuring sex/gender system, which was described as “a neutral term which refers to the domain, and indicates that oppression is not inevitable in that domain, but is the product of the specific social relations which organize it” (1976, p.168). Adrienne Rich provides us with her explanation of a universal oppression of women by men in emphasizing that:

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men -by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor- determine what part of the women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male. (1976, p.170)

Millett (1970) asks the simple question of how have women around the world come to the point of being an oppressed group, how can this have happened when women had similar access to education, financial resources, and civil and political rights? The answer, she explains, lays in psychology, where an engineering of consent among women took place. This uncoerced consent given from women evolved through conditioning them to embrace the process of sex-role stereotyping. This is evident from early childhood where women and men learn and accept a society which makes the distinction between male and female spheres, characterizes each gender by specific traits, and teaches that public power is allocated exclusively to males.

In a patriarchal system, men of certain classes, race, or ethnic groups play different roles and have different places in patriarchy, but all have one thing in

common, and that is to secure and maintain their power over their women (Hartmann, 1992). Hartmann argues that there is a material base from which patriarchy is secured: the exclusion of women from access to some essential productive resources (jobs that pay a certain wage) and the restriction of women's sexuality through heterosexual monogamous marriages. Men also secure the reproduction of patriarchy through the control of many other social structures such as the church, schools, sports, clubs, unions, armies, factories, offices, health centres and the media. The rearing of children is an important part in the maintenance of patriarchy. Children are primarily raised by the mother who is at times confined to the domestic picture and learn to recognize women as inferior to men (Hartmann, 1992). Children learn their place in the gender hierarchical system and eventually become an integral part in the promotion of patriarchy.

Patriarchy is supported by a powerful ideology which permeates through many institutions in society including the world of scientific research. Pronger's critique of the world of science presents it as still a male-dominated environment that "values orthodox men and their interests and devalues women and theirs, thus perpetuating orthodoxy in these gendered power relations" (1993, p. 11). Science in general, explains Pronger, can be seen as a social practice whereby knowledge is produced through an uncritical support for a social system of gendered power relations. It is not surprising, then, that science has relied on a biological discourse to explain the inferiority of women. Science has not only supported a social system of gender power relations but also has promoted "sexist, racist, homophobic, and classist social projects" contends Harding (1986). Pronger supports Harding's argument by emphasizing that in a sexist society which supports patriarchy and gender differences, scientific research becomes an integral part in thematizing difference between the sexes and

demonstrating feminine inferiority in the context of masculine projects. Harding argues that it is the sexist attitudes present in every day social interactions that uncover science as an inherently sexist paradigm which supports a gender dichotomy and patriarchy.

Sexual division of labour. Feminist research that been quite successful in unveiling society as patriarchal and as supporting a sexual division of labour (Harding, 1983). Donovan (1985) contends that the central concern of contemporary socialist feminist theory has revolved around the following questions: (a) domestic labour and its contributions to capitalism; (b) the relationship women have with the modes of production as wage earners; (c) the link between class and women; (d) the home and the family's role in the socialization of young men and women; and (e) the notion of praxis with respect to the question of ideology and nature of consciousness.

In a large portion of history, women have been the individuals who have remained at home to do housework and take care of the family. Benston (1969) explains that housework (done predominantly by women) must not be relegated to marginalized labour but viewed as valuable work when analyzing the intricate workings of the economy. She continues to express how household work under capitalism is not counted. Because women's work is not worth any money, it is not valued in a capitalist system: "In a society in which money determines value [...] women who do this value-less work can hardly be expected to be worth as much as men, who work for money" (1969, p. 502).

The sexual division of labour, maintains Hartmann (1983), has been apparent throughout human history and can be described as a hierarchical one with men at the top level and women as the subordinates. Hartmann contends that it is the sexual division of labour that has produced women's present social status. For Hartmann, patriarchy and capitalism are two distinct but similarly

oppressive systems that help men maintain their power. Most anthropologists contend that sexual stratification has developed with increasing productivity, specialization, and the establishment of settled agriculture and private property. The formation of a patriarchal system was established when men began to control the labour of women and children, and by doing this, learned to use the system of hierarchical organization in their favour. Patriarchy, maintains Hartmann, is the system of male oppression of women and “a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relation between men and solidarity among them, which enable them to control women” (1992, p. 103). Alongside patriarchy, capitalism has created places for a specific hierarchy of workers, with traditional Marxists not explaining and identifying who fills these places. It is gender and racial hierarchies that influence and determine who is at what hierarchical level.

Oppression. In socialist feminist theory, gender and class play an equally important role in explaining women’s oppression. In contrast, Marxist feminist thought emphasizes how class provides a more adequate account for women’s status in society (Tong, 1989). Marxism does not discriminate on the basis of gender but clumps all oppressed individuals into one group and views individuals as gender free. Jagger (1983) has suggested that Marxist feminist theory says too little of women’s oppression by men and seems to recognize only the needs of men. In Jagger’s critique of Marxist feminist theory, she explains how it avoids discussing issues related to sex. Socialist feminist theory overrides Marxist feminist theory in its struggle for women’s liberation, through an understanding of patriarchy as an incredibly powerful system. MacKinnon (1982) explains that neither Marxist feminist theory nor capitalism have dismantled society’s stereotypical perception of the woman as housewife, sexual slave or mother.

Rubin (1976) explains that capitalism is not the sole culprit in women's oppression, but what capitalism has done is taken over and reformed male and female notions of the past centuries: "No analysis of the reproduction of labour power under capitalism can explain foot-binding, chastity belts, or any of the incredible array of Byzantine, fetishized indignities (p.157). Mitchell (1971) explains that when we speak of women's oppression we should focus on all aspects of women's experience - in production and reproduction - in order to come up with the best interpretation of women's state.

Conclusion

Feminist theory has gone beyond focusing on central themes such as patriarchy, the sexual division of labour, and gender. It now includes the examination of how the above concepts are understood across race, class, sexuality, the body, and subjectivity/agency (Cole, 1993). Socialist feminist theory is based on the assumption that capitalism, patriarchy and racism are interdependent, but at the same instance autonomous systems of oppression (Cole, 1993). Acknowledging that socialist feminist theory takes into account systems of oppression such as racism and capitalism, it recognizes that there are various women's positions (i.e., it recognizes the oppression of women of the Third World, women of colour, women with mental or physical disability, etc.) within the feminist framework. Cole (1993) argues that these divisions among women must be understood in order to develop more adequate theories and politics. By understanding the various standpoints within feminist theory, feminists can begin focusing on changing and transforming society from a patriarchal system which produces masculinities and femininities and a sexual division of labour into a more equalitarian system which provides equal representation for all sexes, races, and colours. Hartmann suggests that the only

possibility of achieving this is through the following process: “Men will have to be forced to give up their favoured positions in the division of labor - in the labor market and at home - both if women’s subordination is to end and if men are to begin to escape class oppression and exploitation” (1983, p. 101).

Feminist Cultural Studies

The amalgamation of British cultural studies and socialist feminist theory into a feminist cultural studies provides a perspective which allows for a better understanding of the world by avoiding a reductionist stance. The emphasis of feminist cultural studies is on understanding how social and cultural norms, symbols and values are reproduced in our world. This theoretical framework recognizes the human subject as one who has been molded and shaped by the cultural and ideological practices that surround him or her. Cole and Birrell explain that socialist feminism and cultural studies, together, “challenge an economic reductionist position [...] and shift the location and exercise of politics and power from the state to everyday, local, and state levels” (1986 p. 2).

The New Left theorizing (British cultural studies included) has not considered and been unable to take into account the impact of sexuality, reproduction, and violence. The fusion between British cultural studies and socialist feminist theory, then, can provide tools to better: (a) investigate the role of culture in the reproduction of gender inequality; and (b) see how an analysis of gender can contribute to an understanding of culture (Franklin, Lury & Stacey, 1991).

The fusion of British cultural studies and socialist feminist theory offers an interactive potential for the examination and understanding of complex social relations and cultural practices. Messner (1992) argues that sociologists should avoid utilizing one-dimensional perspectives (e.g., Marxist or feminist) in their

research and concentrate on utilizing progressive theories which encompass what some have called a “multiple semi-autonomous, cross-cutting system of inequality” (Baca Zinn et al., 1986; Collins, 1990). Feminist cultural studies does just this by combining British cultural studies which focuses on how the production and reproduction of cultural practices has molded past and present social systems, with a socialist feminist theory that provides an explanation for the various forms of women’s oppression found in our society. Socialist feminist theory aids in describing how capitalism, patriarchy and racism are interdependent and at the same time autonomous systems of oppression.

Feminist theory has developed a framework where women’s experiences have been isolated, leaving no room to relate these experiences to the operation of cultural practices. Feminist cultural studies does just this and more in that it adds significantly to the cultural studies project by suggesting the need to examine gender/sex relations and integrate feminist theory.

Feminist cultural studies remains an on-going process, changing with the times: “it is a practice of theorizing that necessarily remains open to new struggles, power relationships, and external influences” (Hall, 1986, p. 60). As a perspective, feminist cultural studies is evolving as it is gaining in popularity in Canada, the United-States and England. Its beginnings, however, have been relatively slow. Obviously, in the early works of British cultural studies there was no recognition of gender issues or of women’s oppression in a patriarchal society. The inclusion of feminist theorizing was not incorporated in British cultural studies until the efforts of the Women’s Studies Group at the Centre in 1970 (Hall, 1993). A number of cultural studies theorists at the Centre eventually realized that: “A theory of culture which cannot account for patriarchal structures of dominance and oppression is in the wake of feminism, a non-starter” (Hall, 1980, p.39). It is the Women’s Studies Group that influenced and forced a rethinking in every area

of cultural studies analysis. Stuart Hall remarks that the feminist theorizing did not affect British cultural studies in a casual way but in a decisive manner although this was not accomplished without tremendous resistance from a “fully installed patriarchal power” at the Centre. The impact of feminism was immense recalls Stuart Hall, it was ruptural, and turned the British cultural studies focus upside down and inside out:

opening the question of the personal as political, and its consequences for changing the object of the study in Cultural Studies, was completely revolutionary in a theoretical and practical way. (1992, p. 282)

With respect to methodology, feminist cultural studies moves away from positivist types of research and favors methodologies of the anti-positivist and ideographic type. Politically, proponents of feminist cultural studies view themselves in the same light as British cultural studies practitioners in that they see themselves not simply as scholars but as politically engaged participants who believe that they can affect social change:

Every act of struggle is thus not necessarily consistent with the politics of cultural studies, though cultural studies would agree with feminists, people of colour, and those on the left that the canon presents a selective tradition that it is deeply implicated in existing relations of power. (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992, p. 13)

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methodology used in the study of the narratives associated to men's experiences in an interuniversity football team. The chapter includes several sections focussing on the research protocol, the triangulated method, the sample of the study, the instruments used to gather and record data, the procedures of data collection themselves, and finally the techniques of data analysis.

Research Protocol

This exploratory study centered on the investigation of narratives present within the football subculture, their function, and their interpretation by the football players. The research protocol consisted of a non-experimental design focusing on one case study. The case under study was that of one Canadian interuniversity football team associated to the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union.

Triangulated Method

A triangulated method was utilized to gather information allowing the understanding of the players' narratives within the amateur football environment. The triangulated method consisted of three distinct procedures: (a) a content analysis of official documents, (b) participant observation of players, and (c) in-depth interviews with players. These procedures are described in the paragraphs to follow.

The first procedure was a content analysis of official documents. This analysis was conducted on the official documents concerning the formal league rules (C.I.A.U.) regarding players' comportment and behaviour within the interuniversity football environment. The official documents were made available to the researcher by the athletic department, more specifically, by the C.I.A.U. Athletic Coordinator.

The second procedure consisted of a participant observation of how players comport themselves within the football setting, more specifically observing and documenting the players' narratives associated to their experiences while: (a) in the locker room, (b) on the practice field, (c) at team social functions, and (d) at team meetings. Some comments heard on the football field in game situations were recorded (post-facto), but they were few in number due to the obvious conflict of taking notes and at the same time being perceived as being part of the team and devoting one's attention to the game in progress. In this participant observational phase, particular attention was devoted to the investigation of the presence (or absence) and function of specific narratives: sexist narratives, homophobic narratives, violent narratives, macho narratives, and narratives involving issues related to pain and/or injury.

The third procedure consisted in conducting in-depth interviews with a sample of the team's players in order to investigate the players' own interpretations of their narratives, the function of these narratives, and the football subculture in general.

Sample

This case study focussed on the narratives of football players involved in one Canadian interuniversity team during the 1993 season. The selected team was part of the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) and participated in

seven official league and two exhibition games. The team also participated in approximately 80 practices during the season under study. The team was lead by seven coaches although one left before the end of the season.

The sample for the study consisted of the entire population of the players on the football team (N=65). These players were observed within their football setting and the observation phase lasted one and a half month.

At the end of the season, a purposeful sample of players (N=19) were selected for in-depth interviews. Ten players whose narratives had been frequently recorded during the observational phase were asked to participate in an interview. An additional nine players for whom very few narratives had been recorded were also asked to participate in an interview. All interviews were conducted between December 15, 1993 and January 31, 1994.

Instruments

Two instruments were used for the study. The first one was field notes, which were used to record the “episodes” surrounding and including the narratives of players. During the participant observational phase of the study, these field notes were taken in order to record the narratives of the players, their place of occurrence, the reactions they received from other players and other details surrounding the context of their occurrence. Field notes were recorded on a small notebook, and at times, on any paper that was handy and could be used as inconspicuously as possible.

The second instrument used for the study was the interview protocol (see Appendix A). The interview protocol consisted of three sections, each composed of open-ended questions of the semi-structured type. The first part of the interview consisted of questions designed to obtain information from the players concerning the major reasons for their having chosen to play football as opposed

to other sports (for instance, individual or non-aggressive sports) and for enjoying football. The second part of the protocol included questions designed to illicit the players' thoughts on various topics such as their relationship with the coaches and with the players, the issue of homosexuality and how it is viewed in the football environment, their behaviour on and off the field, etc. Included in this second part was the players' reactions to, and interpretations of narratives or comments they had made during the participant observation phase. They were asked questions regarding the reasons, functions, and acceptability of such comments. The prime focus in the last part of the interview protocol was to obtain some feedback from players concerning what they thought were the positive and negative attributes of football, and their suggestions on some of the areas that should change in the football environment?

Data Collection

Data were collected during the 1993 football season between the 1st of October to November 15. The data collection began only when the full football squad was officially announced and therefore the football training camp was not included in the observational phase of the study. Before the start of the participant observational phase, team coaches were informed of the study and a consent form was handed out to the players along with a brief explanation of its contents (see Participant Observation Consent Form in Appendix B). A consent form was signed by each of the players on the team before the start of the study.

Official documents: the official documents concerning both the CIAU and the University Sport Services code of behaviour that players must respect within the football setting were obtained from the Head Football Coach, the Coordinator of Athletics, and the CIAU support staff.

Participant observation: with respect to the participant observational phase, data were gathered through field notes before, during, or immediately after the practices, team meetings or official team gatherings. At the end of each data collection day, all recorded notes were transcribed on computerized HyperCard fiches or cards (see HyperCard Example in Appendix C). A coding system was associated to the individual card used to record each narrative. Each narrative was recorded and associated to a specific "episode" encompassing all the contextual details surrounding the narrative. Most often, a player's narrative was part of a verbal interaction between him and another player or group of players. To the best of the researcher's recollection, then, the HyperCard card contained not only a player's narrative but the whole interaction, the name of the players who took part in it, the position of these players (e.g., defensive back, receiver, offensive line, etc.), the location of the interaction (e.g., showers, therapy room, equipment room, locker room, team meeting room, practice field, etc.), and the details of the circumstances surrounding the interaction. At the end of the data collection phase, a total of 131 cards had been created, documenting as many episodes.

In-depth interviews: in terms of the interviews with the sampled players, data were collected by recording the interviews on audio-tape. Players were contacted by phone at the end of the season and interview times were scheduled. Interview settings were chosen by the interviewees themselves and all interview locations turned out to be informal places where players felt most comfortable. A consent form was given to, and signed by each player before the interview (see the Interview Consent Form for interviews in Appendix D). The semi-structured interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and consisted of open-ended questions to provide the interviewee with the possibility to expand on

their answers. Interview recordings were later transcribed onto computerized HyperQual cards.

Data Analysis

A qualitative method was used to analyse the official documents and the data collected from the participant observation and interview phases. The qualitative data analysis allowed for an in-depth investigation of the players' narratives, the function of these narratives, and the players' own interpretations of these narratives.

Official documents: the official documents were content analyzed for any trace of rulings concerning the verbal behavior of varsity athletes. The limited document found was the Draft of the CIAU Guidelines for Ethical Behaviour. After a thorough search, not much information was collected on language guidelines, and this was considered an interesting and revealing fact in and of itself. The few paragraphs specific to language were analyzed and contrasted to the actual language and comportment of the players on the studied team.

Participant observation: the software program "HyperCard" was utilized in organizing the data from the participant observation phase. The program allowed to categorize narratives recorded on cards according to: (a) the type of episode, (b) the player-s involved in the narrative-s, (c) the narrative-s, (d) the context of the narrative-s, (e) the possible function of the narrative-s, and (f) the consequence of the narrative-s or how others reacted to the narrative-s. The HyperCard program helped in organizing the data into five specific categories of episodes (violent, sexist, homophobic, macho and pain/injury) and in investigating the particular patterns associated to these categories of episodes.

Interviews: the software program "HyperQual" was used to analyse the data gathered in the interview phase. This program was selected because it permitted

the investigator to divide the interview transcripts in multiple segments or meaning units and to then apply one or more “tag” to this meaning unit. A meaning unit is “a segment of the text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea [...] or piece of information” (Tesch, 1990, p.116). Dividing, tagging and classifying the data from the interview phase was an on-going process. Thomas and Nelson (1990) state that categorization is a major factor when involved in qualitative analysis. Indeed, a lot of time was devoted to the examination of the data, the creation of tags, and the creation of categories of tags. The HyperQual program was useful not only in creating tags and a hierarchy of tags, but also in allowing to automatically sort and print the players’ narratives and the information attached to the players’ narratives according to their tags.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the case study. The chapter begins with a contextual overview of the football subculture in order to better situate the findings. Then are presented the different types of narratives used by the players in the football environment and the context of these narratives, the functions these narratives play, and the reactions these narrative elicit among the players. In the last part of the chapter is presented the player's own interpretations of their narratives.

Contextual Overview of the Football Subculture

The results of a participant observational study of the narratives associated to men's experiences in football must be prefaced by a personal note to better contextualize these results. This note has to do with what is not necessarily said by the subjects under study but what is observed by the investigator and profoundly marks not only the domain under investigation, but the investigative process itself.

When describing my experience and the overall group dynamics within the team, one word stands out from all the rest, and that is "conformity." Having played five years of interuniversity football, I have realized that being different, having your own thoughts, ideas or opinions is not valued within the football subculture. In order to be accepted and to fit in, you must abide by certain formal and informal rules, and most of all you must act and comport yourself in the same fashion as other players. A player must not act as an "individual" - this word is often used in a derogatory way by coaches and other players. Its definition is:

not thinking in terms of the team, thinking only about yourself, being selfish. Football teaches you that every player should act in the best interest of the team, and so if one is injured, for example, one should continue playing because if one does not, then one is selfish, one has no regard for the greater whole, one is not aiding in the production of a victory.

For many players on a university football team, playing football tends to make them believe that they are above or superior to the average student. Coaches often refer to this type of mentality as the “campus jock” mentality. The campus jocks are those who think they are above school rules and regulations, they are invincible and, to a certain extent, in control of the social scene at the university. Coaches often play down or try to abolish this type of mentality because it often results in bar fights and mischievous behaviour in various school social settings. It is ironic that the coach promotes the elimination of this type of attitude while at the same time he explains to the players that they are special and that other students are envious of who they are: students and athletes.

The campus jock mentality is very much analogous to the comportment of players in the locker room and on the practice field. In the football environment players are continuously defending themselves against remarks made by other players which inferiorize or ridicule them. Players compete and challenge each other, battling it out for who is the dominant male. Players consistently tease each other through derogatory comments and try to make each other look foolish in the presence of other players. This battle of male egos is constantly there, everlasting, and never losing its fullness. Wherever players are together and whatever the setting, the teasing among players is present, always staring at them in the face. Teasing takes the form of putting-down other players, influencing or forcing them to respond, or stumping them when they cannot answer back. Players who are teased must always respond or retaliate because

if they do not they will be viewed or labelled as “wimps,” “losers” or “fags.” The whole football environment (the actual environment of the football playing and the partaking in the activities surrounding the practices and games) is characterized by a culture revolving around crushing, dominating, and gaining superiority over the other.

In brief, conformity and obedience to the team informal norms and rules, the campus jock mentality and the crucial importance of “teasing” within the players’ interactions are as many elements allowing to better contextualize the nature and function of narratives within the football subculture. One last observation concerns the “official” rules or guidelines about language within a university football team setting. An examination of the official CIAU documents concerning the athletes’ general comportment within the university and the league revealed that very little attention is devoted to player behaviour and comportment on and off the field. There is a lot of documentation on official sport rules and league rules, but with regard to the individual athletes’ behaviour, only a Draft of the CIAU Guidelines for Ethical Behaviour was found. This document was not officially distributed to the players or coaches as it was still under review in the 1993 season (it was to be adopted at the next CIAU Annual Meeting). An analysis of this CIAU document revealed the presence of the following guidelines concerning the players and their behaviour:

- Treat individuals with respect at all times;
- Provide feedback to others in a caring manner that is sensitive to their needs;
- Do not engage in demeaning descriptions of others in sport;
- Recognize the rights of others;

- Treat all participants in sport equitably regardless of gender, race, place of origin, athletic potential, colour, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, socio-economic status or any other conditions;
- Use appropriate, respectful and gender neutral language for individuals in all situations;
- Do not practice, condone, ignore, facilitate or collaborate with any form of unjust discrimination. (Draft of the CIAU Guidelines for Ethical Behaviour, 1993).

Interestingly enough neither players nor coaches were aware of the above guidelines concerning player and coach behaviour or any other guidelines which may have been produced by the University Sports Services or by the CIAU. Guidelines concerning language or behaviour were not presented to players before the start of the 1993 football season. Granted the observations made above, I would venture as far as to say that even if guidelines had been presented to players at the beginning of the season, they, alone, would have had little impact. Considering the nature and tradition of the football subculture, it would be practically impossible for coaches or players to reprimand any football player using derogatory or discriminatory language in the locker room or on the field. In fact, the analysis to follow may show that the football subculture tends to encourage the type of language and behaviour prohibited by the guidelines.

Players' Narratives and their Function

Types of Narratives

Previous literature regarding the football subculture had provided evidence of racist, homophobic and sexist narratives and information was gathered during the participant observational phase of the present study to verify the existence of

similar types of narratives. The qualitative data analysis revealed the presence of five main categories of narratives: players' narratives associated to (a) sexist episodes, (b) homophobic episodes, (c) "macho" episodes, (d) violent episodes, and (e) episodes related to pain or injury. From all the field notes gathered during the participant observation phase, only a few isolated racist comments were found. Racist narratives were not found to be an integral part of the football environment like the other types of narratives.

Although there were five distinct categories created, many of the narratives overlapped. For example there were a considerable amount of sexist narratives which could also be categorized as violent narratives, such as: Shut-up bitch; I'll make you my hoe; and I'll whip her and give it to her hard.

Many violent narratives also overlapped with the macho narratives, for example: I'll beat and slap your butt.

With respect to many of the homophobic narratives made, many overlapped with the violent narratives. In the football subculture homophobic jokes most often had a violent or aggressive tone to them, example: I'll come all over your face.

As for the narratives related to pain and injury, many overlapped with the macho ones. The reason being that both were inter-related -in essence showing no pain demonstrated "machismo" or masculinity.

Interestingly enough you would predict the players who were observed to have made the most derogatory comments to continue to express themselves in the same manner in the interviews, but that was not the case. Every individual interviewed had their own unique way of expressing themselves- for many this was probably their first experience answering questions of this sort. Regardless of whether the player was observed often on the cards (Hyper cards), or not, all seemed to act and behave differently when speaking to the researcher one on

one, compared to their behaviour in the group (football subculture) setting. Many seemed to be more relaxed, more direct, and considerably more open to alternative choices and ideas (i.e. other sexual orientations, and sensitive to the needs of women and homosexuals).

Within the category of “sexist episodes” were regrouped narratives that degraded, objectified, or expressed a vision of women as inferior beings. Under the label “homophobic episodes” were regrouped narratives of players which inferiorized, mocked, or discriminated against gay men. In the “violent episodes” were included all narratives used to threaten another player (i.e., “I’ll slap you in the head”) or any comment that is used to promote violence against a specific person or group of persons. In the “macho episodes” (for lack of a better term) were included all comments utilized by players to convey their superiority over other players or persons, comments used by players to convey their physical or sexual prowess, or other comments used to convey their “masculinity” understood in the traditional sense of the term. A last category of narratives was created by grouping all episodes including narratives associated to pain or injury. This category included comments used to “tease” players who are injured or to ridicule players who are expressing or not tolerating pain, as well as comments on injuries or pain associated to oneself which are used to demonstrate one’s strength, one’s tolerance to pain, one’s masculinity.

After the categories were established, they were further dissected by analyzing each specific narrative within each episode. The analysis focused on three elements: (a) the common words present in the narratives belonging to a specific category; (b) the common expressions present in the narratives belonging to a specific category; and (c) the common ideas present in the

narratives belonging to a specific category. In the following paragraphs, these three elements are discussed for each category of narrative (or type of episode).

Sexist episodes. Within the sexist episodes a variety of words were used to describe women, their behaviour, action, and most of all their body parts. The words most often utilized by players to describe women were “hoe” (players use this word interchangeable with the word “bitch”), “slut”, and “chick.” Other words such as “cunt,” “bitch,” “tits” and “fucked” were used but with a lesser frequency than the ones mentioned above.

In the sexist episodes there were commonalities in the expressions used by the players. The expressions associated to women were numerous. The most frequent expression was: “she’s a slut.” Other expressions included: “slap her in the head,” “she’s a hoe,” “jack her up, does she fuck” and “lend me your girlfriend.”

In the sexist episodes the most common ideas or themes revolved around the players making comments about how large women’s breasts. For instance, these expressions were common: “she’s got a big fucken set of lemons” and “big quzutas.” Many of the narratives focussed on women as sexual partners (e.g., “does she fuck,” “girls all want it”) and how painful a player could make the woman feel while having intercourse: “I’m jammin her hard,” “jack her up,” etc.

Homophobic episodes. In the homophobic episodes, the words most often used by players were: “cocksuckers,” “fag,” and “sucked, sucking or suck.” Other words such as “blow-jobs,” “homosexual,” and “queer” were also frequent.

Within the homophobic episodes, expressions such as “you’re such a fag” and “you’re such a cocksucker” were most common. Other expressions of the homophobic type included: “you’re such a queer,” “give me a blow-job,” “suck me hard” and “I’ll come all over your face.”

In the homophobic episodes, several common ideas were identified. Players would inferiorize or degrade other players by utilizing homophobic expressions such as: “give me head,” “give me a blow-job,” “you’re such a cocksucker,” “you’re such a fag” or “you’re such a queer.” These expressions were used by players to tell others that they messed up or were acting and behaving in an improper fashion (i.e., acting too feminine or messing up on a practice or game assignment. Players often times told others to “blow me” or to “come all over your face” as a way of demonstrating their superiority over them, as a way of dominating them.

Violent episodes. Within the violent episodes words such as “slap or slapped” were most often used while others such as “kill,” “beat,” “assault,” and “hit” were evident but not as frequent as “slap.”

The common expressions seen in the violent episodes were: “I’ll slap you,” “slap her in the head,” “pull her hair” and “I’ll whip her and give it to her hard” (the “her” being at times used to speak of players or of women).

One common idea found in the violent episodes concerns the players consistently intimidating each other or trying to get the upper hand on other players by threatening them: “I’ll kill you,” “I’ll beat and slap your butt.” Another idea common to most violent episodes is that players express their “obsession” with demonstrating their physical prowess to others by making violent and threatening comments.

Macho episodes. Not too many explicit words were identified as being common to the macho episodes. Words such as “broads,” “real-man” and “stud” were the most frequent in the macho episodes although their frequency was quite low. The common expressions observed in the macho episodes were the following: “you bitch,” “you’re not a real man” and “you’re such a wimp.”

In the macho episodes, one common idea was identified and it related to the players demonstrating their physical prowess to other players or elevating themselves by putting down other players and speaking to their lacking “machismo.” The idea that, for example, that the other is “not a real man” was prevalent.

Episodes related to pain or injury. The only common word identified in the episodes related to pain or injury was the word “wimp.” Within those episodes, one common expression was found: “you’re such a wimp.” The main idea found in the episodes related to pain or injury is that players tease injured players by commenting on how they cannot handle the pain or fake injury so as not having to practice.

Context of the Narratives

This section describes in what situation and in what way the players’ comments were expressed. In order to understand the essence of the narratives one must understand the context in which they were said.

For the sexist episodes many players made these comments when they were hanging around before and after practice talking to other players about their various sexual experiences. While players recounted their sexual conquests they also would discuss how to properly treat or be treated by women. Many of the sexist episodes were also said while players glanced at magazines or images of women. As players would stare at these photographs of women, other players would come in, take a glance at them too and continue to engage in sexist narratives. During many social functions, the players’ conversations exclusively revolved around women: their bodies, their looks, and how easy or difficult they were to have intercourse with. These social functions included football receptions and informal player gatherings (after games) which focused on

players talking about “picking up” women that evening. Considering many of these contexts for the exist episodes, many players simply conveyed these narratives in no particular fashion or pattern.

Many of the homophobic jokes by players were recorded in the context of talking and teasing each other before and after each practice, usually in the locker room and during warm-ups (on the practice field). In general, there were not many particular patterns with respect to the context of the specific homophobic episodes, many occurred “out of the clear blue”. Nonetheless there were a few patterns: homophobic jokes were said when players began to tease others, and those players being teased reacted and responded with other homophobic jokes. Also, players often responded to other players’ comments with a homophobic joke: when a player thinks another player is acting or saying something that really doesn’t make any sense, they ridicule the player through homophobic jokes.

The context for most of the violent episodes usually was when players began to tease other players. While players directed a comment (usually degrading or inferiorizing) at another player, that player would retaliate with a violent narrative. No other commonalties were found with regard to the context of the narratives.

In the case of the macho episodes, many occurred when players were interacting together in groups. Many of the macho comments were made when players were set to go out on the town to party (after certain games or practices players organized social functions), ready to meet and “pick-up” women. A good portion of the macho episodes were also said in response or reaction to unacceptable comments and actions by players (i.e., players wearing too much clothing when it is quite cold outside for practice or players saying things that make little sense for other players).

The context in which almost all of the episodes related to pain or injury occurred was when players were injured, limping, or slacking off (probably because of an injury). A player would be making a comment to undermine their toughness because they didn't think they were really injured. A lot of the comments were in the context of a player not practicing like the rest of the football players.

Function of the Narratives

The function of a large number of the sexist episodes appeared to be primarily for the players to promote and support their image as promiscuous males. This was done by objectifying women, demonstrating their conquest over the woman or women they had sex with, and demonstrating their sexual prowess. For example, a player would say: "girls they are all sluts. All they want is sex. There is no problem, I have sex all the time." Or, the following interaction would take place:

Player A: I fucked her last night (swinging his hand up and down).

Player B: When did you do her? Player A: You know, when we went out on Thursday.

Many players talked about women in a degrading and inferiorizing manner to help them feel more manly, more masculine:

Player A: What did you do with the girls last night? Player B: Nothing, their boyfriends came. They looked like two sluts!

The objectification of women through sexist narratives was probably the most evident of all the functions. The players not only inferiorized women

through their sexist narratives but portrayed women as individuals simply there to satisfy the players' sexual needs, as objects, and pieces of meat:

Player A: She's got big quzutas hey. You promised to share her with us. Player B: Yeah right. Player A: So [name], I heard you and [name] fucked two cows this weekend. Player B: Shut-up [name], like you have any sex at all.

Sexist narratives were common place in the locker room, practices, and social functions and they were a normal part of the football language. Players were involved in sexist comments and jokes in order to bond with other players, get to know one another while mocking and demeaning women. For example, the following comments were noted: "There's so many pussies here. I don't know where to start" and "so who are those broads I saw you with last night." These sexist comments or jokes provide the laughs in the locker room and other football settings and are also used to tease other players, to ridicule players if they acted or behaved "too feminine." A comment frequently heard was: "you're playing like a fucken hoe."

Searching through the homophobic episodes, several explanations for these episodes were identified. The function of many of these homophobic narratives was to debase and inferiorize other players on the team. Consider, for example, the following narratives:

You're such a cocksucker.

He's a fucken fag that guy [name].

[Name] is a fag boy, [name] is a fag boy.

[Name], you were born a fag.

These specific narratives helped to degrade and put down other players because cocksucking (referring to gay men having oral sex) is seen as the lowest act of all. Indeed, homosexuals are not respected and are viewed as a low form of human being within the football environment. Inferiorizing other players (by telling them to “give me a blow-job,” “blow me,” or to “give me head”) appears to come from the need to dominate over them. Although many of these homophobic narratives (e.g., “shut-up you fucken queer” or “you’re such a fag”) degrade other players, they are common and, most of the time, are used to tease other players and see how they will react. Along with teasing other players, the homophobic jokes serve to simply make other players laugh. Consider the following excerpt:

Player A: So [name], are you going to get in much this weekend?

Player B: I don’t know. Player A: Maybe you should start sucking the coach’s cock.

Often times, these homophobic narratives helped players bond and get to know each other a little more. This is evident in comments such as: “You blow me, I blow You! We are a family” or “you know I have a tight ass.” When players acted differently or made statements that were considered not masculine or contradicted the macho player image, other players would let those players know about it. There was constant policing in the locker rooms and practice field. The behaviour and language a player used was constantly policed in the football environment. This is exemplified in the following statements:

Your telling me you went to a woman’s hair salon!

I can’t believe you shave your legs [name], you’re such a fag.

Players policed actions that were stereotypically homosexual, thereby attempting to demonstrate a full and complete heterosexuality. Through homophobic jokes, players conveyed their displeasure and disgust with anything that was feminine or not masculine.

The primary function for many of the violent narratives was for players to demonstrate their toughness, physical prowess and masculinity. This was done through comments that promoted violence against women. Witness the following statements:

I'm jammin, I'm jammin her hard, and we are all jammin her.

[Name] beats on women, [name] beats on women.

Why does society frown on people hitting women?

Pull her hair, she doesn't even feel it, go for it you stud!

Slap her in the head, make her pay for it.

I assaulted my woman at the age of ten, now she's 13 and she's pregnant.

This was also done through comments expressing violence towards other individuals in order to show masculine superiority. For instance, some players offered the following statements:

Player A: No, you're not sitting here with me. Player B: I'll slap you,

I'll sit anywhere. Player A: Shut-up bitch, I'll make you my hoe.

I'll kill you [name], I really will.

What the fuck did you say, you don't joke around like that you fuck.

Finally, some of the comments promoting violence against women were said simply to get other players' attention or for shock value.

The function for both the macho narratives and the narratives related to pain or injury was similar: to degrade and put down other players, to show power over other players. Another less evident but important function of these narratives was to question other players' manliness or toughness. Consider the following comments, for instance:

[Name], you were born a fag.

You're such a little girly man, why are you taping your thumb?

Stop faking you fucken bastard. Saturday I'll bet you'll be running a 4.2.

Also consider these interactions:

Player A: I can't believe you're wearing those tights. Player B: It's really cold. Player A: You're not a real man.

Player C: Why are you getting taped [name]. Player D: Well, when something hurts me I usually tape it up so I don't aggravate the injury.

Player C: You're such a wimp [name], why don't you just suck it up

Players' Reaction to Narratives

In this section what was recorded was how players reacted to another player's comment, in other words, how did a player react to a homophobic joke directed at him, or how did players' react to someone inferiorizing women and making a sexist remark? Did they contribute to the sexism and homophobia?

The player reactions to the various comments were varied in all five different categories of episodes. Beginning with the sexist episodes, many players laughed and giggled when other players would make comments of the sexist kind (e.g., "jack her up," "run faster you hoe," "she's got a nicer snapper"). If players laughed at the sexist comments, they were agreeing in a way or at least allowing

this type of language to continue. Yet some players had mixed emotions towards the sexist comments, especially if they were violent at the same time. Some players nodded their heads in dismay (not understanding the reason for the comment), while others found them amusing. When sexist comments such as “your playing like a hoe” were directed at other players, some became irritated by the statement and made additional sexist remarks, hence debasing women as well as other players. Consider the following episodes:

Player A: [Name], you think your going to pick up chicks with that hat.

Player B: Of course I'll pick up chicks. Player A: Yeah right, all you can do is give head with that.

Player C: She was walking with her tits out. Player D: In France, Cote D'Azur. Player C: The girls all want it there. Player E: They're crazy.

There were also others who possibly didn't react because they were used to this type of language. While players recounted their sexual conquests (usually degrading the woman in the process), other players praised them:

Did she fuck [name]? I bet she's happy she fucked the captain on the team.

Player A: I fucked her last night. Player B: When did you do her?

Player A: You know when we went out on Thursday.

During the viewing of a pornographic movie, players began to shout and praise the male having intercourse with the woman: “pull her hair, she doesn't even feel it, go for it you stud” and “Come in her face.” These narratives may have had the effect of rendering violence against women acceptable.

Players reacted with defensiveness whenever homophobic jokes were directed at them. The reason being that whenever other players mocked or

teased them through homophobic jokes they felt that their masculinity was being contested. Players often times reacted by shouting back other homophobic or violent remarks. As a group, when one player teased another, every other player tried to add to the homophobic comment directed at specific player. A reason for players loving to mock and ridicule others on the team appeared to be because these practices enhanced the bond between teammates.

Many of the violent comments by players directed at other players did not always intimidate others but in fact spurred on more violent comments and actions. Some players became really defensive when others tried to dominate or intimidate them with violent comments such as the following:

Player A: No, you're not sitting here with me. Player B: I'll slap you, I'll sit anywhere. Player A: Shut-up bitch, I'll make you my hoe.

The consequence of violent comments directed at groups such as homosexuals and women were often times encouragement on the part of other players: players sang along and others simply laughed. Considering the general support for these violent narratives, there were still some players who were mostly surprised by these narratives. In addition, some players were embarrassed by violent comments directed at them.

As players on the team continuously talked about their fighting exploits, other players listened attentively enjoying every minute of the fight description. However, the practice of beating up or fighting another individual was praised only when the individual came out a victor. Players on the team loved these type of victory stories.

There were not too many commonalities in the consequences of the macho narratives other than players being embarrassed by other players' comments and

retaliating with other degrading comments. Again here, not all players were annoyed or disturbed by macho comments directed at them.

Players who were teased and mocked by other players regarding their injuries or (in)tolerance to pain were often times embarrassed by the comments while at other times they simply enjoyed the attention or used the remark as an excuse to dish another remark in response.

Players' Interpretations of their Subculture and Narratives

The interview phase was conducted in order to better understand the players' interpretations of their own sexist, homophobic, violent or macho narratives as well as those narratives related to pain or injury. Interviews also allowed to better understand the interuniversity football subculture as a whole. The results from these interviews are presented in the sections to follow.

Players' Interpretations of the Football Subculture

For a large number of players on the team, football had a particular meaning and function and this was reflected in the way they described the football subculture. A common statement by the players was that the football setting taught them to deal with various aspects of everyday life:

Helps me in that I am experiencing certain lessons that I think will be applied in my everyday life, like a lesson in dealing with everything, dealing with group dynamics, dealing with hardship, frustration.

For a large number of players, the football environment was a setting where they were able to be themselves without really offending anyone. For many players, the football environment helped them be physical and violent without

being reprimanded for it. Not only did players learn about how to deal with everyday events, they reported that football helped them to release their frustrations and aggressions. Many players stated that they were attracted to the game because it contained contact and legitimated violence. For instance players mentioned the following reasons for loving football: “the intensity of hitting,” “I could say one word: contact,” “football to me would be a way of releasing tension, positive and negative tension, it is also a way to keep out of trouble.” When a player was asked if he believed the football game increased his violence and aggressiveness, he stated:

I guess because you are playing a physical game whether you are on or off the field. You still get in that state of mind where O.K., listen, this guy is bugging me, boom! I am a football player, I can do whatever and beat him up or try to or whatever, I think it does contribute.

It was a tough sport, I wasn't tough but, I just liked the sport, I don't know, I can't really say what took me to it only, I wanted to be really macho.

Players search for a sense of meaning from the football experience. They hope that football will allow them to compete against other players and demonstrate their physical prowess, develop new friends, belong and be accepted. Other players did not mention any particular reason or were ambiguous about the reasons. There were players who probably participated in football because that is what they were taught to do (e.g., “at university [name], I did this, I had no good reason for playing and it was almost because [...] other people expected me to”). For others, playing football seemed simply to be the thing to do since others were doing it: it appeared to be a way to be accepted by others and be part of something.

Through the 19 interviews conducted, there seemed to be a constant in that players perceived themselves to be superior to the average student because they were both students and athletes. This sentiment of superiority also came from the fact that players believed themselves to be more physically dominating than the average person. Players also reported feeling secure because they were part of a large group. Consider, for example, this excerpt from an interview with a player remembering his 1993 teammates:

They are physically dominating and they have an attitude sometimes. They could gruff, and they hang around in numbers, like packs, that leads them to believe they have strength.

Some players also maintained that they considered the football a unique subculture, something totally different from any other institution. For instance, a player responded in the following way to the question: is there any difference between language in football and outside of it?

Well because the fact is that through football you become, it is like an extended family, you get to see the dark side. So things that you wouldn't really talk about, or just joking about, like society has its norms, well football gets rid of all the norms.

The relationship between players and coaches is a very important one and had great influence on how the players comported themselves in the football subculture. When the players were asked how they perceived their relationship with various coaches, they responded in very similar fashions. Except for one coach (described as having no respect for players and their feelings and as being abusive, harsh and obsessed with power), players expressed that coaches on average were quite positive and used (most of the time) skilled communication

techniques when speaking to them and relaying their various instructions. When the players were asked what type of comments coaches used to motivate them to work harder, they responded in the following ways and reported that coaches “will swear at you.” A not so uncommon statement was offered by this player:

Coaches, the bottom line is, they try to strip you of your identity and give you a new one. By doing that you can strip a strong willed male of all his pride [...] If you attack the male image, it can go one of two ways. It can either damage the player irreversibly or motivate him because you are questioning his manhood, but I think that is the bottom line for most coaches. They try to question your manhood.

Coaches continuously demeaned players by mocking and insulting them, challenging their manhood. Coaches used derogatory comments which not only demeaned players but specific groups such as women and homosexuals. Coaches supported aggressive behaviour, objectification of women, and homophobia in their communication and treatment of players. Players were quite conscious of this:

I can't pin-point it, I remember hearing from a coach saying: “you are playing like a pussy.”

There was one coach, I was freaking out, he was swearing at the players: “fucking hit the player, you have got to fucking hit him, hit him hard, man hit him [...] when you hit him take out his knee.”

Players also agreed that expressions such as “you're such a pussy” or “you're such a woman” were used on a variety of occasions by coaches. As one of the players stated: “I think they use that because, the players are afraid, no

one likes to be called that, they don't want to be put in that class, so somehow they try."

Players' Interpretations of their Narratives

There were six major reasons identified in the interviews for players exhibiting sexist, homophobic, violent, macho and pain/injury episodes. The six reasons identified were: (a) conformity or pressure from other players, (b) insecurity, (c) domination over other players or the demonstration of superiority over specific groups in society as well as other players, (d) commonality of language in the football subculture, (e) upholding the stereotypical tough masculine football image, and (f) the isolation associated with an all-male environment.

Many of the players were quite embarrassed and ashamed when they were made aware of the fact that they had made some degrading comments. When asked about why they or others made certain comments, many players blushed and laughed demonstrating that they were slightly uncomfortable with the question. From the majority of the interviews, one interesting finding stood out and it was that most players were quite sincere in expressing their displeasure with the type of language used by most players. Players understood that many of the episodes (e.g., sexist, violent, homophobic, etc.) were degrading to the groups they were directed at.

Because of the nature of the interview, were players voicing "politically correct" answers or did they actually agree that many of the comments were in fact demeaning? Being a part of the team and having known the players for approximately two years, I believe their responses to be sincere. Not only were most of the interviewed players surprised and ashamed about the degrading

comments always present on the team, during the interview they also became conscious of the fact that this type of language was prevalent among players.

In general the interview data seem to indicate that the players were overall, respectable individuals who were deeply influenced by the group dynamic existing in the environment of the football team. It is this group dynamic which led players to conform to the stereotypical heterosexual masculine football persona, a persona which ultimately led them to sexist, violent, macho, and homophobic narratives.

It seemed that on a one on one basis and in a context outside of the football environment, players took on a whole new identity, an identity quite different from the one they had in their dealings and interactions within a large group setting. On a one on one basis, players seemed free of having to demonstrate a certain macho image, of conforming to ideas, values or behaviours, of having to please others, and simply of being someone they may not be. It seemed that within the team, the pressure to conform to a particular definition of "masculinity" molded, absorbed, enveloped, manipulated players in becoming who they were not, stripped players of their unique identities.

Various themes and reasons were identified for many of the homophobic, sexist, violent, macho, and pain/injury narratives in the football environment. When analyzing the many reasons for the comments existing in the football subculture one must consider that it is a sport that allows males to be isolated from the outside environment in a place that is exclusively accessible to them. This all-male domain helps to justify and legitimate many of the comments that demean and mock certain groups (women, homosexuals, and less masculine men). When the players were asked whether they thought the language in the locker room was considerably different than in the outside setting, players commented in the following ways:

I think certainly, I think the locker room in a sort of way allows them to speak about things, about things that they would not speak freely in any other place.

Being in an all-male environment had great influence on how players spoke. There were no repercussions for demeaning speeches because almost any type of talk was supported in the subculture of the team. Consider the following:

I don't know , I think people are not worried about what other people think of them when they are in there. I don't think they have any reservations about swearing, because you know people aren't going to look at them if they had three heads, they are not going to look at them as if they are something different, whereas if you were on the street and you were talking like that you know people would take a second look, like you know: "what is wrong with you," "why is he walking on the street swearing all the time."

Because players spent so much time with each other and were isolated in an environment that is all-male, they felt like they could let loose and be free to do and speak as crudely as they wished. This is mentioned in the following statements:

Well you get that many guys together, obviously they are not girls together and some personal things.

I don't know, I suppose just because it is all guys. If you don't have to worry about being polite around 50 guys who just came in from being all muddy, you can call them dicks and arses and whatever you feel like. We cut up women.

I don't know, more vocal, say out loud, say more things definitely. Sure because they are with a certain group of guys that they know and you are comfortable with that, so you talk, whether you have good or bad in you, just talk about it, it is going to come out.

Many of the players on the team used a type of language in order to conform to the overall ideas, values and behaviours existing in the football subculture. Due to this need to conform, many players lost their identities and any inclination to think for themselves. The pressure to conform revolved around assuming a certain identity that is very much in accordance with the stereotypical personality promoted in the football environment. If players did not use the language of the team, they risked being isolated and alienated by the rest of the team members. For a majority of the players on the team, the first few years were spent learning how to dress, behave and speak the language of the subculture in order to be accepted by the older players on the team. Witness the following account:

A guy wants to know that he is going to be accepted, that is what it is all about, I know players want to play up to coaches, even if they start they want to know at the end of the season how they played, they need to know from the player how accepted they were on the team. It is a big deal being accepted.

I think the first year guys, they don't know what to expect so maybe they sit around and they pick up on the behaviour of the older guys, so eventually towards the end of the season it is like they are just one of the regular guys talking as if they are the 4th year, not that that should make a difference.

Well a lot of guys when they first come in they don't know how to act. A lot of the first year guys they try to fit in, 1st, 2nd year guys try to fit in. Then a lot of the guys who try to fit in with the bigger more popular people.

From my experience as a member on the team, I identified that many of the players played football to be part of something they could identify with, to belong to a group. Taking this into consideration one realizes that most players would rather conform than be different:

I mean there are very few individuals out there who are truly individuals. I am not saying that everybody is just going to follow the masters, but I mean you are going to tend to pressure, even when it is indirect pressure [...] because they are afraid of being ostracized.

Some players are intimidated by other players, they are afraid to say or behave in any fashion that contests the status-quo: they don't want to be outcasts:

You feel like you have to be pressured to belong and if you are a little deviant, well you are no good for the football team [...] I guess it is peer pressure to belong, they feel pressured that if they don't act like a certain person on the team, degrading, then they will feel like an outcast.

Especially with big guys on the team, the young mature guys, the team gravitates towards someone who has been around or who demands a presence, maybe that is because they lack some type of the game even themselves.

Because he is big [...] because he was a fourth or fifth year guy, he is a big guy. People don't want to cross him.

It is like follow the leader, it is not a bunch of leaders going in different directions, it is a follower and a leader, that is what it is.

Being different and having your own opinion means you do not want to abide by the formal as well informal rules present in the football subculture. You are perceived by other players as an individualist, a person who thinks he is greater than the whole.

Conforming to the stereotypical football image (defined as tough, insensitive and masculine) can be perceived as having had the most impact or influence on the players of the team. Portraying the tough mean football image was evident in most players. Most players had to demonstrate to each other that they actually did fit the stereotypical masculine football player. Because this stereotype has been created, most players felt the need to uphold it by: (a) exhibiting toughness on the field and off; (b) dominating other players by addressing them with homophobic and violent language; (c) avoiding any feeling related to pain or injury; and (d) using demeaning language that degraded certain groups (women, homosexuals, and less masculine men) to attempt to demonstrate their superiority over these groups and also other players on the team. Consider the following account:

Football is a game of egos and you have to have a big ego, have big strong self confidence, if you don't, you won't survive on the game, you got to play it the way the guys on the team do.

It is almost like an ego thing, I think, when people are talking, because they have to, I don't know, display some kind of machismo, I don't understand it, like I do it too.

I guess if you are subjected to, you are in there and you are listening to that kind of language, you start to talk as well.

Now dealing with the aspect of women I think again it is peer pressure and it is almost cruel in a sense to degrade women or what not, where ~~as~~ as one on one aspect you would be hard pressed to hear similar comments.

The narratives present in various settings such as the locker room, practice field, team meeting rooms, and places reserved for social functions all speak to one crucial goal: adhering to the image/persona of the heterosexual masculine football player. During the interview phase, players provided their interpretations of the narratives they or other players had been associated to. These interpretations are presented below.

Sexist episodes. When asked about how they thought most players on the team perceived women, some interviewees were quite blunt in their responses and explained that women were often times viewed as inferior and as objects of desire:

Someone to fuck! It is just part of the scene in football, it is party time, wild and reckless, get out there.[...] it carries down to your vocabulary, eventually these repetitions will turn some guys to be habitual about that, the way they treat women.

I think I objectify women, obviously, all society does. There is maybe some peer pressure to do that. You want to get on anybody's good side, hey look at that. I don't know, it is such a common feeling.

It is so common for players to speak of women in this fashion, not only to inferiorize them but because, as one player explained, there is peer pressure. Another player agreed to this:

[Name], he used to have a contest, every night after we went out we used to have a contest, who'd bring home the fattest chick. Now why do people do that, he goes: "I'll give a case of beer for the ugliest chick if you walk her home."

Not only were women perceived as objects of desire but players on the team often supported promiscuous activity among teammates. Sex was an integral part of the football subculture because it is the action that most defines what is a "real, tough, masculine man." Players on the team were easily influenced by other players and were often times peer pressured into having sex with as many women as possible. This player discusses this issue in the following way:

Sexual promiscuity, everyone brags about them being a player, what about this guy who left his girlfriend back in X city and all of a sudden is hanging out with these guys who act like, well, you have got to go to every bar and pick up [...] Is he getting pressured to pick up? Sure enough he cheats once, cheats again, next thing he goes home for Christmas, dumps his girlfriend, he is a dog like everyone else.

It is this pressure to have as much sex with women as possible that gets the ball rolling. Players need to demonstrate to others that they are this big macho heterosexual stud who picks up women at anytime. Obsession with sexual promiscuity had a tremendous influence on why sexist language was ever so

present on the team. When players were asked about why there was language on the team that inferiorized women, players responded candidly. One player offered the following statement:

They are insecure. Those who talk like that probably don't have a, maybe have a serious relationship, but I find some of those that talk like that are probably looking, they are single and not in a relationship, they have to compensate and talk about women all the time.

Players are insecure about themselves so they compensate by demonstrating their superiority over women. They perceive themselves as "real men" and dominant because they are stronger and tougher. This player offers the following statement on this:

Yah, they think that they are tougher, and they are a lot cooler in their minds because they put themselves on a pedestal because everyone [is] below them, homosexuals below them, women are below them, like you are a number one king cat on campus.

Just like a lot of it is like proving you're a man, to prove you are a man you have got to either degrade women or prove to the guys your power over women and just go "click" you are with me tonight. It is the way guys talk to each other.

As mentioned earlier, sexist language was typical and quite common among players. When speaking of women it was almost like second nature for players to demean and objectify them. Witness the following excerpts:

Some guys just say it to see what the other guy would say, just to see what the other reaction would be, oh yah, at that. Maybe feel a bit more like a man.

Still it goes back again to this macho thing, where you have got to be... we are bigger, stronger, faster than women and they are not capable of doing what we can do.

On the team, players did not demonstrate any respect for women, they continuously bashed and objectified them. Some players suggested that because football is a violent game, it promotes this type of language directed at women:

I mean I have said these comments before in the past, but to actually live by these statements, never, no way. These guys in the locker room have no respect for women, I think that the game perpetuates this.

In the participant observation phase, there was evidence of much language that promoted violence against women. The question is why do players objectify women and go one step further promoting violence against them? As stated previously, the violence associated with the game of football tends to have much influence concerning the use of violent and misogynist language. Asking players whether violent language is common and abundant, one player answered: "There is lots" and another confirmed: "Yes, definitely. One of the guys talked about rape, joking around."

Players on the football team were taught to continuously defeat their opponent as well as the teammates they were competing against for positions. This type of behaviour taught to players by coaches filtered and flowed into the daily player to player interactions. Because the football subculture of the team

reinforced domination and violence on the football field, this directly filtered onto how players spoke to each other about women and homosexuals: players demonstrated their superiority over players, women, and homosexuals by mocking and demeaning them, resulting in them feeling more confident, secure, and superior:

Men treat women like pigs. Because we don't treat guys like pigs, some of them do. I heard somewhere, men tend to be able to separate love from sex, women can't.

Players needed to bash and dominate over anything and anyone to prove that they were masculine, strong heterosexual men and to demonstrate their toughness and capacity for sexual prowess:

Because, I don't know, I think a nice pussy, because they are dominated, they wanted to be dominating, I don't know, they just, they don't see them as people, they think of themselves as more dominant, that is why they use it, I don't know.

Again men -women, men are supposed to be higher once you're on the field because football players are, by putting them down ... everyone puts the women down since there is no women.

Players were often crude when recounting many of their sexual escapades to other players in the locker room. They were not satisfied in describing that they had sex with them but had to explain how hard and how painful the women felt when they had sex with them. Talk about women in a derogatory fashion was typical and normal speech in the environment of the team. It came down to players showing to others that they were "real men" and were superior to women by describing them in a particular fashion:

It is typical language of any large group of guys who get together, you can't blame anything on the sport. It is just a sport, it is the mentality of guys who tend to get together in large group, and then the testosterone is flowing ... like cock fighting ... I don't know they are just like animals competing for girls.

After having asked why players on the team began making degrading comments about the women figure skaters on the university rink (before going to out to practice), a considerable amount of players revealed they tried to conform and fit in with the other players. After asking one player what he thought of this, he quickly responded by recounting a specific scenario he witnessed:

There is a star player on the field and he will start whistling at her, he is not whistling because he has his own opinion, and that is OK, he is going to start whistling at her and being very degrading and making the girl feel uncomfortable. Since he has made all these friends, the friends feel a little pressure, even though they say in their minds they hate this guy, they are going to say well this guy, he is a close buddy of mine, I guess I am going to whistle too.

This player emphasizes that being together in a group affects the way you speak and view women. Not only does the football group influence what you say in the context of the football setting but many sexist as well as homophobic remarks were found to be expressed to increase male bonding among the players:

It is cliché but it is male bonding, guys will use, guys are not very affectionate, they are not very loving, they will find other means to

show their love and affection for people. They will concur on ideas and values, they feed off that.

Homophobic episodes. Homophobic episodes in the locker room and on the practice field were commonly exhibited by almost all players. Homophobic comments were expressed to degrade and mock other players. They also served to boost the players' heterosexual masculinity by inferiorizing everything that is frail and weak. Because football is such a violent and aggressive sport, players assume that only straight heterosexual males can be tough and mean. Homosexuals are stereotyped as weak, frail, and much less masculine individuals: "I would think so, just because the football image. It is a tough guy sport, all that hitting, contact." Questioning players on how most players on the team perceived homosexuals, they answered in ways similar to these:

Homosexuals, well they wouldn't be part of the group, because it's not normal.

Yes, that is what a lot of people think, I am sure a lot of the football players think like homos aren't actual real men.

Because football once again is this real-man, leather neck, tough guy image, compared to tinkerbell, soft, more emotional. That does not help the sport, that means you are putting football and figure skating in the same spot.

Upholding the image of the tough masculine football player was the single most important concern for most players on the team. Players needed to inferiorize and dominate over others in order to feel good about themselves and feel like real tough football players. In the case of homophobic jokes and comments, some players actually expressed that there were certain players on

the team who would actually be violent toward homosexuals for the simple reason of demonstrating their manliness to other players and themselves:

He would actually beat someone up because he was gay or something like that, [name] he is so insecure he doesn't know how to act. Last year, [name] was around all the time, and he worked at a bar in town with [name] and those guys and I, now, would come in, oh [name] beat this guy up threw him out because he stepped on [name's] foot ... He tries to upgrade his image. He takes his homophobia out of the locker room.

Everything that does not conform with the football image is mocked, ridiculed and contested. When one player was asked to give his insight on why a player would make the following comment: "Why are you wearing those faggot purple pants for," he responded: "It is feminine, personally, I think a lot of these guys are homophobic, they don't understand. I think that stems from the fact that they don't have an open mind, they are very shallow minded." Players on the team consistently teased one another with homophobic jokes because firstly they assumed everybody was heterosexual, and secondly it helped in the male bonding process: degrading gay men and ridiculing them provided comic relief. One interviewee offered the following explanation: "[it is] a way of joking and getting along with the locker room. So you try to take a different aspect, you try to take a more humorous aspect and try to not get in a fight."

Of the various reasons given for many of the players' homophobic jokes, the one which stood out and had the most impact on the players was again the need to uphold the typical football image. Consider, for example, the following account:

He is insecure about the way he is, he wants to be a football player so badly, trying to form this personality of a football player. Now he hears the words love and affection ... he comes, he knows it is true deep down. Deep down he knows it is true, so he labels me a cocksucker, a homo, because homos and cocksuckers aren't football players.

Anything that was feminine or was associated with homosexuality was ridiculed and oppressed by many of the players on the team. Homosexuality or behaviours that did not fit the stereotype of the football player were not tolerated. Signs of sensitivity and sharing personal intimate conversations with other players were not accepted, because again, players showing these types of behaviour were quickly labelled weak and frail. Aggressiveness and crude language were more valued by the players because they went hand in hand with the football image. This is exemplified in the following answer of a player asked about the possibility of a player using words such as "love" and "affection" in locker room:

It scares him. Love and affection does not fit into his puzzle of being a football player. His personality being [that of] a football player. Being a football player is being tough, you don't need love, you don't need affection to be a football player. You just have to be tough. He is insecure about the way he is ... now when he hears love and affection he comes, he is like: "who is this?" He doesn't want to associate with anyone like that.

Homophobia ran rampant in the football environment. Asking one player why wouldn't guys accept a homosexual as a player on the team, he answered: "It doesn't fit in with the football image, no, that's for sure." Gay bashing was

common behaviour among the football players on the team, because in their minds, gay men represented everything that is not masculine or tough. Any behaviour, language or dress that may have been mistaken as effeminate was shun upon by most players. Speaking of gay men, one interviewee offered the following statement:

They hate them. I have talked to a couple of them [i.e., gay men], I know some of them [i.e., players] thought I was gay when I first started playing here, just because of my nature, I would tell some guys: "no I didn't fuck her last night." "What are you, gay?" Just the type of clothing I wear ... guys are all over you, it is ridiculous.

Not only were homosexuals viewed as inferior, but players mocked them, and promoted violence against them. The following excerpt speaks to this:

They are perceived as inferior. I mean a lot of people say that as a joke and there are a lot of guys that would be strong and say screw that. A lot of guys think that homosexuals are completely down inferior, lot of guys they think: "oh yah, shit kick a fag, let's go gay bashing."

Players actually expressed that homophobia and homophobic language was prevalent among team members and was thought by many to be taught to most boys at an early age. Players suggested that boys learn to mock and ridicule anybody that has any sexual preference other than heterosexual:

I would like to say, perhaps it is ingrained, because I don't want to come out saying that I am socialized by those people, but I mean it is part, when that becomes ingrained in you, that just becomes a product of your environment kind of thing and you socialize it and you don't

think of the repercussions of the statement, of what you say. You just think of it in terms of direct meaning. You don't think of it in any broader sense.

A few players suggested that players have been taught to behave and perceive things in a way such that in their minds they are labelled as "abnormal." A different sexual preference is just that: abnormal. Homosexuality is viewed with animosity because it moves away from the norm. Boys are taught at an early age by their parents, teachers, friends and, most of all, the media, to devalue anything that does not conform. We live in a heterosexist culture. This was expressed in the following account:

This problem is in society, it's on hockey teams, it's in chess teams, it's in biology class, it's in the library. I have heard talk like it, but it seems like people do it the most when they are around the same sex.

Violent episodes. From the participant observation phase, it was found that much of the violent narratives were directed at women. According to the players interviewed, language promoting violence against women was used because players needed to constantly reassert their strength, toughness and superiority not only over women but over other players. Narratives including violence against women seemed to be a product of the environment. Because of the violent nature of the game, players were constantly abusing each other verbally and at times physically. Insulting and using violent language against women was considered common and normal behaviour in this subculture. Players probably became immune to language that degrades any specific individual or group because it just became a part of the subculture. These players testified to this:

They expect you to talk about football, they expect you to answer all your questions about football. They expect you to be a macho guy: "How many women have you fucked?" or "You abuse a girl."

Everything centered around sexuality, like I mean, the big thing for a guy, especially in a locker room, is to tell: "oh, I got laid last night," "oh, we went, you know after (so and so)," "I picked her up, man, and I slammed her." Stuff like that, that is big.

Macho episodes. When players were asked for reasons why they, or others, made macho comments, a variety of answers were provided. Much of their responses revolved around players being insecure about themselves and having to uphold the tough masculine image. With respect to the macho narratives observed in the locker room, players responded in this fashion:

There was actually bets on the team on who could last the longest without wearing our sweatshirts this year. That is the tough guy male ego: "I can stand the cold." You have to be really stupid.

When players were asked why degrading or demeaning language was directed at selected groups, some of them recognized that many of the players made these types of comments to feel superior, macho, and support and retain the image of the tough, mean football player. For example, these players stated:

Because football in my opinion is a macho sport, it is a male-dominated sport, extremely male-dominated and it is something the players try to reinforce. If you are playing football and football is a male-dominated sport, and you are trying to define yourself as a person, you are going to try to shape in a way that you are a dominant person. Just the male

stereotype, football, you are trying to live up to that stereotype. You talk differently and act differently: talk macho and you act in a macho way.

Amongst the teammates, in the football environment, oh sure. It is a big game. Take up a lot of space, got to show yourself up to be big, take up a lot of space.

Another question posed to the players was how would a certain group of players react to two teammates speaking about personal intimate problems, for instance, a relationship with a girlfriend. Not surprisingly, all players answered in the same fashion revealing that intimate thoughts were not considered macho or masculine. Some players suggested that the reason for players mocking and ridiculing anything that is intimate was due to the fact that when speaking about relationships a player would be demonstrating that he is somewhat dependent on a woman and has lost some control over the situation. Discussing personal aspects of one's life was usually left out of the locker room, lest one would be mocked by other players and labeled a "little woman." For example, consider the following excerpts:

They would say: "[name] is having more women problems, he always gets women ruling him."

I can't figure out why, it is like people are afraid: "shit I don't want to get serious in front of these guys, I don't want to show that maybe I am a little weaker."

Many players expressed the feeling that men have traditionally had trouble demonstrating their feelings to others because of the way they are raised. They also suggested that they were probably insecure and afraid to show that they

have any sort of problem: “I think guys are reluctant to share their inner most feelings” and “On the football team, they will keep that stuff dead, they won’t speak about it.”

A reoccurring theme from most of these interviews was the need for players to uphold the typical macho image. Most players who mocked other players discussing intimate thoughts in the football environment did it to demonstrate their masculinity. Macho narratives were often a punishing reaction towards those venturing into sensitive discussions:

They would react in a negative way because they are trying to reinforce this personality for themselves, and they have to act in a certain way to prove it to themselves that they are a certain type of guy.

If they are in love, it is a sensitive issue. Football, you are not supposed to be timid and sensitive, all cupid. You are supposed to be tough, play football tough.

Being sensitive and speaking of personal feelings was taboo on the team. In the football environment, a player: (a) had to be a tough guy who doesn’t take any “shit” from anybody including his teammates; (b) could not express feelings that may make other players view him as “pussy whipped” or “a wuss”; (c) could not be sensitive to a variety of issues that other players are usually not sensitive to; and (d) could never show that a woman is ruling his life or that he is dependent on her. In brief, players had to be macho:

I think it comes to that male bravado again, the macho can’t-be-hurt, don’t-show-your-feelings ... it still all comes back to the banging days I guess.

Episodes related to pain or injury. When players were questioned on why comments related to pain or injury were made by players on the team, almost all expressed that it was due to the need for players to demonstrate their resiliency to pain. In the football subculture, players were not allowed to exhibit any feeling of pain, because if they did, they were usually mocked and ridiculed. A player explained: "I guess, indirectly, you see the definition of a man is, you've got W.S.A., classic wimp: try to suck it up. I think that seems to be one of the favourite things in football is to suck it up." Players who are repeatedly injured become vulnerable to player comments. Consider these statements, for example:

We'll call him a wuss: "you suck man." That guy has got no guts, he is not for the team. Mind you, a little toe injury can be the worst possible injury because it is painful. It is a shame it happens because it just puts the guy more down on the hook.

[The constantly injured player is] perceived as being weak, same thing, perceived as not being the macho player who should be playing football. If you get injured and you don't play or if you get injured [for a] period, you are seen as not as much of a physical specimen as maybe the ideal football player.

Players see you as a woman: "you are a pussy, don't be a pussy."

Players who withstand pain and continue playing are rewarded and constantly praised by coaches and teammates. Why do players and coaches glorify players who are injured? The answer is simple, players who suck it up are viewed as real football players for one, and for two, the less injuries to players or

the more players can endure injuries, the better the team in the short term (e.g., aggravation of an injury may be problematic in the long term).

In the football subculture, the body is viewed as a barrier between playing and playing well. Players have total disregard for their bodies and playing while injured is viewed as normal even if it results in aggravation of the injury. The disregard for the body (i.e., playing while seriously hurt) goes hand in hand with the confirmation that the player is in fact tough enough and “man” enough to play football. These players addressed such issues in the following way:

Yes, I have been injured, I have always been injured, but I guess I suck it up.

Because it makes them feel like, I guess, more macho, it makes them feel they are bigger and better, they can stand any forces, any pain. They will be looked at as this great power, if they can withstand having blood dripping down their noses, it is a sign of power.

I think it is the exact opposite, I think you are seen as more of a man by your teammates when you have injured yourself on the field and they glorify that.

Teasing other players when they were injured was just another constant in the football environment. Players teased and ridiculed others, often times using derogatory language that was sexist (“such a pussy”), homophobic (“you’re such a fag”) or macho (“you’re such a wimp”). Teasing in relation to injuries was often done purely for male bonding purposes. For instance, two players mentioned:

Everybody would call him pussy: “why are you milking the injury?” Stuff like that. It doesn’t mean they think any less of him, it is just something to do, you just bug him.

I think it is part to get them back faster. But then, “wimp” ... Maybe the guy will get back faster, get healthy. Other guys just like cutting up other guys, it is just in their nature.

Players who could not endure pain and were rarely practicing were labelled weak and often times mocked because they were not as tough as the other players. They were perceived as “not sucking it up” and, therefore, as letting the entire team down.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a discussion of the results from a feminist cultural studies perspective. Results are explained and contextualized using the previously defined concepts of gender, hegemony, ideology, power, patriarchy and oppression.

As the game of football is inherently violent, players learn to use violence as a means of gaining superiority and dominance not only over their opponents but also over their own teammates. The more pain one can inflict onto one's opponent, the more respected one is. One is considered tough and masculine if one is capable of having a complete disregard for one's body while playing or inflicting pain onto one's opponent. Winning is achieved at all costs, even if this includes having to injure opponents or teammates in the course of practices. This finding is supported by Whitson who suggested that "sport continues to bolster hegemonic masculinity by ritualizing and embedding aggression, strength, and skill in the male body and linking it with competitive achievement" (1990, p. 18). Using the body as a weapon to achieve success and respect from fellow teammates and coaches becomes second nature and instinctive, and possessing masculinity is learning to use the body in a forceful and space-occupying way (Connell, 1983). As Messner (1990a) has also stated, players view injuries as just this part of the game that helps to develop character.

Inasmuch as football encourages violent behaviour, it also promotes the use of sexist, homophobic, macho and violent narratives. The reasoning behind this is as follows: as players demonstrate their physical prowess to others by dominating over their opponents through aggressive and violent play, they must

also discover a way to uphold their tough masculine heterosexual image when off the field, more specifically in the locker room and in any other all-male environment associated to the team. In his study, Curry (1991) concluded that in many sport teams, women are referred to as “cunts” and “pieces of ass,” and gay men as “feminine” or “not real men.” Curry’s explanation for much of this type of language being so evident in the locker room is the fraternal bonding occurring as result of this shared language. Going one step further, the present study indicates that the fraternal bond is important, but that much of the sexist, homophobic, macho, pain and injury, and violent narratives are present because players need to uphold the tough guy image and gain superiority and power over others toward which comments are directed (teammates as much as women, less “masculine” men and gay men. In short, players have to show that they are not going to “get pushed around” or intimidated by anybody. At the same time, players have to constantly reassert that they are fully heterosexual and this is done by: (a) convincing others that they have a sexually active lifestyle; and (b) verbally bashing everything and anybody that is remotely associated with homosexuality.

Since its inception, the game of football has been known to promote violence, aggression, and most of all domination over opponents. On the team under study, this is also the case since players are taught to dominate over not only their opponents but also their teammates as well as members of other groups such as women and gay men, through the use of specific narratives. Much of the narratives commonly used by players are sexist, homophobic and violent, and in the larger theoretical context, they support the patriarchal system by producing and reproducing traditional forms of masculinity. If football is very much a subculture with its own unique characteristics, it nevertheless seems to be a microcosm of our patriarchal society. Through their interactions and

experiences with others on the team, players learn to inferiorize women, gay men, and others who do not, in their view, measure up to their standard of traditional masculinity. For many, this learning started long before joining the team. The team, in effect, seems to reproduce and reinforce a number of things already in existence in the patriarchal environment.

Surprisingly, there was not much evidence of racist narratives in the study. The quasi absence of racist narratives in the subculture of the football team could be explained by the fact that there were many players from a variety of ethnic backgrounds on the team. For example, there were players of Haitian, Jamaican, Greek, Italian, East Indian, English, and French descent. The presence of members of these various ethnic groups may have in fact sensitized the players to different cultural values. The multi-ethnic environment may also have forced white Euro-Canadian players in a “not-so-dominant” position which may have contributed to greater tolerance for players of ethnic backgrounds. Obviously, unlike sexism and homophobia, racism could be seen, within the team, as counter-productive in terms of the primary objective of the football team (i.e., winning). All these reasons may contribute to explain the fact that racist narratives, in the context of the team, were not at all prevalent. As for the other types of narratives, several factors help to explain their presence in the football environment. As mentioned in the first paragraphs of this chapter, there are reasons existing at the micro-level, the level of the team itself. But several reasons emerge from the macro-level as well.

For instance, when one describes our present North American society, the words sexist, heterosexist, homophobic, elitist, exclusionary, conservative, and competitive come to mind. These words are symbolic of a specific ideology which promotes the view that capitalism, patriarchy, success at all costs and male supremacy represent the “natural” order of things. It is through ideological

State apparatuses such as the family, the school, the State, and the media that this ideology is transmitted and a certain type of gender relations is maintained (a type where one gender dominates and one gender is oppressed). The dominant ideology and underlying values present in our society have a direct influence on young men, their socialization into and through football and the interactions found to occur in the environment of the football subculture. The results of this study seem to indicate that the football subculture of this one Canadian interuniversity team does mimic and support society's values and dominant ideology. The main difference between this Canadian interuniversity football subculture and culture surrounding it is the extent to which homophobia, sexism and violence are openly and verbally oppressed, perhaps because football players are, in the football context, isolated from the rest of society: they find themselves in an all-male environment with nobody policing violent, sexist, homophobic language, and everybody encouraging it.

Sports today, is still a privilege predominantly given to young boys. The sporting arena has remained an exclusive environment for teaching boys the essential ingredients necessary to become a tough "masculine" man. This process has been reinforced by the sports media which have had an enormous influence on sports participation and the construction of what is "natural" or not. The sports media have aided in giving value to male sports while inferiorizing and devaluing sports played by girls and women. The sports we view on television are still those played by men thereby confirming that male sports (particularly male professional team sports) are the only one worthy of our attention. Not only do the sports media focus on male sports but they encourage a winning-at-all-costs attitude. For example, sports commentators lead us to think that in football, it is permissible to injure a player if it is for the good of the team, and in hockey fighting is justified and promoted because it helps to give the team some

momentum. In the sport institution as well as in the sports media, cooperation and fairness are not valued, while violence, aggression and competitiveness are glorified. The sport institution and the sports media continue to be major contributors to the social production of traditional forms of masculinity, and the resulting exclusion of women, homosexuals, less "masculine" men, and openly gay men.

Many gay men, still today, remain in the "closet," afraid to divulge their sexual orientation. Their fear is as real as the discrimination present in society. The idea of compulsory heterosexuality present in most areas of our society is certainly exemplified in this study. Despite the obvious homoerotic connotations of sports like football (and perhaps because of it), players use homophobic narratives, mocking everything related to homosexuality. The verbal "gay bashing" found within the football environment is certainly not surprising granted the epidemic of physical gay bashing actually occurring in the larger society.

Today, in most aspects of social life, men are the ones still at the helm, continuing to support and maintain our social, political, economic, and sporting institutions as male-dominated environments. Men then, assume that these environments are exclusively theirs. Considering this, how can young boys not feel and view themselves as members of the superior gender?

For centuries, men have been the privileged gender in our world. Still today, sexual harassment, rape and sexist language are problems that most men ignore. Most men regard these problems as specific to women and many don't even acknowledge they exist. In fact, a larger fraction of men (and women) contend that as more women have integrated the workplace, sports or the media, equity and equality have been attained. But has it? Socially, politically, economically, women have still a long way to go. In the world of sport, much is still left to gain as well. And considering the language and attitudes of university-

educated young men who contributed to this study, gender equity is a goal that remains out of reach.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

At the start of this study, I, as a player, had some indication of what to expect in terms of the results. However, I was surprised by the degree to which and the consistency with which players were associated with violent, homophobic, sexist, and macho narratives. Reiterating what was illustrated throughout the study, much of the violent, homophobic, sexist, and macho comments were said by players as a way to conform to a certain type of male image. It seems that in the football environment, preserving the image of a male who is strong, intimidating, tough, masculine, and heterosexual was the premier concern for most players. The need to conform to this image forced many players to disregard and repress many feelings of love, intimacy, and affection. Conformity to the tough masculine image influenced many to continuously be violent and aggressive and to use violent, homophobic or misogynist language.

Reflecting on the results has led me to put into context the consequences of the prevalence of sexist, homophobic, macho, and violent narratives for the players, the sport of football, and the university. As players were somewhat forced to conform to specific types of narratives present in the football subculture, many of them were forced to ignore who they really were or how they otherwise communicate with people. Within the football team, players were no longer individuals with unique differences but people who were forced to adhere to the formal and informal norms of the football subculture.

Results of the study also suggest an obvious question: how do the types of narratives found in the context of a university football team coincide with the mission statement of the university or the mission statement of the Canadian

Interuniversity Athletic Union? Within its mission statement, the university clearly pledges “to continue to be a leader in the promotion of women in all aspects of university life,” while the CIAU Guidelines for Ethical Behaviour advocates things like: (a) providing feedback to others in a caring manner, (b) not engaging in demeaning descriptions of others, (c) treating all participants equitably regardless of gender, athletic potential or sexual orientation, and (d) using appropriate, respectful and gender neutral language. Clearly, the results of this study indicate that there is a conflict between these guidelines or mission statements and the types of narratives current in the subculture of this interuniversity football team. Obviously, if the university is committed to “equity in every aspect of school life” and if the CIAU is similarly committed, then university football should not be an exception and should be an occasion for young men to learn, develop themselves and play in a positive, respectful and equitable environment.

There is much to do for football to provide this type of environment. Perhaps a first step in this direction is to develop some awareness on the part of players and coaches. The present study was a beginning, in that regard. Interviews with a sample of the players and presentation of the results of the participant observation phase to them allowed to enlighten these players and make them conscious of the fact that the language ever so present in the football environment promotes violence and actually inferiorizes and demeans specific groups such as women, less masculine men and gay men. It seemed that for most players, awareness of these facts was simply absent. It seemed that as players were absorbed by the unique characteristics of the football subculture, they were blind to what was actually occurring to them.

In addition to promoting consciousness raising in players, what must be acknowledged is that there is another group of individuals who do not discourage the use of derogatory language in the football environment: the coaches. The

coaches on the team used degrading and violent language to motivate and enhance the players' performances. Could coaches motivate players by using a different language or other motivation strategies? My answer to this is yes. Not only do coaches degrade specific groups with their choice of language but, according to the interviewees, they also put down their own players and thus lower their self-esteem. Perhaps coaches should also be made aware of the fact that they use demeaning language which does not comply with the CIAU guidelines and which is not conducive to what the university community should be about: "a learning environment which is pleasant, professional, and promotes due respect and regard for the rights and feelings of all."

The CIAU makes it obligatory for all football athletes to participate in a Drug Seminar and a Date Rape Seminar. These seem to be positive measures but insufficient ones. Something must be done to raise consciousness amongst coaches and athletes. Language is often symbolic of attitudes and behaviours and all of those should be freed from prejudice and discrimination. Both coaches and athletes could gain from attending gender sensitivity classes. The last group of individuals should be sensitized to the difficult issues raised by this study: University Administrators. Since football occurs within the context of university activities, administrators (in the sports department, in the student services and in the higher administration) are ultimately accountable for the experiences that young men have with the football team. Surely, they must be informed and they must support the progressive changes necessary to make the football environment an educational place worthy of affiliation with a university institution.

Hopefully, this study has helped the understanding of the unique narratives present within the football subculture, the reasons for these particular narratives, the functions of these narratives and the players' interpretations of these narratives. Hopefully, this study has also shown that invaluable insights on the

amateur football subculture can result from a qualitative methodology emphasizing participant observation on the one hand, and giving a voice to the subjects under study, on the other. It is hoped that this study has provided a better comprehension of the function narratives play in the social production and reproduction of traditional forms of masculinity and the exclusion of social groups such as women and openly gay men. In that sense, it is hoped that the study has provided some clues on how to transform sport so that it becomes more accessible and inclusive.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

NARRATIVES OF FOOTBALL PLAYERS

A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONAL STUDY OF SPECIFIC NARRATIVES ASSOCIATED
TO MEN'S EXPERIENCES IN ONE INTERUNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM

PART A - INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

- John Colatosti:
- Greet the player.
 - Provide the player with an overview of the study.
 - Give out the consent form and get the signature of the interviewee.

PART B - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. How long have you been playing football for?
2. What do you like about football, what is it that attracts you to football?
3. How do you think football helps you in life?
4. In a few words, can you tell me what football means to you?

PART C - NARRATIVES IN THE FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT

5. Do you think that guys speak differently in the locker room when compared to how they speak outside the sport of football? If they do, why?
6. Have you played sports other than football, and if so, how do you compare the football environment (more specifically how guys talk or the comments they make in the locker room, football field, team functions) with other environments? If there are differences, where and why do you think they exist?

7. What about in our team? What kind of people would you say are on our team? 'If they are violent or aggressive, ask about what kind of language players use when they show some type of aggression on the football field, locker room.] Why do they act and behave in that fashion?
8. Are certain players treated differently on the team compared to others? Do certain players speak differently to second stringers or non-starters? For example, do they use specific comments or language to put them down?
9. What do you think of how the coaches treated the players this year? Do you think they were harsh with respect to the comments they made to some players (or to you) this year? What type of language do they use to get the most effort out of the players?
10. Is there any tension between groups within the team? What about the relationship between Francophones, Anglophones, Blacks, and Whites [give the example of the incident between (deleted), a black individual, and (deleted), a white individual]?
11. Have you been injured this year (or if you have not been injured, what do guys say about guys who are injured)? How do you feel when you are injured? Do guys bug you? How do guys bug other guys, what do they say to them?
12. Are there moments that are more scary for you during the football games or practices? If so, did you try to hide your hesitation from players? What would players say if they knew you were scared?
13. Can you tell if guys are nervous when playing, and what do they say when they feel like this?
14. Do you have any good buddies on the team? Do you share any intimate feelings with them? If not, why?
15. If you would be talking to another player about some feelings you have for a specific women (say you tell this guy you love this certain woman and care for her) and a group of other guys overheard you talking about this one woman, how would they react, and what would they say about this?

16. Do you think football players in general treat and speak differently to others (or groups) than the average Joe?
17. [Insert example of episode(s) and ask the player about his interpretation of it.]

PART D - ENTERING THE FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT

18. Is there something special about being a football player?
19. How has football helped you as a person?.
20. Has football had any negative or positive effects on you personally?
21. Do you think players feel better or worse about themselves because they play football? Has your opinion of football changed a lot from when you first started. Do you wish it could stay the same way it was when you were a kid, or has there been positive or negative changes?
22. Do you remember the times when the women's figure skating team would be practicing and the guys were whistling and making comments about their legs, ass, and how gorgeous they looked? Do you feel that is typical language in the football team? If it is, why do guys talk about women that way? Why do they talk in this way?
23. Let me give you an example, probably will never happen but anyways, how do you think members of the football team would react to a woman being part of the team? What would the guys say about this, and would she be accepted as part of the team?
24. Do you think there are any gay men on the team now?
25. How would players react to a gay player on the team? What would the guys say about this?
26. What would happen to him, and would he have any chance of staying on the team?

PART E - LIFE OUTSIDE FOOTBALL

27. Do you feel a lot of guys are influenced by others on the team (in the way they act)? If so, in what way do they influence them (how they act and what comments they use with them)?
28. Do you think players feel superior or inferior to other people when they are outside the football team?
29. Is there a big change in how players talk to others outside (when they are in the company of others) of the football environment?

PART E - CONCLUSION

John Colatosti: - Thanks the player for participating in the interview.

Appendix B

Participant Observation Consent Form



FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES DE LA SANTÉ
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I state that I am over eighteen (18) years of age and agree to participate in a research project being conducted by John Colatosti of the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. I further grant permission for recordings of my participation in this research.

Purpose of the Project

To study and understand the various interactions taking place between players within one interuniversity football team.

Procedure

The procedure for me, is to participate in an observational study conducted by the investigator, by allowing the investigator to observe me and take note of the various interactions between me and the other players on the team. The investigator agrees to not use cameras or tape recorders, but simply to take written notes of the interactions, at the end of the games, practices, team meetings and events in which my team will be involved during the 1993 football season.

I acknowledge that the nature and purpose of my participation in the study has been explained to me and that John Colatosti has offered to answer any questions which I may ask about the procedures to be followed. I have been made fully aware that I may report any incidences that violated my welfare to the University of Ottawa Human Research Ethics Committee. I understand that I may withdraw this permission at any time; and that any recordings of my participation will be erased at once upon my request. I also understand that all materials collected as a result of my participation are confidential, that they will be used only for research purposes, that they will be available only to responsible professionals, and that my anonymity will be protected at all times. I freely and voluntarily consent to take part in this research project. Finally I understand that if I have any questions, comments or concerns, I can contact John Colatosti, Dr. Genevieve Rail or Dr. Marie Des-Anges-Loyer (Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Ottawa) at the addresses listed below.

Signature of subject

Date

Witness










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Appendix C

HyperCard Example

Type of episode	Location	 sort	Episode No.
Sexist	Locker room		042
Narrative			
[Player A]: So [Player B], I heard you and [Player C] fucked a few cows this weekend? [Player B]: Shut-up [Player A] , like you have any sex at all!			 
Name(s), narrator(s)		Position(s), narrator(s)	
[Player A] » [Player B]		[Position of Player A] » [Position of Player B]	
Context of narrative			
The players are in the locker room talking about their weekend adventures. [Player B] is a little pissed-off and embarrassed about the whole episode. [Player A] didn't think [Player B] would react in this fashion.			 
Function of narrative			
[Player A] tries to tease [Player B] for having slept with a large woman. [Player B] seems embarrassed because players do not think highly of players having sex with ugly or large women, seen as "easy" women. [Player C] is referring to the women as slabs of meat (use the word cow to describe the women).			 
Consequence of narrative			
[Player B] is embarrassed and others who heard about what happened begin to tease him. [Player C] is referring to obese women as "slabs of meat," who are not difficult to persuade, who are not a challenge.			 

Appendix D

Interview Consent Form



FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES DE LA SANTÉ
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN AN INTERVIEW

I state that I am over eighteen (18) years of age and agree to participate in research being conducted by John Colatosti of the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. I further grant permission for tape recordings of my participation in this research.

Purpose of the Project

To examine and understand the various interactions between players within one interuniversity football team.

Procedure

The experimental procedure for the human subject is to participate in an in-depth, open-ended interview conducted by the investigator. During the interview, the subject is invited to discuss their feelings and opinions about their football experience and the narratives they use in association with this experience. The interview will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes. I acknowledge that the nature and purpose of my participation in the study have been fully explained to me and that John Colatosti has offered to answer any questions which I may ask about the procedures to be followed. I have been made fully aware that I may report any incidences that violated my welfare to the University of Ottawa Human Research Ethics Committee.

I understand that I may withdraw this permission at any time; and that any recordings of my participation will be erased at once upon my request. I also understand that all materials collected as a result of my participation will be used only for research purposes, that they will be available only to responsible professionals and that my anonymity will be protected at all times. I freely and voluntarily consent to take part in this research project. I may refrain from answering any questions which I feel are too personal or simply not acceptable to me. If I have any questions, comments or concerns I can contact John Colatosti or Dr. Genevieve Rail or Marie Des Anges Loyer, the chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Ottawa at the addresses listed below.

Signature of subject

Date

Witness

Date

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