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TRANSGRESSING THE CLOSETS:
FEMALE COACHES NEGOTIATIONS OF HETERONORMATIVITY IN SPORT

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Degree
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ABSTRACT

Heteronormativity, the ideology that heterosexuality is the only “normal” or natural sexuality, is insidious within the sub-culture of sport. Within this oppressive ideology, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered coaches must negotiate their identities through a continuum of hegemonic or transgressive discourses. As previous literature indicates, female coaches with nonhegemonic sexualities have been threatened, fired, harassed, and silenced within the context of sport (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2005; Veri, 1997). Male hegemony in sport perpetuates the production and management of heterosexism and heteronormativity in order to maintain a privileged status in sport.

Queer and feminist poststructuralist theories posit that identity cannot be reduced to an essential core, and that subjectivity is fragmented, fluid, and contextual (Butler, 1990). Further, such frameworks elicit an interrogation of compulsory heterosexuality and the deconstruction of oppositional binary systems of gender and sexuality that are inherently hierarchical (Sykes, 1998). The present study is designed to explore the ways in which “out” lesbian coaches transgress the heteronormative boundaries of sport. Further, this study explores the notion of political agency of “out” lesbian coaches and how they effect social change.

Eight collegiate level coaches who self-identified as “out” lesbians were interviewed with a semi-structured protocol. Qualitative inductive analysis guided by a queer-feminist framework (Sykes, 1998) revealed five emergent processes: (a) *Identity Performance*, (b) *Discourse*, (c) *Coach/Athlete relationships*, (d) *Sociopolitical Climate*,

and (e) *Psychosocial Impact*. These processes and their supporting themes and subprocess are presented and deconstructed.

The coaches in this study challenged and transgressed the heteronormative environment of sport and, therefore, disrupted heteronormativity in sport and engaged in social change. They also upheld the qualities associated with effective leadership in sport (Chelladuri, 2000; Murray & Mann, 2000). Further, the coaches' behaviors were impacted by the heteronormative and homophobic climate, such that they perpetuated hegemonic norms and practices of sport.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Personal Narrative	1
Introduction to Topic	6
Overview of Dissertation	7
Brief Overview of the Topic	8
Statement of the Problem	9
Purpose of the Study	10
Definitions	11
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	13
History of Women in Coaching	13
Heteronormativity in Women's Sport	15
Queer Theory	20
Origins and Debates	21
Performative Gender and Sexuality	24
Queering Sport	25
III. METHODOLOGY	28
Qualitative Research Methodology	28
Queer-Feminist Hybridity	29
Co-participants	32
Procedure	35
The Interview	37
Memo and Journal Writing	39
Credibility and Trustworthiness	39
Data Analysis	41
Feminist Research Group	43
Reflexive Subjectivity	45
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	49
Presentation of Processes and Themes	49
Process 1: Identity Performance	53
Subprocess 1: Shifting and Fragmented Identities	54
Subprocess 2: Inside/invisible	55
Process 2: Discourse	62
Subprocess 1: Self-identifications	63
Subprocess 2: Naming the Significant Other	64
Subprocess 3: Out/Visible	67
Theme 3: Coach/Athlete Relationship	71
Subtheme 1: Open Relationships	72
Subtheme 2: Role Model(ing) & Identifications	74

Subtheme 3: Honesty	77
Subtheme 4: Performance and Success	78
Theme 4: Psychosocial Impact	80
Subtheme 1: Personal Benefits	80
Subtheme 2: Benefits for Others	81
Theme 5: Sociopolitical Climate	83
Subtheme 1: Region	84
Subtheme 2: University	86
Subtheme 3: Athletic Department	88
Subtheme 4: The Team	90
Subtheme 5: Recruiting	92
Subtheme 6: Politics of Difference	98
 V. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	104
Conclusions	106
Recommendations	108
Future Directions	108
Applications for Sport Psychology	110
 REFERENCES	113
 APPENDICES	125
Appendix A: Key Informant Script	126
Appendix B: Interest Form	127
Appendix C: Co-participant Informed Consent Form	128
Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions	129
Appendix E: Sample Journal	130
Appendix F: Confidentiality Form	131
Appendix G: Additional Results and Supporting Findings	132
 VITA	153

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Personal Narrative

Looking back, if someone told me that I would be writing a dissertation about “out” lesbian coaches, I probably would have laughed. Mostly because of the “dissertation” part, but also because of the “out lesbian” part. The majority of the laughter would have been due to the denial I was in during most of my young life. It wasn’t exactly favorable to be a lesbian at a small, Catholic college, particularly as a female athlete. Although a handful of my teammates during my four years were lesbians, or at least experimented, it wasn’t necessarily something we discussed as a team, and certainly not with our coach. The shame and guilt that surrounded me in college was enough to make me sick, quite literally. I remember the great lengths I would go to make sure that no one saw me leaving my girlfriend’s room on the nights that we actually did “plan” to stay together. It was a meticulously detailed schedule so that no one would become suspicious. We had to be quite circumspect so that no one would think I was doing anything other than preparing for an exam or a paper when I was in her room. Whenever I was asked where I had been or why I had left a party so abruptly without telling anyone, I could fabricate the most elaborate story, come up with the biggest lie and be totally believable. My favorite was the one I told about walking around the cemetery behind campus because I felt bad for the dead people. I wasn’t exactly the most creative liar, but I was somehow believable, at first anyway. It became easy to lie about almost anything. However, over time, people caught on to my façade. Although I attempted to cover and hide any trail leading me back to my love life, I’m one of those people who wears her

emotions on her sleeve. My relationships became obvious to everyone because they could see the way I looked a little too long at another woman, or the way I acted anxious and suspicious when I had just been with my girlfriend. People talked about me and told others I was a dyke. Rumors, or that's what I chose to call them anyway, spread quickly when there are only 1200 students. Even my teammates engaged in the name calling and taunts behind my back. I tried desperately to hide my sexuality; I was a "normal" college kid, playing basketball on a pretty successful team. I had great, loving, hard working parents and an almost perfect childhood. *I* couldn't be all those nasty names and things people said about me when I was not in their company. I knew at the time that it was something of which I should have been ashamed.

It was no secret that my coach was a lesbian, yet there was never anything mentioned about it beyond the derogatory innuendoes and comments from my teammates, and ashamedly myself. I realized, very quickly, that to survive in that atmosphere, you kept your mouth shut about your sexuality. I wanted and needed so badly to see positive role models with whom I could identify. I hated that part of myself because everyone I knew who was like me hated themselves too; why else would they not want to talk about the person they loved? I lived in shame and fear and guilt for so long that it was impossible to see any other way to live. Sometimes, the hurt was so bad and I had no one to turn to. My mom still hates to hear me say that because she and my father have been my strongest support since I came out to them. I remember crying after a basketball game one night because I was so emotionally fatigued. My coach said I played great, and there was no need to cry. My parents were disillusioned, given they had no idea what could upset me so much, something that I wasn't even able to articulate it to

them. As much as I loved and adored basketball, I never cried after a game. I destroyed relationships because I never opened myself and my heart up to people for fear of their judgment. I underestimated a lot of people, and turned my back on a lot of potential friendships because I hid in silence. They were waiting for me to be honest with them, but I never let that happen.

As one would imagine, this became quite tiresome. The hiding, lying, and avoiding began to wear me out emotionally and physically. I tore my Anterior Cruciate Ligament in the middle of my senior year, ending a strong basketball career abruptly. From there, my complex and fragmented identities began spiraling downward. I was no longer an athlete; I was relegated to the sidelines only to watch as my team carried on without me. I was subsequently allowing my sexuality to become more visible, and eventually it became impossible to hide. I began engaging in what I thought was typical senior college student behavior and began eating and drinking heavily. I couldn't run, jump, or fly down the court as I had been able to four months earlier; I couldn't even walk without crutches. My girlfriend at the time was a huge support, carrying my stuff to class (when I went), and mostly making sure I got home at night safely. I was about to graduate and I was in rehab for my post-ACL reconstructive surgery, had been cast out as an athlete, not to mention a dyke, and I had gained about thirty-five pounds. I was in real good shape. I had no idea who I had become, and I graduated from college feeling utterly empty. That summer after graduation, I came out – okay – I was dragged out of the closet by my mother, who at one point referred to “the closet” as “the cupboard.” It was the best thing that could have ever happened to me.

Because part of my identity was wrapped up in being an athlete, the logical step for me was to become a basketball coach. I landed myself a pretty good assistant coaching position at a small, private school right in the middle of Ohio. The image that comes to your mind is probably accurate when you think of small town Ohio. Fresh out of college, at the ripe age of 22, I had a coaching and teaching job. Although I was out to my family and all of my close friends at that point, my identity as a lesbian stayed well beneath the radar blip. I passed, everyday, as a young, single, heterosexual. I never dated guys or pretended to even be interested, but no one in my professional life knew I loved someone, or someone loved me, other than my parents, of course. I became quite good at the pronoun game and spoke highly of my “best friend.” I feared entering the locker room until I was sure all of the players were dressed, and I avoided any contact with my athletes beyond a “high five.” I knew I wasn’t some kind of predator, but I immediately assumed people would think otherwise. I behaved like this for three years as a college coach until I moved to Bowling Green, Ohio to begin my master’s degree in sport psychology.

I was fortunate enough to obtain a graduate assistant position with the women’s basketball team, and continued my “pursuit of excellence” as a basketball coach. It was at this point in my life where I decided that I wanted to be a *whole* human being, allowing for change and multiplicity of self. I didn’t want to hide my girlfriend in the nosebleed section of the bleachers, and I was ready to break down barriers that stifled my relationships with those around me, including my coaching colleagues and athletes. It was also at this time that I began working with Vikki Krane. Until this point, I had never had a teacher or a coach who was a visible, real life, out, lesbian. Twenty-five years old

and I finally had someone that said to me, “You can be a whole person.” Vikki never actually spoke those words to me, but she didn’t have to. I felt it surge through me every time I walked into her office, sat in her classes, or house sat for her and her partner. This is a powerful message at the age of twenty-five for a young student and coach to experience. I was, in so many ways, validated, and I learned to breathe. For most of my adult life, I realized that I was holding my breath. This came at a time when having oxygen was crucial; I was fired from coaching.

The entire coaching staff was fired, actually, because the athletic department didn’t want to deal with rumors about lesbian coaches. Some bad situations that occurred throughout the season turned into serious problems as the season came to a halt. Instead of the athletic department reprimanding those at the center of the problems, it was easier for them to fire all of us, including me, the graduate assistant. I had subsequently lost my funding for graduate school. I had a year left of course work and a thesis to write, and my funding was gone. Coincidentally, I was working on a class project about homophobia and heterosexism in sport. My questions turned from, “Does this stuff really happen? Do they really fire coaches just because they are gay?” to, “I can’t believe this is happening – to *me!*” I wasn’t directly fired for being gay, but the head coach and her assistant were. It was an eye opening experience to say the least.

I had two choices. I could quit graduate school, quit coaching, and give up sport completely. At one point, I was ready to do that. My other choice was to continue my education with Vikki, and pursue a Ph.D in sport studies. I’m happy to report that I chose the latter. Thankfully, with the help of Vikki, and Dr. Janet Parks, funding had been allocated to me so that I was able to finish my graduate work. My experience of watching

two women I admired get fired and my own demise as a coach, who also happened to be a lesbian, became the impetus for me to do social justice work in sport. I'm not a huge believer in fate or destiny, but I believe we make decisions in our life, and when the energy in the universe is right, we are pushed and pulled into the right direction. I am passionate about sport, and what it has done for my life, so I'm glad I didn't give it up because a few homophobic administrators handled a problematic situation with expedience instead of principle. When I have struggled with this dissertation, or have become let down or frustrated by sport, it isn't difficult for me to remember part of the reason why I want to do this work. I'm lucky because I have the privilege and access to higher education. I have a responsibility now to make sure what happened to me can be avoided for other female coaches. I have embarked on this dissertation because it fuels me and I hope that in doing this work, others will become ignited and empowered to live without holding their breath, as a full human being.

Introduction to Topic

“their eyes are all asking are you in, or are you out, and i think, oh man, what is this about? tonight you can't put me up on any shelf 'cause i came here alone i'm gonna leave by myself - i just want to show you the way that i feel and when i get tired you can take the wheel - to me what's more important is the person that i bring- not just getting to the same restaurant and eating the same thing...”

(Ani Difranto, *In and Out*, 1997)

Ani moves across each chord expressing her disillusionment with society's need to put its oppressive thumb on her sexuality and distinguish the elusive boundary between the homo/hetero binary. Although music is not my forte (despite my obvious efforts); this

dissertation is similarly concerned with cultural expectations to fit neatly into a binary and hierarchical system of gender and sexuality. I am concerned with ideas of sexuality and gender as it relates to women with nonhegemonic sexualities in sport; specifically I am interested in female coaches who now comprise the smallest percentage of collegiate coaches in United States history.

Overview of Dissertation

This section gives a brief explanation of the relevance of this interdisciplinary project as well as outlines the chapters included in this dissertation. Chapter Two presents the historical and contemporary culture of women's sport as well as puts forward the queer-feminist framework used in this study. Chapter Three provides an in-depth explanation of the paradigm, epistemology, ontology and tradition used - a critical paradigm was used within a feminist-postructuralist epistemology. Methods included semi-structured interviews with eight lesbian college coaches and interpretative analysis using an experienced research group. The fourth chapter presents the results and a discussion of the findings. Seven major processes including subprocesses and subsequent themes are explained. Finally, Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings as well as future directions for this study; also described are the implications this work has for social change within the fields of sport psychology, cultural studies and sport sociology.

In particular, I argue that the experience of "out" lesbian coaches and the ways in which they negotiate their identity within the heteronormative environment of sport is important and, in many ways, groundbreaking research within sport psychology. I also argue that the interdisciplinary conversations between cultural studies, sport sociology, and sport psychology provide valuable tools for understanding the psychology of coaches

within sociopolitical climates. I have found that “out” lesbian coaches engage in strategies and behaviors within a continuum of being inside and out with regard to their sexual identity. The coaches also engaged in strategies and behaviors that were consistent with qualities of effective leadership (e.g., honesty, trust, communication) and worked toward creating accepting climates with regard to social difference.

Brief Overview of Topic. Over the past three decades, women’s participation in athletics has increased; yet, 31 years after the implementation of Title IX, women in sport are still experiencing discrimination and lack resources, power, and privileges that are fundamental to men’s sport (Krane & Barber, 2005). According to Acosta and Carpenter (2004), ninety percent of the leadership positions in women’s sport were held by females prior to 1972; today, there is a serious dearth of women in power positions in intercollegiate, amateur, and professional sport (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). In an era when female representation in leadership positions has increased in almost all other professions, sport remains an arena where women in power positions are rapidly declining (Knoppers & Ellig, 2001).

Many scholars (Cahn, 1993; Griffen, 1998; Krane, 2001; Wright & Clarke, 1999) assert that the insidious ways women are excluded from sport are largely due to the lesbian label. The lesbian label refers to the pervasive stereotype that all women in sport are lesbian because they participate in athletics (Blinde & Taub, 1994). The use of the lesbian label allows the heteronormative domain of sport to “police the borders of appropriate gender behavior” (Plymire & Forman, 2000, p. 143). In other words, those who have power in sport perpetuate social ideals about women in sport in order to maintain power. As long as females in sport can be denigrated (e.g., assumed or labeled

lesbian or “deviant”), males will maintain the power, resources, and status in the sport arena. The heteronormative climate that exists within sport serves to disenfranchise all women who participate.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the previous literature within the past decade has served to shine some light on the injustices women in sport have faced due to issues of sexual identity (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Iannotta & Kane, 2003; Krane and Barber, 2005). Previous research has also unearthed the fear, discrimination, denigration, and oppression encountered by lesbian coaches and athletes. However, little attention has been given to athletes or coaches who are “out” with regard to their lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered identity, and actively transgress heteronormativity in sport. As Hargreaves (2000) asserts:

Liberal reforms do little to change public attitudes; taking part openly as a lesbian in sport can do a lot more. The huge popularity of sport makes it one of the most public channels through which lesbian women can resist stereotypes and harassment (p. 146).

To this end, Iannotta and Kane (2002) interviewed thirteen lesbian coaches who considered themselves open, but not out (e.g., to team, administration, or other coaches) about their lesbian identifications. In a similar vein, a group of feminist sport psychology researchers have explored lesbian physical educators who are “out” as moral exemplars (Braidemeier, Carlton, Hills, & Oglesby, 1999). Again, as Hargreaves (2000) asserts:

By speaking out, lesbians in sport and their supporters are openly transgressing traditional cultural limits and regulations. They are resisting compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchal relations of power which are intrinsic to it,

combating stereotypes about homosexuals, and celebrating difference and inclusiveness. Speaking out is an essential start for any change in people's perceptions of lesbian women in sport. (pp. 145-146)

I, too, believe that the previously mentioned effects of the lesbian label, heteronormativity, and heterosexism contribute largely to the decline of women in coaching. In an era where gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are gaining more acceptance in society, sport remains incredibly homophobic and heterosexist. However, within the past decade, sport scholars have been working to understand and critique heterosexual hegemony in sport.

Purpose of the Study

This project explored the experiences of women in coaching who identify with non-hegemonic sexual identities. Specifically, through qualitative interviews with co-participants, this study attempts to unearth the ways in which female coaches negotiate their sexual identity within the heteronormative culture of athletics and, secondly, to explore the ways in which female coach's become political agents within the climate of athletics. At this point, the majority of the research regarding sexual identity in sport has focused on the homonegative and heterosexist environment that encompasses women's athletics. This study interrogates the boundaries of heteronormativity in White, heterosexist, male dominated institutions within a queer-feminist framework. Further, this project explores the power relations surrounding sexual orientation within the culture of athletics. Traditional notions of sexuality and gender are deconstructed and explored with regard to issues of representation and power differentials that exist within athletic institutions.

Definitions

Assistant Coach: In most hierarchical sport structures, the assistant coach is second to the head coach. Typically, this individual is responsible for recruiting of athletes, organization of athletic-academic interactions, and daily practices and competitions.

Bisexual: the sexual orientation where individuals have romantic and/or sexual attachments, identification, and orientation with both women and men.

Deconstruction: social analysis of who, why, and what produced a text; an analysis of what is said, and unsaid, through the language, form, structure, and style of a text. An examination of the productions of truth (Namaste, 1994).

Feminist theory: a framework that is concerned with the elimination of male domination and movement to end sexism, and oppression toward women.

Head Coach: In most hierarchical sport structures, the head coach is the leader or individual in charge of a group of athletes and is considered the person who has the most power in decision making, playing time, and team administrative duties within a specific athletic team. This person is responsible for broad, overarching team goals and functions.

Heteronormativity: Refers to the practice of organizing patterns of thought, basic awareness, and raw beliefs around the presumption of universal heterosexual desire, behavior, and identity. Heteronormativity acknowledges no variations, no exceptions, no resistance, no dissent: it becomes the way the world is perceived (Warner, 1993).

Heterosexism: Sexual identity prejudice, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice, backed by an institutional power, which subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

Homonegativism: Homonegativism is purposeful, discriminatory behaviors and negative attitudes toward homosexuals (Krane, 1996). Homonegativism is an outcome of the values of a society that perpetuates heterosexual values and denigrates anyone who is gay or lesbian.

Homophobia: An irrational fear or hatred of the same sex, or same sex desires.

Identity Performance: The way in which coaches' lesbian identities exist, disappear, struggle, flourish (Sykes, 1996) within the context of coaching women's sport.

Lesbian: romantic, fantasy, and/or sexual attachments and identifications between women.

Queer: originally a derogatory term that has been reappropriated to identify in a positive way individuals with non-hegemonic sexualities who are targets of homonegativity.

Queer theory: poststructuralist epistemological shift from examining identity concepts to a cultural or epistemological centering. A framework that exploits the ways the "outside" is always already fully "inside" and production and management of hegemonic genders and sexualities.

Queer Praxis: Blending queer theoretical underpinnings with practical change that attempts to disrupt regimes of sexual normativity and dismantle homonegativism and heterosexism.

Transgender: relating to transsexuals, transvestites, cross dressers, or anyone who tends to blur traditional gender boundaries.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

It is important to recognize social and historical contexts surrounding women in sport and lesbian coaches in particular. Because a queer-feminist analysis was employed, the contexts in which women in sport have been situated is imperative to understand. The following section describes athletics from a historical position and explains some of the current social and political climates that surround women in coaching.

History of Women in Coaching

Around the time of the Second World War, there was a surge in female sport and physical activity. Because many women were entering the physical work force due to men's involvement in the war, physical activity became an integral part of the educational system (Wushanley, 2004). A multitude of federal programs for physical education were funded for both males and females in most education settings, particularly collegiate settings, to prepare young men and women for the physical nature of war and work. It was in this time period that a social and moral shift took place in social views of women's participation in physical activity (Wushanely, 2004). Women who competed in sport and physical activity were slowly legitimized as a result. Female participation in organized sport elicited a new "athletic girl" and changed the face of sport participation (Rader, 1999). "As models of democratic sport, physical educator instituted 'play days,' special athletic events at which athletes from several colleges gathered for a day of competition and socializing" (Cahn, 1993; p. 66). While historic "play days" ensued, the amount of physical activity exerted by women who participated in these events increased during this time period, and Black women who attended segregated Black colleges began

to participate in competitive intercollegiate competitions (Wushanely, 2004). Although Blacks in the United States were not receiving equal opportunities in education, they developed athletic programs through church leagues and community organizations such as the YWCA. While many White women in sport and education emphasized individual health, Black women leaders promoted community health and spirit as well as highly competitive athletic endeavors (Cahn, 1994). Once women were permitted to participate fully in the Olympics, Black women were more successful than their White counterparts, primarily because of their prior experience in highly competitive sport.

However, women's entry into the athletic arena was not smooth, but rather contentious because it was seen as posing a threat to men after World War II (Cahn, 1994; Messner, 1988). Historically, sport has been a means through which men inculcate themselves with physicality, masculinity, and power, therefore, relegating women as trespassers (Messner, 1988). As women in sport gained more recognition and achieved sporting success, more attempts were made to exclude them from athletics. Cahn (1993) stated that the stereotype of the "mannish lesbian" emerged after World War II in an attempt to revert women back to domesticity, a code word for heterosexuality. At that time, masculine characteristics associated with sport were thought capable of turning all female athletes into lesbians (Cahn, 1993). Despite the attempts to dissuade women from athletic opportunities, many girls and women were still able to make significant strides in this era.

With the implementation of Title IX in 1972 and the appropriation of women's sport by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), organized athletics for women began to emerge. On one hand, female sport participation had increased greatly.

On the other hand, once the NCAA gained complete control of both men's and women's athletics, the percentage of women in leadership positions steadily decreased. In 1982, 52.4% of women's teams were headed by female coaches. In 2004, only 44.1% of women's teams are headed by female coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2004). However, the percentage of women coaching men's sport remains the same as it did before Title IX and the merge of the NCAA at a mere 2%. The majority of voting privileges and NCAA council representatives were and still are held by men (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000).

Thus, male hegemony in sport has allowed men to acquire and maintain positions of power in sport, while women are still in the minority. Sport scholars assert that one of the reasons for the decrease in women in leadership positions, particularly coaching, was the rise in both salaries and status of women's sport (Cahn, 1993). Many men took this opportunity to gain coaching experience as a stepping stone to coaching the more prestigious men's teams. In many instances, women had both more coaching experience and more athletic experience, yet coaching positions increasingly went to men (Acosta & Carpenter, 2004).

Heteronormativity in Women's Sport

Many critical feminist sport scholars argue another reason for the decline in women in coaching was the association with masculinity and fear of the lesbian label. The lesbian stereotype had always been a way to stigmatize women who participated in sport and discourage young girls and women from entering the historically masculine terrain and disempower *all* women in sport (Cahn, 1993; Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996, Wright & Clarke, 1997). Characteristics typically associated with masculinity, such as muscularity and assertiveness were perceived to imply lesbianism (Cahn, 1993; Lenskyj,

1997). This “myth” is still prevalent today, especially regarding female athletes who enter traditionally male dominated sports.

Female athletes often experience heterosexism and homonegativism (Krane, 1997). Heterosexism is a system of beliefs that views heterosexuality as the dominant, “normal,” natural sexual orientation (Krane, 1996; Vealey, 1997). Homonegativism is a set of purposeful, discriminatory behaviors and negative attitudes toward homosexuals (Krane, 1996). And, homonegativism and heterosexism are problematic for *all* women, regardless of sexual identity, who participate in athletics because they are forms of discrimination that negatively affect women in sport (Lenskyj, 1997).

Although our culture has witnessed some change in how homosexuality is regarded, lesbians in our culture are still largely seen as social deviants (Blinde & Taub, 1992). Behaviors such as unfair hiring practices, negative recruiting, and eliminating women in coaching are justified by the stereotype that lesbians are sexual predators (Griffin, 1998). Coaches have reported that they knew of individuals who were not given coaching positions or were fired from coaching jobs due to assumptions of being lesbian (Krane & Barber, 2002; Wellman & Blinde, 1997). Firing a lesbian coach is sometimes justified because it is viewed as a means of protecting young female athletes from assumed lesbian sexual predators. Heterosexual women who do not assert their heterosexuality (e.g., marriage, children) are as much the target of discrimination as lesbian and bisexual women are. The “no lesbians” attitude, which also sometimes translates to “no women,” is justified because lesbians do not fit into the constructs of heterosexual ideologies (Blinde & Taub, 1994). Hiring male coaches makes women’s

sport “safe” from the lesbian predator and increases the opportunity for men to maintain control of women’s sport.

Negative recruiting is another example of the hardships faced by female coaches and women’s sport teams. An example of negative recruiting is when a coach discourages recruits from attending a rival school by labeling the team or the coaches’ as lesbian. In other words when two coaches from rival schools compete for the same athlete, coaches will often use the lesbian scare tactic (e.g., “You don’t want to play for a coach with that lifestyle”) to discourage an athlete from attending the competing university. This practice has been reported frequently among the college coaching ranks (Krane & Barber, 2005; Wellman & Blinde, 1997) and is used to intimidate and discriminate against collegiate coaches in the recruiting process of athletes. Athlete recruitment is not an issue that should be taken lightly. At many elite level Division I institutions, getting the most talented athletes is a high stakes battle.

However, there are female coaches in athletics who are lesbian (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1997). Lesbian women in sport encounter the challenge of hiding or concealing their lesbian identity to avoid further discrimination and prejudice (Krane, 1997). While heterosexual coaches attempt to avoid the lesbian label by, for example, emphasizing marriage to a man, and dressing more “lady like;” lesbian coaches attempt to conceal their sexual identity and most aspects of their personal lives. The sport environment creates different pressures for lesbian coaches than for heterosexual coaches (Blinde & Taub, 1992; Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1997). Coaches, administrators, and athletes fear the negative repercussions of being associated with the lesbian label and, therefore, young lesbian coaches adopt the perceived norms of sport culture. Recently, Krane and Barber

(2005) also found that female coaches often must negotiate these “identity tensions” in collegiate sport.

Sport has been an arena where heterosexuality is compulsory for both men and women and any deviations from masculinity or heterosexuality have been seen as deviant. Fuss (1991) asserts that compulsory heterosexuality is enforced through a governing body and must be perpetually reinforced in order for it to remain the more “natural” sexual identity. As she puts it, “...the language and law that regulates the establishment of heterosexuality as both an identity and an institution, both a practice and system, is the language of law of defense and protection...” (Fuss, 1991, p. 2). The language used in sport normalizes masculine qualities and heterosexual identities as the norm. In fact, the opposite of masculine and heterosexual in sport are often ways to degrade and ostracize athletes who are not performing up to par (e.g., “quit throwing like a girl”, or “you’re playing like a little faggot”).

Interestingly, silence is also an important aspect of “language” and discourse. Foucault (1978) claimed that:

Silence itself-the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers-is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other does from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. (p. 27).

Women in sport often deny the fact that lesbians exist in athletics, further perpetuating the silence surrounding lesbians and placing shame and discrimination on lesbian women in sport (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1997).

Using silence as a form of social control and power can be more effective than written or spoken words of discrimination (Veri, 1999). Hargreaves (2000) explains that “...most sport organizations, administrators promoters, and coaches either deny the existence of lesbians in their sport or deny that there is homophobia of any sort” (p. 142). Sykes (1998) utilized a queer-feminist theory analysis in her work on lesbians in physical education and found that silence surrounding sexual orientation in physical education perpetuates heterosexist ideologies as strongly as do heteronormative discourses (e.g., representations and language in media guides of athletes with boyfriends) used on a daily basis. Such “...repetitive performances, if unchallenged and uncomplicated as they frequently are, grant security and certainty to heterosexual story lines” (Sykes, 1998, p. 166). Sykes (1998) found that lesbian physical educators who were “in the closet” communicated heteronormative practices as strongly as any language. As she says, heteronormative speech acts, avoidance, implication and everyday ways of talking occurred within her interviews. “Mundane” ways of communication normalize heterosexuality while demonizing homosexuality without even saying a word. From this silence, heteronormativity is produced and reified and those who ascribe to non-hegemonic forms of sexuality are left to negotiate their roles in often hostile power relations (Hargreaves, 2000).

The effects of heterosexism and homonegativism can increase stress on individuals who are trying to earn their living by working in athletics (Krane & Barber, 2005). A negative sporting environment can increase the likelihood for burnout to occur, especially for individuals with a devalued social identity (e.g., women, lesbians, bisexuals). Coaching is a livelihood for these women, and an enormous amount of stress

can occur due to the pressures inherent in coaching. Added stress, such as homonegative environments, can intensify anxiety greatly for women who want to achieve success in sport. Therefore, it is not surprising that women, regardless of their sexual orientation, do not want to be a part of an institution that promotes discrimination and intolerance. Many quit coaching or changed homophobic universities for this reason (Krane & Barber, 2005). Young athletes witness the struggles they face with regard to the lesbian label and also witness discrimination faced by their coaches, regardless of sexual identity. With other career opportunities for women that espouse open and accepting environments, it is not surprising that many young female athletes do not aspire to be coaches.

Queer Theory

It is important to acknowledge that queer theory is not just an all encompassing framework for gay, lesbian, bisexual, or homosexual individuals. “It would be misleading to suggest that all queer research pursues similar lines of inquiry” (Sykes, 1998, p. 156). Queer theory and those who identify as queer represent a particular type of politics that are confrontational and express a radical leap from traditional theoretical frameworks of identity (Walters, 1996). Traditional notions of strategy, style, tactics, and ideology are disrupted. Queer theory and politics resist the canon of heteronormativity and acknowledge that there is no one sexual origin from which others deviate. Deconstructing heterosexuality as the norm allows queer theory to unpack the ways in which homophobia and heterosexism operate in our culture by unearthing issues of power, language, and representation (or lack thereof) (Jagose, 1996; Walters, 1996). Thus, queer theory and politics move beyond simple identity politics or individual experiences to deconstruct the social and political sphere where power and privilege

operate within the discourse of sexuality, identity/identification, gender, and gender expression.

In this study, I use queer theory to ask how heterosexuality becomes normalized as natural. (Britzman, 1995). Queer theory encapsulates issues of power, race, and ethnicity that are often excluded in many gay and lesbian studies (Jargose, 1996), and is a response to perceived limitations of the gay and lesbian movement that essentialized gay and lesbian experiences. Queer theory attempts to promote a non-identity or anti-identity instead of a shared identity that essentializes one group (Jagose, 1996). The theory is thus, always in flux, according to the “direction of urgent and expanding political purposes” (Jargose, 1996, p. 2).

Where education is concerned, Capper (1999) argues that “the significance of studying queerness...has less to do with numbers, and more to do with what such study can reveal about the “normal” state of affairs in schools, which affects all people (p. 5).” This approach can be utilized in exploring “out” lesbian coaches who are a part of a larger institution, unlocking insidious power dynamics that inhibit everyone. Thus, although my focus here is on lesbian coaches, my findings have implications for heterosexual women in sport as well because queer theory emphasizes that any identity exists only in relation to an “Other.”

Origins and Debates

Inspired by the postructuralist thought of philosophers such as Foucault, and Derrida, queer theory deconstructs the heteronormativity that operates in culture instead of concentrating on “deviant” sexualities. Poststructuralism “refers to a manner of

interpreting selves and the social which breaks with traditional epistemologies”

(Namaste, 1994, p. 221). As Namaste (1994) suggests,

Subjects are embedded in a complex network of social relations ...the relations in turn determine which subjects can appear where, and in what capacity...the subject is not something prior to politics or social structures, but is precisely constituted in and through specific socio-political arrangements (p. 221).

Unlike traditional epistemological foci that separate out the political from the social from the psychological, poststructuralist thinking understands such processes as complex and fluid relations.

Judith Butler’s *Gender trouble* (1990) is foundational to queer theory; Eve Sedgwick (1990) and Diana Fuss (1990) have also contributed key studies. In *Essentially speaking*, Fuss posits the idea that gender does not preclude stable, essential identities. Fuss (1989) notes that, “...the body is never simply there, rather it is composed of a network of effects continually subject to sociopolitical determination. The body is ‘always already’ culturally mapped; it never exists in a pure or uncoded state” (pp. 5-6). In other words, although individuals may have shared aspects of their identity, one essential “gay” or “lesbian” identity does not exist. Further, Fuss (1990) articulates how homosexuality is a contemporary Western category that emerged with the rise of industrial capitalism. Borrowing from Foucault, she posits that the notion of homosexuality as an opposition to heterosexuality is based on both historical and contextual social constructs rather than natural and fixed essences. Such binary sexualities are produced discursively and do not presuppose biology or nature. Therefore, sexuality becomes de-essentialized. In other words, to be a “lesbian” for one individual is

not the same as for another individual. There is no one essential lesbian identity to which all lesbians adhere, and “being a lesbian” takes on different meanings and politics throughout cultures and historical time frames. The constructs of homo/heterosexuality are viewed as an “invention;” one that was shaped and fixed over time depending on social and historical constructs.

Yet, many lesbian theorists are unwilling to give up the notion of a lesbian essence. Many lesbian and feminist theorists believe that giving up a collective essence denies their history of oppression as women and immobilizes efforts to eradicate the marginalization and degradation faced by society. Fuss insists that “identity is rarely identical to itself, but instead has multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings” (Fuss, 1989, p. 98). Identity politics, then, is a misconception because not all lesbians value the same political movements and identity does not capitulate or determine politics. Simply “being” gay does not necessarily lead to political action. Further, Butler (1991) claims, “there is no question that gays and lesbians are threatened by public erasure, but the decision to counter that violence must be careful not to reinstall another in its place (p. 19).” Thus, the argument is not necessarily against identity categories in and of themselves, but a reminder of the potential risks identity categories yield, such as exclusion and a false concept of homogenous identities within the category gay or lesbian. A primary example of exclusion is that of Black women in the contemporary lesbian movement. Many scholars assert that the identity “lesbian” conjures images and identities of a White woman. Thus, many Black lesbians feel excluded by the identity category that erases the category of race.

Performative Gender and Sexuality

Butler (1990) maintains that in contemporary Western societies biological sex (male/female) is seen as defining gender (masculine/feminine) and prompting “normal” desire or affinity towards the opposite gender. However, Butler debunks these fixed links among sex gender and sexuality. She contends gender and sexuality operate on a continuum not in binary and oppositional categories. She asserts that gender is a performance; something one does repetitively over time in order to fit into ideological constraints.

For Butler, engaging in subversive acts can potentially disrupt hegemonic holds on the proliferation of gender. She uses the metaphor of “drag” to express the performative nature of “doing one’s gender” (Butler, 1990). Our society rewards and accepts women who display hegemonic femininity - those who wear make-up, dress “gender appropriately”, and act passively. These women are performing their gender (woman) appropriately for society so that they are loved, accepted, and rewarded (Butler, 1990). However, those individuals who do not perform their gender appropriately (e.g., women who have very short hair cuts, wear baggy clothes) are seen to perform their gender inappropriately. Therefore, these women do not reap the same benefits, rewards, and love as those who perform their gender according to hegemonic gender ideals.

Butler (1990) dismantles the assumption that heterosexuality is the center, and all other sexualities are an opposite or deviant form of heterosexuality. According to Butler’s argument, gender and sexuality are an “...imitation for which there is no original” (p. 306). She also argues that the “Other” is always juxtaposed to the self in order to claim identity. In other words, one cannot claim the identity of “lesbian” unless there is

something “Other” to lesbian, e.g., heterosexual. Therefore, claiming a lesbian identity only reifies the ideology that heterosexuality is the normal, more natural identity and lesbian is opposite or deviant of that identity. At the same time, however, Butler argues that the only aspect of identity that is constant is instability.

Gender performance is non-voluntary, but masculinity or femininity are “forced norms” that must be regulated and negotiated continually. The embodiment of particular gender norms repetitively leads to the compulsory nature of hegemonic femininity and masculinity. Yet, these particular identities that seem fixed and stable are fictitious and reproduced for the purpose of sustaining ideological hegemony (Jargose, 1996). Identity categories are open to great interpretation and are sites of challenge due to what they claim as well as what they disclaim which can be used to challenge heterosexual norms (Butler, 1991).

Queering Sport

There is a genuine need for individuals who self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer to contribute to their own representations and become agents of social change within the sport arena (Krane, Barber, & McClung, 2002). Discrimination and the heterosexist practices that pervade sport must begin to change, and all participants of athletics need to collectively work to make significant changes. Queer theory can be used to interrogate the boundaries of heteronormativity in White, heterosexist, male dominated institutions (Sykes, 1998). A queer theory analysis can further explore the power relations surrounding sexual orientation within the culture of athletics. Sport must not be taken at face value; a liberal, functionalist view that emphasizes only quality attributes produced through and by sport (e.g., sport builds

character, sport leads to physical fitness) does not address power, dominance, and oppression.

A queer framework will attempt to explore the social construction of sexual identity and heteronormativity in sport rather than focusing on the individual identity of female coaches. Davidson and Shogan (1998) have asserted that there is an “impetus for other sport scholars to address queer theory and sport” (p. 360). Broad (2001) asserts that sport is not a de-politized terrain and further argues that women in sport are “queer” because they represent a disruption in the male hegemonic culture that sport insidiously attempts to reify. In this sense, Broad (2001) argued that sporting women can transgress and directly confront both sexual and gender power regimes in society and sport by “queering” or normalizing lesbianism and nontraditional gender expressions through mere participation.

It is important to recognize that there are multiple ways queer theory can be taken up. Only a few sport scholars have implemented a queer framework to understand and explore heteronormativity in sport (Broad, 2001; Caudwell, 2003; Sykes, 1998). A hybrid theorization of queer theory and feminist theory affords me the flexibility to explore the ways in which sexuality and its multiplicities operate in institutionalized sport (Sykes, 1998). Working through a cultural studies framework, as well as feminist and queer theories allows me to deconstruct the way both gender and sexuality operate in the culture of athletics. By examining the experiences of women in coaching who claim non-hegemonic sexualities, possibilities of changing language, inclusion, and other performative behaviors might occur.

Therefore, I engage a queer-feminist theoretical framework to understand queer experiences of women in coaching, but also illustrate whether queer praxis is observable for sexually nonconforming coaches in sport (Broad, 2001; Sykes, 1998). Simply, praxis is the reciprocal nature of theory and practice, and in particular, queer praxis attempts to use theory as action in order to effect social change. A queer praxis allows me to explore the way the dominant culture in sport (i.e., white, heterosexual, able-bodied, male) proclaims and reinforces “normalcy” (heterosexuality) and “deviance” (lesbianism), and how this regime must be overthrown by transgressors of the dominant culture. In other words, I attempt to understand how coaches who transgress traditional norms of silence and heterosexuality *dismantle* normative values (don’t ask, don’t tell) in sport. Queer praxis is the engagement of queer theory to inform practical, political activism that goes beyond a high theory critique of sport. Therefore, I am exploring how queer politics of difference can be taken-up and observable through practical strategies used by female coaches.

In summary, the social and historical context of women’s sport provides a backdrop for understanding the contemporary culture of women’s sport in general and the plight of female coaches in particular. Previous research has engaged with the topic of lesbian identity and the emergence of the lesbian label in mostly linear theoretical frameworks. A hybrid queer-feminist framework provides a poststructuralist theoretical frame for examining identity/identification in sport. Further, this project attempts to engage in queer praxis and use sport as a site for political social change. It is with this review in mind that I utilized the following method as explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and an interpretative analysis was used. In this chapter, I address the qualitative strategy utilized and illustrate a broad overview of the research. Further, I explain the particular queer-feminist hybrid approach to this project and the means by which data was collected and analyzed. This includes an explanation of procedures, such as how the interview process with co-participants worked, interview transcription, , transcript review with a research group, and the credibility and trustworthiness of the research process.

Qualitative Research Methodology

The paradigm in which this research was conducted was both critical and poststructuralist. My research questions and process utilized a collaborative feminist semi-structured interview guide in the hope that traditional hierarchical power relations were dismantled between the co-participants and myself. Also, I engaged in a poststructuralist deconstruction of the athletic culture as well as the co-participants' text. A hybrid feminist-poststructuralist epistemology (Sykes, 2001) was employed throughout the process. Ontologically, I believe that reality is shaped by social, political, and historical forces that reflect culture. Over time, realities about gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation become crystallized within the context of society (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Whereas positivist research attempts to find "Truth" through "value-free" science which tries to legislate one version of truth over another, a critical-poststructuralist qualitative paradigm espouses anti-positivist politics that critiques the "crowning

achievements” of positivistic methods (Lather, 1986). Lather (1986) asserts that there is no neutral research. Therefore, knowledge is both subjective and political and can be co-created through dialogue between researcher and co-participant. In-depth qualitative research allows co-participants to articulate emotional or mental aspects (of sport) in a meaningful way. Because little research has been done on lesbian coaches who are “out,” allowing their voices to be heard was a critical component of the research and reflective of my queer-feminist epistemology. In order to fulfill my desire to answer particular research questions and stay in line with my personal research politics, a qualitative methodology was most fitting.

Queer-Feminist Hybridity

As Reinharz (1992) explains there is no one feminist method to be employed by all women doing feminist research. I used a feminist qualitative method to collect and gather data which was guided by a queer-feminist approach. In other words, the way in which I gathered and analyzed my data reflected both feminist theory and queer theory. This approach was utilized, in part, because the voices of coaches and athletes in sport are often missing from the traditional models of sport research. Further, as Lather (1992) contends, feminist research attempts to give voice to marginalized groups such as women and lesbians. This type of feminist science advocates for women’s voices and experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge and understanding of the social world. As Campbell and Wasco (2000) assert, “...the ordinary and extraordinary events of women’s lives are worthy of critical reflection as they can inform our understanding of the social world” (p. 780).

My intentions were to combine both queer and feminist approaches, so I must recognize the tensions between these epistemological stances. Sykes (2001) illustrates how she felt similar tensions while conducting queer-feminist poststructuralist life histories that explored heteronormativity within women's physical education. One such tension is the "death of the author," or the erasure of women's voices. Feminist scholars have argued that "the poststructuralist death of the author has been championed at a time when the voices of marginalized groups were just beginning to gain authority" (Sykes, 2001, p. 16). By employing a queer-feminist hybridity, I wanted to avoid the "erasure" of the author, or the women who I interviewed, while simultaneously avoiding the essentialism inherent in many feminist standpoints. Because women have been systematically devalued in society, it is imperative that those voices are not further silenced. Similar to what Sykes (1998) proposed, my challenge, "shifted from accurately re-presenting the 'real' experiences of sexuality in the lives of the women, towards multiple yet still cautious discursive analyses of their stories, my questions, transcripts, quotations, interpretations" (p. 16). In other words, I engaged in a queer framework for theorizing about identity of my co-participants alongside my feminist methodology (Sykes, 2001).

There were several fundamental components to the feminist methodology I utilized in my research. Feminism argues that dominant values are socially constructed to perpetuate male hegemony in society. Broadly, this refers to the ontological view that many feminist women share. A deconstruction of taken-for-granted notions of women's lived experience is emphasized within this methodology (Gamson, 2000). In particular, females are systematically marginalized in a patriarchal society to facilitate the supremacy and privileges of (white) men while oppressing and perpetuating inequalities

for females (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). The research process attempts to value women's experience and names the co-participant as the "expert" regarding a specific subject, thus avoiding the antifeminism that often is encountered in queer research (Jargose, 1996).

The feminist component makes visible the lesbian identities claimed by the co-participants. I believe this was important due to the (often) associations between queer and male homosexuality. However, I also made use of queering the notion that there is an "expert," stable self, or core identity and recognized the fragmented and fluid nature of the co-participant's gendered identities. This occurred through a rigorous process of reading through the co-participant's transcripts, as well as the use of a feminist research group discussed later.

Qualitative inquiry also affords feminist researchers the space to allow females who are oppressed, devalued, and silenced to assert their own voice, and, therefore, the research process as well as the research data becomes an impetus for political and social action. By speaking with women rather than for women (Lather, 1992), feminist research serves as a conduit for co-constructing the data in research. "A move to activism occurs when research fractures the very ideologies that justify power inequities" (Fine, 1999, p. 24).

Feminist methods as well as queer ones seek to break down hierarchies between researcher and participant that are prevalent in quantitative methods (Gamson, 2000). Positioning participants as co-participants or co-researchers assumes a different meaning other than relegating women to the position of "subject." An important component of my queer-feminist method is the positions that both the co-participant and researcher take in the interview process. The women I interviewed were positioned as co-participants. Fine

(1999) encourages researchers doing feminist activist work to recognize and claim the “...self-conscious role our politics can play as we pursue, passionately, our intellectual work” (p. 15). It becomes imperative, therefore, for the researcher to overtly position herself within the questions and political stance of the research.

Thus, conversations within a queer-feminist paradigm can have a transformative quality on existing hegemonic practices, oppressions, and discriminations instead of being a simple, pluralistic gathering of individual voices (Fine, 1999). The dialogue between researcher and co-participant is critical in that it should have a disruptive quality to the dominant ideologies that serve to oppress and devalue the lives of women in the margins. Specific to my research, in the dialogue between myself and the coaches, I attempted to disrupt the ways in which male hegemony continues to marginalize, devalue, and keep lesbian women closeted.

However, it is equally important to recognize that the positions of both the researcher and the co-participant change and are fluid over time (Fine, 1999). Contextual as well as local meanings are co-created and are multiple and changing. Therefore, I was overt about my feminist politics and queer framework from which I was conducting the study. A collaborative practice occurred between myself and the co-participants that exposed contradictions and conflicts as we worked together to understand and deconstruct their meaning. Both myself as researcher and the co-participants were engaged critically in the dialectical research process.

Co-Participants

I examined the experiences of 8 female collegiate coaches. All 8 women self-identified as lesbian. Six of the co-participants identified as White or Caucasian, 1

identified as White with a Jewish background, and 1 identified as Hispanic. There were four NCAA Division I coaches, three NCAA Division III coaches, and one NCAA Division II coach. The coaches range in age from 32 years to 51 years, with an average age of 39.25 years. There were two crew coaches, two softball coaches, one basketball coach, one lacrosse coach, one field hockey coach, and one swimming coach. Six of the women chose their own pseudonyms, one woman asked me to pick one for her, and one woman wanted to use her real name.

Krista is a thirty-two-year-old softball coach at a Division III institution and had been an assistant coach several years before obtaining this head coaching position. Jenny is a thirty-six year old, Division I head softball coach who had been coaching for approximately seven years. Susan is a thirty-two year old assistant field hockey coach at a Division I institution. She also had high school coaching experience. Monkey is a fifty-one year old Division III head crew coach who had previous high school coaching experience, as well as experience working in a hospital. Rogue is a thirty-three year old Division I head lacrosse coach who had prior assistant coaching experience at her Alma mater. TJ Hayes is a forty-three year old head basketball coach at a Division II school who had previous coaching experience at the collegiate level. Elizabeth is a forty-one year old head crew coach at a Division I institution who had been an assistant coach previously. Jessie is a forty-six year old head swimming coach at a Division III college who had prior experience coaching as an assistant (see Table 1).

Table 1

Description of Co-Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Sport	Division	Rank	Sexual Identity	Race
Krista	32	Softball	III	Head	Lesbian	White
Jenny	36	Softball	I	Head	Lesbian	White
Susan	32	Field Hockey	I	Assistant	Lesbian	Hispanic
Monkey	51	Crew	III	Head	Lesbian	White/Jewish
Rogue	33	Lacrosse	I	Head	Lesbian	White
TJ Hayes	43	Basketball	II	Head	Lesbian	White
Elizabeth	41	Crew	I	Head	Lesbian	White
Jessie	46	Swimming	III	Head	Lesbian	White

Note: Co-participants chose their own pseudonym and self-identified their sexual identity and race.

Procedure

Approval was obtained from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to contacting and interviewing co-participants. I used the process known as snowballing to recruit the co-participants for this study. Snowballing, a form of purposive sampling, is the process of knowing or getting to know key informants who will introduce others to the study (Kvale, 1996). I was seeking a particular group of women (i.e., “out” lesbian coaches) who could articulate their experiences of being “out”; therefore, the process of snowballing put me in contact with a specific sample of women in coaching who recommended other women for the study.

I utilized coaches that I knew personally to find co-participants as well as other key informants. These key informants were friends, previous coaching colleagues of mine, sport psychology consultants, and coaches who participated in an interview with me. The key informants were given a key informant script (see Appendix A) that detailed the information of the study. I initially utilized the help of approximately five key informants. Upon contacting potential co-participants, my key informants briefly explained the study to the potential co-participants and gave them an interest form (see Appendix B). The interest form contained a brief statement that asked only if the potential co-participant would be interested in participating in my research study. The interest form contained space for contact information such as name, email address and telephone number. I collected the interest forms, in the form of an email, from my key informants and contacted each of the potential co-participants. During this contact, I explained the research study in detail and set up a time to conduct the interview. This

method provided me access to coaches whose voices allowed me to answer my specific research questions.

Interviews were scheduled with each individual coach during a time that did not conflict with work or athletic practice. Because the coaches were from NCAA sanctioned universities from around the country, phone interviews were conducted with all eight co-participants, allowing me to interview coaches from all over the United States. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) found that telephone interviews proved to be an appropriate method to engage with co-participants. Because the perception of anonymity is increased through telephone interviews, data quality may also be increased when interviewing individuals regarding sensitive subjects (Creswell, 1998). As Krane and Barber (2005) assert, it “may be that telephone interviews allow participants to feel less threatened, also increasing candidness” (p. 70). Although I believe there were some benefits to phone interviews, a limitation may be that nonverbal communication such as body language and eye contact were not detectable.

A written consent form (see Appendix C) was e-mailed to each participant to read and coaches gave their verbal consent over the phone prior to beginning the interview. Before each interview, I reiterated the purpose and rationale of my study and answered any questions that the co-participant had. I also described the interview process, explained my role as an interviewer, assured confidentiality, and reminded participants that the interview was going to be audiotaped. I also reiterated my research politics, and I explained the method of ensuring confidentiality. At this time, the co-participants chose their pseudonyms, and I explained to them that they were free to withdraw from the study

at any time. I individually numbered tapes with corresponding codes to which only I had access. All tapes, notes, and transcripts were kept in a secure, locked location.

The Interview

I engaged with co-participants in an in-depth, semi-structured interview lasting approximately 35-60 minutes. I chose an interview format as opposed to a case study approach. Although a case study could have offered an in-depth account of an “out” coach’s experience, I believe the interview tradition best suited this study. This tradition allowed me to “capture” the experiences of women from all over the country in particular regional, social, and university climates. Semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions that allow for flexibility in the interviewee’s responses (Shensul, Shensul, & LeCompte, 1999) (see Appendix D).

The focus of the interviews was coaches’ experiences of being “out,” existing challenges in sport culture, how they negotiated that space in an athletic department, and any attempts to create political change. Both myself and the co-participants engaged in a conversation where I, too, answered questions and expressed feelings instead of acting as an objective, passive, interviewer. I found my experience consistent with Fontana and Frey (2000) who stated this type of interviewing strategy leads to a wider range of responses and fosters greater understanding of the experiences of the co-participants.

The language and the sequencing of the interview further allowed them to feel a greater sense of control and ownership over the conversation. Mutual understanding between myself and the co-participants as well as support and confrontation were integral to the interview process. Therefore, my own politics and identity was an integral part of the interview and not compartmentalized or bracketed out (as typically referred to in

qualitative research), but explored, acknowledged, and interwoven into the main fabric of the interview structure. My interview questions were structured in a way that open-ended answers were given by the interviewee and answers were probed for further discussion (Shensul et al., 1999). Probing was intended to help clarify and explain exactly what the co-participant meant through her own lived experience (Taylor & Bogden, 1999).

“Qualitative interviewers have to force themselves to constantly ask informants to clarify and elaborate on what they have said, even at the risk of appearing naïve” (Taylor & Bogden, 1999, p. 107).

A difficult aspect of interviewing was the common knowledge shared by the interviewee and myself. To rectify this, I probed for clarification on terms and language that seemed obvious to myself and the participant to ensure that we defined this information in the way that she meant. This technique was employed because members of social groups often use “insider language” (Krane, 1997b). The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the co-participants to confirm or disconfirm my interpretations (Shensul et al., 1999).

The order of the questions was also important when utilizing a semi-structured interview protocol (Shensul et al., 1999). Initially, I asked demographic questions followed by an icebreaker (i.e., “How long have you been coaching [her sport]?”). The interview began with nonthreatening, general questions (e.g., “let’s just start out real general and tell me about your experience of being ‘out’ as a coach.”) which provoked interest and conversation. Then, the questions became more specific and challenging, lending to conversation and dialogue (Shensul et al., 1999) (“Who is actually aware that you are a lesbian?”). I asked the co-participant to describe what it was like right now to

be an “out” lesbian collegiate coach. Also, I grouped questions according to their similarity with one another. For example, I asked what type of personal benefits the coach encountered by being “out,” and then asked if and how being “out” affected her coaching. Concrete questions or topics were asked before abstract topics and, the least sensitive topics came before questions that were more controversial or sensitive to the co-participants unless the co-participant brought it up herself (Shensul et al., 1999) (e.g., Elizabeth brought up experiences of being “uncomfortable” with seemingly violent language because of an abusive childhood toward the beginning of the interview.).

Memo and Journal Writing. Memos were written during the course of the interview and immediately after the interview. This worked out well since the interviews were over the telephone and I could take notes or memos during long or critical responses. This helped me remember to return to something a co-participant said. Memos served two formal functions: As outlines to recall information and to record emerging themes (Taylor & Bogden, 1999). Writing memos during the course of the interview helped me organize the interview and served as a reminder to revisit specific comments (Taylor & Bogden, 1999). Journals were used for acknowledgement of the setting, environment, and time frame of the interviews (Shensul et al., 1999). Following each interview, I wrote journals where I recorded the process of the interview and some of my personal thoughts and reflections regarding the interview. Journals and memos were also stored in a secured, locked location.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The term trustworthiness is used in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) as opposed to validity or reliability. Typically, positivist research has used the term

validity or reliability, whereas qualitative research deems trustworthiness to be a more appropriate term because "...it signifies a different set of assumptions about research purposes than does validity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 151). Trustworthiness and credibility are essential criteria when interpreting qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As Lather (1986) eloquently explains, "...approaches to validity must reach beyond the obfuscating claims of objectivity used by positivism to skirt the role played by researcher values in the human sciences" (p. 66). In other words, qualitative research evaluates different criteria than quantitative research. "Being trustworthy as a qualitative researcher means at the least that the processes of the research are carried out fairly, that the products represent as closely as possible the experiences of the people who are studied" (Ely, 1991, p. 93). Trustworthiness and credibility are key components to a rigorous feminist-postructuralist paradigm within an interview tradition.

Establishing rapport with the coaches also enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Ely, 1991; Taylor & Bogden, 1999; Shensul et al., 1999). Building rapport was essential in establishing trust with the co-participant. "The researcher must establish rapport and trust based on their personal characteristics, not on their status and their promises" (Shensul et al., 1999, p. 76). Rapport was developed by establishing a personal interaction between the interviewee and myself where trust was created (Shensul et al., 1999; Silverman, 1993). I established rapport by sharing some personal information about myself in the beginning of the interview as well as throughout the process of our dialogue. For example, I made it clear from the beginning of our conversation that I was a lesbian, I have had coaching experiences, and my reasons for wanting to do this particular research. Rapport was developed further by constructing a

phone conversation that was congruent with the natural way people converse on a daily basis (Taylor & Bogden, 1999). In other words, I created a phone interview with the co-participants that felt more like an actual conversation than me firing questions at them.

I attempted to create a somewhat personal relationship with each interviewee by chatting with them in a personal way. As Oakley (1981) stated, there is “no intimacy without reciprocity.” Therefore, I attempted to co-create a setting that minimized my status as an interviewer and allowed for a more human kind of conversation. By opening myself up and overtly stating my personal politics and feelings, I attempted to establish rapport that might not have otherwise existed if I had not revealed my own assumptions, thoughts, feelings, and biases. For example, I often joked about language, my experience living in the south, or different social and contemporary topics (e.g., the 2004 presidential election). It was important that I established rapport with my co-participants early so they felt comfortable disclosing valuable information to me.

Data Analysis

The process of qualitative data analysis involves inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing (Berg, 2001). This process requires creative thinking to recognize themes and structure them in a holistic fashion. These processes must take place to allow the researcher to convey the data to the reader in an organized and understandable fashion. Overarching processes and subprocesses resulted from inductive analysis. Also, emergent themes and subthemes resulted from the interview data.

As Sykes did(1998), I engaged in interpretative analysis of my interviews. The interpretation of my interviews occurred through the perspective of a queer-feminist framework. As Kvale (1996) states, “The interpreter goes beyond what is directly said to

work out the structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in the text (p. 201).” This is not to say that I ignored or dismissed the accounts of the women who I interviewed. Because queer analysis inherently problematizes the assumption of lived experiences to be captured by the researcher, I deconstructed the heteronormativity expressed by the co-participants instead of viewing the co-participants as sexual subjects to be studied. Therefore, I utilized quotes in a way the coaches might have intended them while using queer theory to deconstruct meanings that seemed obvious within a poststructuralist theoretical underpinning. This process is known as “understanding” and “overstanding” the data (Sykes, 1998). Where “understanding” asks questions directly from the text or the actual words of the co-participants, “overstanding” asks questions that the text does not directly indicate. These often mundane, taken-for-granted notions of language or the avoidance of particular language (such as silence) is a critical concept within the parameters of queer theory (Sykes, 1998). Thus, the interpretive analysis consisted of the active voices of the co-participants as well as queer deconstructions. As Sykes (2001) proposes,

It does not take much experience of marginalization or entanglements in things queer for a reader of a “lesbian life history” to catch similar questions floating above the page of humanist or standpoint narratives. Things go missing, within even the most collaborative, feminist lesbian-centric narratives. Around the edges of these narratives are queries about certainty, completeness, rationality, and transparency of meaning between narrator, researcher, and reader. (p. 18)

In other words, working within feminist and queer frameworks, I consistently dealt with the tensions in and around these epistemologies, but also utilized them to contemplate the

ways in which sexual identities were constructed and re-constructed as well as interrogated the heteronormative culture that was evident in both speech and silence. Sykes (2001) posits that these are indeed productive tensions that lead to both further knowledge and an emphasis on an “ethical working through” (p. 18).

The perspective of a hybrid queer-feminist framework further enhanced the credibility of the oral interviews by comparing the data and analysis to theoretical frameworks. Krane and colleagues (2001b) noted the importance of theory in interpreting qualitative data. Without the use of theory to provide a framework, the process of interpretation would be “virtually impossible.” Although this process may be perceived as deductive interpretation, the themes and codes emerged inductively (Krane et al., 2000b). The use of substantive theory clarified a comprehensive understanding of a theory that is relevant to the research inquiry (Hatch, 2002). I did this to ground my categories in previously generated theory. I asked myself questions such as, “Why would this coach feel like husbands and wives of heterosexual coaches are treated ‘better’ than her partner?” and “Why would ‘out’ coaches feel the need to stay ‘in the closet’ for particular circumstances?” Lather (1986) refers to this type of theoretical implementation as systematized reflexivity. She asserts that “...a priori theory has been changed by the logic of the data, becomes essential in establishing construct validity in ways that will contribute to the growth of illuminating and change-enhancing social theory” (p. 67). Thus, the trustworthiness of my research was enhanced through the existing theoretical frameworks of queer and feminist theories.

Feminist Research Group. Multiple analyses were used through the use of a feminist research group. Patton (1999) suggests two or more researchers can serve as a

valid method of creating credibility and trustworthiness with regard to data analysis.

Several feminist researchers emphasize the importance of a collaborative process in research analysis (see Bredemeier, 2001, for example). As Fonow also (1991) suggests:

...not only is collaboration a strategy for ameliorating the problems of scarce resources; there is also the expectation among some scholars that feminist collaboration will bring about a deeper intellectual analysis, an original approach to framing the questions, with a mind-set of innovation to deal with the gendered context of the research (p. 5-6).

Therefore, I organized a small research group of five individuals who had knowledge of feminist inquiry, qualitative research, and inductive analysis. Each member of the research group was given all transcripts to review and thematize independently. Each also signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix E) stating that all transcripts and discussion would remain confidential within the group setting. Four of the women were graduate students who had taken several graduate courses related to qualitative research. All of these women had diverse sport experiences. Two of the women self-identified as lesbian, one of whom was legally married in the state of Massachusetts. Three of the women self-identified as heterosexual. One woman had been previously married, and another heterosexual woman was in a long-term married relationship. This research group assisted in generating themes individually, and the group came to a consensus during our meeting regarding final higher order themes. However, it is important to acknowledge that I could have utilized this research group more productively to collaborate on which quotes fit best within each process and theme; unfortunately, due to time constraints, I only met with the research group one time but spoke with each individually about themes

and processes in the data several times. Finally, I interpreted and organized the findings to present the data to the reader in an understandable fashion (see Table 2). The data presented is a description of the coaches' lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Reflexive Subjectivity

Reflexivity refers to the subjectivity of the researcher. Unlike positivistic research, objectivity is neither possible nor desired in qualitative research. The researcher acknowledges her worldview and readers understand the researchers' interpretation of the data more clearly. Reflexivity is the acknowledgement of the researcher's bias and of the lens through which she looks (Krane, 1997b). Lather (1986) describes reflexive subjectivity as "...some documentation of how the researcher's assumptions have been affected by the logic of the data (p. 78)." I self-identify as a queer lesbian feminist and I am a researcher working in a feminist-queer and critical paradigm. I believe sport is inherently an institution that perpetuates and reinforces the homo/hetero binary for the production and management of normalized heterosexuality. As Gamson (2001) acknowledged, research involving queer theory and queer politics can make individuals who are rendered invisible, visible. Often, women with non-hegemonic sexualities are invisible in the sport arena to maintain the "natural" status of (male) heterosexual sport.

I also *love* sport. Sport has been a core aspect of my fragmented, fluid, and shifting identity. The physicality associated with sport runs deep through my blood and it is a site of connection for me with my own body as well as a chance to engage with those around me. Through sport, I have been challenged both physically and mentally, and sport has been a space and opportunity for my own empowerment.

Table 2

Examples of Raw Data Themes and Subsequent Processes.

Raw Data Themes	Subprocess	Major Process
It's certainly a lot easier for me now Over the course of my lifetime it's definitely changed Performance I was much free-er when I was out of athletics	Shifting & Fragmented Identities	Identity
I'm not overtly talking about (sexuality) either I have to act like that or be very guarded You can choose not to be out and hide something	Inside/invisible	
I refer to myself as lesbian or dyke Lesbian and dyke is claiming a negative word I'm not really into the whole label thing	Self-identifications	
I don't call her my partner or wife, she's [Rosie] Yep, partner or significant other I use the term girlfriend	Naming the Significant Other	Discourse
I came out to my team They know who that person is on the sideline It was really easy for me to be out here	Out/Visible	
if I never share anything about a personal life, then they don't know me as a human I'm sharing my life they know I have a partner	Open Relationships	
It's more than just rowing, I can be a mentor By me being out, and modeling that Relationship I can be a good role model	Role Model(ing)	Coach/Athlete
I'm just being honest about who I am I think that perpetuates honest communication Because I'm open and honest with my players	Honesty	
Relationships allow me to motivate my players You have to get them to perform to their best Something about winning within certain parameters	Performance & Success	
I would say it's positive being out I can live a full and enjoyable life	Personal Benefits	Psychosocial

Table 2

Continued

Raw Data Themes	Subprocess	Major Process
I think it gives an educational opportunity I think it's positive for the team...I'm like everyone It will be better if one of my athletes come out	Benefits to others	
I think the region...it all matters In this area of the country....are more enlightened	Region	
It's a great place to be a lesbian here This is a safe place, a safe haven I think it's a pretty open environment	University	
I've had good experiences...in this department People in the AD...have partners and children You're...ostracized if you're homophobic here	Athletic Department	
With the kids, it's a pretty open atmosphere I know all the parents know, we're like a family Climate One of my captains is an open lesbian	Team	Sociopolitical
I think it's helped me get some athletes I don't think it's hurt my recruiting I always thought that would end my career	Recruiting	
Made me...sensitive to building a tolerant climate Much more conscious of diversity in general She's grown as a person and appreciates differences	Politics of Difference	

Because of all of my sport experiences, I have gained confidence in myself to handle many other “non-sport” situations. Sport has been a way for me to connect with others, both men and women, and has given me opportunities to run, jump, swim, and shoot a basketball alongside and with other people.

Athletics has been a wonderful aspect of my life; yet, I think it can be better. Because I am a White, middle-class, highly educated female, I have to recognize all the privileged aspects of my identity. Perhaps it is because of my privileges that I can reflect positively on my own sport experiences as well as even engage in this kind of research. As McIntosh asserts, perhaps since I am white, I can expect my work to be viewed (at least somewhat) favorably by my peers, my dissertation committee, and the larger academic community (McIntosh, 1989).

However, I also understand that my queer lesbian identity (as fluid and fragmented as it is) places me in oppressed categories (i.e., women, lesbian) and has relegated me to “Other” in a heteronormative, patriarchal society. Because I cannot separate my privileged self from my oppressed self, I must negotiate their existence as a person as well as a researcher.

In conclusion, rigorous qualitative methods were employed to fully explore the research problems I am examining. The combination of queer and feminist theory assisted me in developing a sound theoretical conceptualization of the data, and guided me to explore these questions in a manner that was consistent with both my queer and feminist principles. The next chapter describes the results and a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this research was twofold: To explore the ways in which lesbian coaches negotiate their sexual identity within the heteronormative culture of athletics and to explore the ways in which they become political agents within that culture. Findings culminated from the active voices of the participants as well as from queer-feminist deconstruction of semi-structured interviews. An interpretive process was used to analyze the ways “out” lesbian coaches negotiated the limits of their identity performances within the context of a heteronormative sport culture. This section reports how they transgressed such a sport culture and the psychosocial benefits of transgressing the boundaries of “the closet.”

Presentation of Processes and Themes

Queer theory and politics asserts that identities are fluid, unstable, fragmented and are performed and produced through the body (Butler, 1990; Broad, 2001; Sykes, 1996, 1998). Sykes (1996) argues, “Analyses of the ways in which institutional discourses construct, and seem to constrict, sexual identities are needed to counterbalance a focus on individual performances of sexual identities” (p. 467). Further, a queer-*feminist* analysis is used to analyze the gendered climate of sport as a devalued space for females. The foci of my analyses were on how and when individuals engaged in particular identity performances of sexuality within the context of institutional discourses, specifically sport and athletic discourses. Processes refer to the findings from the data that influence, shape, and effect one another in a symbiotic way and subprocesses refer to (need a reference for processes and subprocesses in qualitative data analysis – could use Patton, 1990) . These

processes and subprocesses included: *Identity performance, shifting and fragmented identities, inside/invisible, discourse, self-identifications, naming the significant other, and out/visible*. The term “themes” will be used to describe themes that emerged from the data that support the previously mentioned processes (need a reference here as well). Themes and subthemes included: *Coach/athlete relationship, open relationships, role model(ing) and identifications, honesty, performance and success, psychosocial impact, personal benefits, benefits for others, sociopolitical climate, region, university, athletic department, the team, recruiting, and politics of difference*. Two or three quotes are used to support each process, subprocess, theme and subtheme within this chapter and additional supporting quotes are listed in Appendix G.

As Figure 1 illustrates, *Identity Performance* is an overarching process that was comprised of being “*Inside*” and “*Outside*” particular forms of *Discourse*. The value placed on the *Coach/Athlete Relationship* was inherent in the process of their identity performance, but was also relegated by the *Socio-Political Climate* as well as their perceived *Psychosocial Impacts* of identity performance. Each of the processes and themes overlaps, influences, and shapes each other with *Discourse* as a central component to each process and/or theme (see Table 3).

The following section illustrates and supports the processes and themes by utilizing quotes from the interviews as well as a queer-feminist deconstruction of the data.

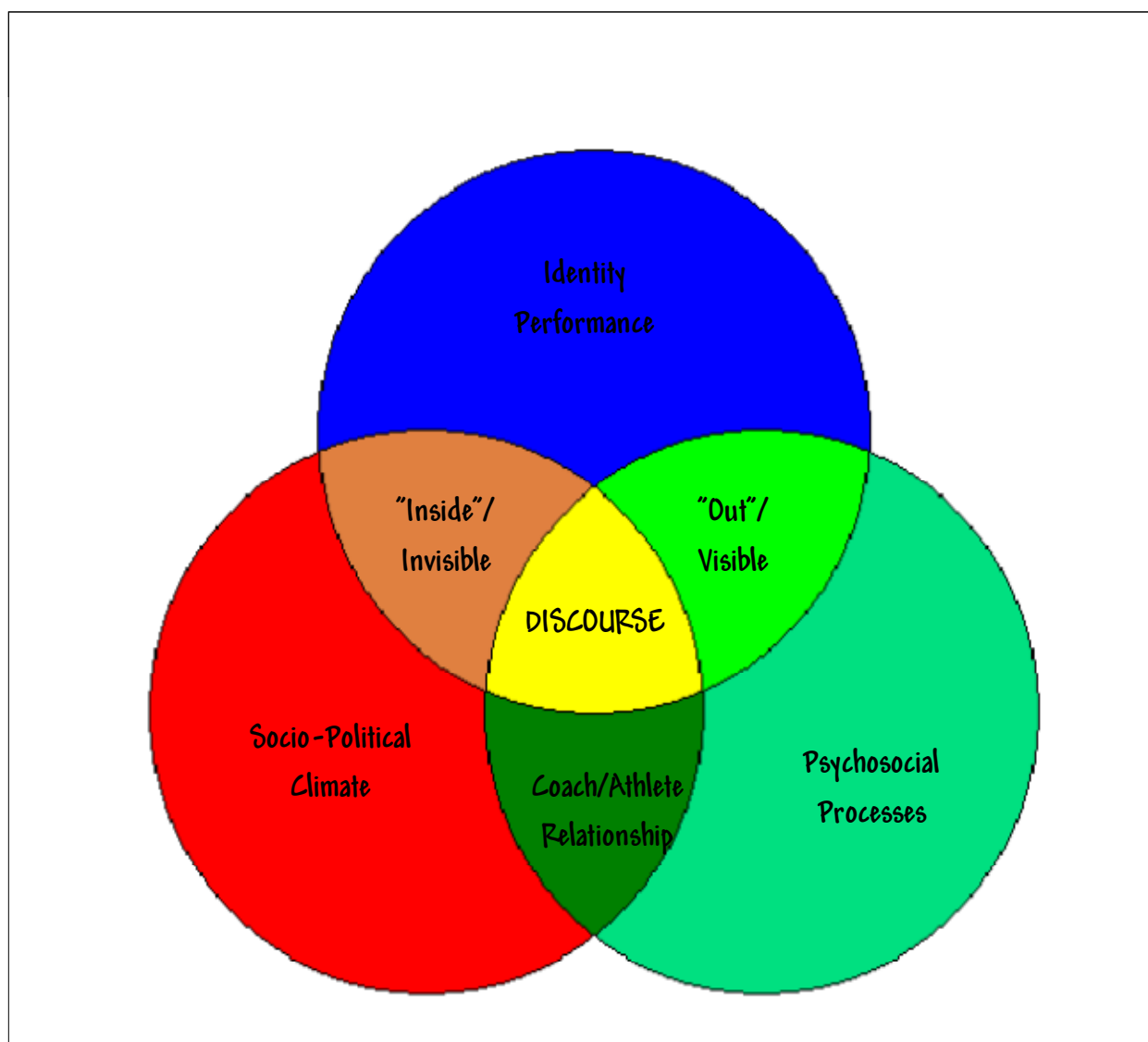


Figure 1. *Presentation of Major Processes and Themes*

Table 3

Processes and Themes

Processes		Themes		
Identity Performance	Discourse	Coach/athlete Relationship	Psychosocial Impact	Sociopolitical Climate
Subprocesses		Subthemes		
Shifting and Fragmented Identities	Self-identifications	Open Relationships	Personal Benefits	Region
Inside/invisible	Naming the Significant Other	Role Modeling & Identifications	Benefits for Others	University
Department	Out/visible	Honesty		Athletic
		Performance & Success		The Team
				Recruiting
				Politics of Difference

Process 1: Identity Performance

As Sykes (1996) suggests, “There is considerable potential in the analysis of sexualities and genders as performances in both physical education and sport contexts” (p. 460). The ordinary and taken-for-granted heterocentrism and heteronormative speech, actions, laws, and prejudices that exist in sport culture make sexual performances both contested and transgressive. I refer to *Identity Performance* as the way in which the coaches’ lesbian identities exist, disappear, struggle, and flourish (Sykes, 1996) within the context of coaching women’s sport. This is a continuous and fluid process, of course, that is situated in and mediated through the discourses of sport and the institution of athletics. In order to illustrate the fluidity of the coaches’ identity performances, I have overlapped the *Inside* and *Out* nature of their identity performances. In other words, there are situations and contexts where the coaches are explicitly “out” of “the closet.” They refuse to be silent and they transgress the heterosexist ideologies (e.g., “don’t ask, don’t tell,”) perpetuated by sport by using particular discourses to “come out” and speak their queer sexualities into existence. Inside, then, is not to be misconstrued as a binary opposite of *Out*, but a continuum of performances enacted by the coaches where coaches remain silent or implicit about their sexual identity. Jenny illustrates this fluidity of identity performance by saying: “I would really choose not to use *that* [lesbian, partner] language, and I would be maybe more silent about it. I think since I’ve grown in my own identity and been comfortable and embracing my own sexual identity.” Subprocesses for *identity performance* include: *Shifting and Fragmented Identities*, *Inside/Invisible*, *Discourse*, and *Out/Visible*. Each is discussed in turn.

Subprocess 1: Shifting and Fragmented Identities. Queer theory posits that anti-essentialist, fragmented, and fluid sexual identities exist in our society. In the context of this study, it is imperative to understand that the co-participants identified at this particular time as lesbian, but discussed the shifts in their own identity over time. Butler (1993) attests that sexual identity is performative, and like other sexual identities, it repeats itself; it is the repetition of these performances that constitute lesbian identities. Hayes discussed,

“In the beginning of my career I tried to hide, and tried to be straight, and I was absolutely miserable, so I think it’s been a progression, I think, it’s been a progression of self-acceptance from that.”

By hiding, or trying “to be straight” Hayes is referring to performing a sexual identity that was normative: heterosexuality. Jessie also articulated, “I kind of grew out of the ‘dating guys just make you look good’ stage pretty quickly, though.”

Heteronormative and hegemonic forces in culture and institutions have repeatedly constructed heterosexuality as the normal or natural sexual orientation. In fact, Rogue discussed the ways in which her institutional climate affected the way she performed her lesbian identity. It is important to acknowledge the institutional context in which the co-participants exist to understand their identities. Rogue says:

I think definitely [I’ve changed], especially from when I first came out, having to sort of be really cautious. One, I was at a Catholic school, and we had that nebulous conduct that was inconsistent with Franciscan values, values that could be grounds for dismissal, so I’m pretty sure that being gay would be one of those.

Krista also discussed the difference in how and where she chooses to perform her lesbian sexual identity. She said:

I think that when I was out of athletics, I, I was much freer, I was in a work environment that was seemingly much more acceptable, and then getting back into athletics, I feel like I've had to take a step backwards in regard to my openness about my relationship.

Identity can only be understood in relation to the social and cultural institutions that inscribe gender and sexuality on particular bodies. Jenny articulated the way that her own identity had shifted and changed throughout time and that she had become “comfortable” with her sexual identity. Because identity does not pre-exist culture, it is important to understand that the larger heteronormative culture and culture of athletics make it difficult for individuals with marginalized or devalued identities to embrace their sexuality.

Subprocess 2: “Inside/invisible.” “The closet” in women’s sport and physical activity is a widely known concept and has been articulated by a variety of sport scholars (Blinde & Taub, 1994; Cahn, 1993; Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996; Sykes, 1998). My intentions here are not to rearticulate the meaning of “the closet” or dispute its existence, but to understand the ways in which coaches with non-hegemonic sexualities must negotiate the space of “the closet” in athletics. Although many of the women I spoke with were proud of their “outness” with regard to their team, staff, administration, and families, there were instances where they reverted to “the closet” for safety, self-preservation, or comfort. Further, this theme illustrates the way “the closet” is spoken about among women in coaching and how silence perpetuates heteronormativity in sport.

A few of the women discussed the ways that they felt more closeted or guarded and how and when they reverted to “the closet.” The following dialogue illustrates one way Krista engaged in this behavior:

Kerrie: if you are asked (about your sexual identity) overtly by somebody on your team, then how would you handle that?

Krista: I think that I would take, I would take the approach that it is not appropriate for them to ask that of me, regardless. And that may be, that may be a total defense mechanism, and maybe I approach them that way so I sort of have that out with them if they would approach me with that.

When I asked Krista how she felt about that, she responded by telling me:

No, I totally am not okay with that, I, I feel like... I feel like I betray myself, I guess, and it's very bothersome to me that I feel like I have to act like that, or be very guarded about who I am in talking about my relationships, yeah, and very much bothersome to me.

One instance that Elizabeth recalled specifically was taking her partner, Maddie, to the Athletic Department Holiday party. She remembered:

The interesting thing is, she's [Maddie] a kindergarten teacher. So basically, I go out to their functions and they know who I am and I can walk into the principal's office in the elementary school and the principal knows me and the secretary knows me, and I'm really embraced at that school, and people here, they know who Maddie is, but I'm more hesitant to bring her. Like we had a Christmas party here on Sunday, but I wanted to, I didn't go... because I wanted to spend time

with her, but I also didn't feel comfortable taking her and I just don't trust how people will respond, and that's sad to me.

Interestingly, when I asked Elizabeth why she did not feel comfortable taking Maddie to the holiday party, she responded by saying:

It's not so much the athletic department, but it's like.... you've got kind of this 'good old boys' sports network and you've got this ... Nobody here treats me poorly. I don't get that, but I feel like, 'oh yeah, she's definitely got a partner' and of course they might not have a problem with it, let's say in the department, she's got a partner, and then, oh yeah, they're talking to someone who's interested in [University], so it's like there's a competition to choose [University], whereas an elementary school, you're in the neighborhood, you go there, you know what I mean?

In other words, most of Elizabeth's concern about bringing Maddie to the holiday party stemmed from a fear of people negatively recruiting against her. Because recruiting is such a huge component of Division I athletics, Elizabeth believed that by bringing her partner to her own University's Christmas party, it could be used against her when trying to recruit athletes. She made this distinction from her partner who teaches at an elementary school by saying that regardless, children will still go to kindergarten if there is a lesbian teacher, but athletes might not come to her team if the coach is a lesbian. Although it is confusing why anyone Elizabeth works with would use her lesbian relationship against her with regard to recruiting, even the possibility that this information could be taken elsewhere and used against her negatively with regard to recruiting is an example of the fear homonegativism places on lesbian coaches. This

quote is particularly interesting and troublesome because Elizabeth has “listed” many members of the athletic department who are aware of her lesbian relationship, yet she believes that it is these same people who will expose her relationship to other coaches who will in turn use it to negatively recruit against her. One possible explanation is the difference between the local (elementary school) and the national (university). Perhaps change and acceptance is happening at the local levels when individuals such as teachers are more well-known in the community. Since Elizabeth’s identity could be seen on a more national level as a Division I coach, changes at the local level are perceived as less challenging.

Many of the other coaches discussed “the closet,” how they viewed being closeted, and the effects it had on other female coaches. Jenny stated:

I think that there are people who are in relationships and it's very secretive and closeted, and they may feel ashamed, but more importantly they're scared and they're afraid of how people will react to that. And they're not gay in the world, and they live these very closeted lives. I could not, I cannot, imagine feeling so stifled, and feeling so, like, nervous or scared to be who you are. And I think that's incredibly debilitating.

Monkey recalled a conversation at a rowing convention with a lesbian colleague who was discussing her closeted athletic department environment:

Even within the university climate there’s still less acceptance, but the conversation was just about what she thought she could or could not do. And even though she thought there is like passive acceptance (of lesbian coaches), like

“wink wink” or, like everyone knows, but it's never stated, it's never really there, you know. This kind of “open secret” is widely acknowledged within the women’s sport context but Monkey believed, “I just personally think it’s a real shame. I think it's a real shame for your athletes who have these people as role models, and it's a real shame for the non-lesbian athletes.” Obviously, Monkey felt extreme frustration with the idea of a “passive acceptance” of an environment that promoted a “don’t ask, don’t tell” kind of policy. Hayes felt similarly about hiding a part of her identity, or keeping her sexuality closeted. She commented: “I think people that are hiding, or you're denying, you know, you’re saying, they're saying, ‘there is something wrong here.’ Then they say “oh, if your hiding something, it’s wrong, that's bad.” Both Hayes and Monkey articulated the “open secret” or “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy regarding lesbians in sport. Their reactions indicated that this type of passive acceptance or closeted behavior has negative consequences on others involved in athletics.

Interestingly, Monkey and Hayes live and work in two entirely different regions. Monkey works in a small, liberal arts college in the Northeast area of the country, while Hayes coaches in the southeast region of the country at a mid-sized Division II university. Although the climates at both schools are very different in regard to progressive politics, student-body make-up, and religious affiliations, both coaches agreed that being closeted results in damaging effects for young athletes.

In their discussion of “the closet,” the coaches reinforced the way silence and “the closet” were a part of women’s sport. The idea of “the closet” and the silences that are associated with “the closet,” only gain their meaning in relation to “the discursive situation in which they are produced” (Sykes, 1998, p. 165). Thus, being “in the closet”

as a lesbian college coach only exists because of the explicit discussion and discourse surrounding heterosexuality as well as because silence surrounds lesbian coaches.

Several of the coaches talked about the heteronormativity that was pervasive in their daily lives. In discussing her idea of being “out,” Hayes commented,

“I don't deny it, like I said, if you are heterosexual you wouldn't go around saying that all time, you know, grab your partner and hold them in front of everybody and say, “this is my partner?!”

In a heteronormative culture, heterosexuality is assumed, unless someone indicated otherwise. Krista articulated,

“If you're married, or in a heterosexual relationship, you don't have to explain anything. All you say is either I'm married or I've been with this many guys, or had one boyfriend or whatever.”

Rogue discussed the ways in which she felt excluded or marginalized in every day occurrences with individuals in her athletic department. Although Rogue was explicitly out to every member of the athletic department, including the administrators, they often remained silent about her relationship with her partner, while openly discussing relationships with heterosexual coaches on staff that were inclusive and caring. Rogue recalled:

“I've been there (at athletic functions) where we're with coaches and they're saying, “Oh, how's your wife” and I've been [standing] there and they just they never ask about her (Rogue's partner) or say anything, you know.”

This dismissive and heterosexist behavior is part of an assumption that certain heterosexualities (e.g., monogamous, one man & one women) should be discussed and

spoken about while non-hegemonic sexualities (e.g., S/M or lesbian sexuality) should remain invisible and silenced. As Rubin (1997) argues, “Kinship and marriage are always aspects of total social systems, and are always tied into economic and political arrangements” (p. 56). Rogue illustrates Rubin’s argument explaining the social system of the sporting environment and the ways in which that system is concerned with marriage.

Interestingly, many of the coaches discussed the issue of gay marriage in the interview either overtly or at least made mention of the topic. The discussion of gay marriage and the movement to ban gay marriage in the United States makes visible and thinkable non-hegemonic family forms. As Butler (1990) argues, laws, such as those governing marriage, are ways for individuals to assert “social recognition as an effective heterosexual” (p. 77). Thus, if LGBTQ people can marry, there are no rules or sanctions that separate heterosexuals into a privileged group. In other words, to claim to be “married” is a legally sanctioned institution that excludes individuals who are not in the dominant culture, therefore reinforcing the normalization of certain forms of heterosexual relationships. As Rubin (1997) points out, both economic and political arrangements are inherent in obligatory heterosexuality. Several of these coaches illustrate how the economic and political arrangements inherent to sport (e.g., recruiting, Alumni funds) further perpetuate the need for particular heterosexualities in order to maintain their privileged status. Elizabeth commented also on the ways in which she felt less embraced than the heterosexual coaches:

“When I got hired here, I wish they would have embraced my family and not just me. On some level they embraced my family, but it wasn’t really true.”

The feelings of not being embraced have relation to the heterosexist and heteronormative discourse that surrounds the coaches' institutions. Many of the women internalized not being embraced or feeling excluded in relation to the normalized recognition received by heterosexual coaches and staff who were married or in heterosexual relationships. Much of this is related to the perpetuation and management of the lesbian closet. The lesbian closet becomes a safe haven not only for the lesbian coaches, but for those individuals who need the "open secret" or "absent presence" of lesbians in sport to maintain the dominant heteronormative discourse (Sykes, 1998). When lesbian women in sport transgress traditional heteronormative boundaries and expect to receive recognition, conversation, or acknowledgment of their existence, a backlash of compulsory heterosexuality ensues in order to maintain the status quo.

Process 2: Discourse

In the context of this project, discourse is used in Foucauldian terms to mean language, laws, beliefs, prejudices, "and all other means by which human values are communicated, 'naturalized' and reproduced" (Hall, 2003, p. 65). Thus, this process refers to the discourse surrounding the sexual identity of these coaches with regard to their visibility as lesbians and their invisibility. Discourse, then, refers to the silence of one's identity as a lesbian, as well as the public testimony, verbal and nonverbal, that draws attention to the idea of affirming an identity based on their sexuality. As mentioned previously, sexual identity is a performance that repeats itself, and it is the repetition of this performance over time that constitutes a lesbian identity (Butler, 1990). The discourse surrounding when, where, and to whom these coaches come out sometimes challenges the cultural norms of the heteronormative sport climate. As Martin (1993)

suggests, “telling these stories is linked to the perceived importance of countering representations that have rendered homosexuality invisible, perverse, aberrant, or marginal” (p. 278). In other words, lesbian women in sport run the risk of being defined by those very forces that would silence their existence.

Monkey talked about having recruits on campus and driving them down to the boathouse. She said,

I get in my car, I've got rainbow flag in it and so when I drive them down to the boathouse, unless they happen to be looking somewhere else, you know, it would be hard to miss that, and unless you're from east jablip or somewhere, you know what that sticker means these days.

Monkey provides an example of how a rainbow sticker is a form of discourse, a universal sign for LGBTQ pride. Jenny also discussed the ways that nonverbal symbols initiate communication about her identity. She said, “I have pictures of my son and pictures of my partner in my office.” Both Monkey and Jenny gave examples of how the discourse of sexuality can operate within the sporting environment. Monkey and Jenny, as well as many of the other coaches in this study discussed how language was used to convey their lesbian identity. The following subprocesses illustrate this point.

Subprocess 1: Self-identifications. Language includes the ways people realize their subjectivity (i.e., sense of self). Identity, then, is not being taken up as an essential core, but a set of repetitive performances that constitute a particular fluid and unstable identity. As Namaste (1994) argues, subjects are a part of a complex network of social relations where, “the relations in turn determine which subjects can appear where, and in what capacity” (p. 221). Knowledge of sexuality and how sexuality is put into language

and discourse are a result of the social identities that are produced within a sociopolitical climate and within this project, the sport climate (Namaste, 1994). When asked what kind of language she used to describe herself, Monkey said, “I would refer to myself as a lesbian or Dyke, I generally don’t use gay.” Jessie said, “Gay or lesbian.” Monkey went on to say that there are certain contexts in which she uses certain language:

It partially depends on who I’m speaking with. If I’m speaking with a non-Lesbian person like I’ll probably use the term ‘lesbian.’ I probably wouldn’t use the term dyke, but I would use that mostly with people who are of similar persuasion, because the word Dyke has its own negative connotations in the world. Jenny articulated: “If I say ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian,’ to me that means, who’s that person like in terms of their family, who do they rely on, in terms of, you know, kind of that situation.” The quotes within this subprocess illustrate the fluidity and antiessentialist idea of identity/identification. Each of the co-participants self-identified initially as lesbian, and went on to elaborate what that meant to them. The different meanings and connotations “lesbian,” “partner,” or “dyke” had between co-participants is indicative of a need for a broader scope of identity and identification.

Subprocess 2: Naming the Significant Other. In heteronormative culture, dominant language and discourse are utilized to perpetuate the status quo. Thus, when I asked the participants what kind of language they used when describing themselves and their relationships, some of the participants were uncomfortable with their choices. Interestingly, other coaches felt more comfortable discussing their own identity with regard to their relationships. When I asked Susan what words she used to describe herself, she said:

I don't usually use a word, I don't call her my partner or my wife. She's just Rosie to me, and so people just know what I'm saying when I say Rosie, and I've never really labeled myself or use a specific word to do that is well.

Rogue discussed her complication in using language to define her relationships. She stated:

There really isn't a good word, so a bunch of my friends always said, we're going to start introducing people to our 'lesbian lovers.' You know, I've never actually done that, but it is something that we joke about.

Initially, Elizabeth said, "I use partner a lot." She then went on to recall an incident where,

We're at the celebration of a coach who just got 1000 wins as a coach, and there's a group of us at the table, and I said to someone, "Did you see my friend?" And she was like, "**friend??**" And I was like, "What did you want me to say, did you see my lesbian lover?" I'm just not that way, this is an endearing term, like someone would call someone their 'honey' and this is something that I've done the whole time that we've been together, and this woman felt like, she had a problem with her own identity that she jumped all over me about it, and how the word, I used! She drove me of me crazy!

Although language surrounding sexual identity is complicated, there are certain implications in using the term "friend" or "roommate" instead of more accurate terms such as partner or significant other. The word friend connotes a platonic relationship of good feelings between two people, while this clearly is not how Elizabeth speaks of Maddie, the woman with whom she shares her life. However, Elizabeth did go on to say,

When I was coming out, there was a lot of derogatory feelings toward lesbianism, dyke, butch. So for me that feels violent to me, and I don't know, maybe it was because tough women would use them more. I felt like when I was coming out, there was these women who were like, 'dyke!' And there was a certain walk, or stance, like, 'I'm tough.' That sounded very harsh for me, and I came from a very abusive childhood, so I tend to stay away from that demeanor, I don't think it's necessarily wrong, but it's definitely not comfortable for me.

Although Elizabeth articulated her abusive childhood as a reason for using the word friend or “non-violent” words like lesbian, she may be perpetuating the ideology that lesbianism should not to be spoken about, or should be kept silenced. Although everyone at her table knew she was a lesbian, it was difficult for her to use the word “partner” which she described earlier as a word she typically used. However, these coaches also talked about self-preservation as it relates to how they self-identify or identify the individuals with whom they are in a relationship. When asked if there were any situations where she would not use particular words, Monkey argued:

As out as I am, I'm certainly not stupid, and so I have the potential reality of what may be...I wouldn't necessarily walk into as what I perceive as being a hostile environment screaming that I'm a Dyke. I have a good sense of self-preservation.

Elizabeth also commented:

But there are times when I'm really hesitant, so when we added the men in [the department], when they merged, I felt like I really had to get a sense of them, who they were, to trust them to be that open with them.

The previous examples illustrate the complexity and fluidity of identities and how they exists within the context of a particular sociopolitical culture. It appears that the language and discourse surrounding sexual identity had both emancipatory and negative consequences for these women.

Subprocess 3: “Out/visible.” As Sedgwick (1990) argues, lesbians have been “passing” or hiding under the veil of heterosexual assumption. Therefore, when lesbian women “come out” they are acknowledging that they have been “passing” as heterosexual all along. This is particularly true in a male hegemonic, heteronormative culture of sport where heterosexual assumptions about women in sport are crucial in maintaining and reproducing the status quo that privileges men and oppresses women. This understanding of “coming out” illustrates the tensions inherent in poststructuralism and queer theories around affirming an identity based on sexuality. Yet, as Sedgwick (1990) argues, proclaiming a sexual identity based on categories can be useful “especially for groups who depend on the definition as a distinct minority population” (p. 55). As Bacon (1998) asserts, self-disclosure “is not a story of origins, certainly not in the sense of trying to figure out who we are by paying careful attention to where we have been. Instead, this story offers a way of negotiating identities within hostile contexts, preserving dignity, and working toward a queerer way of seeing the world” (p. 255). Rogue is on one end of the continuum of discourse related to identity disclosure in that not everyone on the team explicitly knows she is a lesbian:

They (the team) met my partner and some people don't know... With different people, there's different degrees of being out, and certainly some of the parents

know, and you know, they send cookies home to me and my partner and ask about her and, and things like that.

Jenny is on another part of the continuum:

I came out to my team because I think that it's significant that they know who this person is and I'm not hiding this person behind left field. And it's a very important that they know that this person is a very significant person of my life and that was the reason for me coming out to them.

Some of the coaches came out directly while others came out more subtly over time, or through other people. Monkey said: "So it's not part of any scripted orientation speech, it just happens as we get to know each other as people." Jenny said:

I tell people to tell people, because it's important to me and I'm sharing them with someone. I want them to know who I am and I want them to know who's important to me; that's not necessarily making any political statements about people knowing that I'm gay.

Although some coaches needed to feel established either with their department, players, or other individuals with whom they worked, other coaches came out initially to avoid the problems associated with "the closet." Hayes recalled:

When I came for an interview, I informed the president 'this is who I am.' And I knew that I didn't have to do that, but I was tired of the underlying battle, and I didn't want to do that any more and I didn't want to hide it and you know I didn't want that..... I didn't want to coach in a place where that wasn't wanted or that it was an issue.

Rogue added: "I don't know if it's something that I have to do it [come out] continually, but I'm certainly aware of the opportunities that can be gained by coming out to different people at different times." Jessie also described the continuous process of coming out:

I think that it would be something that you would go through continually, whereas with a heterosexual person, people just assume that you are, but when you meet a new person, people have to quote 'figure it out' or you have to tell someone, but it's not kind of the given that it would be with a heterosexual person. It's just kind of assumed that they are [heterosexual] until something changes that.

Monkey said: "I've made a conscious decision to be out because ...because I wanted to live my life as who I am, be who I am and not have to worry about that." Jenny said that her decision to come out was impacted by the fact that she lived in residence on campus. She said: "I'm out for several reasons and I think that one of the reasons being is that I live in residence on campus." In other words, many factors contributed to the coaches' desire and privilege to be visible or out, such as their regional location, housing location, race, and age.

In addition, several of the women discussed how having a family or children also impacted the coming out process. Two of the coaches had children, and three coaches discussed the possibility of having children in the future. Having to explain their child or pictures in their office invoked discussion around their sexual identity. Jenny recalled being asked about pictures of her partner and her son on her desk and saying:

This is my partner, Sophia, this is my son. My partner's the biological mother and some people look at me in that department, and they knew I wasn't pregnant, and they didn't know I had a partner per se and so then I say you know, my partner's,

she's the biological mother and I adopted my son, and yeah stuff like that...and just language like that.

Jenny went on to say that she is upfront and clear about who her family is: "This child is legally mine. We have the domestic partnership agreement with City Hall, and I've adopted our child." She also said that it was important to her to correct people when they assumed she was heterosexual and had a husband when they met her child. She stated:

People say "oh, you have a son?" You know, and like some have been, like who is your husband? And so, like, "oh no, I don't have a husband, I have a partner."

For Jenny, using inclusive language or discourse that undermines heteronormativity and the assumption that in order for her to have a child, she should have a husband, was important for her.

Finally, some coaches talked about the positive experiences they've had being out. Monkey stated:

I've had absolutely no problems being out as a coach, and I don't know if that's if I fallen into the right places and my attitude has always been this who I am, I feel like, you can fire me, I don't care and so I really have had no problems.

And Susan said:

I've been here for four years, and so far it's been nothing but positive, everyone in the department knows, some of them I'm very open with, some of them know, but don't ask me, I've never had any negative comments or treatment by anyone, actually ever in my life. I'm very very fortunate.

While it is clear from the preceding quotes that each of the coaches negotiated the ways in which they were out, each discussed the fact that they were visible, on some

level, to the people with whom they worked regularly. Further, it is important to understand the tension of “coming out” with regard to identity politics. Although a strictly poststructuralist queer framework posits that claiming an identity based on sexuality further cements the hetero/homo binary and the perpetuation of heteronormativity, a queer-feminist framework based on a politics of differences recognizes a more reflexive identification. As Alsop and colleagues (2002) assert, identities can be claimed for political purposes because, “We can see identity politics as an open and potentially shifting set of allegiances born, not necessarily of shared subjectivities, but reflective political analysis” (p. 235). In other words, for these women to assert a lesbian sexuality does not mean they are claiming an essential or stable identity, but engaging in a reflexive political statement that positions them as transgressors in a homophobic and heterosexist culture. As Broad (2001) suggests, when regimes of sexual normativity are confronted and disrupted, sexually nonconforming individuals in that regime are engaging in queer politics and destabilizing heteronormative environments.

Theme 3: Coach/Athlete Relationship

This process refers to the personal reasons or impetus these coaches have for becoming visible and being out as lesbians to their teams. It also refers to the philosophy of coaching that has influenced them to come out, such as valuing honesty, creating a trusting environment, and being a positive role model. As Lather (1992) asserts, “politicize means not to bring politics in where there are none, but to make overt how power permeates the construction and legitimating of knowledge” (p.xvii). As Broad (2001) argues, “the sports arena is not a de-politicized terrain” (p. 182). Although many

of these coaches said they were not being political in coming out, there are certain value-laden reactions and responses to lesbians in this culture, particular in the social context of sport. Thus, coming out as a “lesbian” in sport has different consequences or meanings than do other aspects of people’s identities. For example, if a coach identifies as a “mother,” an identity that is often viewed favorably for women, it might garner different reactions than identifying as a “lesbian.” In other words, being a mother seems mundane, acceptable, and even valuable, yet being a lesbian has not been received with quite the same acceptance. In fact, it often elicits rejection. So, there are certain “political” or reactionary responses to identifying as a lesbian in the context of sport. The sub themes within coach/athlete relationship include, *open relationships, role modeling and identifications, honesty, and performance and success.*

Subtheme 1: Open Relationships. Many of the coaches believed that developing open relationships with their athletes was a critical component of being a successful coach. Many sport psychologist consultants assert that building trust, integrity, and interpersonal relationships with athletes are key ingredients to successful leadership (Chelladurai & Trail, 2000; Janessen & Dale, 2004; Murray & Mann, 2000). Five of the ten qualities of effective coaches proposed by Murray and Mann (2000) include trust, respect, dignity, and integrity. Jenny articulated her idea of an open relationship, one that includes her own sexual identity, and how she believed it affected her coaching and team:

If I’m guarded, and I’m feeling like I, if I’m gay, and I’m not out to my team or I’m not out to key people in the department, and you know, then that’s holding me back. And I’m feeling stifled by that, how can I really, if I’m so guarded, how can I really connect with my athletes, how can I really do what I would need to do for

them. So I think that when I came out and I think my partner's influence, I think has made me a better coach and a better person.

She further stated:

I didn't want to create drama on my team and I didn't want my team going, "oh, who's that woman?" And I didn't want them making an issue that they feel they can talk about, and had to talk about, like I didn't want them to feel that they had power over that, you know, and so if it's out there and they knew, then, then it couldn't be something that they took ownership of and they talked about and questioning and all of that. So I took that kind of type of drama in questioning and uncertainty away from them and said this is the way it is, and, you know, it's healthier.

In Chelladuri's model of leadership, he asserts that warm, interpersonal relationships and social support are key ingredients to effective leadership. Many of the coaches believed that by being out, they were allowing themselves to develop and establish more open interpersonal relationships with their team. Further, a cultural studies as praxis model (Wright, 2003) infused with sport psychology rejects the idea of neutrality in sport, an arena that endorses oppression (Ryba & Wright, in press). In the cultural praxis of sport psychology model, my colleagues assert, "a sport psychology educational model in this conception goes beyond teaching athletes to develop psychological skills and beyond the notions of performance enhancement as neutral and an end in and of itself" (Ryba & Wright, p. 27, in press). This model also has great implications for ways of creating positive coach/athlete relationships that takes into account social difference. Hayes commented:

I think that there's a lot of really good coaches who feel that way, and understand that relationships are really the bottom line in coaching, because it's about people, and it's not about the technical part of it, it's about the relationships... it's always a process and you have to understand that.

Social support and trusting the coach to be there for you are widely cited effective qualities for coaches (Janssen, 2000; Murray & Mann, 2001). These coaches articulate examples of a cultural praxis of sport psychology works with regard to coaching. Although Ryba and Wright (in press) spoke of this model with regard to identity/identification and agency of athletes, I believe this model can be applied to coaches as well. These coaches illustrated the ways that they are both “subjected to and have the agency to negotiate power relationships within various discourses” (Ryba & Wright, in press, p. 26).

Overall, the coaches believed that being out to their team made them better coaches for several reasons. First, the coaches discussed the more open or trusting relationships they could forge with their teams because they were not constantly having to put energy into hiding or pretending they were heterosexual or even asexual. Further, because the “the closet” remains a fixed location in sport, these coaches believed that by being open, they were placing trust in their team to “take care of” the knowledge that their coach was lesbian; this practice is uncommon within the context of sport in general and coaching in particular. Within heteronormative sport environments where there are a few examples of lesbian coaches or athletes who are visible, this is an important issue.

Subtheme 2: Role Model(ing) and Identifications. Several of the coaches discussed the influence they believed they had on their athletes with regard to being a

role model. Because identity is fragmented, fluid, and unstable, it is important to understand the ways in which the coaches located their particular identities with regard to being a role model. Drawing from Layton (1998), Gutkind (2003) states, “the intent to be a role model provides a sense of agency that allows for cohesion and intelligibility during the negotiations of identity” (p. 88). In other words, identity or identification as a role model can be recognized as an assertion by the coaches of one aspect of a fragmented and fluid identity (Wright, 2003). This assertion is recognized through multiple discourses and various identifications, and is in constant flux. As Butler (1990) suggests, identifications occur when we identify with someone else. We create an internal image of that person, then we identify with that internal and idealized image. Monkey commented:

You can be involved with your athletes on a different level, its more than just rowing, and I like that I can be a mentor. I like what I think is being a role model. I like being a person who is just happy with who they are, and especially with lesbian people who have high rates of suicides. I think it's important for them to see [an out lesbian] and so I guess it's been positive,....but yeah, I guess it's been a positive thing.

Monkey believed that her athletes, in particular her lesbian athletes, will make positive identifications with her because she is seen as someone “who is just happy with who they are.” It is within these shifting and complex contradictions of identities that both the coaches and athletes have agency to negotiate their various identities, and thus understand that “how we make sense of ourselves and others via discourses is intensely variable” (Alsop, Fitzsimons, & Lennon, 2002, p. 221).

Jenny said:

“so just by me being out, and modeling that and handling that, its something my players are learning from; just from that experience.”

Jenny also talked about different identifications her athletes might have with her that would not be evident if she were not visible as a lesbian coach:

I think the other piece of that is, you know, I'm a role model. I'm modeling a healthy committed reciprocal relationship, and that's what I'm modeling to them and also modeling parenting and being a parent and being able to balance work and family. So there's a lot of modeling going on that my athletes are seeing.

Jenny's example is an excellent illustration of the shifting and fragmented subjectivities of the coaches. Clearly, Jenny believes that many of her athletes will form an identification with her parental and familial identity, not necessarily her lesbian identity. However, if her lesbian identity was not visible, her athletes would not be able to form identifications with her identity as a “mother” or “partner.”

Although these coaches are working in the heteronormative climate of sport, they have created positive identifications (e.g., productive citizen and coach) for their athletes through negotiation and agency. However, some of the coaches had different understandings of agency. Jessie, for example, only believed her being out would affect change for her lesbian athletes. Other co-participants believed that being out would create broader social change by being visible to their administration, athletes, parents, and prospective athletes.

Subtheme 3: Honesty. Effective and credible coaches are ones who are honest and trustworthy in their dealings with their athletes and with themselves (Janssen, 2000).

Many coaches discussed that they valued honesty in their relationships and that by being out, they believed they were being more honest in their interactions with their team.

Monkey valued honesty and articulated that by saying:

My athletes here are wonderful. I think that, you know, I'm not doing them any service because I'm gay or because I'm straight, but I think the message is you know that I'm just being honest about who I am.

Jenny stated: "I have had a very positive experience, positive in the sense that I feel that people have been receptive to my honesty." Hayes also valued honesty and claimed:

So you know, there's no pretense there, and so I think that perpetuates honest communication among people, and I think you want that, the biggest thing about coaching is relationships and if people can't figure that out, I don't think they're going to be very good coaches, and I think that it's about having positive relationships and honest relationships.

Rogue also stated that successful coaching is not only "strategy or X's and O's, because I'm open and honest with my players, it gives them the security to be open and honest with me."

Because the climate of women's athletics has been so acculturated with heteronormativity and the production and management of "the closet," several of the coaches believed that by transgressing "the closet," they were setting up environments of trust. Murray and Mann (2001) claimed that, "when we trust others, they trust us" (p. 102) and named "trust" as one of the ten qualities of effective coaching. Jenny stated,

“I think that there's no question that having a coach who's out that it that it sets the climate for trust and support and acceptance that just needs to exist, and it just happens.”

In summary, many of the qualities associated with being a “good coach” or an effective leader are qualities in which these coaches believe. Creating positive environments that have trust, integrity, honesty, and openness often leads to successful teams. The coach/athlete relationship and models of effective leadership are prevalent in the sport psychology literature, and have relevance to this study in particular. If female coaches, regardless of sexual identity, are part of an institution of sport that creates a system of fear, homophobia, and oppression through male hegemony, such effective qualities of coaching become stifled and almost unattainable for women in sport, and for lesbian women in particular. Therefore, it is advantageous to understand the role of sport psychology from a cultural studies praxis model (Ryba & Wright, in press) to implement social justice and social change to make sport a productive and safe environment for all of its participants.

Subtheme 4: Performance and Success. Along with training and instruction, sport psychologists have found that social support, constructs of closeness, trust, respect, honesty, interpersonal relationships, and caring all lead to effective coach/athlete relationships that yield satisfaction, motivation and improved performance (Chelladuri & Trail, 2001; Janssen & Trail, 2000; Murray & Mann, 2001). The coaches in this study described how social justice and identity issues certainly affected their players’ performances. As Monkey stated:

So, you try to act as a mentor, because I'm a nice person, I care about them, or simply because it serves my purpose is to get them to do better. I think you could be a wonderful warm snuggling person, or you're just using them in another way, but I think that sometimes you have to get them to perform the best of them and that can, sometimes, that means guiding them through some of their emotional stuff, stuff that they won't even come to talk to me about how to give guidance if they don't feel that I'm a person too, and I'm not claiming to be a sport psychologist or try to cure them, but they, that at least be able to open up to me so that I can send them in the right direction to the counseling service, or to the chaplain or to their parents.

Here, Monkey suggests that even if a coach's motive for creating a positive sport environments is strictly for performance reasons, which Monkey does not personally advocate, it is still in the best interest of the athlete and the coach to function in such an environment.

Creating climates of acceptance and social difference is something for which many feminist sport psychologists have advocated (Hall, 2001; Krane, 2001b). Approaching coaching and sport through a feminist model might have great implications for setting up successful and healthy environments. Further, as Ryba and Wright (in press) propose, a cultural studies as praxis approach to sport psychology allows participants in sport to work towards success without the myth of neutrality that often rears itself as heterosexuality and further promotes heterosexism and homophobia in sport. This model allows coaches and sport psychology consultants to shift from "merely attempting to improve athletes' performance in a narrowly focused sense to assisting

athletes in the process of “conscientiation”¹ and creating possibilities for both performance enhancement, athlete self-assurance and empowerment and indeed social transformations to occur” (Ryba & Wright, in press, p. 27).

Theme 4: Psychosocial Impact

This theme refers to the psychological and social impact of being out and transgressing the heteronormative and closeted culture of athletics. Further, it encompasses the personal and social nature of this performance in a heteronormative environment and the political and personal implications for openly transgressing “the closet.” Interestingly, many of the coaches discussed the positive aspects of being out in relation to being “in” or closeted. Being out was positive because the other option was living in fear, or hiding a part of who they were. As Butler (1997) articulates, being out only gains its meaning in polarity. In other words, the benefits of being out for these coaches is always already in relation to being “in the closet.”

Subtheme 1: Personal Benefits. The co-participants commented on the perceived personal benefits they had for being out and not hiding their sexual identity. Monkey stated, “I would say it's positive being out.” She went on to express that being out and not hiding was part of living a full and healthy life, “I am who I am so I can either, I can live, what I consider a full and, and enjoyable life or I can hide in the closet and worry about what pronoun I’m using and so I’d choose not to do that.” Hayes commented that being out affected her personal well-being, “If you feel good about yourself, then others will feel good about you.” She further stated, “You don’t have to hide, you don’t have to live in fear, you don’t have to worry if someone finds out that you might lose your job, I mean who wants to live like that!” Rogue similarly mentioned, “I think generally yeah, it's been

positive. I mean, certainly, not having to hide parts of my life has probably given me a little less stress.”

The coaches also discussed the personal benefits of being out with regard to their coaching. The following dialogue illustrates this well:

Kerrie: Do you think that [being out] affects your coaching?

Monkey: Sure. I never thought about it, but I can't imagine that it doesn't. I think that you're the best at doing anything if you're not worried about or have anxiety about who you are or are saying the saying the wrong thing, or concealing this, or do I not come to that, or do I make excuses, but I can't imagine trying to juggle everything I do here and have that, and yet that, on top of everything, so yeah I would say it's positive being out.

Similarly, Hayes said, “I think it affects my coaching because I'm not worried about being judged. I'm not worried about being “found out” and I can just walk into work being me everyday.”

Although the women acknowledged that the world of coaching was not always the easiest environment in which to be “out,” they articulated the personal and psychological benefits they received for openly performing their lesbian identity.

Subtheme 2: Benefits for Others. Several of the coaches believed that being out had positive benefits for others as well. For instance, Hayes discussed the benefits of her being out:

If you can say, ‘hey, it's ok to be who you are,’ and think I it's great. And you know, you’re not telling lesbians to hate themselves and there’s so many people who struggle with this issue, so many people who are lesbians out there....And

what do they do? They self-medicate with alcohol or drugs and they're not dealing with the issue. And we're just allowing them to do that or not helping them to say it's ok! And again, I'm not trying to promote lesbianism, but I am trying to say if that's who you are... It's ok, if you're heterosexual....That's OK . If you're confused, that's OK too. You're gonna figure it out.

It is interesting to note that Hayes believed her openness would be perceived as “promoting lesbianism.” However, in the context of a heteronormative culture, a heterosexual coach who told her athletes not to hate themselves if they were heterosexual would not be viewed as promoting heterosexuality. Although it appears that Hayes embraces her sexuality and attempts to create positive spaces for all her athletes, her language denotes certain elements of homophobia that are often inherent in our culture. Rogue commented that being out was important to her because:

...I think it gives an educational opportunity, and as much as I would love to say, Lacrosse 24/7, it's much more about the education of these kids that you see... They're not going to be professional lacrosse players, but you know, they are to go on to be productive citizens, hopefully. So I think that my being open and honest about who *I* am forces them to deal with an aspect of the real world that they maybe haven't had experience with, but they certainly will at some point in their lives.

Although many poststructuralist and queer theories posit that coming out as a lesbian only reinforces the polarity between heterosexual and homosexual and reinforces essential categories based on identity, it is imperative to understand the environment in which most coaches must negotiate these identities. As Aziz (1997) asserts, a new queer

politics must “incorporate both the deconstruction of subjectivity and the political necessity of asserting identity” (p. 77). Therefore, it is important to recognize the shifting, fragmented, and contradictory subjectivities of these coaches, as well as the need to make visible sexualities that are rendered invisible in the heteronormative culture of sport. “The claiming of an identity does not therefore rest upon an essential core; it is instead momentary and dependent upon the discursive context and the agency of the individual” (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 235).

Theme 5: Sociopolitical Climate

This theme refers to the social, cultural, and political climate in which these coaches live and work. It includes *The Region, The University, The Athletic Department, The Team, Recruiting, and the Politics of Difference*. As Butler (1990) claims, identity does not pre-exist culture; it is always already mapped in mundane, taken-for-granted notions of gender and sexuality. Several sport scholars have begun to understand the importance of situating sport within a particular political and social culture in order to fully understand the experiences of those participating (e.g., coaches, athletes, fans, administrators). Although, sport psychology has recently begun to make these connections, (Fisher, Butryn, & Roper, 2003; Krane, 2001b; & Ryba & Wright, in press) these concepts are only now emerging within the field. Understanding sport as part of a larger institution that is situated in a specific historical and socio-political context is imperative to understand the lives of coaches who exist in these spaces (Ryba & Wright, in press). As Ryba and Wright (in press) suggest:

Athletes have fragmented identities and identifications within various discourses of class, gender, race, sexual orientation, region, etc., that athletics is a culture

within a larger culture, and that the institutions in which athletes are located attempt to control and mold their behavior. (p. 27)

Although athletes were specifically mentioned, this encompasses the experiences of coaches as well, particularly those with marginalized identities.

Subtheme 1: Region. The subtheme *Region* refers to the area of the United States where these coaches lived and worked. Many of the women discussed the importance of state or city protection in non-discrimination policies, and the political climate in the area of the country in which they lived. The following quotes illustrate the way the coaches believed the region or area of the country affected their experiences:

Kerrie: Do you think that the region or the university has anything has to do with that?

Jenny: Oh, absolutely! oh Absolutely! I think the region, I think the attitude of the college, I think the attitude of the athletic department, I think that all matters.

She further believed:

But people in this area of the country, I think that people are....I think I'm biased, but I think people are a little more enlightened. I think people are more....I think they're enlightened because I think they're more educated, quite honestly, that I think that the atmosphere and the policies that the university's creates on campus and how that trickles down to the athletic department is important. And I think you also need people that are willing to be out and to say, 'yes, I'm gay,' and 'this is my partner' and introduce your partner to colleagues in the department.

I believe much of Jenny's hesitation at first to discuss her "bias" of the region in which she lived was her knowledge of the region in which I am located. Because I am currently

living in the South, an area of the country that is stigmatized for its conservative social policies regarding issues of race, gender, and sexual identity, Jenny appeared careful not to offend me.

Rogue believed part of the reason for acceptance of lesbians in her region was economically based: “There also tends to be middle-class kids and a Northeast based sport, so, you know, we’re not recruiting kids from areas of the country where it’s maybe not as tolerant as most of where we draw our recruits from.” Jessie also commented on the region saying: “I also think that people are more, at least in this area of the country, much more accepting of it. Certainly not from the states that are running out to ban gay marriages...” Jessie went on to say:

I’m saying that very much keeping in mind what part of the country I’ve been and where I’m working.... in an academic setting . I really don’t think that would be typical if you working in an Utah or Ohio or, probably somewhere in the South.

Importantly, the majority of these interviews took place after the 2004 presidential election, which was touted as the most divided election in history. The media were continuously displaying images of “red” and “blue” states that only further propagated the divide among the country. Several “red” or conservative states also implemented state bans on gay marriage, and presidential incumbent George W. Bush’s proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages at the federal level was pervasive rhetoric that led many conservatives to vote Bush back into office.

Jessie acknowledged some regional privilege in her interview:

Where I’m living in [New England State], just outside of [Big City], coaching at a very academic liberal arts school, and the kind of school that [College] is, it

probably would be a different experience that a lot of my lesbian colleagues have had at different places.”

The fact that all of these coaches, except one, lived in either states or cities that had equal protection under the law and in regions that implemented nondiscrimination policies regarding sexual identity was of particular interest. The majority of the participants were from the Northeast, or the West Coast.

Subtheme 2: University. This subtheme refers to the climate of the particular college or university in which the coaches were working. Many of the women discussed the politics of the institution and the climate regarding issues of sexual identity and social difference as it pertained to the larger university. Monkey discussed how her child was accepted within the university climate. She said:

People gave us gifts and the team gave as a gift and again, I got pictures of my son on my desk and people always ask for him and he comes to the building at least once a week and runs around the gym and stuff, and you know, it is it's a great place to be a lesbian here, and a lesbian with the kid, and our trainer has a kid and they're always running around the department and so it's not unusual, and so the athletes are kind of used to having these moms, or these parents who happen to be two moms so it hasn't been a big deal.

Monkey further remembered:

You know, and so the minute I stepped on this campus, I realized that this is a very safe place, this is a safe haven. You know, but it's not the real world here. I remember my father telling me that, you know, you're not going to the real-world yeah. You know [laughter] it's okay [laughter], but I'm going to enjoy it!

Interestingly, Jessie discussed the aspect of working in a same gender school:

But [College] is a little different, too, because it's a single sex school... And they [homophobic male coaches] wouldn't last very long if they were making homophobic statements, so [College] is... also a big part of the schools makeup is to be tolerant of people's differences because most of the students would technically be considered minority students.

Krista does not work at an all female institution, but interestingly, when asked if she had anything to add to the conversation at the end of the interview, Krista added:

I thought about how it might be different in my experience too, having a partner, if I work at an all women's school, if it would be more comfortable, if it would be an environment more conducive to being, to me feeling comfortable with who I am and to live more open than I already do. And I don't know, and I don't know anybody who works in an all women's school but I thought about that as an experience, my assumption is that it would be and I think that thinking about here, you have an athletic department and as you know, the manliest of men on the one side. Then within, I work in a department that there aren't very many women. So that has something to do with my situation in being totally comfortable, feeling more than I am. Then have the guys and have typical football tough guys that aren't, you know, really opened to being understanding of difference, different people in different situations and lifestyles, and relationships.

It appears that male hegemony in athletics was a source of heteronormativity for Krista. She believed that working in an all female institution would be more accepting of diverse sexualities.

Indeed, lesbians who were not out would lose respect on Jessie's campus. She stated:

Here (at her college) [covering up your sexual identity] would be, like a joke! People wouldn't even consider that you would feel that you needed to live your life that way, because they're so many models on campus, of gay men even who are professors who are teaching on this campus, and that's perfectly fine, and I think they would, it wouldn't be gossip, because you wouldn't even be able to comprehend that there would even be that much pressure that someone would have to do that, and no respect for someone who choose to do that, they wouldn't understand it and they wouldn't think very highly of her at all.

This quote illustrates how LGBTQ identities are passing into "normalcy" and taken-for-grantedness, particularly with individuals who are not working in an athletic department.

However, some of the other women did not feel as safe in their institution and region. Elizabeth believed her university and regional environment was unique to her Midwest surrounding, but she commented, "And, you know we're in a pocket here in this state, and we're in this pocket where there's a supportive environment, but here I don't feel safe."

In summary, although most of the co-participants discussed the open and accepting environment of their universities, both Krista and Elizabeth believed their institutions were not where they needed to be in terms of providing safety. Not surprisingly, both of these coaches engaged in closeted actions with regard to their sexual identity.

Subtheme 3: Athletic Department. This subtheme refers to the climate of the athletic department and how the coaches' experiences were shaped by and affected the

athletic department in which they coached. Hayes reacted to my question about the athletic department as seen in the following dialogue:

Kerrie: What is the climate like regarding your athletic department where you're at?

Hayes: Great. Actually, great. People know that we're partners, there's no issue I would say people would say, 'hey, where's your partner today', there's no... I don't feel any type of hatred at all.

Susan stated: "I've had good experiences here at this department; people have been great." Jessie also commented on her department, saying:

People that work at the college in the athletic department have partners and children with their partners. There are women coaches in the department who are heterosexual, some who are married, we all work very well together, that's not really an issue. We had our holiday party last night, and people brought, whoever their partners are, it's not like you leave them at home because you don't want anyone to know.

Interestingly, Jessie and Elizabeth's experiences contrasted with one another.

Jessie said:

So you're much more likely to find yourself ostracized or an outcast or people being very angry with you if you're homophobic here, or when people say things about people on the athletic teams who are lesbian, that is more likely to create a team dynamics, where even the straight kids don't tolerate it.

Elizabeth's words seemed to contradict each other. She commented, "It's not so much the athletic department, but it's like.... you've got kind of this good old boys sports network and you've got this attitude there" but went on to say, "Nobody here treats me poorly." Similarly, Krista thought it was institutional intolerance that related to her department's intolerance, "No, I think it's (intolerance) the same in the department. It's certainly not encouraged to be open." The climate of the athletic department seemed to have a significant affect on the coaches, and many of them believed the climate in the athletic department stemmed directly from the region and institution.

Subtheme 4: The Team. The climate of the team regarding issues of sexual difference or identity was discussed among the coaches. Rogue commented on her team environment by discussing her team captain:

Even though she's [the team captain] not gay, she's really gone out of her way to make sure that everyone knows it's ok that you are, that the locker rooms a safe space, that no one's going to be judged, she's organized the team to go over to the Student Union on coming out day to get the ribbons of support, the purple ribbons that supported, to get the whole team to go over the there. So I think with the kids, it's a pretty open atmosphere.

Jenny discussed the team's acceptance and comfort with her partner: "In general, the response has been terrific, and they like get to know Sophia and its just, 'hi how are you?' or engaging in a conversation or whatever." My dialogue with Hayes illustrates her team's climate:

Kerrie: What is the climate like surroundings sexual identity regarding your team?

Hayes: Oh, it's excellent...It's um, I think because I'm not hiding it and I'm not trying to, I think that it's ok for athletes who are lesbian or questioning to be who they are because I'm not hiding it, I'm out about who I am, you know. I think if you love yourself for who you are, I think that more likely people will love you, because they see that you loved yourself.

Susan discussed the importance of her accepting team climate as she and her partner are beginning to plan to have a child:

I know all the parents know, because we're such a close knit family with my players, and the department here, and I know my players have told their parents and you know, I'm assuming that I would receive the same support from them, if we're lucky enough to have a child.

Jessie, the swimming coach, continued to discuss her team climate by saying, "Now I have a kid, I have a woman on the team, and her water bottle says I'm a lesbian....no.... it says "dip me in honey and throw me to the lesbians." And that's the sticker she has on her water bottle, and everybody just laughs at it."

Many of the coaches discussed the progressive and accepting attitudes of their athletes and their teams with regard to social difference, specifically sexual identity. Younger generations of athletes have been exposed to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight alliances in high school, and the visibility of more positive media portrayals of gay and lesbian characters. Therefore, it is not surprising that the younger generations of athletes playing for these coaches are helping to create a climate of acceptance and cohesion, regardless of sexual identity.

Subtheme 5: Recruiting. Throughout the contemporary research regarding sexuality in women's sport and the pervasive heterosexism that exists within the male hegemonic culture of athletics, recruiting has been a huge point of contention for all women, regardless of sexuality (Blinde & Taub, 1994; Ianotta & Kane, 2002; Krane & Barber, 2005). One example of negative recruiting is when coaches of opposing teams tell potential athletes that the coach at a rival institution is lesbian, or that the athlete might not want to play for a coach with "that lifestyle." Sport scholars have found that this practice is quite common, particularly in sports such as basketball, soccer, and softball (Griffin, 1998, Krane, 1996). However, many of the coaches that I spoke with did not encounter these problems. Jenny, for example, talks about how having a child affects recruiting:

Nothing has come to my attention to let me know that a recruit has decided not come here because I came out to them, or they knew, or they heard it through the grapevine that I'm gay or whatever the case may be. I think that in recent years, and within the last couple years with my son, and being so visible with him, I think it necessitates an even higher level of being out and I think that recruits have known the last couple years that have come out. I feel it's a way that they feel like they know me know more, because they have this window into my life, and I don't know. I have this person or my son in my life because, you know I've seen them across the river at a football game or whatever. Like, it's not something I think that if it comes up in the recruiting process have people asked me, "are you married?" Now, I would tell them, but most the time it doesn't come up. But

recently it has because you know, I'm pushing my son around campus with my partner, so it's kind of just naturally going to come out.

Yet, Jenny stated that: "I don't have the feeling that a recruit was immediately uncomfortable or that changed the whole nature of their visit," Hayes commented:

There's a lot of people out there who would try to harm you in terms of recruiting. It's what they would do, or whatever, and there are people who are like that, there's no doubt that that doesn't exist, but I think there's enough educated people in the world that that's not necessarily true, see, you hope that you get the right match with people who are out there and find people who say, 'they [lesbians] are still good people.'

In fact, Jessie believed that her struggle with recruiting at an all women's school had more to do with gender than sexuality.

I'm sure there are people who say, you know, a guy, I had a guy the other day, who said one of his concerns with that there's all those radical feminists over there and that would be [small college in New England] and that would be the women who go to [college], and they are very liberal, and I wouldn't call them radical, and I'm sure that people say that, I think what they hear more of is, "why would you want to go to an all women school" other than, "oh they're all lesbians over there.

Although queer theory asserts that the "natural" link constructed in our culture between gender and sexuality is a social agreement or construction and should be debunked, many people inextricably link gender and sexuality. Thus, in order for the "heterosexual matrix" to work, this mythical equation of sex equals gender equals desire

has to prevail. Therefore, it is not uncommon for people to become “concerned” about an all women’s environment in a same sex educational setting because the homophobia inherent in this assumption is what perpetuates heterosexist behaviors.

Jessie also commented on being honest with her athletes about her sexual orientation and how her athletes were honest with recruits by saying,

“And when they come in for a visit I’m sure that some of them look around, but I don’t tell my kids, “don’t tell them!” Be who you are, and if they like it fine, otherwise they’re get here and transfer anyway.”

Jessie felt no need to keep her lesbian identity closeted for recruits because she knew that once they were on campus and in her program, the subject of her sexual identity would be evident. And Monkey thought being out even helped her recruiting:

I think...it’s helped me get some athletes! Those who are lesbian, you know, kids have asked me, so you know, I’m having a conversation about rowing with them, and they ask me, so what’s it like to be a lesbian on campus here, and so the conversation took a real turn and they’re asking because they’re a lesbian or they’re questioning, and there’s a lot of kids today that are involved with... either they’re lesbian or their involved with gay and straight alliances and things, and on a form that I have they get to say other things that they are involved in, and so a lot of more students, it is not unusual today to see kids that are involved with gay straight alliances and that doesn’t mean they’re gay or they are, but they’re involved with a group, who are accepting.

Monkey goes on to discuss the way that the climate of the university is important in her recruiting:

So, I don't think that it hurts my recruiting, I think it helps in some ways. But if it is negative, then I think it's probably for the best. If the kid doesn't want to have a coach who is a lesbian, they're not going to like this place in general, because it's an accepting kinda place in general.

On the other hand, Hayes did not think that being out affected her recruiting at all. She said:

No I don't. I don't know why, I and always thought that that would be an issue and I always thought that would end my career, and that I would have to stop coaching. But that's just not.. not the truth, and I've still been able to recruit people, and... and I'm certainly not only recruiting lesbians, but that's not necessarily the case. You know people ask, recruits ask players, "Is your coach gay?" And they say, "yup," and that's the end of it, and it's not a big deal.

Not surprisingly, the subject of marriage was also linked to recruiting in interesting ways. Jenny discussed the conversations she had heard regarding negative coaching between schools, but never herself believed she experienced it:

[You hear] this coach is trying to put this fear that, you know, *this coach is not married* and I think that people are more worried about another coach. You know, and I'm recruiting another kid at school X is recruiting in school, that's just trying to scare that kid into saying 'oh! this coach is gay or whatever.'

As Sykes (1998) asserts, marriage becomes meaningful only in relation to the Other or the implied lesbian. In her life histories with physical educators, Sykes (1998) discussed how a conversation around marriage illustrates Derrida's notion of "différance." Thus, "female heterosexuality requires a lesbian Other, because it only acquires significance in

the play of difference between the two” (p. 167). In other words, the question of marriage becomes contested and significant in the context of recruiting because not being married implies “lesbianism,” particularly in sport where women are still considered trespassers into male territory. “Meanings are organized through difference in a dynamic play of presence and absence” (Namaste, 1994, p. 222). Therefore, what appears to be “on the margins” or outside of a particular system is always already fully inside. The homo/hetero binary requires on another and is in relation only to the binary structure of sexuality.

Elizabeth discussed at length with me her anxiety around recruiting and the question of marriage. She said:

When I’m recruiting, like being in a family's home or whatever, and I don't know people really well, it makes me nervous. It's just that I don't trust what their response would be. Like recruiting wise, I can't stand when people ask if I’m married. It's like an anxiety, you know, I feel like I have to have an answer before they even ask me.

In this instance, Elizabeth’s anxiety is perpetuated by the notion that not being married equals being lesbian. As Sykes (1998) points out:

If one accepts Derrida’s notion of “differance,” one begins to see that doubt of “the closet” and certainty of normative heterosexuality can never fully be contained on either side of a watertight boundary. So often, doubt and suspicion leak outside “the closet” and so, rather than being a hermetically-sealed confine for lesbian sexualities, “the closet” is in fact highly contagious, capable of transmitting doubt, suspicion, and secrecy. (p. 167)

Heteronormativity and silence operate simultaneously for Elizabeth. This is illustrated in the following exchange:

Kerrie: What do you say when people ask you that [if you're married]?

Elizabeth:: almost all the time I say, 'no,' and recently, I was like, 'yeah, I'm married to my job.' [nervous laughter].

Krista also discussed the topic of marriage when recruiting was "code" for "Are you a lesbian?":

I think that the recruiting factor makes me feel like that, makes me feel like I have to be very careful about... You know, if people ask me if I'm married or have a boyfriend; saying no, but being very arbitrary about that, and even so far as wearing my [commitment] ring on a certain hand, because I feel like with the recruiting things, it would negatively affect me, and my job, and my team, because it could potentially effect who I can get to come here if people knew I was gay or I was with women.

Krista went on to say,

"as far as the negative recruiting piece of it, I've never experienced something like that, but it's something that I definitely think about, and it's something I think that people could, would definitely use that."

While Susan discussed her knowledge of negative recruiting, she did not believe it existed in field hockey:

You always read stories about basketball coaches who use negative recruiting and statements towards other coaches and stuff like that. But, you know, I've never heard anything about that... we're such a small population - Division I - there's

only about 78 or 79 programs and the country, and I would say about 90% of the coaches are gay. I don't know, I know a lot are out, but at what level I don't know. Although Susan was one of the youngest coaches, it was somewhat surprising that she had never heard of an incident of negative recruiting in field hockey. Susan attributed this to the high percentage of women coaching field hockey who were believed to be lesbian. Thus, heteronormativity, a system that perpetuates heterosexism and homophobia, is less constraining, perhaps, in women's field hockey because of the visibility of many lesbian coaches.

In summary, the recruiting process for a few of these coaches was a source of stress and contention. Even though most of the coaches could not provide clear examples of negative recruiting happening to them, they were well aware of the possibility. Griffin (1998) suggests several strategies for social change regarding negative recruiting. Griffin believes that education of coaches, athletes, parents and administrators is imperative to changing discrimination toward lgbtq individuals in sport. She also advocates for understanding and knowing institutional rights and policy surrounding same sex relationships.

Subtheme 6: Politics of Difference. The final subtheme revolves around the politics of difference. Queer theory incites a movement from "identity politics" to a "politics of difference" that encompasses individuals who are increasingly marginalized from dominant culture (Alsop, et al., 2002). Identity politics as a movement toward social change often relied on essentialist and stable categories. Queer politics, or a politics of difference operates under a broader coalition of people who dissent from dominant discourses in society. For example, not all women in sport have an essential female core

from which to rally around. Because women in sport have a series of complex identities and identifications, such as being Black, Hispanic, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, or differently abled, a politics of difference allows for a broader movement that negotiates such differences. Many of the coaches I interviewed discussed a genuine interest in creating positive environments of difference. Some of the coaches commented on the influence their own marginalized sexual identities had on creating environments that supported difference. As Rogue discussed:

I think actually it's made me a little more sensitive to building a tolerant environment, to accept the differences, and it is not because it's the PC thing to do, because I believe there is value in diversity, and I think some kids think that, 'oh you're only doing that because it's politically correct', you know, I'm saying it because the more diverse we are the stronger we are. And it's made me somewhat of a crusader because I think maybe it gets a team to understand diversity and try new things without judging them beforehand and excepting differences. So I think it's contributed to that. She went on to comment:

I think that the one thing that it's [being lesbian] definitely done for me is that it's made me so much more conscious of diversity in general. Whether it be race, or religion or socioeconomic background. Because I've known what it's like when others judge you for something that you're not really in control of.

Rogue summed it up by saying: "I think it's made me more sensitive to differences and the loneliness experienced when people feel isolated." Jenny also articulated that it was important for her to send the message to her team that she's, "creating a culture where people can be who they are and be supported, regardless of what they are, or what their

defining characteristics might be.” Monkey also addressed issues of difference with her team typically at the beginning of the season by saying, “We [the team] are open to diversity...we have straight people, we have lesbian people, we have people of all races we have people of all religions....we said, this is an open community.” Susan also discussed diversity from the beginning of the season: “The first thing I say is, ‘you know, you have to respect differences in people.’” She went on to recall how this affected one of her athletes, “One of my seniors that graduated last year, she said, ‘you know, what the one thing of all the things I’ve learned over the years is I’ll never forget to respect other peoples differences.’” Susan believed this was important because:

That was really cool because, yeah she's improved as a player, but I really think that, you know, she's really grown as a person and understands differences and appreciates differences in the world. And that meant more to me than if she's a better goalie or whatever. She will be a better person in the world.

Some of the coaches also discussed their attempts to make other coaches and administrators move toward a politics of difference with regard to language and heterormativity. Jenny said:

I’ve definitely been one to push the envelope with certain policy stuff, because here's a coach who has a partner, and I'm going to an NCAA tournament and where's the policies surrounding partners going with?.... the policies surrounding.... a coach who is married and their husband goes, how should that be different? So, I think I've pushed the envelope that way in showing up and saying, ‘my team qualified for NCAA regionals and I have these extra spaces available, and I have my partner, who I want to go and I, and not just because it's

important to me, but because she could be a part of that travel group. And how is that travel party and that policy different if I were married?

This is an illustration of the way heteronormative language in certain policy excludes those who do not ascribe to dominant culture. As Butler (1990) asserts, the compulsory order of heterosexuality requires the exclusion of homosexuality and also a failure to conform to the dominant heterosexual culture invokes social sanctions and exclusions. As Monkey put it, “The top doesn't change if it's not pushed and the top is the status quo and the status quo is always happy within a way things are.”

Jenny went on to articulate:

Because you can't sit there in front of the administrators and say, ‘well, our policy is if a head coach wants to bring their spouse, that's fine if the language says spouse. Only then that's discriminatory because that doesn't include someone who has a partner. In some states you can get married and many states you can't get married.... all the rest of them in fact. So, if it doesn't exist that you know there's this option to be married as a gay couple.

In summary, as Broad (2001) suggested, “we must have ‘boundary-strippers’ in sports who unapologetically complicate the category of womanhood and attendant heterosexuality” (p. 199). Many of these coaches are complicating the mundane and everyday discourse in policy, administration, and team behavior by openly transgressing the heteronormative boundaries associated with sport. Rogue discussed her experience of recently introducing the topic of homophobia as the president of her sport association. She said:

For the first time we're going to do a roundtables session on homophobia. And the reaction I got from some of the executive committee members when I said, 'here's a working agenda' with the topic [of homophobia] were well, 'you're brave!' and, 'is anybody going to go to the sessions?' And my answer was, 'I kinda hope so, you know and I hope that a couple gay people show up and a couple of straight people that are friends of the gays show up.' This is something that nobody wants to talk about, but it's such a huge issue.

Rogue discussed the fact that homophobia or lesbians in sport is something that nobody wants to talk about. She went on to suggest that this is important because:

...If not on a personal level for coaches. But some of the kids are coming out really, and earlier. And, within our coaching career, every coach can have one student-athlete whose questioning or they are coming out, or who's already out before they get to college. So, it's something that as educators we all have a duty to know what the issues are and to make sure we're fostering a climate and allowing these kids to have the same experiences [as other athletes].

Krista also mentioned being socially conscious to issues of language and social difference by saying, "I guess I'm very vocal about that. So I certainly would call someone else on saying, 'fag' or 'dyke' or 'retard' anything like that. So that's kind of the culture that I establish on my team."

In conclusion, many of the coaches discussed the way their own subordinated identity influenced them to engage in issues of social difference and social justice. Although many of these coaches were White lesbians coaching at middle- or upper-class universities, they believed in the importance of reconfiguring sport or athletics as

political space to teach about social difference. Therefore, these women believed in the importance of creating socially just or diverse environments, not for the sake of “political correctness,” but because they valued and believed in the inclusive politics of difference.

Overall, identity performance for the coaches in this study revolved around the discourse of being Inside/Invisible and Out/Visible. These negotiations were contextual and dependent upon the sociopolitical climate in which the coaches worked and lived, as well as the coach/athlete relationship. The psychosocial processes that occurred within the coaches’ identity performances of being Inside or Out illustrated the benefits of being out as well as the drawbacks. The co-participants discussed various ways they engaged in a politics of difference and how this interacted with their coaching styles and values. In the following chapter, implications of these findings and suggestions for future research are addressed.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Future Directions

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which lesbian coaches who are “out of the closet” have negotiated their identity in the heteronormative environment of sport. Further, through semi-structured interviews and interpretative analysis, an attempt was made to understand the ways these eight coaches have transgressed compulsory heterosexuality and addressed issues of social difference and social change. Inductive, thematic analysis resulted in the processes of *Identity Performance*, *Inside/Invisible*, *Outside/Visible*, *Coach/Athlete Relationship*, and *Psychosocial Impact*. Each occurred within the context of particular *Discourses*.

The diagram presented in Figure 1 represents a visual depiction of the complexity of ways these eight lesbian coaches negotiated their identity within the heteronormative environment of sport. The diagram reveals the identity performances of these coaches as lesbian. Butler (1990) asserts that identity is not a fixed or essential core, but a series of repetitive performances that result in an identity, albeit one that is fragmented, unstable, and in constant flux. In this particular study, all eight coaches self-identified as lesbian. However, as illustrated in the diagram, these identity performances were negotiated through discourse and shifted on a continuum of being visible and outside of the closet to invisible. Through a queer-feminist framework, the way in which the coaches with “marginalized” identities as lesbians were always already fully inside dominant discourse was also important. In other words, the use of “the closet” and the “absent presence” of lesbians in sport reinforced the homo/hetero binary that needs to exist in order to maintain a compulsory heterosexuality order. As queer theory posits, identity does not

pre-exist culture; therefore, the sociopolitical climate where these coaches lived and worked influenced their negotiation of a lesbian identity. The Coach/athlete relationship was also an important process where coaches modeled effective qualities of leadership, as well as reinforced the need for a “cultural studies as praxis” (Wright, 2003) model in sport psychology. The coaches believed in the importance of being visible to their athletes and administrators in order to develop sincere interpersonal relationships and establish qualities such as honesty and trust with their team. Further, because an “out” lesbian identity is politicized in the context of a heteronormative environment of sport, the coaches utilized this position to include a politics of difference within their team environment and ultimately affect change.

The coaches also believed the visibility of their identity had personal and social benefits. Many of the coaches believed that their overall mental and physical health was better because they were not putting energy into “changing pronouns” and hiding their partners “out in left field.” They also indicated that administrative policies were changed because of their efforts to provide a more inclusive environment, and also believed their athletes benefited from a more open and honest environment that they believed led to social change. Yet, many of these coaches experienced situations that challenged their level of openness, such as while recruiting. At times the co-participants reified the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy inherent in women’s athletics instead of challenging existing heterosexism. These contradictions were more pervasive for some coaches (Elizabeth, Krista) than for others, however. In general, then, the coaches engaged in a continuum of behaviors that at times partially dismantled heteronormativity and at other times perpetuated homophobia.

Conclusions

It is hoped that the results of this study expand on the existing knowledge base regarding lesbian coaches' experiences in sport, and the production and management of heterosexuality within the athletic environment. In particular, quotes taken from the interviews and a queer-feminist deconstruction of the transcripts have explored the role of heteronormativity and lesbian experiences within sport differently than existing literature. Several conclusions can be gleaned from the results of this study. The next sections outline specific conclusions taken from the results that are based on the purposes of this project.

A critical focus of this research was to explore the ways in which lesbian coaches negotiate their sexual identity within the heteronormative culture of athletics. Previous literature in sport psychology and sport sociology has unearthed the insidious heterosexism and homophobia that affects all women in sport, regardless of sexual identity (Griffin, 1998; Barber & Krane, 2005; Ionatta & Kane, 2002; Sykes, 1998). Recently, Ionatta and Kane (2002) explored the experiences of "open but not out" lesbian coaches in sport in an attempt to explain these experiences from a different, non-linear theoretical model. As Ionatta and Kane (2002) assert, "The findings from this investigation suggest an alternative theoretical approach to sexual identity" (p. 366). Krane and Barber (2005) have also employed social identity theory to understand and explore marginalized sexualities in sport. Recently, Krane and Barber (2005) have found that lesbian college coaches must negotiate tensions within their coaching identity and their lesbian identity.

Although many of these scholars have advanced both sport psychology and sport sociology with their conceptualization of lesbian identity in sport, I believe a queer-feminist (Sykes, 1998) framework offers a way to explore transgressions of fluid and multiple sexualities within the context of heteronormative sport environments. Identity in this framework is conceptualized not as an absolute or universal account of sexuality, but rather as a series of repetitive performances. Lesbian sexuality, then, is taken-up as a subjectivity that performs within a continuum of being “out” and being “in” through discourse, depending on particular sociopolitical climates.

Further, this work interrogates the heteronormative environment in which lesbian coaches are situated and their individual agency to become political figures. As Ionatta and Kane (2002) propose, sport scholars must recognize resistance and agency of lesbian women in sport. Queer politics and queer praxis blends theoretical and empirical conceptualizations of the production and management of non-hegemonic sexualities (Broad, 2001). As Butler and others asserts, instead of attempting to adapt political strategies to fit within the existing status quo, queer politics “reconfigure” particular political spaces. Sport is not an apolitical or neutral site. Coaches who transgress heteronormativity in sport do not have to have an essential, fixed, or stable core that pre-exists culture in order to have political agency. Sport, as a cultural space, becomes a site for social change to occur.

It should also be noted that all of the coaches in this study, with the exception of Susan, are White. The majority of the women were living and coaching in the northeast part of the United States at colleges and universities that attract middle- to upper-class White athletes. Interestingly, I was unable to locate any “out” Black, African-American,

or Asian women for my study. Statistically, people of color make up a small percentage of coaches in intercollegiate sport, and an even smaller percentage are women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2004). Thus, the privileged identities of these coaches as White, middle- to upper-class, coaching at predominately White institutions must be acknowledged.

In sum, the co-participants negotiated their lesbian identities in ways that transgressed heteronormativity in sport while other times engaging in a continuum of performances that included reinventing “the closet.” Many of the coaches believed that being a role model for their athletes was integral in their decision to be “out” as a coach, and believed being out positively impacted those around them, as well as themselves. Further, the coaches expressed qualities or characteristics associated with being effective leaders and developing positive coach/athlete relationships.

Recommendations

The findings from this investigation have applications for future directions of conceptualizing identity in sport in general and sport psychology in particular. Because sport is a sub-culture that permeates American society, the implications from this study have the potential to reach far beyond the boundaries of sport. The results of this study prompt recommendations in two areas: (a) future directions for conceptualizing identity of nonhegemonic sexualities in sport, and (b) applications for sport psychology. These two areas are discussed in the proceeding sections.

Future Directions

Although both gender and sexuality were integral to this study, the intersectionality of race and class with gender and sexuality has great implications for future research. A possible future area of study would be to explore the ways in which

queer women of color negotiate their identities within heteronormative sport environments and any attempts to transgress sport. Another possibility would be to explore the experiences of bisexual or transgendered coaches in sport through a queer-feminist framework. Ascribing to a politics of difference and opening up “the margins” might be a politically strategic way to evoke change in the current sporting system, and more importantly, give voice to those who are often rendered invisible.

White, male hegemony in sport continues to create systems of inequality and oppression for all women in sport (Wright & Clarke, 1997). Recent studies have illustrated little improvement in the ways heteronormative and homophobic attitudes and policies rule sport (Ionatta & Kane, 2002; Kauer & Krane, in press; Krane & Barber, 2003). Instead of focusing on the victimization of women in sport (in particular LGBTQ women) the focus needs to shift to a dismantling of male hegemony in sport. Further, giving voice to those women in sport who transgress the traditional boundaries of gender and sexuality will provide counter-hegemonic narratives that could potentially lead to social change.

Finally, the present queer-feminist framework provides a balanced theory for exploring complex, dynamic, and fluid identity experiences of female coaches. Although this study gave voice to lesbian women in sport, additional interviews with sexual minorities and heterosexual women in sport would prove valuable. Because heteronormativity affects all women entering coaching, regardless of sexual identity, further interviews would be imperative.

Applications for Sport Psychology

While most of the literature surrounding sexuality in sport remains in the field of sport sociology, few scholars in sport psychology have attempted to specifically tackle this issue (Krane, 1996, 1997; Barber & Krane, 2003, 2005). With the emergence of cultural studies in the field of sport psychology, further progress with regard to nonhegemonic sexuality in sport is imminent (Fisher, Butryn, & Roper, 2003; Ryba & Wright, 2005). As applied workers, sport psychology consultants have access to the hierarchy of sport participants (i.e., administrators, coaches, athletes) (Barber & Krane, 2003). Therefore, there is great potential for a “sport psychology as cultural praxis model” (Ryba & Wright, 2005) to flourish and influence those individuals in the field. As Gutkind (2003) suggests, “The sport psychology consultant that provides performance enhancement training to the exclusion of all else may be missing important needs of the...client” (p. 100).

As several feminist sport psychologists have asserted, most applied interventions are grounded in theory (Gill, 2001; Krane, 2001; Roper, 2001; Whaley, 2001). A queer-feminist framework that emphasizes queer politics and praxis may contribute to the notion of “theory as intervention” and possibly lead to change the status quo (Krane, 2001). Many of the practices implemented through an applied sport psychology consultant have particular relevance for dismantling heteronormativity in sport. As mentioned in this study, many of the coaches discussed the importance of team climate, coach credibility, effective leadership, performance, and the coach athlete relationship. In a heteronormative environment, such mundane everyday practices implemented by sport

psychology consultants become difficult, if not impossible for LGBTQ individuals in sport.

Finally, it is important to recognize the value in understanding social difference in sport psychology. Because the field of sport psychology is “firmly planted in male soil” (Roper, 2001), it is important to realize who benefits from research and applied consultation in sport psychology, and who gets to be applied consultants. Just because a large majority of people in the field concentrate only on performance enhancement does not mean that sport psychology does not have other valuable facets or cannot be reconstructed for the good of social change. I have been questioned and prodded time and again about the usefulness of social difference in general and sexuality work in particular for the field of sport psychology. Questions such as, “What does that have to do with performance enhancement?” “Why do lesbian coaches matter in sport psychology?” continue. As this study illustrates, the same issues arise in sport (e.g., team climate, coach/athlete relationships) for LGBTQ coaches and athletes as they do for “other” sports people. Interestingly, many people in the field of sport psychology believe sport psychology consultants have no place in the dismantling of the entire climate of sport in order for social justice to occur. This is because some see it as a social or cultural issue only. However, sport psychology consultants and the coaches and athletes with whom they work do not exist in a vacuum which is exempt from sociocultural issues.

Sport sociology scholars have tackled the issue of sexuality in both men’s and women’s sport for some time now. However, the work that has been done often remains invisible to the coaches, athletes, and administrators who need it most. That is not to say that some scholars are not engaging in praxis and taking their work into the “trenches” to

create change (Griffin, 1998; Sykes, 2005). Yet, the people who work with coaches and athletes daily, who have contact with parents and administrators, and who theorize about creating “positive sport” environments still have a long way to go when it comes to implementing social difference. For example, “diversity” pieces are still on the margins at our regional and international sport psychology conferences. Instead of social difference being an integral piece to how we study performance enhancement, social psychology, and exercise psychology, we will continue to perpetuate white supremacist, heterosexist male hegemony in the field by placing it “to the side.”

By working with professionals in sport studies, social change can be created at a fundamental, basic, daily level. We need more people in the field to recognize that challenging homophobia and heterosexism in sport goes a long way. If our jobs are to create positive, successful sporting opportunities and environments for coaches and athletes, that means *all* coaches and athletes, not just a chosen few. If our goals are to create healthy environments for our youth, that does not mean only heterosexual, White, male youth. Until these fundamental ontological and epistemological shifts occur, sport psychology will continue to perpetuate oppression and discrimination. Personally, I believe our discipline, and the people in it, are better than that and have the power to enhance the sport experience for *everyone*.

i. Conscientiation is a principle concept in Paulo Freire’s liberation pedagogy. The assumption is that dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order. The oppressed can remove barriers to total liberation when they become critically aware of the injustices in the world and perform acts which destroy it. In a way, the process of conscientiation is the creation of new perceptions of reality, an awareness of how one is positioned in society and a starting point for doing something to change oneself and society for the better. (In Ryba & Wright, in press, Quest)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Key Informant Script

I am contacting you about a study examining women in coaching and sexual identity. Kerrie is interested in your perceptions and experiences as a collegiate athletic coach. She would like to interview you, which will take 60-90 minutes. Also, Kerrie is interested in exploring the experiences of lesbian and bisexual women in coaching, so there will be a question asking you your sexual orientation. If you are interested in learning more about this study, fill out this interest form, return it to me, and I will give it to Kerrie. This does not commit you to participate in the study. It indicates you want to learn more about it before you make a decision about participation. If you complete the form, Kerrie will contact you and explain the study to you in more detail. At that point, you can ask the researcher any questions and set up a time to interview. Thank you.

APPENDIX B

Interest Form

I am interested in communicating with Kerrie Kauer to learn more about her study about female collegiate coaches. After gaining more knowledge about her study, I will decide if I would like to be interviewed about my own experiences as a female athlete. By providing the following information, I am indicating that I am willing to talk to Kerrie Kauer about participating in an interview for her thesis.

Signature

Print Name

Phone #

E-mail address

Kerrie Kauer
kkauer@utk.edu
865-207-9569

APPENDIX C

Co-Participant Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of female coaches in regard to sexual orientation. Potential benefits of this study include obtaining information that could assist coaches and athletes in creating a positive sport environment for all women in sport.

I willingly provide my consent to participate in a research study examining my collegiate coaching experiences. My involvement in this project includes participation in an interview. This interview will last 60-90 minutes and will focus on issues related to the sport environment, sexual identity, and women in coaching. I understand that the interview will be audio taped.

Confidentiality of all information provided is guaranteed. Any mention of my name, names of other people, and other features that could be used to identify me will be removed or coded in the written transcripts of the interview. The transcripts will be secured so that only the researchers see them.

Additional questions about this study can be directed to Leslee Fisher, or lfisher2@utk.edu. I may also may contact the Chair, Internal Review Board, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 865-974-3466 with any problems or concerns.

My signature below indicates I have been informed:

- all information provided during the interview will be confidential,
- my coaches will not receive any information about this study in which my individual responses can be identified,
- my participation is entirely voluntary,
- I may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time during the project,
- of the procedures, and
- upon request, I can receive a summary of the findings from this study.

Signature

Printed Name

Address

Phone Number

Date

e-mail

APPENDIX D

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience of being a female coach who is “out.”
2. Who is aware that you are a lesbian?
 - a. Team?
 - b. Staff?
 - c. Administration?
 - d. Community?
3. Describe in what ways you are out?
4. Describe the process of coming out for you?
 - a. Do you have to do it continually?
5. Do you believe this has been a positive experience for you?
 - a. For your team?
 - b. For staff
 - c. For administration
 - d. For community
6. Do you create a climate for social difference by being out?
7. In what ways has this affected your recruiting of athletes?
8. What are the positive social or psychological benefits of being out?

APPENDIX E

Sample Journal

12.16.04

Elizabeth

Mid-morning interview

So this was about the most bizarre-feeling interview to me. I should have known when Elizabeth said that she had been thinking what to say to me before I called. Also, since we have been playing email tag for almost 8 months and she's one of my last interviews! I could tell that she really wanted to talk about this stuff...most people would have given up after I told them I had to wait for the IRB to come back in 3 months. Anyway, she was really nice, but there was something about her that I could tell she was struggling. I'm sure it was her complete divulgence of information regarding her childhood that gave it away, but I could almost tell in the beginning of our conversation. It was like she really wanted to be part of the study because she was an "out" coach, but there was so much holding her back.

I really felt uncomfortable when she was telling me about her abusive childhood. Not that she went into explicit details, but she certainly discussed it often and brought it up over again. It reminded me totally why I got out of "mainstream" psychology. Good thing there was the distance of the phone. I can't wait to tell Lizzard about this one too, because she totally contradicted herself and it was hard to "push" her a little regarding her contradictions while still being compassionate and supportive of her. At one point she was talking about how she and her partner were in therapy and part of the reason is because she's not out more at work. Yet, she described all those people that she was out to. Then she said that it's not the people in the department, but a fear of recruiting. Well, if it isn't the people in the department, then why worry about taking your partner to the holiday party? I totally didn't get that. I should have been like, "how will this party affect your recruiting?" or something. I challenged her on it, but she really kept talking in circles, which became confusing and frustrating.

She seemed to be doing some really cool things, too though. Seems she has a good rapport with her players. In fact, one of them came into her office while she was on the phone with me, and I really liked the way she spoke with this athlete (maybe it was for my benefit – who knows). Something in her voice changed though and she didn't sound like a scared and struggling person anymore. She sounded so reassuring to her athlete (who was getting a cast off!). It was like she got all her shit together in a matter of 45 seconds when she was speaking with that athlete. She was calm, really sweet, and confident!! She didn't sound like this with me so much. I wonder if I would have even noticed if I were sitting in her office. It was interesting, and I thought she was probably a really good coach at that moment. She really talked a lot about her family and how they have been supportive, too. She was really big on the religion thing, and I'm not sure how that's going to come in to the whole project, but she's like the 5th one to talk about it. She was saying how her partners parents introduce her to people and they are really Christian, and they send birthday cards, and anniversary cards, but they believe in love and.....

APPENDIX F

Confidentiality Form

I understand that I will be a member of a research group that intends to read and analyze transcripts produced by co-participants of the study, "Queer female coaches." I understand that by signing this statement, I am agreeing to keep the information that I read in the transcripts completely confidential. The transcripts will not be discussed outside of the research group. I acknowledge that any violation of this agreement constitutes a serious breach of ethical standards.

Name

Date

APPENDIX G

Additional Results and Supporting Findings

The following appendices report additional findings and quotes that support the major process and themes with regard to this dissertation. Each of the major themes are listed and subsequently reported along with quotes supporting each subprocess and subtheme not discussed in the results and discussion section of this dissertation.

Process 1: Identity Performance

Identity performance refers to the ways in which these coaches' lesbian identities appeared, disappeared, surfaced, and vanished throughout time. Jenny discussed that in the past: "I would really choose not to use *that* [lesbian, partner] language, that language, and I would be maybe more silent about it. I think since I've grown in my own identity and been comfortable and embracing my own sexual identity." Hayes said, "In the past, I lived in fear or, a lot of that was self-hatred, not wanting to be who I was." Krista elaborated on the psychological effects of "the closet" and hiding her own sexual identity:

I truly believe that your psychological health and physical health are very, very connected and looking back on times in my life when I wasn't as open, I think it directly affected my physical well-being. I really do, you will be emotionally stunted because you can feel like you can't move on, because the situation, I can't disclose myself, or just really being physically sick because emotionally you're weary and have the weight of the world on you. So I feel like I've experienced that, there are times in my life when I'm struggling with that, and it's very clear to me, and my physical health has suffered from that.

Subprocess 1: Inside/invisible: The subprocess inside/invisible refers to the ways these coaches reverted to “the closet” or engaged in closeted behaviors.

Elizabeth discussed her sense of being guarded or sometimes closeted as a conflicting aspect of her personality. She said:

So, I just wish that I didn't have to be guarded at all. I just wish that I could be out there. And again, I'm not this flag-waving in-your-face kind of person, I'm just being who I am. You know, it is just like I'm very, and sometimes I feel like I'm calculated in how I am in regard to my sexuality, but I'm just like crazy and I just jump around in front of the secretaries and I'll roll around on the floor and I'll do all that crazy stuff. When we're in the vans I'll like, crank up the music and I sing with them. Then I think there's those extremes, and I wish that I could be who I wanna be in terms of who my family is.

Rogue discussed “the closet” from a historical perspective:

Well, I think it's...uh....hearing some of the horror stories and the problems of people who are closeted and who have lived in fear, and some of the generations that went before me, where people were scared that they lose their jobs, where they had to hide, and sometimes would be in fake relationships just to cover, and I think just the stress and the emotional toll that it took on them was probably not healthy, and a lot of different ways on a psychological level and in some cases on a physical level.

Similarly, Jessie said,

“I think it's a lot better to be out than it is to be closeted. I just think a lot of people who are not out are just constantly worried, that they are constantly watching their back.”

Although many of the coaches I interviewed could not or would not choose a life in “the closet,” they understood that it is a real life choice for some women in coaching. Monkey said:

Maybe my attitude...I don't want to appear flippant or anything, but I know that there are certain real-life choices for some people to make. If they're out that and they have a job and if [people] know [they're out], then they don't have a job. Then that's not good.

Jenny also had an understanding of the fear associated with being out. She commented,

“So there's a lot of fear surrounding that so in that kind of climate [homophobic regions] where coaches are like, ‘I can't be out, I'll lose my job people if they find out I'm gay.’”

Not only did some of the coaches discuss the ways heteronormativity operated, they also articulated how heterosexism existed all around them. Monkey discussed a recent publication in the alumni magazine at her university:

It's not to say it's [her university] perfect. There's still, you know, homophobia is still the acceptable prejudice, the alumni quarterly just ran an issue, in the past issue, about same-sex marriages, because in [state], and there is a big article, and there were people who were pro and got married. And there were actually people who were happy to have their picture in the quarterly saying that they are anti, and this is wrong, and God's against it, and they're working with their church to stop

it. And you know, it's like they wouldn't be saying those things if they were talking about segregation, if they believed it or not, you know, because it's not acceptable to be anti-Black anymore, it's not acceptable to be anti-Semitic anymore. But it's okay to say you're against gay marriage! Not that we hate these people, but they shouldn't have what we have.

Rogue commented again on the way that she believed she was being systematically marginalized in the athletic environment because of the overt heterosexist discourse: It's a situation, where they say all the right things, that [being gay] is ok, 'we're supportive'... They say all the right things but their actions don't necessarily give any weight to their words. It's not encouraged; it's not discouraged; it is just not really acknowledged. Whereas if this is one of the heterosexual members of the staff, they are certainly encouraged to be part of the family.

Process 2: Discourse

When I asked Monkey what those words meant to her, she said:

(pause) Lesbian means more to me as women who identify with other women. It's probably sexual on some level, but it doesn't necessarily have to have been acted on. Let's say that there might be sexual feelings or strong emotional feelings or feelings of strong ties, they might be sexual, they may be part of that. 'Lesbian' and 'Dyke' is sort of claiming of a negative word, I guess it's sort of like black people calling each other 'nigger' and certainly they would get upset if someone who wasn't black called them that or in that context because it used to always have a negative connotation. So ['dyke'] is a little bit of a reclaiming of a word.

Subprocess 1: Self-identifications

Monkey thought it was important because:

it's important to own language, and you cannot, you know, what you own then people cannot use it against you, you know, so if someone would say to you, oh you Dyke, you're like, oh yeah, that's right, I know I am.

Subprocess 2: Naming the Significant Other

She went on to say,

“So, probably ‘partner,’ ‘significant other,’ are probably the most accurate choices, and I think ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’ would be the two words that are used to describe myself” and “I’m not really into the whole label thing, and I know some people are very proud about having a label and I know that some people don’t want a label, but to me it doesn’t really matter.”

Jenny went on to further discuss the word partner and what that meant to her:

“Partner to me means something very significant like, when I say to someone this is my partner, to me that dictates a certain level of a commitment in the relationship.”

Krista said she used, “Partner or significant other, some of those other arbitrary-ish words,” and “it means that, those mean, to me, that, well first of all, that I date women, as far as using the word partner, that would mean that significant other, someone that I spend my time with in a relationship.” Interestingly, Rogue talked about being out to her staff and administration, but not being out directly to every one of her players:

We (she and her partner) have a joint checking account, so every time I write a check, and so every time I give money back, you know, from a meal that we didn’t spend, my business manager sees her name on my checking account, and

she's my emergency contact, and our athletic director secretary. I'll introduce her....'this is my partner'....and I think a lot of people know. I've introduced Penny to a lot of my colleagues, to my coaching colleagues. And they all know, and my assistants know and a lot of the upperclassmen on my team have been over to my house and so it's pretty out there. And it's not something I walk around and say, 'hey it's something you should know I'm gay,' you know. Then I think that is kind of something that would make it seem really weird.

Subprocess 3: Out/Visible

And for Elizabeth, it came up in her department when she was hired:

There's the main guy who oversees the whole athletic department, and then there are the sub-athletic directors. Now, of the sub-athletic directors, three of them clearly know, and I talk about Maddie openly. One of them is pretty much my boss. So she's aware, you know, and so are the two other women. Now, we used to be a separate department, and now we've merged. So, those women used to be a part of the department. And that's when I had gotten the job here, they had found my partner a job.

She went on to discuss relationships with people within her department:

I really tried to get to know her [the new basketball coach], and she knows I have a partner. And the volleyball coach, I thought right away, you know, I'm just going to be out there, because it's just who I am. Similarly, Krista said:

I'm very open with saying, 'oh, we're going to, we're heading to Connecticut for Thanksgiving' or 'Jackie and I will be going up north for Christmas.' So, no, I don't have a problem with that at all.

Krista also discussed being out with her athletic directors:

Yeah, we got three...an athletic director, an assistant athletic director and an SWA and two of them know, I absolutely know they know. And the other one may know, but the athletic director and the senior women's administrator...I've had conversations about it. And you know, what is really interesting about it actually is the athletic director knows because of a hiring.... because of a hiring issue, that in potentially hiring [partner]. I couldn't hire her as she was on my insurance, and what is it called, nepotism? And it's part of one of the employee policies that if someone is on your insurance policy. He brought me into his office and he said, 'you know, she can't work for you or,... you know she's, she's on your insurance,' and at the time, I thought you know, she is and I thought 'oh, I'm being bold.' Saying 'yeah, yeah, she is' and not flinching [laughter] ...And he was like well, you know it's in our policy, we can't hire her if she is on the policy, you know, which was interesting.

After initially feeling accepted and comfortable with the first administration with whom Rogue worked, after some changes in the administration, she decided to come out to them also. She stated:

"There's not too many out coaches and I so came out to my new bosses. When I first did come out to them, I told them about my partner and a few weeks later at a soccer game, I introduced my partner to the athletic director and the senior associate AD."

Susan stated that she also does not mind if others "come out" for her, or talk about her relationship with her partner:

Before I was here, I was coaching high school and a high school player that I coached is now playing here, and so I coached her for four years of high school, and three years here at college-level and she knew, because at that time, I was younger, and you know, I just was open to saying that this is my girlfriend and so she knew that coming in. She knew that we were still together and so I think that people asked her about [my partner] and said she just told them, and I had no problems with that and I have no problem people telling people about myself or who I'm with or what ever, because I really, It's just OK, because I don't really care if they know.

With regard to the continuous process of coming out, Jenny stated:

But I think that you always, as long as you have new people in your life, you are always kind of as your relationship grows potentially you want to tell them, you want them to know what's important to you. It's important that you share that information, so you always have to kinda come out.

And Monkey commented on how her age and maturity affected that process:

I came into coaching late in life and maybe that has something to do with it and I was already sort of established in who I wanted to be and I was, you know, I was almost 40 when I accepted this job.... I have sort of established who I was, I could be the person I wanted and knew what levels of in or out I would be . And so I wasn't going to take a job that I wasn't going to be able to be me, or how I did everything.

She went on to say:

You become more comfortable in the world, and being gay in the world, because it's easy to be gay in your head, and it's being easy to be gay secretly. But being gay in the world, in terms of like, I identify with certain people in the media who may be gay as role models, or being in the world in terms of living on campus and being part of a group of advisers that help students on campus with sexual identity issues. Like, that's how you're kind of like... that's what I talk about being more gay in the world... and your out and it's external and it's more visible.

Hayes also commented that her age had something to do with being out,

“So we're not holding hands in public or we're not kissing in public or anything like that, but when you're 43 and you live together with another woman, you know they're certainly a big assumption out there already.”

When I asked Monkey who was aware that she was a lesbian, the proceeding dialogue occurred:

Kerrie: who is actually aware of your sexual identity?

Monkey, I think that better question is who is not? [laughter]

Kerrie: [laughter] okay, who is not aware? [lauging]

Monkey: [laughing] I don't know? [laughter] I mean, people who choose, you know, there are some people that are so homophobic that you know, they just don't want to see it or want to know, so they don't know, so a better question is who doesn't know and I don't know.

When asked these same questions, Hayes also stated:

Kerrie: do you think there's people who are not aware?

Hayes: I don't think that's true. I don't think on this campus that's true, no I just don't believe that at all, not on this campus...not on a campus this small, no.... it's a small campus. There's just no way that people are not aware.

Susan said that her players specifically ask her, or talk freely with her about her identity:

My players do know, some of them pretty much come up and ask me. They relate to my partner; it's been over eight years now. They know who she is, and we're always invited to gatherings and to do stuff, or always around the team together. When we do stuff, I don't hide it, she's probably my number one support and always will be, and they know who that person is out there on the sideline on the field.

She further stated:

I would never want to hide who I am, or who I'm with, you know, with all the different invitations to do things, whether it's with individual coaches or the department. We're always having functions and you know [Rosie] just comes with me, like part of me together, and it's been like that from the beginning, so I feel extremely comfortable now, and when I came in, in the beginning I just don't hide who I am and who I'm with.

Theme # 3: Coach/Athlete Relationship

Monkey continued:

I enjoy it more when I know them as people. And I like to get to know them as people and so I assume that they like it more when they know me better as a

person and I think it allows them to come to me for other things other than rowing.

Monkey summed it up:

I know because they need someone,... they are just kids still and they're college students and in so many ways they know, so nothing! And there's so much to learn, and you know, so they need someone sometimes to bounce ideas off of and I will do that. If they think I'm some cold person who has no personal life of my own, and I'm changing stuff or not sharing personal stuff,... but I'm sharing my life they know I have a partner that I care about and I've had other relationships and I think it frees them to use me as a resource that maybe they wouldn't do and I think sometimes they need all the resources they can get. Or, they won't come to you, you know, because then I'm just a person that makes them be in pain everyday!

Similarly, Monkey said:

I think it does help your coaching in some way. I've had people.... I've had athletes crying in my office about relationship issues, whether it's boyfriends or their girlfriends, and I think by being out it allows people to see that...I have feelings, you know, and so if I lie and I change pronouns, if I never share anything about a personal life, then they don't know me as a human and for some coaches, maybe that's fine and some coaches maybe it's just coming in and coaching, but I personally think there's more to coaching than that, and I think you get more out of athletes if you're working together as the team and you know, I'm part of the team.

Jessie stated that lesbians on her team feel more comfortable talking to her because of this open relationship:

“Some of them, and more so some of the lesbians on the team will come to me if they have issues with their partners.”

She also believed:

I think it's positive for the team to have someone to look to who's happy with who they are. And I would hope that if I were straight, I would hope that it would be the same. The only difference is that when you're straight, it's the accepted norm and there are people out there who are trying to be straight [who aren't].

Subtheme #2: Role Model(ing) and Identifications

Rogue suggested: “I think if I have any kids that are struggling with the issue, I can be a good role model and so they know that you can be a productive citizen and you can be gay. It's a good thing.” Jessie said, “I think it's a positive experience for the lesbians on the team, maybe not for the heterosexuals on the team, they're not looking for a role model in that way.” Jenny also said, “I've just been very open and very honest. Like, this is who this person is, and this is my little boy, this is my son, and this is kind of our family.” Rogue also agreed that honesty was an important aspect to coaching: “I am honest with them (team).” However, she made a distinction between being asked and volunteering such information: “I told my bosses that if I am asked, I'm going to be honest with them.” She went on to say:

I definitely think that it's, you know, when you get to know someone whether it be a friendship, a relationship, or a mentoring relationship, or your employer/employee relationship, if you can't be completely honest with who you

are, then your relationships are never going to be the best that they can be. So, I think society will function better if they are honest and open and secure who they are able to be 100% fully themselves with other people.

Rogue said,

and I think that the relationships that I have with my players allows me to motivate them and help them reach their potential in the classroom, and on the field and in the community. So I definitely think that it is an advantage, you know if you're hiding part of yourself and you really don't make a full connection with the student-athlete, then I don't think that you can really push them to be everything that they can be so to speak.

Jenny said:

I think there's a first part of just what kind of climate are you creating on your team by being out, and I think that everything depends on how you handle it. But my focus has always been that it's that I want my players to feel that they can trust me and be honest with me. So if I'm lying to them about a significant part of my life then I'm not being genuine with them.....So I think that I want a model of very open and supportive atmosphere as well an atmosphere of respect, an atmosphere of trust.

Hayes suggested it is not just winning that is important:

I love to win, but I think that there's something about winning within certain parameters, certain values, and not winning at any cost, and if you're looking at winning at any cost and then are you really winning? Because there is a cost, you know, you reap what you sow, there's, there's cause-and-effect, you know, you

don't give away anything, whatever. This is my personal philosophy or whatever, I really truly believe that, whatever pain you create for another will come back to you tenfold, so fear, giving off fear, giving out the love in your heart, that's going to come back to you.

Subtheme # 3: Honesty

Rogue said, "I'm very lucky that I don't have to hide and, by being out, I don't have nearly the amount of stress that I would have if I had to stay in 'the closet' and be fearful about who knew about me, or who I told or what that might cost me down the road."

Krista said:

I think that just not being open, or being open, you save so much energy hiding or pretending that you don't love someone, or live with someone, or not telling people you're spending the holidays with someone or, not talking about what you did last night if you're with your partner and I don't do that. And I think that it's helpful I think it's a whole lot of energy that I don't have to expend. And I think that energy, the energy towards my work and other aspects of my personal life.

Elizabeth commented,

"When you're open, you don't feel like you're lying" and that, "when you're open it just feels better, you don't like you're being deceitful or hiding."

Theme #4: Psychosocial Impact

Similarly, Jenny stated that,

"It would be really hard to hide it. I would have to move off campus, it would be very different. I think. I wouldn't feel like a whole person and if I had to hide a significant part of my life and my family and all that."

Jessie stated, "It's not an easy experience, but it's a positive experience." She went on to say, "It definitely has not been an easy path, but it hasn't been....I haven't had a terrible life either. I think it's made me stronger because I've had to deal with people and you can accept it, this is who I am! Like I said I think I have tougher skin."

Subtheme # 1: Personal Benefits

Krista also commented that in order to be out, you have to be stronger, On the positive side, I feel like I've, I'm much, I'm a much stronger person, because, again, I think that you either become stronger or, or you either disintegrate, because.... I think you have to be stronger. Or it may not even be in reality. It might be my perceived reality that you have to be a little bit stronger and you have to hold your chin up higher. Similarly, Jessie said:

I think the more people that are just open about it is the more people will realize there's as many nice gays and lesbians just as there are many asshole gays and lesbians just as there's nice straight people and nice Black people and you know the whole reason why we stereotype people....you know if there's an idiot then they're an idiot, you know, it's not because they're this one particular thing that it's just they're whole makeup is not somebody you would like hang out with.

Elizabeth commented, "It's positive for the team because they can see that I'm just like every other person, so I think it helps in that way." She went on,

We're (meaning she and her partner) in this relationship, and we own this house, and we do these things together, and our families are in on it, and it's something that's not abusive, or violent, or bad, but we're people who are living together, so I think it does affect people positively.

Subtheme # 2: Benefits to Others

Furthermore, Elizabeth told a story of an athlete and her boyfriend who she perceived were affected positively by her being out:

I remember talking with an athlete, who we (Elizabeth and her partner) helped, and she's dating a football player, and they were talking about the election and we're having this conversation in October, and we're talking, and somehow he was bringing it up about gay people, or maybe it was the marriage act, and she was pointing out to him, 'How can you say that when two people I know who are gay and they helped me and this is what they did,' So she was trying to put out a good thing, and she was kind of able to change his thinking or affect it to a point where he came to my house and we had a recruit over and a cookout and he came to the house so, so that's good, like a positive thing.

Rogue also believed that her being out affected others positively:

And certainly the experience for my players to know that I am out, to know that it's going to be so much better if one of my athletes ever decided to come out or decide to come out and know, hopefully, that it makes it easier for them and that hasn't happened yet, but I did have a player at [old university] that came out when I was there and she knew about me for sure, and we talked about it and I think enough of the kids suspected [she was gay]. And so I think it was a good environment for her.

Theme # 5: Sociopolitical Climate

The following conversations with Jenny and Hayes illustrates their perception of how great the university climate is:

Kerrie: So, what is the climate like in regard to do the general university? What is that like?

Jenny: Oh, terrific. Unbelievable, it's great.

Kerrie: What's the university climate like?

Hayes: Excellent. Yeah, it's been very, I think I'm very fortunate in this situation.

Like Jessie, Rogue stated:

I think that the university is good and again, we have a lot of protection built-in because we're employees of the [North Eastern State] and [State] is fairly progressive in terms of employment with nondiscrimination and protection, and I think that it's a pretty open environment and I have not heard of anybody reporting being discriminated against and there certainly are a number of gay and lesbian people in positions of power on campus and you know one of our top-level human resource person is an out lesbian and our vice president is an out gay man.

She also discussed the climate of her athletic conference:

The conference that I work in, most of my fellow coaches are younger than I am, and they don't seem to have such an issue with it as maybe some of the older coaches, or even older than I was when I came in. You know, when I first got here it was like, oh well, it's an all women school so they must all be lesbians. And the younger group of people that I work with, they realize that they have gays and lesbians on their team too, regardless of where they work or not . It just doesn't seem to be that big of the deal.

She also commented on her visibility as a lesbian, but was unclear about how that might play out for a lesbian athlete:

I'm probably the only lesbian or gay person that they know and talk to and work with on a continuous daily basis. So I always wonder what if one of my players is [lesbian] and what if she came out and what the climate would be towards her, because she is with them all the time, and she's changing with them, and she's doing this and that with them and would it matter, because I don't know. I don't have any idea, and I don't know of any field hockey player who's come through the program whose gay since I've been here, and I have no idea what that climate would be like on that. I know it's a positive for me and I know that I'm judged for who I am, not what I am, and, and I would hope that it would be the same thing for a player coming in.

In contrast, Jessie said:

There are women on the team that I know are gay, or very open about that, and very comfortable, and they know I'm not disrespecting them. Now, how the women on the team feel who are not open, and there are probably are at least one of them, I don't know.

She also believed:

I think it is probably more important that they have peers that are out, and I could be way off base, but I think that 18,19, 20 year old kids really don't care about their coach's life, but I think that's a lot of the drama surrounding women, I think women are sort of like that, but I don't think they really care, because they're so

self-absorbed. I don't think they really care what I'm doing on a Saturday night, they are too busy worrying about what they're doing on a Saturday night.

She illustrated this by saying:

I mean, one of my captains is an open lesbian, and she has been since she got on the team, and they voted for her for captain and they've know of her sexual orientation and the manager of the team is her partner. And when I did this test, I had given questions, who do you respect most, who do you think is one of their most caring individuals, she was top in every one of the categories, and they know perfectly well, and they know, and she doesn't hide it, and she's openly out there and she's one of the most popular kids in the athletic department.

Subtheme # 5: Recruiting

Rogue discusses the culture of lacrosse in regarding recruiting and being out by saying:

I also think that women's lacrosse is a sport that, for whatever reason, a lot of the coaches in the sport and the high school ranks and the college ranks are lesbian. So, maybe it's something that is a little more common. So, there's a good chance that many of the kids that I'm recruiting, whether it be through their high school program or their club program, there's the high chance that they've met or have been coached by an out lesbian....someone who is at least is implicitly out.

Elizabeth also thought her being out helped her get certain recruits, in this instance a women who had two lesbian mothers. She said, "the funny thing is last year we got someone on the team, she has two moms, so we said, 'hey one year [being lesbian] worked for us! [laughter].'" Susan also describes the recruiting process for field hockey by saying, "So I don't know if for parents, and for incoming freshmen that even that pops

in their head, 'Was the coach gay?' I've never heard that about in this program or anyone asking that about a program." Although Susan is an assistant coach and faces different pressures of the recruiting process, she went on to say,

At least with hockey here at [University] and I would even know if it's something that happens at other schools too, and we're all really good friends with other schools too, and that's never been brought up in terms of recruiting for incoming students.

In terms of recruiting in the future, Rogue said:

I'm sure at some point, there will be someone who has a problem with it and it will be interesting to think if I'll keep my cool or say what it I'm mentally prepared to say in that situation or if I'll be flabbergasted and not know what to say in that situation. There doesn't seem to be a lot of negative recruiting of what coaches would say, oh you don't want to go to that school because they're a bunch of lesbians and there doesn't seem to be a lot of that in women's lacrosse, But I'm sure as the sport grows and it's more and more competitive then, or more money is being pumped into it, that may change unfortunately. But I would say that right now, probably almost 50% of the coaches in the college ranks are probably gay and a good chunk of them are out. It was even a higher percentage when I first started coaching.

She further expressed:

I think if there is ever a situation where someone is asking because they have a problem and they don't want their daughter playing for a lesbian because they're thinking she's going to get converted or she can get cooties or something, then I

think that I would respectfully say, 'this is a kind of program where my sexuality has nothing to do with it but if you don't feel comfortable with that then I would ask you and your daughter to leave right now, and we don't tolerate homophobia on our team or any other discriminatory attitudes at [University] or where I happen to be at time.

VITA

Kerrie Jayne Kauer was born in Pittsburgh, PA on May 20, 1975. She graduated from Keystone Oaks High School in 1993, and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology with a minor in sociology at Saint Vincent College in 1997. Upon graduation, Kerrie served as an assistant basketball and head women's golf coach at Muskingum College for three years.

In 2002, Kerrie earned her Master of Science degree in developmental kinesiology from Bowling Green State University where she specialized in sport psychology. Her thesis was titled, "Scary Dykes and Feminine Queens": Stereotypes and the Conflicting Social Identities of Female College Athletes.

Kerrie entered the doctoral program in the sports studies department at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Here, she taught physical activity courses, co-taught mental skill training for sport and life, and held a lecturer and graduate associate position within the Women's Studies program. Her research focuses on sexuality and social justice in sport and integrating cultural studies with sport psychology. Kerrie received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the College of Education with an emphasis in sport psychology and cultural studies, May 2005.
