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Moving toward Social Justice through Sport: An Exploration into the Ability of
Intercollegiate Coaches of Women's Teams to Effect Social Change

A Dissertation Presented for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Elizabeth A. Slator

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Abstract

At the present time, a great number of American schools and certainly the majority of American sport teams are not taking on the responsibility of teaching young women and men the value of cooperation, democratic citizenship, and critical thinking. Because of this, critical educators have begun advocating for a movement in the education system called critical pedagogy, in which it has been theorized that schools can become sites for social transformation and emancipation (McLaren, 2003). There is a similar movement in physical education teacher education programs (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003), but no such actions have been taken in the sport arena. As a result of this dearth, this paper puts forth a model of “athletic praxis” which promotes social transformation through sport.

The model for “athletic praxis” is based on the data from an empirical study that was designed to explore the spaces and perceived barriers identified by intercollegiate coaches of women’s teams when it comes to the issue of addressing social difference and justice with their athletes. The data was subsequently infused with a model called cultural studies as praxis (Wright, 2002) that currently exists in the education field. “Athletic praxis” consists of three components: theoretical preparation, service learning for social justice, and structured reflection. It is argued in this dissertation that, by incorporating the components of “athletic praxis” into the sport setting, female athletes could develop a heightened sense of civic responsibility during their collegiate career. In this way, sport has the ability to play a key role in an individual’s education toward democratic citizenship. Integrating these principles into sport could result in large groups of young

women who feel a sense of responsibility to their surrounding community and who see themselves as potential agents of social change. As such, the athletic arena could become another means of working toward social justice in our society.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Personal Narrative

I grew up in a suburban, middle class, two-parent household and spent much of my youth surrounded by individuals with very similar circumstances. Most of my friends played sports, participated in extracurricular activities, excelled academically, and virtually all of us graduated from high school with plans to go to college. The privileges I was afforded during my childhood seemed commonplace and ordinary, as they were no more or less than the privileges of most of my peers. Even when I went off to college, I did not meet many individuals who came from backgrounds much different than my own. I played softball on an Auburn University team that largely consisted of white, middle class women. By the age of 22, I had not encountered much in my life that stretched my comfort zones nor forced me to consider life outside my box. I graduated from Auburn in the fall of 1999 and spent the next six months working odd jobs and attempting to figure out my life's path. I settled on a career in sports and set forth to obtain a graduate degree from Auburn University that would allow me to work in the athletic arena. In the summer of 2001, after earning a Master's degree in sport psychology, I learned of a job that would allow me to utilize my knowledge of and passion for sport. I discovered an AmeriCorp program called Athletes in Service to America, and it was a discovery that would change my life.

Athletes in Service to America is a program created by Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society which draws on the popularity of sport to create

change in young people's lives. Specifically, Athletes in Service programs utilize current and former collegiate student-athletes to work with young people in community recreation centers, primary and secondary schools, summer youth sport camps, and after-school tutoring programs. Athletes in Service programs work to achieve stronger communities by focusing their attention on three main areas, including violence prevention, academic development, and diversity awareness. During my time as an AmeriCorp member, I was exposed to a multitude of new and diverse experiences that began to transform the way that I looked at the world. During my year of service in this program, I began to realize what a fortunate, yet short-sighted, life I had been leading. Working in an urban setting with families from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds than my own, I was startled and troubled to learn that the promise of meritocracy in America is little more than a hopeful and naïve myth. Suddenly, all the privileges that I was afforded throughout my life did not seem so commonplace anymore, and it has felt quite important ever since to work to challenge some of the racial, sexual, and social class injustices that are insidious in American society.

Looking back on my experience in AmeriCorp, it seems most appropriate to describe it as eye opening. While I would like to state for the record, that the entire experience served to heighten my overall level of social awareness and spurred my desire to obtain a doctorate from a program that blended the study of sport with the progressive field of cultural studies, I think that there are three main factors which came about during that experience that are the most relevant to my dissertation today.

One aspect was a better understanding on my part, of the role I play in perpetuating exclusion, elitism, and racism in our society. This realization was a slow one that started fairly immediately and continued throughout my year in the AmeriCorp program. Often finding myself the only white face in the crowd, I experienced for the first time in my life, the discomfort and fear that might occur for minority group members who feel invisible and silenced in American culture all the time. While these fears were unwarranted, I began to see a bit more clearly that I was living in a society that seemed to go out of its way to keep certain members on the margins. This realization was the beginning of my understanding that perhaps our country's claim of justice and equality for all is still shrouded in a racist and sexist cloak. Further, I realized that my own oblivion to white privilege was part of what helps maintain that privilege. By seeing my own skin as colorless and normative, I was perpetuating the "otherness" that works to keep millions of individuals of color on the outskirts of society.

The second factor that I would describe as being a major contributor to my ongoing development of a critical consciousness was an increased awareness and understanding of the cyclical and often defeating effects that poverty has on young people. After working in a community where few resources and poor conditions were the norm, and seeing firsthand how the intersections of race, class, and gender can greatly affect a person's life chances, I cannot help but surmise that some members of society seemingly have three strikes against them from the day they are born. However, I also learned that it is extremely important that we do not write off the children of impoverished families as lost causes. Some of these individuals are the product of parents

who do not have the time, the energy, or the economic resources to provide for their children, and nearly all of these kids can be helped just by receiving some extra attention and pats on the back. While these children may face an uphill battle, there are many potential avenues for recourse for these individuals that make giving up on them premature.

The final factor that I think is important and of great relevance to my research is the ability of Athletes in Service to be a successful contributor to the communities in which it works. I think that without question, the efforts made by myself and my fellow AmeriCorp team members made a difference to the individuals with whom we had contact. Athletes in Service is not a perfect program, but it does provide a consistent hand to communities much in need. Further, it teaches important lessons to Corp and community members about social and economic difference. I learned so much in a year's time about the roles we each play in perpetuating masculine, heterosexist, and capitalist values that disadvantage so many, and learning those lessons made me want to continue working for social justice in society. My year in Athletes in Service fundamentally changed me in ways for which I will be forever grateful. That year of my life and the people whom I encountered along the way are largely responsible for my interest in social justice and my understanding of how a social institution like sport can make large inroads towards a better life for us all. My time as an Athletes in Service member helped lead me to the University of Tennessee (UT), and my time at UT has helped give me the theoretical tools that compliment what I continually learn from doing practical service. The blending of these two forms of knowledge (though still quite incomplete) has

inspired me and made me capable of doing real work, academic and otherwise, that has the potential for creating positive social change in communities.

To be clear, I do not offer this brief synopsis of my past as a plug for Athletes in Service or as a pat on my own back, but rather as an entry into how my current research interests came to be. Beyond my own personal awakening, what I discovered during my tenure as an AmeriCorp member was that the premise behind Athletes in Service is a good one; the popularity of sport and the athletes who participate in them can indeed be used to positively affect young people. What I noticed, however, was that while there are well over 700 National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I, II, and III institutions, and more than 300,000 athletes, we seldom see these athletes standing up for issues which call for radical societal or even community reform (Coakley, 2003). I began to wonder why this was so, and what could be done to change the seemingly conservative or selfish attitudes of today's athlete. Are these women and men so absorbed with themselves and their own success that they cannot be mindful of their positions as role models in society? Or have we created a society where cooperation, civic responsibility, and critical thinking is undervalued and ignored? I cannot help but think of myself five years ago, a recent college graduate and former student-athlete. I was neither conservative nor selfish; I simply had never encountered any type of experience that might have pushed me to think about social inequities or the role that I played in perpetuating them. Where could I have encountered these experiences? Where can we present it to young athletes today? How can we foster environments that promote and

value social action and reflective thinking? These are all questions that I have spent time wondering about and for which I hope my research will provide answers.

Introduction to the Problem and Rationale for the Study

Sport is perhaps the most popular leisure time activity in our society today. Most people have experienced sport personally, either as athletes or spectators, and are familiar with the physical and emotional experiences that are associated with it (Coakley, 2003). There is a distinct relationship between sport and society in that sport has had a clear impact on culture in the United States and, conversely, trends in American society have influenced sporting practices (Sage, 1990). It is because of sport's integral role in society that sociologists have been able to take it seriously as a cultural institution and study the deeper meanings that are associated with it. Sport sociologists focus most of their research on, "...developing an understanding of a) the cultures and societies in which sport exists, b) the social worlds that are created around sports, and c) the experiences of individuals and groups associated with sport" (Coakley, 2003, p.4).

Within the realm of sport sociology, there is considerable disagreement when it comes to explaining the function of sport in American society. While most agree that there are many connections between sport and the larger world, a sociologist's explanation of the function of sport in society depends on her/his theoretical orientation and her/his understanding of how societies operate. Some sociologists, and most American citizens, view sport through the lens of functionalism. Functionalists believe that as Americans, we all share certain values and work to achieve similar goals through accepted methods (Coakley, 2003). Functionalists consider the different social spheres

(i.e. family, education, and sport) to work together in conjunction with one another in an effort to keep the whole of our society operating smoothly. An analogy that I often use to help my students understand this theoretical orientation is to compare a society to a car and the different social spheres to car parts. Each part has a job to do in order for the car to run smoothly. No one part is greater than another, and each plays a valuable role in a car's ability to operate efficiently. According to functionalists, the same is true for the different social spheres in society; each one plays a role in helping the whole of society to operate more efficiently. Functionalism is a popular perspective because it allows us to focus on the positive attributes of each of these social spheres. For instance, with regard to sport, functionalists often focus on its ability to teach valuable life lessons, build character, and promote a disciplined work ethic. Further, functionalists believe that sport makes it possible to bring together diverse communities and harmonize potentially disruptive divisions in society (Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2000). The assertion here is that individuals from different racial, gender, and social class backgrounds meet through sport on a level playing field. It is for these reasons that functionalists often promote developmental youth sport programs, fund high school and intercollegiate sport programs, and advocate for more sport opportunities for girls and women (Coakley, 2003). In fact, when speaking specifically about sporting opportunities for girls and women, functionalists often point to the gains that women have made in the field (i.e. increased opportunities) and link them to overall improvements in women's conditions and the deconstruction of sexist practices in the larger society (Cahn, 1994). Advances in the athletic arena represent to many, both personal and collective empowerment as

women are becoming more and more confident in their own bodies and subsequently in their capability to compete with other individuals in society. From a functionalist's perspective, by simply participating in sport, women learn about their physical potential, and are provided with outlets for their growing ambitions, goals, and desires. Some theorists might even go so far as to say that it is women's participation in sport that helps them to realize that they are capable of shaping their own destinies (Kane, 1995), but it is my opinion that these assertions are incomplete.

While all the attributes listed in the previous paragraph might sound like sport is doing much to improve the overall conditions in our society, particularly for women, it is necessary to consider sport from a more critical social perspective in order to ascertain a more complete picture of its true role in American society. By looking beyond conventional (functional) wisdom of sport in society such as the characterizations mentioned above, we can, "... step back from thinking about sport as merely a place of personal achievement and entertainment and study sport as a cultural practice embedded in political, economic, and ideological formations" (Sage, 1990, p.11). Sport holds the possibility for cultivating environments that accept diversity and difference, and I fundamentally believe that sport is capable of positive identity development for both women and men. However, I do not think that the current model of sport allows for this. By using a more critical perspective, the discrimination and injustice that exists in contemporary sport can be highlighted and transformed. In addition, we can begin to see the ways in which sport is not meeting its potential as a transformative social sphere. Many of sport's critics point out that since the turn of the 20th century, sport has served

the purpose of furthering a capitalist, sexist, and homophobic agenda, and I agree with these conclusions. However, I also maintain hope that in spite of these things, sport still has the potential to serve a greater purpose, one that promotes inclusion, cooperation, and social justice. Since the current athletic arena has proven that sport is capable of teaching young athletes about conservative and functionalist values and has played a role in molding our youth into disciplined and acquiescent minions, then it stands to reason that with some restructuring and intentional reform, it could also hone and sharpen a more critical and empathic consciousness in the individuals who participate in it. Sport can help our society to move toward social justice if we can begin to introduce its participants to some of the important concepts that critical and feminist educators have utilized in the classroom for years. Women and men in education have insisted that it is possible for our society to refocus the educational system into a venue where young women and men learn to reach their full human potential. Similarly, I contend that sport has the capability of becoming an intentional space where individuals find the strength and resolve to create a better life for themselves and those around them. It is because of the theoretical models that have been provided by critical education, and the similarities that exist between the social spheres of sport and education, that I believe that by addressing issues of social justice and social difference in team sport settings, it is possible that sport can do more to help us all live in a more equitable society.

Because the participants in this study all came from intercollegiate women's sport programs, it is necessary to point out that there is great danger in overall conclusions that have been made in recent years about the relationship between women and sport. As was

mentioned in preceding paragraphs, positions by some of the leading theorists in the field assert that female athletes, simply by nature of their participation in sport, help challenge the status quo and that their efforts forward the progress and overall advancement of women in our society (Cahn, 1994; Kane, 1997; Nelson, 1994). These assertions are an example of what becomes problematic about liberal feminist views of the construction of sport. While these positions paint positive pictures of women's empowerment through sport, they subtly neglect to address exactly to what this sense of empowerment may lead. Coakley (2003) asserts that women's feelings of empowerment from participation in sport does not come automatically, nor is it always associated with a sense of consciousness that would lead an individual to actively promote gender equity in sport and beyond. In fact, in a study of female athletes and sport's inherent ability to construe feminist principles, Blinde (1994) and her colleagues concluded that,

...women's participation in sport may challenge traditional notions of women's capabilities and provide positive role models for girls and women. However, sport does not appear to be an effective vehicle for developing an athlete's consciousness as a woman or encourage activism regarding the concerns of women (p.57).

Blinde went on to propose several reasons to account for female athlete's negative attitudes towards feminism and social activism. Two that are particularly striking are women's lack of political voice in sport, and the use of the lesbian label as a tool to keep women from actively challenging the status quo. Issues dealing with voice and representation, as well as heterosexism and homophobia are not effectively challenged in more conservative sporting climates. Women are already forced to deal with associations between athleticism and lesbianism, and it makes sense that some athletes might not wish

to link themselves with women's issues and other "radical" causes that challenge existing patterns of patriarchy or other hegemonic practices which are the norm in today's society. Some female athletes already see themselves as outsiders and do not wish to do anything to further exacerbate their situation. Because of this, I would argue that we need to change our daily practices in the sporting arena so that young female athletes gain both the confidence and knowledge necessary to become social activists who are capable of fighting for social justice in general and women's rights in particular.

I see social justice as being defined as working toward an awareness of issues of discrimination, and then using activism to overcome those unjust oppressions. I believe that girls and women's experience in sport could enhance their lives in fundamental ways if through their participation they were able to learn the values of cooperation, democratic citizenship, and critical thinking. However, I have been progressively disappointed that in recent years the direction of women's sport has been rapidly headed toward the patriarchal model of male sport, where competition, individualism, and heteronormativity reign supreme. Many athletes, female and male, seem to be increasingly concerned about "looking out for number one," and frightfully careless about their positions as role models in society. Further, the women and men who are leaders (i.e. coaches and administrators) in the athletic arena seem to have capitulated to a "win at all costs" mentality. Most coaches do not feel that it is part of their job description to help an athlete develop a critical consciousness. More often than not in team environments, coaches may teach their athletes, but often limit the scope of learning to individual positions and technical performance (Lough, 2001). This is an unfortunate turn as athletes

and coaches are some of the most visible individuals in our culture today. Individuals who are recognizable to the general public have the opportunity to become positive role models and valuable agents of change. Sadly, in today's society, many sport sociologists agree that of the athletes who identify as role models, most often represent dominant groups who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo (Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2003). However, it is my contention that the interactive space between an athlete and a coach might be able to play a role in the way that both athlete and coach think about their place in their surrounding community. A coach is there to guide, motivate, and serve as a role model for her/his athletes (Lough, 2001). Coaches share many of the same responsibilities as mentors, and as such are in a unique position to influence athletes to become agents of social change. By incorporating coaching strategies that promote critical thinking skills, cooperation, and social action, an athlete could develop a heightened sense of civic responsibility during her collegiate career. If these actions were to be taken, coaches could have an enormous impact on an athlete's citizenship education. Integrating these principles into coaching practices could result in large groups of young athletes who feel a sense of responsibility to their surrounding community, and who see themselves as possible agents of social change. Coaches who were dedicated to citizenship education could help change the negative views that female athletes have of feminism and social activism.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold. First, it is to undertake an empirical study designed to explore the spaces and perceived barriers identified by intercollegiate

coaches of women's teams when it comes to the issue of addressing social difference and justice with their athletes. The second is to create a new model of "athletic praxis" by infusing the empirical data with current models of praxis that exist in the education field. This model of "athletic praxis" will aim to promote social justice through sport by teaching athletes and coaches to become agents of social change.

Framework of the Study

In order to achieve the goals of this study, it is necessary to choose a framework which is flexible and capable of drawing from a multitude of theories. In addition, because it is my intention to take sport seriously as a social institution, the framework must view popular culture as a meaningful sphere. For all these reasons and more which will be discussed in the literature review, this study will be grounded in cultural studies. Cultural studies regards culture as political and popular culture as an arena in which consent and resistance occur (Hall, 1998). These are two fundamental premises behind this study. If ultimately the goal is to transform what we "do" with sport, then this project must be grounded in a theory which allows sport to be taken seriously, and to acknowledge the ways in which athletes and coaches can resist dominant ideology through participation in sport.

Scope of the Study

A possible limitation to this project is my own lack of coaching experience. While my time as a collegiate athlete gives me a certain amount of insider information, I am in some ways unable to relate first hand to the administrative components of an athletic program. The stresses and pressure that come with collegiate athletics are not comparable

to what I have experienced in the work force. In addition, the sometimes oppressive culture of sport can force people to monitor their behavior, dress, and language. While I understand this kind of anxiety or strain intellectually, it is not something I have had dealt with directly and is subsequently hard for me to relate to on an emotional or empathic level. Further, because I am no longer immersed in an athletic culture, my views of coaching and my outsider's perspective on the intercollegiate athletic experience could be very naive and idealistic.

Another possible limitation to this study is that I was only able to interview 8 participants, and because of this, I cannot say that I obtained a sample that fully represents all the views of intercollegiate coaches of women's teams across the United States. The information that I obtained may have differed greatly had I interviewed more coaches located in the western United States, if I had interviewed more male coaches, or if I had decided to focus solely on either head or assistant coaches. In addition, the focus of the study was only on coaches of women's teams. I imagine that I would have learned very different information if I had included intercollegiate coaches of men's teams as well since the male model of sport is far more commercialized. My sense of intercollegiate men's athletics is that it is a business whose focus is creating a dramatic spectacle (Eitzen, 2003) that serves as entertainment for the American public

Significance of the Study

Illuminating places in sport where coaches might be able to incorporate strategies that address social justice with their athletes is a revolutionary first step towards utilizing the arena of sport as a vehicle for promoting social justice. By interviewing current

collegiate coaches, I have gained insight into if, when, where, and how taking up strategies to address social justice could be incorporated into athletic team settings, and how barriers that could theoretically block this practice could be overcome. In addition, the creation of the idea for “athletic praxis” is based on sound critical educational models. By having both empirical evidence and substantive knowledge, I believe this study is the foundation for the creation of a new facet for sport. “Athletic praxis” could contribute to a better system of coaching, as well as help young women to become more cooperative, critical, and democratic citizens who utilize their status in society to work for social change in their communities. Additionally, a new model of sport that is focused on social justice adheres far more to the educational missions of most institutions than the current model, and could help get the priorities of colleges and universities across the country back on track (Svare, 2003).

Organization of Study

The following chapter focuses on a theoretical discussion of cultural studies, the model of cultural studies as praxis, critical theory, feminist praxis, the capability of coaches to act as mentors, provides an outline of the CHAMPS/LifeSkills program, and provides an overview of the Positive Coaching Alliance. Chapter Three outlines the methodology and discusses the influence of feminism on this study. Specifically it covers the selection of and profiles for participants, the methods used for collecting data, how the data were analyzed, and a reflexive piece including thoughts and theories about the research relationship. Chapter Four presents the findings from the study and discusses how they tie in to the theories presented in Chapter Two. And finally, Chapter Five

contains my overall conclusions about the study, recommendations for future projects, and outlines the notion of “athletic praxis.”

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

In this chapter, I review literature regarding my understanding of cultural studies and how it fits into the dissertation, the emergence of a model called cultural studies as social justice praxis, critical theory and how critical theory is often used by sport sociologists, feminist theory and its usefulness to women's sport, and finally literature regarding coaching programs and practices. Specifically, I will cover the topics of the coach as mentor, discuss the NCAA CHAMPS/LifeSkills program, and outline a model put forward by the Positive Coaching Alliance called the Positive Coach Mental Model.

Cultural Studies

I was introduced to cultural studies in a seminar class that I took during my first semester as a graduate student at the University of Tennessee. The seminar was basically set up to provide students and faculty with a forum to learn about the burgeoning (anti/post/inter/multi) discipline. We read the works of academicians in the fields of English, history, women's studies, and literary criticism to name a few. We learned that cultural studies was concerned with creating better, more equitable societies; that it dealt largely with issues of power, social difference, and the existence of an unequal material reality; and that individuals in the field of cultural studies care deeply about social justice. The conversations we had in that seminar over the course of the semester were often dense, sometimes highly theoretical and abstract, and always challenging. My introduction to cultural studies changed the way I look at the world, and my continued relationship with it bolsters my ever expanding critical consciousness with sound

theoretical knowledge. I am continually wrestling with my understanding of cultural studies, and I believe that struggle is a necessary part of doing cultural studies work. It is a dynamic field that is capable of turning the world on its head. It's challenging, frustrating, and without it the idea for this dissertation would not exist.

In every article or book chapter that I have ever read about what makes cultural studies, cultural studies, I never fail to see the line telling me that there is great difficulty in attempting to define it. As Stuart Hall (1998) notes, cultural studies are not any one thing, but is instead a relative hodgepodge of disciplines, theories, and methodological practices. He is quick to point out, however, that cultural studies is any and everything. Largely, work done by those who are in cultural studies looks at the depth and breadth of a society's institutes and belief systems, as well as it's cultural and communication practices (Sparkes, 1998). They are engaged with the political, the economic, the social, and the ideological. In short, "...cultural studies entail the study of all relations between all the elements in the whole way of life" (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992, p.14). With such a broad scope, one can certainly see why it is so challenging to define.

Cultural studies work can be described as open, theoretically versatile (Johnson, 1998) and interdisciplinary in nature. In fact, often people who use cultural studies to address an issue do so specifically because its ability to infiltrate and borrow from other disciplines enhances the research process (Wright, 2002). More often than not, cultural studies work is project driven rather than simply an attempt to create a study that conforms to the boundaries of a traditional discipline. By being project driven, a researcher uses theories and practices from various disciplines in order to create a well-

rounded analysis of an event. This differs from the more traditional approach of a researcher picking a topic within her/his discipline and then applying the methodologies and practices that are inherent to that discipline in order to understand it. The interdisciplinary approach used by cultural studies theorists allows for a more enriched investigation into events.

In addition to being described as interdisciplinary, cultural studies is also multi- and postdisciplinary. You can find individuals doing cultural studies work in a variety of academic fields including, but not limited to literary criticism, sociology, history, media studies, and more recently sport (Sparks, 1998). Cultural studies borrow methods and practices from these disciplines in order to draw a more complete picture of what is going on in different societies or groups around the world. But cultural studies does more than draw from other disciplines, it critiques them, challenges them, infiltrates their boundaries, and gives them something back as well. Cultural studies theorists believe that academic boundaries ought to be fluid, to give and take from one another as is necessary, and as a result cultural studies has shaken up the structure of academic parameters that has traditionally existed in the Ivory Towers.

Cultural studies interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and postdisciplinary nature speaks to the willingness of this reluctant discipline to expose itself to the discourse and practices of surrounding disciplines (Storey, 1998). But for all its versatility, cultural studies exists in a tension between wanting to borrow and blend with traditional disciplines, and the desire to keep them at arms length. It will not adhere to traditional disciplinary boundaries and refuses to intentionally draw on one certain discipline as its

base (Wright, 2002). As Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler (1992) note, “Indeed, cultural studies is not merely interdisciplinary; it is often, as others have written, actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary – a characteristic that more or less ensures a permanently uncomfortable relation to academic disciplines” (p.1). This reluctance stems from the belief of cultural studies theorists that traditional disciplines are too restrictive and that too many individuals are marginalized as a result of these narrow academic conceptions that come from decisions that reflect political and economic assumptions that have insidious effects. Individuals who are interested in doing cultural studies work are interested in the equal distribution of power for all members of society in every arena. Given this desire, one can see why those working in the field of cultural studies have made it a point to deconstruct and keep traditional forms of academia at arms length.

The need for cultural studies to be in constant flux, to continually renegotiate, revise, and reject are all characteristics of what cultural studies is. But that description does not explain what it is this work actually does. In general, cultural studies projects analyze in some part the social practices of individuals and groups (Krane et al, 2001). It is an extremely useful means of exploring the politics of social difference, and while it leans heavily on theory (critical theory, in particular) it also emphasizes the links between theory and practice (praxis) and urges individuals who engage in this type of work to concern themselves with social activism. As Ann Hall (1996) states, “practice does matter, there can be a bridge between theory and material culture, and contemporary scholars can affect social change” (p. 35). As a result, cultural studies has the explicit agenda of creating a better, more equitable world for all. With its neo-Marxist

underpinnings, the influence of the modern women's movement, and the recognition of society's unequal racial structuring (Sparkes, 1998; Johnson, 1998), "...most cultural studies projects deal with the interrelated issues of (a) social difference, (b) the distribution of power, and (c) social justice" (Fisher, Butryn, and Roper, 2003, p.392).

Critical sport sociologists have been using cultural studies for more than twenty years in an effort to explain the connections that exist between sport and society (Andrews & Loy, 1993; Sage, 1998; Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000; Krane, 2001). In particular, scholars like George Sage (1998), Jay Coakley (2003), and Stanley Eitzen (2003) focus much of their work on highlighting the existence of class divisions, homophobia, racial tension, and gender inequality that come into play on the sporting fields and courts of American society. As Ryba & Wright (in press) tell us,

"Taken together, interdisciplinarity, considerations of social difference, power issues, culture and cultural theories and especially cultural studies writings have meant that cultural studies had indeed made inroads into sports studies such that we can now speak of a cultural studies of sport" (in press).

My understanding of the characteristics of cultural studies, and the assertions put forward by critical sport sociologists and cultural studies theorists that one can begin to specifically acknowledge a cultural studies of sport, allow me to conclude that cultural studies is the most appropriate framework for this project.

Cultural Studies as Praxis

In the fall of 2002, as I was first becoming acquainted with cultural studies, I took a course entitled Issues in Cultural Studies taught by Dr. Handel Wright, a professor who has expertise in, among many things, the sociocultural foundations of education. The

course was designed to introduce students to enact a conceptual model that he had put forth called cultural studies as praxis. In his course, we were introduced to cultural studies theory and literature, we engaged in service work with a community organization that was of interest to us, and learned about the structure of that organization by doing a qualitative investigation of it, and finally we wrote a critical analysis of the organization which we presented to the class. In sum, Dr. Wright's model blends the theories of cultural studies, utilizes service learning as the activist/practice component, and incorporates empirical research to serve as the intermediary between theory and practice (Wright, 2003; Ryba & Wright, in press). All of these components are tied together through progressive politics that focus on social difference and social justice (Ryba & Wright, in press).

There are distinguishing characteristics of this model that need to be made clear. While it is true that cultural studies in and of itself is necessarily entangled with praxis, which can otherwise be defined as the blending of theory with practice (Fisher, Butryn, & Roper, 2003; Ryba & Wright, in press), it is important to note that some versions deal more exclusively in theory, while others maintain strong connections with activism. By incorporating a component that actively combines theory, practice, and reflection, Wright's model provides a level balance between theory and practice. Additionally, while the service learning (activist) component would be a valuable experience in and of itself because it engenders empathy and social responsibility, it is important to note that the service learning in this model is of a specific type, that which Steve Fisher (1997) has labeled service learning for social justice. Typically, most programs which use service

learning widely define it as a “...teaching strategy that provides students with the opportunity to acquire academic, social, career, and personal skills through involvement in community service projects” (Watson et al, 2002, p.50), and most of these programs claim to be apolitical in nature. Conversely, service learning for social justice is overtly political and aims to “...examine issues of social difference (race, social class, gender, & sexual orientation, etc.) and address issues of discrimination based on social difference in or through institutions and organizations” (Ryba & Wright, in press). It has been noted by some educators that service that is linked with theoretical learning can teach active citizenship (Clark, et al, 1997), and teaching democratic citizenship is one of the main goals of the cultural studies as praxis models. Service learning for social justice allows individuals to experience social difference, develop new skills, and promote civic consciousness (Gregg, 1998). It is also important to note that service learning for social justice includes a reflective process. This provides a space for individuals to reflect back on their experience and helps them make sense of their service. It is through reflection that students gain a better understanding of the assigned theoretical reading, and allows them to develop a better sense of themselves relative to the community in which they live (Watson, et al, 2002). Participation in service projects has the capacity to help students see themselves as more than just autonomous individuals, but rather as active members of a larger community. In this way, service learning for social justice forges links between the university and community groups, and helps to establish town-gown collaborations (Benson & Harkavy, 1997; Wright, 2002; Ryba & Wright, in press). The final component of the cultural studies as praxis model is the undertaking of qualitative research. Since

cultural studies draws from a number of qualitative methods, the collection of data in this process is relatively open though the preferred methodology is that of critical or institutional ethnography. Students conduct individual and group interviews, utilize document collection, and conduct participant observations in an effort to systematically study and understand the organizations in which they work (Ryba & Wright, in press).

While this brief overview of its elements is an oversimplification of a complex model, it can be best summarized by saying that these three components work together to serve as a new articulation that produces cultural studies as social justice praxis work (Ryba & Wright, in press). This model is extremely important to the overarching goals of this dissertation in that it serves as a guide for the formation of a new kind of “athletic praxis.” I believe that there are three parts of this model that could fit into the athletic arena: theoretical readings which acquaint athletes with different issues of social difference and social justice, service learning for social justice that could come in the form of community service, and reflective journaling which would help athletes tie their experiences in the community back to the readings. These parallels will be made in more detail in the concluding chapter of the dissertation.

Critical Theory

Critical theories largely focus on explanations of social relations and power (Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2003; Figler & Whitaker, 1991; Sage, 1990). They help us explain the ways that culture is produced and reproduced through the use of various social institutions, how systems of power are able to operate through these processes, and the ways society members struggle to make sense of the world and the condition of their

lives (Coakley, 2003). Critical theorists believe that with so many different perspectives in existence, there are no general social laws or truths that can be used to universally explain a social system. This particular perspective is in direct opposition to functionalist theory, which promotes the belief that as a society, we ascribe to a set of shared values. While functionalist theorists might focus on a particular component of the system (i.e. sport, family) and the role it plays in keeping the larger system operating smoothly, critical theorists instead direct their attention to identifying inequities or problems within the system and work to make social life more just for everybody. Critical theories and critique are intricately bound with cultural studies because they help us understand the operation of power, and highlight the inequities that exist in our social institutions. These illuminations provide the first step in our efforts to work towards a more socially just society.

Critical theory and sport sociology. When considering the role of sport in society, critical sport sociologists take the approach that sports are ever changing entities that evolve with new ideas and developments (Sage, 1990). Critical theorists who study sport may focus on issues such as the possibility for sport to become a site for transforming social life, or look at whose voices are or are not represented when we talk about sport (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Coakley, 2003; Eitzen 2003). Critical sport sociologists must explore the cultural and social contexts of sport in order to really understand its deeper meaning. Many view sports as social constructions which are, "...aspects of the social world that are created by people as they interact with each other and live their lives in connection with social, political, and economic processes in particular societies"

(Coakley, 2003, p.5). By viewing sport as a social construction, it stands to reason that as a society we could transform its purpose and organization. Utilizing a more critical approach when considering the role of sport in our society would allow us to not only see the positive benefits that sport offers, but also to take notice of its imperfections. Painting a realistic picture of sport is the first step towards the potential altering the insidious systems of patriarchy, capitalism, and racism, all of which are alive and well in the arena of sport.

Feminism

Feminism, as a movement to end sexist oppression (hooks, 1984), grew out of dissatisfaction with traditions which based knowledge only on the values and experiences of men (Coakley, 2003). Feminism attempts instead to distinguish women and works to the benefit of all society members by offering a more holistic and humane way of viewing the world (Oglesby, 2001). The aim of this ideological paradigm is to correct the ways in which women's experience has been distorted or overlooked in an effort to end women's unequal social position (Lather, 1991). Critical feminism does not merely provide its proponents with a lens from which to view the world, but also mandates that one must have a deep commitment to changing it. Those who wish to engage themselves in the feminist movement must also be willing to become actively involved in the struggle (hooks, 1984). By dealing with sexual exploitation and oppression through direct action, and utilizing a praxis-oriented approach, scholars can commit themselves to both practical and theoretical feminist work.

Although its central focus is on gender, it is important to note that critical feminist praxis also recognizes the devaluing that occurs in all aspects of human behavior. As a society, certain groups are valued and privileged over others. Some examples of these disruptions include the privileges we grant to men over women, heterosexuals over homosexuals, white people over individuals of color or the wealthy over those with limited economic resources (Bredemeier, 2001). Feminism when combined with critical theory is capable of addressing issues of diversity that extend beyond the boundaries of gender. Sexual orientation, race, and issues of class are all examples of the social difference issues that can be taken up by utilizing a critical feminist form of praxis. Further, because various forms of subordination are supported by the same social and cultural institutions, they are nearly inextricably linked (hooks, 1984; McIntosh, 1990). Critical feminist praxis is, therefore, important not only because it works for an end to the oppression of women, but because it recognizes and challenges other forms of subordination and marginalization as well. As women's identities cut across racial/ethnic, social class, age, and sexual boundaries, feminist praxis would be incomplete without this recognition. It is impossible to know how much one feature of our identity (i.e. gender, sexuality) affects our behavior, our circumstances, or our treatment both in specific situations and in general. The extensive capability of critical feminism makes it a perfect candidate to serve alongside cultural studies and critical theory as contributors to the theoretical framework of this project. One who is engaged in critical feminist praxis must be committed to concrete action, reflection, and theory (Lather, 1991) that works to make

the world more just overall. It is because of this commitment that I see feminist praxis as being a worthy contributor to this study.

Feminism and sport sociology. Many in the field of sport studies have been able to apply key themes from feminist perspectives to their work (Bredemeier, 2001; Gill, 2001; Griffin, 1998; Kane, 1995; Krane, 2001). As there are no individuals nor any arena that are impervious to gender relations and the dynamics of power that these relations create, it stands to reason that sport scholars, along with those from many other traditions, can engage in “critical” feminist work. There are oppressive power differentials which exist within the culture of sport that are badly in need of transformation. Oglesby (2001) writes, “Feminism, as a world view, is necessary to bring a semblance of balance, justice, and inclusivity to our global culture. Certainly, the culture of sport and sport science is much in need of feminist balance” (p.374). Directing critical feminist praxis into the arena of sport can help to make this transformation possible.

Women’s experiences in sport are shaped by overarching systems of patriarchal power and control, and while it certainly is true that the number of girls and women participating in athletics has increased dramatically in the past twenty-five years, women still struggle to negotiate for space in a heterosexist, male hegemonic domain (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1997). Sports are gendered activities which are given meaning and organized around the values and experiences of men. Critical feminist theories work to deconstruct and transform the ideology that sustains today’s sport so that women might earn an equal place and voice within the boundaries of this world (Coakley, 2003). Critical feminists attempt to contribute to the creation of strategies that invoke

institutional and societal change as well as work for the restructuring of sports so that they might become sites that challenge existing and oppressive gender relations. By introducing young female athletes to readings that introduce feminism, debunk myths about Title IX, or critique media portrayals of female athletes, coaches can possibly strengthen an athletes desire to become a social activist. In addition, coaches can use their influence to heighten an athlete's awareness to unjust sexist practices that take place both inside and out of sport.

Critical Pedagogy

There are a multitude of assertions put forth by critical educators that can be applied to the world of sport. Critical pedagogy scholars such as Henry Giroux, Paolo Freire (1970), and Peter McLaren advocate for a revolutionary praxis in which schools are, "...sites for social transformation and emancipation, as places where students are educated not only to be critical thinkers, but also to view the world as a place where their actions might make a difference" (McLaren, 2003). McLaren describes current school settings that instead produce compliant and patriotic workers and do not nurture individuals in such a way that they are able to become committed and critical citizens. It can easily be argued that sport could be taken up the same way. Uncritical fans of sport often tout its ability to foster responsibility, discipline, and work ethic in its participants. While not all of these notions are disagreeable, it could also be said that as a result, sport produces unreflective and unquestioning individuals who do little to challenge the existing ideologies of the dominant culture. Critical educators believe that schools serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful, and challenge ideas that their existence

provides social and economic mobility equality for all students. Critical sociologists have made the same argument about sport. The numbers of opportunities for careers in sport at all levels are extremely limited, particularly for women and individuals of color. To point to sport's ability to give upward rise to a significant number of people is one of the myths of meritocracy we hold about sport in this country. In sport, as in most social spheres, there is a glass ceiling that limits how high women and individuals of color can climb (Cahn, 1994; Eitzen, 2003). An obvious example of this glass ceiling is the abysmal state of coaching and administrative positions in women's sport. Since 1972 when Title IX was adopted into legislation, participation in women's intercollegiate sport has more than quadrupled. At present time, women receive more than 35% of all athletic scholarships, up from less than 1% in 1971 (Cahn, 1994). This might allow one to conclude that these advancements in women's sport would lead to greater number of professional opportunities for women in sport as well. However, this is not the case. Statistics show that women's control over their own sport organizations has been diminishing rapidly since the 1970's. In 1972, women coached more than 90% of women's intercollegiate teams, and most were exclusively run by female administration. Today, 81% of all women's athletic teams are under male administration and women coach less than 40% of these teams (Cahn, 1994). Sport may provide a small number of opportunities for social mobility, but the number of individuals who are able to make living off of sports is not high enough to claim it as the great equalizer.

Critical pedagogues argue that theory must be tied to a struggle for a better life for all, a better life which begins with a society which is based on non-exploitative

relations and social justice (McLaren, 2003). In his work in physical education pedagogy, Fernandez-Balboa (1997) states his belief that there is great need for the infusing of critical pedagogy and the world of sport and physical education. He writes,

We have only to look around us to see how the gap between the rich and the poor has widened; how discrimination in terms of gender, race, sexual orientation, ableness, physical ability, appearance, and religion (just to name a few) has become ever more scathing; how violence and war are still constantly present in our lives; how pandemics and hunger are decimating entire populations; and how the Earth is being systematically destroyed due to greed, ignorance, and irresponsibility (p.122)

He criticizes teachers of physical education and sport for focusing too much on technical knowledge and neglecting social factors and systematic problems. Like most critical educators, Fernandez-Balboa believes that when educational practices are based on critical theory, teachers and students can engage in critical reflection and analysis with the intention of uncovering dominant ideologies and deconstructing taken-for-granted notions, meanings, and values (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). The goal of this type of teaching is to transcend the classroom, or gymnasium, or playing field and enter the larger community. In doing this, we might be able to help sport fulfill its potential to become an intentional space where individuals find the strength and resolve to create a better life for themselves and those around them.

Coach as Mentor

As was mentioned in the introduction, it is my belief that the relationship between athlete and coach is a unique and special one in American society. Good coaches can potentially serve as leaders, mentors, and role models for student athletes (Lough, 2001) and as such are in a position to greatly influence their lives. Unfortunately, many current

coaching philosophies and methods are directed toward performance enhancement and athletic achievement (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003) and there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the development of technical skills and procedural knowledge (Kirk, 1992; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). By and large, coaches in the U.S. take a rational approach to their jobs and believe that their main purpose is to serve as an instrument for the transfer of technical knowledge (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). This is a problematic approach to coaching on one hand, because it ignores the fact that knowledge is value-laden and produced in particular sociocultural contexts (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). Sport itself is vulnerable to social pressures and constraints (Armour & Jones, 2000; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003), but as a complex social institution, the day to day behavior within the arena of sport can either reinforce or challenge cultural beliefs and practices (Coakley, 2003; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Eitzen, 2003).

Far from being mere technicians whose only job is to teach athletes how to throw, catch, run, or jump, coaches have the potential to be transformative leaders (Armstrong, 2001) and subsequently ought to develop the cognitive skills that would allow them to connect coaching to a broader sociocultural context (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). Successful coaches can use sport to help their athletes learn about life (Armstrong, 2001). A coach can very naturally step into the role of mentor to an athlete (Lough, 2001). Through dialogue and interaction, coaches can teach athletes to think critically and reflectively by emphasizing ethical and equitable behavior and creating an environment where winning is placed in an appropriate perspective.

According to Armstrong (2001), the coach is the definer of sport experience for the athlete, and as such this experience is often a reflection of a coach's values, beliefs, and priorities. A coach who highly regards diversity, inclusion, critical reflection, and civic responsibility has the potential to teach her/his athletes to value those things too.

CHAMPS/Life Skills

The CHAMPS/Life Skills program, which stands for Challenging Athletes Minds for Personal Success, was created in 1991 through the collaborative efforts of the NCAA Foundation and the Division I-A Athletic Directors' Association (CHAMPS/LifeSkills, 2005). The program was originally created to as a total development program for student-athletes in Division I institutions, and is intended to enhance the quality of the student-athlete experience within the university setting. The mission of the CHAMPS/Life Skills program is to:

- support the intellectual development of every student-athlete
- use athletics as preparation for life
- meet the changing needs of student-athletes
- promote respect for diversity among student-athletes
- enhance interpersonal relationships in the lives of student-athletes
- assist student-athletes in building positive self-esteem
- enable student athletes to make meaningful contributions to their communities
- promote ownership by the student-athletes of their academic, athletic, personal, and social responsibilities

- enhance partnerships between the NCAA, member institutions and their communities for the purpose of education
- encourage leadership skills (CHAMPS/LifeSkills, 2005).

In short, member institutions must be committed to a student-athletes development in five main areas: academics, athletics, personal development, career development, and service to the community (CHAMPS/LifeSkills, 2005). However, the CHAMPS/Life Skills program that exists at each university should be a reflection of the member institution in that it should revolve around the personality of the campus, its athletic department, and the needs of the student-athletes. The Educational Outreach staff at the NCAA provides institutions with guidelines and instructional materials which support a student-athlete's development in the above areas. These materials include a needs assessment instrument that helps a university better determine the needs of the student-athlete; a program administration guide that includes information on addressing administrative needs and a program evaluation instrument; online guides of teaching materials that are used by established programs; and other supplemental materials (CHAMPS/LifeSkills, 2005). In addition to the instructional help, the Educational Outreach staff also puts together new program orientations, and annual conferences which provide member institutions a chance to network and exchange ideas about program implementation (CHAMPS/LifeSkills, 2005)

Positive Coaching Alliance

The mission of the Positive Coaching Alliance is to transform youth sport by providing coaches, parents, and youth sport organizational leaders with a new mental

model of sport. This research based Positive Coach Mental Model (PCMM) was developed to provide coaches with an alternative to the “win-at-all cost” model of coaching (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005). The goal of the PCMM is to help players develop positive character traits that will help them be successful in all arenas of life, and winning becomes a secondary goal. The three main elements of this model are to redefine “winner,” fill the emotional tank, and honor the game (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005). Each element is based largely on sport psychology research, and I will attempt to explicate each of them further and point out some of the specific studies from which each came.

Redefining “winner.” Coaches who ascribe to the PCMM see victory as a by-product of the pursuit of excellence. She or he focuses instead on encouraging her/his athletes to master various physical skills, and on the effort and learning that working toward mastery require. Coaches are encouraged to create atmospheres where there are opportunities for continued improvement, and where mistakes are used as tools for learning rather than for emotional manipulation. With the PCMM, winners are defined as individuals who are putting in as much effort as they can, who are continuing to learn and improve, and who are striving to become the best players and people they can be (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005).

The Positive Coaching Alliance used research done by John Nicholls (1984), in which he contrasted mastery with ego orientation, in order to help them develop a model that redefines winning. Nicholls (1984) concluded in his research that individuals feel more competent when they learn, and feel that they learn most when they are able to

complete task-involved goals, and that task-involvement (mastery) produces the most desirable educational outcomes. In contrast, individuals who focus on ego-oriented goals (winning a game) often compare themselves to others in order to measure their own success, and when these individuals perceive themselves as having low ability as compared to others, they often stop trying. Work done by Duda (1987) that extended Nicholls's work to the realm of youth sport has shown that most young people who drop out of sport are more likely to emphasize ego-oriented goals, and tend to define their sport experience as either a success or failure based on how they feel they compare to others. Duda (1987) also found that young athletes who were involved in a climate where mastery was emphasized, tended to be less aggressive, and were less likely to engage in unethical sporting behaviors. These conclusions were reinforced when a study done by Stephens and Bredemier (1996) showed that athletes who played for coaches that placed greater emphasis on ego-oriented goals tended to show a greater amount of aggression toward opponents. Further research proved that ego orientation leads to a greater sense of pressure, tension, and worry, which takes away from the enjoyment of sport. This new definition of winning was also bolstered by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education's National Standards for Athletic Coaches (1995) which proposed recommendations and standards for appropriate coaching behavior. This is just some of the research used by the PCA to help them come up with and justify the need to redefine winner.

Filling the emotional tank. The PCA advocates for coaches to offer praises, compliments, and positive recognition in order to "fill the emotional tank" of the athlete.

By using the PCMM, a Positive Coach can give truthful feedback, but not communicate criticism that serves to demean young athletes. By creating an atmosphere filled with positive energy, coaches can work to overcome the adversity that commonly arises in team settings. The PCMM helps coaches establish order and discipline on a team by suggesting that coaches listen to player feedback, involve them in the decision-making process, and treat their athletes with respect at all times (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005). The metaphor for the emotional tank comes from a book by Ross Campbell (1977) called *How to Really Love Your Child*, where he likens an emotional tank to a gas tank in a car...each must be filled repeatedly in order to continue to operate smoothly.

The PCA has included the “emotional tank” metaphor in their model because they believe that coaches are often nasty to their athletes and spend much of their practice time yelling and criticizing them. They used many studies which showed that children have better experiences and are more likely to stay involved in sport if parents and coaches create atmospheres which balance positive feedback with constructive criticism (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979; Smith & Smoll, 1991; Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992). The PCA advocates for a 5:1 positive to constructive criticism ratio in order help enhance an athlete’s self-esteem, and foster a lifelong love of sport.

Honoring the game. The PCMM has an element that is devoted to honoring the spirit and the letter of the laws of the game. A Positive Coach is one who teaches her/his athletes to respect the rules, the opponents, the officials, teammates, and the traditions of the game. A Positive Coach can do this by demonstrating her/his own integrity in every contest as well as discussing these values with her/his team. The PCA believes that

because a coach can be such an influence on an athlete, that honoring the game will teach young individuals not only how to conduct themselves on the field, but will also instill values that they can take away from the field and apply to other parts of their lives (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005). The PCA believes that this particular component needs to be specifically addressed because according to a study by Miller and Murk (2000), moral reasoning patterns tend to decrease in athletes who play sports over extended periods of time. Both the researchers and the PCA concluded that youth coaches, parents, and league organizers subsequently needed to become advocates for the development of moral values through sport. The ideas promoted by the PCA for honoring the game come from research done by Shields and Bredemier (1995) which recommends several strategies that can be used by coaches for promoting moral character development in youth sport, and certain principles of the NASPE Standards (NASPE, 1995) which promote sportsmanship and fair play (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005).

The following chapter will outline the qualitative research methods that were utilized in this study. Specifically, I discuss the use of a feminist methodology, defend my selection of participants, describe the data collection process, and discuss the means of data analysis used in the dissertation.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss the qualitative strategies that have been incorporated in order to accomplish a research agenda which set out to create a new model for “athletic praxis.” This model incorporates the information provided to me by collegiate coaches of women’s teams about the possible spaces and perceived barriers that exist when it comes to the topic of addressing social difference and social justice with their athletes, and Dr. Handel Wright’s (2002) model of cultural studies as social justice praxis that has been successfully utilized by students in the classroom. As a qualitative researcher, I am guided by my ontological and epistemological principles, and it should be noted that my identity, experience, and training have shaped my research agenda. For that reason, I would like to start this chapter with a brief explanation of these principles.

During the spring semester of 2004, I learned a valuable lesson from Dr. Amos Hatch in his Qualitative Research in Educational Settings class. He emphasized in the very beginning of the course that projects should not originate with research questions and then move to finding a research approach that allows you to answer those questions. He suggested, rather, that students (and researchers in general) need to give some real thought to, “...the belief systems that under gird our thinking” (Hatch, 2002, p.12), and let those insights guide our research. He addressed the need for individuals who are just entering the world of research to really grapple with paradigm issues and deconstruct the assumptions that we each have about the way this world operates. In one of our first class sessions, we wrote reflective statements about who we were and what we believed about

the world in an effort to help us further shape our research interests and ideas. Writing a personal essay about my suppositions felt a bit like some kind of bizarre therapy session, but it also helped me begin to be able to articulate and understand the lens through which I looked at the world and how different things would be for me if I operated under another set of assumptions. We talked at length throughout the course about the number of theoretical paradigms (ranging from positivism to poststructuralism) that are associated with qualitative research, and how the ontology, epistemology, and methodology which accompany each makes them unique (Hatch, 2002). The initial task of sharing our personal essays in class and hearing the contrasting views of some of the other students helped me to better understand how the framework and composition of some other paradigms became distinguished from my own. With that in mind, it is important to note that I am coming from a critical paradigm, and hold a “materialist-realist ontology; that is, the real world makes a material difference in terms of race, class, and gender” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 21). Specifically, I believe that we live in a white supremacist, heterosexist, and capitalistic society, and that these social structures impact the life chances that we each have as individuals. In addition, I believe that knowledge is subjective and inherently political. The research that I conducted was “value-mediated” (Hatch, 2002, p.16) in that what I felt and believed about the world not only directed the purpose of my research, but also the questions that I asked my participants, and the way that I analyzed my data. Working under the critical paradigm allowed me to stay true to my principles and political beliefs, and more importantly, has helped me do meaningful social justice work.

The rest of this chapter focuses on an explanation of the characteristics of feminist research that I have drawn on throughout this study, a description of the participants and a rationale for their selection, and finally, I describe the forms of data collection and data analysis that were the most useful for the dissertation.

Feminist Methods

A feminist approach to research arose as a critique of objectivist, positivist science (Kirsch, 1999). While there are no distinctive definitions which clearly delineate feminist research from other types of qualitative research, there are characteristics that reveal a feminist approach to thinking about methodology. These characteristics are distinguished by the kinds of questions asked, the purpose of the research, and the location of the researcher within the process of the research (Letherby, 2003). It should be noted that this is not specifically a feminist study; however, it has been influenced by feminism in that reflexivity, participant voice, degrees of collaboration and reciprocity are utilized in this project. Each is a characteristic of feminist research and as such will be the focus of the following section.

There is general consensus among researchers that taking a feminist approach to research requires extreme reflexivity. As Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) assert, this is an attempt by the researcher to make explicit power relations in the research process. In order for me to have been reflexive throughout this project, it was necessary for me to reflect on my own experiences, history, and distinctions that I was bringing with me to the research table. Acknowledging this meant understanding how my epistemology, subjectivity, perspective, and politics have played a part in the dynamics of the

relationships that I formed with my participants. In being reflexive throughout the data collection process, I was able to, "...adjust and refine research goals" (Fonow & Cook, 1991, as cited in Kirsch, 1999, p. 3) as I engaged in self-reflection, and learned more about the participants in my study.

In their chapter on the future of qualitative research, Denzin & Lincoln (2000) pose the questions:

Can we ever hope to speak authentically of the experience of Other, or an Other? And if not, how do we create a social science that includes the Other? The short answer to these questions is that we move to including the Other in the larger research processes that we have developed (p.1050).

To me, this quote clearly points to the need for collaboration between those being researched and the researcher. Collaboration is important because it allows the research to become mutually beneficial, cooperative, and interactive (Kirsch, 1999). As such, the researcher owes it to her/his participants to be frank about her/his intentions when entering the research process. By being open about my intentions going in, giving a part of myself to the participant, and offering them sincere feedback during my interviews, I was able to engage in interactive and reciprocal dialogue with my participants. However, the researcher's efforts are only one half of the collaborative process. It is fair for researchers to expect a certain level of commitment from their participants, but it is important to note that there are a multitude of factors that can inhibit the collaborative process. Possible obstacles include time constraints, different levels of commitment to a project, and conflicting values between the participants and the researcher (Kirsch, 1999). Fortunately, I found that the work I did with my participants was mutually engaging,

however, being aware of the possibility of these barriers helped me to be better equipped going into the dissertation.

Of further relevance to feminist research are the notions of representation and voice. Many researchers see this as a central focus when taking on a feminist approach to their work (Fine, 1994; Kirsch, 1999; Oleson, 2000). As a researcher influenced by feminist politics, I had to consider whose knowledge and interpretations prevail (Oleson, 2000). It is of utmost importance that I maintain accountability to my participants by portraying their accounts as accurately as possible while simultaneously being cognizant of the existing power differentials that are inherent in every research relationship. Feminist researchers must allow their participants to be active in the research process and have to be open to the responses given to them. I attempted to maintain accountability to my participants by transcribing their interviews verbatim, and I attempted to go into each interview with an open mind. Further, I gave my participants an opportunity to view their transcripts and to make any changes to them they desired. However, none of the participants wished to do so.

Overall, it is my belief that the characteristics I have addressed are in line with a feminist approach to methodology. While this is not a feminist study, it does have a feminist undercurrent. I believe that throughout this dissertation, I have been committed to making sure that certain feminist characteristics play a part in my effort to conduct meaningful research.

Bias Statement and Bracketing Interview

It should be noted that while I do not believe it will be possible to fully distance myself from any predispositions that I may have about this study, I participated in a bracketing interview that allowed me to, “find points of tension and conflict” (Janesick, 2000, p.391). This interview helped me to recognize my biases, and because of it, I was better able to listen to my participants with a more open mind. I participated in this interview with a graduate student who was familiar with the details of my study and knowledgeable about qualitative research. In addition, this person knew me well, and I feel confident that she was able to give me insight into the preconceived notions that I had about this topic. Information gleaned from the bracketing interview has been crucial to the data analysis portion of the study as I have attempted to flesh out any possible hindrances that might have affected my ability to see the data with fresh eyes.

I learned through my bracketing interview that I believe that there is an emphasis on winning in sport such that the desire to win supercedes the desire to coach holistically. I do not feel that coaches keep athletic achievement in its proper perspective, and I believe that too much of their focus is on the development of technical skills and too little on enhancing the life and well-being of the athlete. In addition, I think that the pressure to win often dictates how coaches conduct time spent with the athletes in practices, team/individual meetings, bus trips, and other times. I went into the study assuming that most of these coaches, particularly the older ones, would have developed a coaching philosophy that encompassed teaching life lessons to their athletes. Additionally, I believed that the older coaches would have a more relaxed approach to coaching, and that

they would be more knowledgeable about the connections between sport and the larger sociocultural context. I assumed that all of the coaches would see themselves as role models to their athletes and expected them to answer that question in ways that illustrated that they saw student-athletes as whole people who would graduate from their college and go on to have full lives. I expected to hear answers about the value of discipline, hard work, honesty, and integrity. I frankly thought that most answers in this regard would be close to the same from all the participants. In addition, it is important to note that I assumed that I would not get many details from the coaches on the strategies they used to address social difference and social justice with their athletes because I did not think that many of them used any such strategies. I particularly had negative assumptions about NCAA Division I coaches as they are the individuals in the most competitive environments. Another observation that I was able to glean from my bracketing interview is that it is my tendency to think about the NCAA Division I model of sport when I am thinking about intercollegiate athletics in the United States, but that I believe that the Division III model is a more appropriate one for intercollegiate athletics. I believe that most Division III schools do not place the value of the athletic experience over the value of a full education, nor is it valued any more than any other extracurricular activity. Through my bracketing interview, I learned that I had a genuine preference for the Division III model of sport.

A final observation that needs to be a part of my bias statement is that several of the coaches in this study were chosen for a particular reason. I contacted Julie, Kim, and Kelly because they had achieved graduate degrees in coaching education or sport

psychology, and I hoped that because of this, they would be more likely than the other coaches to provide me with insight regarding both spaces and strategies for addressing social justice. I also recruited September because I had firsthand knowledge that she had taken some classes that specifically addressed social difference and believed that this exposure might have led her to possibly implement some practices meant to work for social change in her day to day coaching. It was evident that I had preconceived notions about the value and impact of education on coaches.

Participants

I interviewed eight intercollegiate head and assistant coaches of women's teams for this study. Participants were current coaches from all three levels of collegiate athletics (including NCAA Divisions I, II, and III), and coached a variety of sports. Each of the participants was actively coaching at the time of this study, and current status was a desired prerequisite because I wanted to ensure that their experiences were relevant to today's society. Because so much has changed for women's sport over the past three decades, it was important that I get an idea of the current athletic arena so that suggested changes will be relevant and applicable to the future of women's sport. I interviewed both head and assistant coaches as I felt both were equally qualified to help me to ascertain useful information. Further, individuals involved in this study came from different ethnic backgrounds and races, though that was not entirely intentional on my part. Participants were recruited partially through the use of key informants (see Appendix C), who helped steer me towards needed information and possible participants (Cresswell, 1998). Key informants were friends or contacts that I (or my colleagues) have in the collegiate

coaching arena. I used contacts who were well-established in their fields and who were able to give me the names of other possible participants. These key informants briefly described the study (see Appendix C) and the interview process to potential participants and had these individuals send me an email that provided me with their contact information if they were interested in learning more about the study. Upon receiving an email, I contacted the participant and provided a more complete description of the study and the interview process. Once a description of the study was given and all questions had been asked and answered, the individual then decided whether she/he would like to become a participant in the study.

Participants were able to choose a date, time, and location that were the most comfortable and convenient to them if a face-to-face interview was a viable option, and all phone interviews were conducted at a date and time that best fit with the participant's schedule. Interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. An informed consent form (see Appendix A) was given to the participants before engaging in any formal face-to-face interviews, and the consent form along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope was mailed to those individuals who participated in phone interviews. These consent forms guaranteed each person complete anonymity and let them know that they could terminate the interview for any reason and at any time if they choose to do so without any consequences. I made these same guarantees to individuals over the phone so that they were clear about their rights going in to the interview process. As I used a research group to help with the data analysis portion of this dissertation, the informed consent form also notified participants that any researcher who has access to private information will be

bound by a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D) that states their commitment to keep the identity of the participant anonymous.

The proceeding paragraphs will include short vignettes about each participant. Each vignette will provide background information about the participants including age, race, gender, educational background, type of sport coached, the institutional level of the college or university where they are currently coaching, and how they came to be recruited for this study. This information is provided in an effort to give a particular context for the life of each individual. The order of the vignettes coincides with the chronological order in which each participant was interviewed. In addition, I provide a condensed version of the demographics of each participant (see Appendix E)

Mike. Mike is a 42-year-old white male women's swimming coach. He has been coaching swimming for the past 21 years, and was himself a swimmer. Mike received his bachelor's degree from a small private college in the mid-80's and spent time as an assistant swim coach at a high school in Florida before accepting his current position as the head swimming coach at a large southeastern NCAA Division I university. He has held this position for the past 15 years. Mike was recruited to be in this study because I am acquainted with the assistant swimming coach at his university, and she suggested that he might be a good candidate. While I had met him prior to doing the interview, I would not say that I knew him well. However, though my interaction with him had been limited, it did work in my favor in terms of establishing rapport.

Linda. Linda is a 33-year-old white female head women's soccer coach. She played soccer for 21 years before giving it up to coach, which she has done for 9 years.

Linda received her bachelor's degree from a large southeastern NCAA Division I college, which is also where she began her coaching career. Linda took a job as the assistant soccer coach at another large southeastern Division I university, took the head coaching position 5 years ago, and still remains at this university. Linda was recommended to me as a possible participant by her assistant coach who had participated in my pilot study. I had not met Linda before the interview.

Julie. Julie is a 28-year-old Japanese-American female head women's soccer and co-head women's basketball coach. Julie played soccer at a large southeastern NCAA Division I university, where she earned her bachelor's degree. She went on to obtain two different Master's degrees in sport psychology and educational psychology respectively from two separate universities. Julie coached both club and youth soccer teams for three years before accepting her current position as head soccer coach at a private, liberal arts, NCAA Division III college two years ago. Julie was recruited to be in this study because of her high level of education, and her experience as a former AmeriCorp Athletes in Service member. I had not met Julie prior to our interview.

Kelly. Kelly is a 35-year-old white female head women's basketball coach. Kelly played basketball at a private Division III college in New England, where she earned her bachelor's degree. She went on to earn a Master's degree in coaching education from another New England small college, and has been the head coach at her present institution for the past nine years. Kelly was recruited to be in this study specifically because she had a Master's degree in coaching education. I had not met Kelly prior to our interview.

September. September is a 35-year-old African American female who is the assistant coach of a women's track team. September ran track at a large NCAA Division I university on the west coast where she earned her bachelor's degree. September coached at the youth, club, and high school level before she began coaching at the collegiate level. She worked as the assistant coach at two large NCAA Division I institutions before becoming the assistant coach at the large southeastern NCAA Division I university where she has been employed for the last three years. September was recruited to be in this study because I was associated with her, and knew that she had taken a sport and social issues class that I believed would play a part in how she answered my questions.

Kim. Kim is a 26-year-old white female head volleyball coach. She played both volleyball and basketball at a small NCAA Division III college in the northeast where she earned her bachelor's degree. Kim went on to obtain a Master's degree in coaching education from a private Division III college in New England. She was a coach at the club level for two years before accepting her current job as head volleyball coach at a private, NCAA Division III liberal arts college three years ago. Kim was recruited to participate in this study specifically because of her Master's degree in coaching education. I have never met Kim face to face as our interview was over the phone.

Webster. Webster is a 33-year-old white female head soccer and head tennis coach. Webster played soccer at an NCAA Division I university in the Midwest, where she earned both her bachelor's and Master's degrees. Webster began her career as an assistant soccer coach at her alma mater where she remained for two years before leaving to take a head coaching position at her current Division III university. Webster has held

her current position for nine years. She was recruited to participate in the study through one of my key informants. I have not met Webster face to face as our interview was over the phone.

Rhonda. Rhonda is a 46-year-old, white, female head women's volleyball coach. She played volleyball in college, and has held her current position as the head women's volleyball coach of an NCAA Division II New England university for the past 23 years. Rhonda has a Master's degree in business, which she earned while at her current position. Rhonda was recruited to be in this study because she was recommended to me by another participant, Kim. I have never met Rhonda face to face as our interview was over the phone.

Interviews and Document Collection

Prior to engaging in the research for my dissertation, I conducted a pilot study to see if my topic was viable. I participated in two interviews that lasted approximately 55 minutes each with two assistant coaches of NCAA Division I women's athletic teams. The questions were centered on ways in which they engaged their athletes in issues of social justice. I used a semi-structured interview guide and utilized interpretive analysis to help me fully understand the data that I had collected. The pilot study was useful to my dissertation research in that it helped me to identify potential problems with my interview guide, and I found the practice of interviewing and analyzing data to be very helpful. I found that the more frequently I did both, the more comfortable I felt.

With regard to my dissertation, I conducted eight semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) which lasted between 45-60 minutes. Questions utilized in these interviews

were approved by both my dissertation committee as well as the Institutional Review Board at the University of Tennessee. I used the long interview as my main form of data collection because it is capable of taking "...us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world" (McCracken, 1988, p. 65). Further, by utilizing a long interview, I was able to collect data that was simultaneously abundant and manageable (McCracken, 1988).

It was of great importance for me to establish good rapport with each participant. Participating in interviews which are mutually engaging for me and my participants was the best way for me to understand their perceptions and positions. Further, by making these interviews conversational and collaborative, I was able to work with my participants to thoroughly investigate reality so that at some point we might be able to change it (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

McCracken (1988) describes the long interview as, "...one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory"(p. 9). Dialogic interviews gave me access to the opinions, viewpoints, attitudes, and experience of the individual participant. I hoped to achieve what McCracken (1988) refers to as stepping, "into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves" (p. 9). The use of qualitative interviews helped me understand how my participants feel reality is constructed, and how their experiences are created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Since one of the goals of this research project was to learn more about ways and space, if any exist, in which coaches take up issues of social difference and work toward social justice within

the frame of their team, the use of qualitative interviews allowed me to ask probing questions and gave me room to react critically to answers when the situation called for it.

A second form of data collection that I used is document collection. Written texts are important to qualitative research because, "...the information provided may differ from and may not be available in spoken form" (Hodder, 2000, p.704). Although these documents are discussed only peripherally in the findings chapter of the dissertation, they were very valuable to the research process. I collected written samples of the mission statements from the athletic departments and programs in which my participants work. I was able to juxtapose the mission statements of each college with the personal coaching philosophies of my participants. The coupling of these two pieces of information helped me gain a clearer understanding of how systems of power might operate on an institutional level and subsequently affect coaching practices. While I cannot say with certainty that athletic administrators heavily influence coaching styles, there does seem to be a high correlation between the two.

I also gathered written information put forth by the NCAA on their mission statement as well as how they outline a program called CHAMPS/LifeSkills. This program purports to involve student-athletes in various community events. Additionally, I collected email correspondence from the NCAA Assistant Director of Professional Development which outlines the Diversity Education program that is offered to colleges and universities across the country by the NCAA. The documents collected were in the form of brochures, handbooks, or computer printouts from websites. The usefulness of having this additional form of data from which to form conclusions is that, "Texts can be

used alongside other forms of evidence so that the particular biases of each can be understood and compared” (Hodder, 2000, p.704). In addition, having this information at my fingertips helped me to recruit participants because I learned the philosophies of athletic departments and was able to select coaches who worked at institutions that professed on paper to care deeply about the overall educational experience of the student-athlete. I also had a working knowledge of the CHAMPS/LifeSkills program that so many of the Division I coaches talked about, and as such was better prepared to ask them probing questions about its function at their university.

Data Analysis

The analysis phase of this study occurred throughout the data collection process. I transcribed the interviews in full, and took handwritten notes on my thoughts that occurred to me both during and after the interview. It is important to note that while all qualitative research involves interpretation, inductive thinking and is inherently political (Hatch, 2002), my own personal ideological beliefs are an integral part of the kind of data analysis I have utilized in my dissertation. I went into the research with presuppositions about women’s athletic team settings (which have been outlined in previous portions of this chapter), but my data collection and analysis efforts have nonetheless been rigorous and solidly grounded. Each transcription was read repeatedly in order to “get a sense of the whole” (Hatch, 2002, p. 181). I immersed myself in the material to look for information that was present as well as for information that was not included in the data. In addition, I read through the notes that I had taken during each of my interviews. This was done so that I could mark places in the transcripts where certain impressions and

thoughts came to me. Next, I went through the data several times and highlighted any sentences that stood out to me, and I wrote notes in the margins about questions or thoughts that occurred to me while reading the transcripts. After this was done, I again read through the data that had been highlighted and chose key words or phrases that I felt were representative of the highlighted text. I then read through the highlighted material and identified all the information that was relevant to my research purpose. I subsequently read through all the highlighted material and key words to see if any of the information or my impressions of it were similar or connected. Next, I categorized the information using a code (key) word that I believed to be the most fitting description of the material, and cut and pasted all information that appeared to be connected to those code words into separate documents. Most of those code words eventually ended up being the higher order themes, and the data that existed within these themes was fractured into sub-themes (see Appendix F). After the themes were broken into sub-themes, I chose quotes that seemed to epitomize them and used them in the dissertation. The themes were structured in such a way that I was able to check for both consistency and variability among the transcriptions. It is important to note that I allowed for the natural emergence of these themes, and full data descriptions, even ones that do not mesh with overall conclusions have been included so that the research maintains credibility.

Qualitative research is data which strives to depict the story of the participant through the eyes of the researcher, and its validity is often of great concern. In addition to participating in a bracketing interview to try and offset any possible biases I might have had about the data, I also utilized an outside research group whose sole purpose was

verification and feedback. The research group received clean transcripts of the interviews, and independent and open coding was utilized. The purpose of the research group was to allow for differing perspectives, and my hope was that the group would catch what I might have missed. I met with each group member individually to discuss the themes they felt emerged from the data. While I did not use all of the suggested higher order themes, many of the themes that members of the research group identified were concurrent with the themes that I identified as well. Two examples of this were coaches who are focused on the outcome, and lack of education in social justice issues. The reason that I did not use all of the themes suggested to me by the research group was that not all of the data was relevant to my research purpose. It is my opinion that all of the findings provide a rich description of the efforts and spaces that coaches use to work for social justice in sport.

In addition to analyzing the interviews, I also spent time using interpretive analyses on documents such as the CHAMPS Life Skills materials, and the mission statements of the athletic departments that the coaches who participated in my study were employed by. Having these two forms of data allowed me to compare and contrast the two sources of information and further ground my findings.

Reflexivity

By utilizing a feminist approach for this dissertation, I committed myself to continual reflexivity throughout the entire process. This means that I had to be cognizant of the power dynamics that are inherent in the research relationship. In order to do so, I needed to spend some time wrestling with what that meant for me. I agree that it is of

great importance that I portray accurate accounts of the varying views of my participants. As such, I typed verbatim accounts of the interviews and then offered my participants the chance to read over and make changes to their individual transcripts. However, I do feel that there are fundamental issues of hierarchy within the research relationship that make voice and representation complex issues. It is my conclusion that in the end, the author's voice is the most powerful, and despite our best efforts there is no real way for the relationship between the researcher and the participant(s) to be equal or proportional. Hopefully the research being done is mutually beneficial and that different views fuse together to form useful knowledge, but there is still an unequal power dynamic between those participating in the research and those writing up the final account.

In concurrence with the inherent power differentials in research relationships (and it is important to note that sometimes this means that the researcher is the one who is powerless), there is a facet of my identity that was sometimes salient: my gender. Because I did not specify that I would work only with female coaches, I did interview one male coach. Power differentials and the vulnerability of the researcher was indeed a factor when this dynamic emerged. However, despite worrying that I would not be able to ask the tough questions, I was able to get through the interview without any apparent issues arising. Something else that is interesting to note is that there were not many times when I felt I was the individual with power during the interview process. Three times, interviews had to be rescheduled because she/he either had something else come up, or forgot about the appointment. You certainly get a sense of your importance to these individuals when you are dismissed as an afterthought.

The next chapter of the dissertation will include the results and discussion from my empirical work. I will attempt to make sense of what I learned by using the theories covered in the review of literature.

Chapter IV

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the empirical portion of this research was to explore and elucidate the spaces and perceived barriers that intercollegiate coaches of women's teams identify for addressing social difference and social justice with their athletes. The findings from analysis of all interviews and collected data are presented in this section. All data sets were analyzed using interpretive analysis, and the data was fractured into categories or higher order themes that were consistently found throughout the interviews. Each higher order theme (coaches who focus on outcome, coaches who focus on experience, spaces for addressing social justice, and barriers to addressing social justice) has a set of sub-themes that serve the purpose of making each higher order theme clearer. In the following section each emergent theme, its sub-themes, and supporting participant quotes will be presented. I also offer an outline of the themes (see Appendix F) as a visual aid for presenting themes and their corresponding sub-themes.

Philosophical Beliefs about Coaching

As a means of trying to establish rapport with the coaches in my study, and because I did not want to start the interviews with difficult or intimidating questions, I began the open-ended question portion of each interview by asking my participants to discuss their coaching philosophy. I had initially assumed that this would not be a difficult question, as it seemed likely to me that most coaches would know why they had made that particular career choice and had spent some time considering the types of coaching methods they wanted to incorporate. However, it became increasingly clear that

while the term *coaching philosophy* might be used often, many coaches do not take the time to reflect on what it really means to them (Pelletier & Bower, 2001). Many in the field of sport and physical education pedagogy have made it clear that it is necessary for coaches, at some point in their development, to concern themselves with less technical and tactical types of knowledge and begin asking themselves, “why am I a coach?” and “why do I coach like I do?” (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2004; Lyle, 1999; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). As it turns out, the answer to those questions lies at the heart of this study.

I was able to tease out a number of elements pertaining to coaching philosophy which helped me to understand the current models of NCAA women’s sport in a whole new way. Four of these elements included: what coaches perceived as being in the realm of responsibility for them with regard to “teaching” their athletes; how their coaching philosophies fit in with the overarching philosophies of their particular institution; how their philosophies were demonstrated in terms of day to day action; and how their philosophies affected their interactions with the athletes. By giving me insight into their world view, I have come to better understand how for some, winning is the bottom line, while others view victories on the field simply as an added bonus. The coaches’ answers distinguished themselves in such a way that two categories arose from the data and painted an illustration of how coaching philosophies have the potential to shape entire athletic programs. The first category surrounds individuals who focus largely on the outcome and whose priority it is to achieve the end goal of winning. The second category encompasses individuals whose greatest amount of concentration goes to the overall experience and personal development of the athlete.

Theme #1: Individuals Focused on Outcome

Coaches who choose to focus on the eventual goal of winning are common in intercollegiate athletics. In fact, placing winning above all else has become the most prevailing code of conduct seen in coaches across the United States (Eitzen, 2003). It came as no surprise to me that the coaches who fell into this particular category were all NCAA Division I and II coaches who each focused on imparting technical skill, emphasized winning above all else, recruited athletes based largely on skill level, and wished to work in athletic departments and at institutions where success was determined by the number of wins and losses racked up at the end of a season. Those coaches also offered a theoretically functionalist view of the current state of women's sport.

Technocratic coaching. All coaches in this category gave relatively mechanistic answers to the question concerning their coaching philosophy. While some talked about goal setting, or the journey, or the fact that when athletes looked back on their collegiate careers they would not remember the scores of particular ball games, it did not disguise the fact that each of them still focused largely on technical skill development and the process of physical development. The following quotes from Linda, Mike, and September exemplify this theme of technocratic coaching. When asked to describe her personal coaching philosophy, Linda replied:

I believe in playing...to be the best you have to play the best. So my out of conference schedule is always very hard. I am hired here to win in October, win the conference, and then win the NCAA tournament. I am not hired here to win in September. So, we play...I don't ever want to go 0-8, but if we take a couple of knocks along the way and we learn from it...any loss is not good, but if you can learn from it, it is beneficial. So we try to play the top teams from all over the country. So, 1) my kids are developing, 2) they see the kind of style they might

face in the NCAA tournament, and 3) they're getting the national recognition that they deserve when it comes to voting for all American, and all region, and all of those types of things. And I feel like that's been my philosophy over the past five years, and it's worked out well in terms of development, and in terms of the progression of our program into what it is today.

Here, Linda is focused mostly on developing her athletes into better soccer players. She mentions preparing them for post-season play by scheduling tough opponents and by placing them in high profile situations so that they have the chance to receive national attention. While one cannot conclude from this answer that Linda is not interested in having her athletes develop intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually during her tenure as their coach, one can see that she believes it is her primary job to aid in the physical development of her athletes. Her lack of attention to the holistic development of her athletes is evidence of what she believes her role as a coach to be.

Similarly, the focus of Mike's coaching is on athletic development. He discussed goal setting and focusing on the process as a means to the end goal of winning, and makes this practice clear when he stated:

We are...our gospel is "it's all about the process." It's all about, you know, working on things in workouts and setting goals on a regular basis. I meet with all of the athletes individually on a regular basis, about every three weeks, to monitor their goals, to identify and set new goals, and to you know, really, really get them... because it's amazing how the really gifted athletes a lot of times it's just been the gift and not a whole lot of cognitive thought going in to you know how do I swim fast. And so, I think we do a lot in that area to really educate them. There's probably not a day that goes by that we are not talking to somebody you know, about strategy and process. And when the focus is on process the better the outcomes will be.

During our interview, Mike repeatedly discussed his belief in and respect for sport psychology tactics. He continually championed goal-setting, and asserted the importance

of doing all the little things right each day in practice. While these declarations seem to be about the process, they are actually just simple diversionary tactics that come from the more traditional forms of sport psychology that only make it appear that one is not focused on the ultimate goal of winning. Again, I could not conclude from this answer that Mike is not interested in helping his athletes develop holistically, but neither can I conclude that he is. However, omitting personal growth from a philosophy of coaching seems to be a pretty clear indication of his focus.

Like Linda and Mike, September also offered a more technocratic coaching philosophy. She said:

Yeah, well as far as, you know, physical capacity I am a speed and power philosophy. You train the component that you wanna bring to the starting line. That's what I do, science. As far as people, it's still in progress. You can't be a dictator, and you can't be a friend, or a buddy. You can be a friend, but not a buddy. And you have to keep, I learned this from (names head coach) you have to know what's right for the athlete. And no matter what, you have to make sure that you do that. And sometimes they're going to be mad at you for it, but as long as you know that it's in their best interests, you don't sway.

September's coaching philosophy does not illustrate much critical reflection on her part, though I am not implying that she lacks the skills necessary to do that. She was clear that she wished to train her athletes hard physically, but when she considered how her coaching philosophy might emotionally or mentally affect her athletes, she faltered a bit. She noted that she is still a work in progress, which could indicate that she is trying to sort out the kind of coach that she wishes to be but could also indicate that I asked her a question to which she had not given much thought. September reiterated later on in the interview that she is very focused on the mechanical aspects of her sport. She said:

...I feel like I coach very technical and everything that is associated with a movement is what I want to focus on. So, what I'm saying is track and field is the kind of sport where, if I can just move my step 6 inches further or 2 inches further than it should be or could be, that could equal like a second. So I need to do the things that can help me get that foot underneath me. That one movement instead of a whole big movement. So I try to focus on small particular aspects of biomechanics.

September may not be quite sure about her coaching philosophy on an existential level, but she articulates quite clearly that physical skill development is high on her agenda.

The participants also let me know that they were focused largely on skill development in other ways as well. For instance, when I asked Mike if he felt that team building activities were an important component of his work, he admitted that when coaches become so focused on winning they begin to lose humanistic qualities. However, he made his priorities clear by adding:

Because of the NCAA restrictions on training, we are in a sport that truthfully twenty hours is probably the minimum you really need to train to have any kind of success. And so it is hard to probably get it in as much [team building activities] as we would like to...

Rhonda noted that she really only encouraged her team to interact with one another off the volleyball court during preseason and then her only reason was so that they can play well together while on it. She said:

And a lot of our preseason, which is about 2 to 3 weeks before school, I believe that's a time when you're not allowed to do anything other than be with your teammates. So, we're either training in the gym or eating and sleeping together, or else they're having a social event or um, team meeting or a team building...we did a ropes course once. All those things that get you all together on the same page before you're thrown apart as individuals into classes and dorm life.

There are certain humanistic components that these coaches failed to mention in their coaching philosophy, and they made clear that their goal as coaches was to help these

athletes develop physically and to facilitate their team's effort to work as a cohesive unit on-the-field/court/pool. The philosophies of the coaches in this category actually meshed with the mission statement of the athletic department at the Division I university where most of them worked. The mission statement at this particular university sought to enhance opportunities for intercollegiate athletic competition, foster the pursuit of academic excellence, support and encourage the achievement of individual and team championship performance, and to be a source of pride for the university's students, alumni/ae and supporters.

Emphasis on winning. In the past thirty years, women's sport has evolved from a fun loving game to a high stakes profession (Doherty, 1999). One of the drastic changes that has come along with this shift, is that winning has been brought to the forefront of everyone's minds, the coaches in this category especially. People in the United States enjoy sport because there is a clear outcome, and in sport we can easily separate the winners from the losers (Eitzen, 2003). Often, teams at NCAA Division I level are rewarded handsomely for winning, and successful coaches can receive pay raises, lucrative endorsements, and invitations for speaking engagements (Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2003). There is no shortage of incentives for becoming the leader of a successful program, and there are a number of repercussions (i.e. being fired) that might face those who fail. These facts make it easier to understand why the coaches in this category focus on the components that they believe will make their team winners. They are entangled in a system that determines athletic success by counting the number of wins that have been racked up by seasons end. Whether they agree with this practice or not, they are complicit

in its perpetuation. For instance, when asked about the perceived pressures that come from athletic departments whose largest desire is to accrue national championships, Mike replied:

Um, my first five or six years as head coach, we had a lot of success. And so there was not a lot of pressure, because we were successful. And then we went through about a four-year period where things definitely started getting kind of rough. And yeah, that's when you feel the pressure. Fortunately, in the last three years things have been getting better and better.

Mike is clearly aware that his job is on the line when his team does not win, and he expressed relief that things have been getting better and that the pressure has eased off in the past few years because his teams have had more success. He added that in the years during which he had felt the most pressure, he had not been as good a coach to his athletes. He described feeling as though his “over” focus on winning detracted from interacting with his athletes on a more holistic level, and he missed engaging with them in that way.

Unlike Mike, September seemed to enjoy the relationship between winning and NCAA Division I sports. She said, “I like to win. That’s what I do.” She asserted that her desire to win and the pressure that comes from outside forces did not really affect her because she focused on the “process” that it took to make her and her athletes into champions. She believed that as long as the “process” remained her focus, she would come out on top. She said:

I always feel like when I do the right thing, winning comes anyway. And now the last two nights my husband has been teasing me, because I've been up with my eye twitching because it's track season. But that's not about who's gonna get first place. That's about, is everyone gonna be injury free? What can I do to improve such and such's technique? What's gonna motivate this next person to do that?

It's never about oh my gosh, she has to win. I never worry about that, I always just try to make them focus on the task. And then slowly but surely they win in the end. And if they PR, I feel like they're going to win. And the kind of kids that we recruit, if they PR, they're gonna be top in the country

However, she did acknowledge that at some programs across the country, the emphasis on winning has had detrimental effects on intercollegiate athletes. She said:

I think that how [her current university] is, and what [current head coach] believes is like far and few between. These kids don't have any discipline at other schools. They don't teach them about academics, they don't make them go to class. And I can't say every school. But I can say from what I see, and from some elite athletes that may leave their school and come here and train when they graduate, they have no discipline. They don't have a lot of morals. They kind of just let the kids go and they score points.

Of all of the coaches I talked with, Linda struck me as being the most competitive and driven and she referred to success and winning continually throughout our interview. Early in the interview, she talked about a personal belief she has that is worth quoting at length because it gives great insight into her core beliefs. She said:

What I see is that 95% of the population, at least in North America, is mediocre to average. And that's perfectly fine. People in America can survive being mediocre, and they can have a wonderful family, and go on in life. But 5% of the population pursues excellence. Those are the people like CEOs, CFOs, people that run the country, the President. All those people that are pursuing to be excellent in any field they do, which is competing against anybody that's in their field. The way I see it is that if there are only 5% of those people in this population, then probably only .002% of that is women's soccer coaches and I would take those odds to compete against those individuals any day at any time. So I try to narrow down for my kids saying, you can be mediocre or average and its fine. It's absolutely fine. But I don't want you to be a part of this program. Not because I'm judging people who are mediocre or at average, but I want to pursue excellence here and in every aspect of my life. And I want to be surrounded by the same people. But if you want to be mediocre or average, I can tell you 150 other colleges to go to. And I can help you go there. But if you want to pursue excellence, which is very difficult because it's a daily thing where you have to you have to raise your standards. You have to be morally and ethically correct, you have to live with integrity, all those things, which is very very high standards. And it's human

nature to maybe want to slack off sometimes, to not run as hard when people aren't watching. So I always tell my recruits, if you want to be mediocre and average, go somewhere else. If you want to be excellent then you should come here. So I try to give them those little insights to keep their competitive juices going, and understand there's not ever going to be any slack around here.

When Linda made this statement to me, I truly felt that I could have predicted the course that the rest of the interview would take. It said so much to me about who she was and what she believed to be true about intercollegiate athletics specifically, and the way society operates in general. This statement made it clear how competitive Linda is and that she integrates competition and winning into most avenues of her life. She also demonstrated her belief in the idea that there is meritocracy in American culture. Her assertion that CEO's, CFO's and the United States President reached their positions because they worked hard and "pursued excellence" gives no indication that she is cognizant of the racial, gender, or class inequities that exist in the larger society or in sport more specifically. Nor does she seem to be aware of the embedded forms of interlocking oppression (McIntosh, 1990) where the quadruple strands of race, ethnicity, gender, and class are so entangled that it becomes nearly impossible to separate them. She clearly believes that in a democratic society, there is equality for every citizen and that we are all born with the same life chances. Linda's statements reflect the values and ideologies that she uses to understand the world, and it seems likely that the authoritative discourse she uses would silence her athletes. Linda uses what McLaren (2002) calls "oppressive power" in that she draws on her own values narrowly and in doing so, dismisses the experiences and beliefs of those around her...her athletes in particular.

Like September, Linda is in accord with her athletic department as far as winning is concerned. When I asked her specifically about how her goals as a coach fit in with the desires of her athletic department, she said:

I feel like at [university], they give us so much support that you have to win or you don't have your job...I want to be national champion and so do they, and they have given me the all the resources to do that.

Linda also did not have any complaints about the structure of women's NCAA Division I athletics. She noted that throughout both her playing and coaching career, Division I sports had always had the form of the competitive model that we see now, and she did not perceive any part of that structure to be a hindrance. Linda could not imagine a different model of sport, nor did she seem to think that a new model would be of benefit to anyone. In her assessment of both her own athletic department and of Division I sport, I was reminded of Linda's shortcomings as a critical agent. She demonstrated a lack of reflection on the current organization of sport, and as such had no suggestions for improvement. Not only did I conclude that Linda could use some help honing her critical thinking skills, I also concluded that her answers were probably not uncommon. In my interview with Linda, my desire to do work that could help educate coaches who could become social agents was simultaneously heightened and discouraged. Her answers helped show me that coaches are both part of the problem *and* part of the solution.

Rhonda, who is at an NCAA Division II institution, did not experience pressure from her athletic department to win, but placed an emphasis on winning herself. She said:

There's a large emphasis on it on my part, and I try to instill that among the leaders, the seniors usually, to instill among the team because we've had quite a good tradition going and have been quite successful. And in our conference, and

among the teams in the northeast, we traditionally do very well even though we don't have scholarships. And some of the schools we play do and sometimes we beat them and sometimes we don't. And we don't have any grand illusions to win the national championship, but our goal is to always make the NCAA tournament which means that you are among the top 6 to 8 teams in the northeast, and to win the conference which we've done quite a few times. It's not like a program where it doesn't really matter if you win or lose; we certainly want to win as do most of our sports.

Here it is clear that Rhonda regards winning very highly, and most of her actions as a coach stem from this desire to win. Although Rhonda is at an institution where there are no financial scholarships, she still works very hard to make the most out the resources she has available to her. Rhonda describes herself as being intense, and she said two times during the course of our interview that she was a bit of a tyrant and screamer on the court. I think this gives insight to the competitive fire that must live inside her, and this competitiveness and desire to win has clearly shaped her coaching strategy. To me, Rhonda and Linda are prime examples of coaches who are complicit in perpetuating a system that has placed too great an emphasis on the end result of winning. Drawing from the Positive Coaching Alliance literature on redefining what it means to be a winner, I think that both of these women could benefit from shifting their focus away from outcomes and onto effort, learning, and mastery of skills. I do not mean to say that there is anything wrong with wanting to win, but to have that be the focus of every practice, every day is part of what contributes to our morally distorted sports world. Refocusing on sport's ability to teach collaboration, mastery, and communication, will help athletes better enjoy their sport experience, increase their self-confidence, and could possibly keep them playing sports for a lifetime (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005).

Recruiting for skill. Three of the coaches in this category made it clear that they each recruited athletes based largely on their physical talents. Linda claimed that she recruited “good people”, and then later asserted, “I just want to win. If you come on my team and run past everybody, you can play.” These statements lead me to believe that while she might be interested in the personal characteristics of her athletes with regard to how well they fit in with the other athletes on the team or if their presence blended well with the already established team dynamics, what she most coveted in the women she recruited to play for her was a high level of skill.

Similarly, when asked a question about recruiting from a diverse population, Mike replied:

Again, you know it's not something where I say I am going to go out and find a black swimmer to diversify our program. I look pretty much at times. I don't care if they are white, yellow, or whatever. It doesn't matter to me.

Mike had stated earlier that he did not pay attention to the personal beliefs or practices of his athletes because he was not particularly concerned with them in that regard. He noted that he thought of his swimmers as people and as athletes, but that he did not give much thought to the particular components of their identity (i.e., race or sexual orientation).

In my interview with September, I learned that she also held this belief. I asked September if she intentionally recruited minority women in an effort to give them opportunities that they might otherwise not have. Her reply was, “Nope. Times, heights, distances.” She was referring to the fact that who qualified as a recruit for her was the woman with the best sprint times, and who could jump the highest and farthest. It is important to note that her response surprised me in a way that made me aware of my own

biases and beliefs. September is an African American female who is responsible for coaching the sprinters on a track team that is predominately African American, and the university where she coaches is more than 90% White. There was a part of me that assumed that she would intentionally recruit young African American females because they have been unfairly disadvantaged in American society for so long. Some scholars even note that African American females have two strikes against them as they are both female and black and exist in a racist and sexist society (Cahn, 1994; Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2003). I thought that September might make intentional efforts to provide educational opportunities to young black women who have historically had the odds stacked against them. Though she told me that it was important for her to see her athletes finish their education upon coming to her university, she did not go out of her way to increase the life chances of African American women. One way to interpret September's reply about recruiting talent who can run fast and jump high is that there is nothing more important to September than winning. However, the fact that most of the top high school sprinters in this country are African American may make the intentional recruiting of minority athletes a moot point for her. She may be able to get the best of both worlds in that she can create educational opportunities for young women of color, and she can do that without having to sacrifice her desire to have the best track team in the country.

By and large, the coaches in this group recruited women for their programs who would perform well on the field. Granted, it is unlikely that any of them would sacrifice the reputation of their programs or bend academic policies by recruiting athletes who had emotional problems or track records of deviance and violence just because they could

perform well in the pool or on the soccer field. However, with an increasing pressure to win and the corrupt male model of sport as a role model (Svare, 2003), it is not hard to imagine that it may not be too long before some elite level coaches of women's teams cross this boundary.

Functionalist outlook. The details of a functionalist perspective were outlined in more detail in earlier parts of this dissertation, but as a reminder, I offer a brief overview of a functionalist perspective of sport. Functionalists believe that individual members of a society share basic values, and that major components of the social system (i.e., government, education, family, sport, and so forth) all fit together to form a cohesive unit which works to maintain the overall balance of a system. So for individuals that hold a functionalist perspective, sports are seen as capable of teaching valuable life lessons, building character, and promoting a disciplined work ethic (Coakley, 2003). Further, its emphasis on success and competition promote the most fundamental tenets of capitalism, which is widely ascribed to in our society. Finally, functionalists believe that sport makes it possible to bring together diverse communities and harmonize potentially disruptive divisions in society.

This perspective of sport came out a number of times in my interviews with the coaches in this category. Each of them discussed the great life lessons that sport offers young athletes. Linda said of athletics:

It's such an education beyond the classroom for them. Because they're learning how in the classroom to be a wonderful businesswoman, but then on the soccer field they're learning how to push themselves to the limit of almost wanting to stop, but then continuing to go further. So they're learning that their body can go much further than what their mind is telling them to do. So now, when their faced

with a challenge in the business world, someone's yelling at them and they feel like quitting they have this inner resolve that's going to keep them going.

In this statement, Linda demonstrated her belief that sport teaches young athletes the value of perseverance, and instills in them a “no quit” attitude that will be useful to them in a number of situations in later life. While there is something to be said about a resolute and determined individual, research encompassing the idea that sport builds on these characteristics is inconclusive. There is nothing to preclude the idea that individuals come into sport with these traits already established, that they become more attractive to coaches because they exhibit them, and thus are more likely to be selected to become members of a particular team (Coakley, 2003).

September was a bit stumped when asked about the role of athletics in the overall development of a student athlete. She replied, “I don’t know, I think we do a pretty good job. Athletics is just athletics,” as if sport were a separate entity unto itself and not a part of the larger scope of the school. I offered her some examples of what critics of intercollegiate athletics have said with regard to the concept of the “student-athlete” and how perhaps big-time college sports have challenged the academic integrity of higher education (Eitzen, 2003; Svare, 2003). She came back with this statement:

I feel that there is nothing more important to me than for these girls to have their education. And I don't think a lot of them, especially the kids I coach, the African-American females, most of them would not have an opportunity to go to a big-time D I university if their parents had to pay for it...including myself. I ran at (DI school). I would've been at home if I hadn't had track and field to pay my way. So I think it has a place....

The point that September makes is a valid one. There are a number of athletes, particularly African American athletes, who would not be able to attend college without

the help of an athletic scholarship. However, it also let me know that she had not critically assessed the system of organized athletics, but rather was looking at it from an individualistic perspective. September seemed to believe that because she was one of the few individuals who earned the chance to go to college at a large university via an athletic scholarship that this was a realistic dream for any young woman who worked hard enough. However, there is substantial literature (Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2003) that shows that the belief that sport is a path for social mobility is false. Very few individuals competing in high school athletics ever obtain athletic scholarships, and many of the individuals who actually do, never end up graduating from college. Statistically, across all NCAA Division I colleges in the U.S., African American female athletes graduate at rates below their non-athletic counterparts (Eitzen, 2003), and it has been theorized that this is directly attributable to their participation in sport. Athletes who are recruited for their athletic skill but are poorly prepared for college, the challenge of overcoming mental and physical fatigue, and time constraints all play a role in the success of student-athletes (Eitzen, 2003). While the graduation rate for the women's track team at September's university is 97%, the same cannot be said of all women's athletic programs. September's position on the appropriate role for intercollegiate athletics appears to come largely from her personal experiences. In addition, September did not seem to have given much thought as to why most sprinters in track and field are African American. She did not mention the cultural factors that go into an athlete's physical development, and offered no critique on the role that sport plays in the lives of black youth. These omissions let me know that September had not considered some of the detrimental effects

that can occur when a group of children grow up believing that their only means for success is through their physical abilities.

Other comments about learning how to work as a member of a team, and the maturation process that is facilitated through athletics were made throughout the course of my interviews with Rhonda and Mike. These, like the longer examples that I have already laid out, indicate that all four of these coaches believed that sport promotes character development, gives educational opportunities to individuals who might not otherwise have them, helps individuals overcome their own perceived physical and mental limits, and promotes the idea of teamwork. All of these sentiments fall squarely in line with functionalism, and while some of these characteristics are promoted through sport, this functionalist perspective is problematic to my research. Because much of society believes that sport is doing its job by passing along accepted social values and standards, and because many of us do not take the time to critically reflect on the role it has actually begun to play, sport as it is currently organized and given meaning will stay the same. Functionalists have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo because it allows those individuals who already have power and influence in society to keep it (Coakley, 2003). Sport, in its current form, legitimizes existing social relations and practices, which renders them neutral and natural. McLaren (2002) makes similar points about American schools, and the ways in which they produce unreflective and robotic individuals who barely even consider challenging commonplace practices in our culture. Upon critical assessment, one can see that sport-like school-is a disturbing institution that reinforces the dominant racial, gender, and class ideologies that keep so many on the

margins. Knowing that these coaches supported a functionalist perspective of sport makes the idea of convincing them that a new model of sport could and should be adopted feel particularly daunting. However, it is through this kind of insight that I am better able to present a model in Chapter 5 which has the potential to overcome such barriers.

Theme #2: Individuals Focused on the Experience of the Athlete

Half of the coaches who participated in this study expressed the desire to create positive experiences for their athletes as their first priority. All of these coaches were women who worked at NCAA Division III colleges, which have an organized model of sport that is very different from the NCAA Division I model. NCAA Division III athletics is more in balance with academics and other social and organizational activities that take place on campus. At NCAA Division III schools, scholarships are partial, need-based, and hinge on academic potential (Svare, 2003). Title IX is more fully implemented than at NCAA Division I schools (Svare, 2003), and there are a host of minor men's and women's sports so that participation opportunities are maximized. While I am not going so far as to say that Division III schools have achieved gender equity, it seems clear that because administrators believe in the potential for sport to provide positive experiences for all participants, more people are given access to it. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, athletics are funded by college administrations and by student fees (Eitzen, 2003), so there are few outside commercial forces that come into play. This is very different from the NCAA Division I model where athletics are partially funded through student fees, but largely funded through commercial and corporate sponsorships (Eitzen, 2003) in addition to personal donations. At the NCAA Division III level, the aim of

athletics is to contribute to the education of the student-athlete, but athletics do not supersede the academic goals of the institution, and they are not deemed as any more important than any other extracurricular activity. The Division III model of sport is vastly different than the Division I model in that it is intercollegiate sport in more simplistic form.

The four coaches who held the overall experience of the athlete in the highest esteem viewed themselves as educators. They each believed that teaching athletic skill was secondary to providing the women on their teams with a positive sport experience and passing along valuable life lessons. They each emphasized the pleasure and performance components of sport, focused on the benefits of collaboration, and saw winning and competition as an arbitrary benefit. Often they talked about having a “student-first” mentality, and this was seen in the way that each of these coaches talked about the interactions that they had with their athletes. The coaches who fit this description discussed how their personal coaching philosophies fell in line with the overarching philosophy of NCAA Division III athletics, and most of them had taken the time to carefully consider how and why they wanted to coach. Two of them mentioned that they had taken the time to write out their philosophies as it helped them to remain true to their ethics and principles about coaching. While these women were equally as passionate about athletics as the coaches who emphasized winning above all else, they were able to step away from sport a bit and offer a more critical assessment about the organization of it and determine the ways in which they wanted to contribute to sport.

Coach as educator. For the women in this category, coaching was far more about contributing to the overall education of their athletes than it was about imparting technical knowledge. Because each of them had a holistic perspective on what the role of sport in a person's life should be, none of them talked about strategy or enhancing tactical skills. Instead, they focused on how they could most help their athletes expand their life skills. Ideas about their jobs as coaches came out when I asked them about their coaching philosophy. Kelly described hers to me this way:

I do approach my job as that I'm an educator. I think of myself as a teacher, because I don't like the label coach. I don't know, people just have this vision when you say you're a basketball coach. I consider myself to be an educator. I think my job is to, I don't focus on wins as much as I focus on the process. I get that kid as a first-year, and I want them to leave having learned a lot of things. Not so much about the sport, but about themselves, being a leader, being part of the team...that kind of thing. How to handle adversity. Over the course of four years, they do improve in all those areas and leave, you know, more capable to go into the real-world and be successful. Even if it's just a little bit, I feel kind of like I did my job.

In this statement, Kelly showed her desire to influence her student athletes in ways that extend beyond the basketball court and into their personal lives. She explicitly said that she wants her athletes to leave her program having learned something about themselves, about overcoming challenges, and about becoming a leader. She discussed practical examples of how she attempts to teach her athletes these valuable lessons when she said:

But really the things I'm most proud of is the way that my players, like I said before, develop as people over the course of four years. I mean, there are examples that stand out. For example, a couple of players who were great in high school, but get to college and aren't used to sitting and they come to me wanting to quit and it's a process that I have to teach them about being a team player, what it means being a teammate. You're not always going to start, and in fact, you may not start your entire four years here. But this is what you bring to the program, to the team, and I...I don't know just improving them as leaders. I do a lot of work

with my players on leadership. This year I have been meeting with my captains, they're quiet group. I've been trying to get them to increase their voice with the team and to show their leadership in different ways, and at different times. So, I don't know, it's that general... I think one of my main jobs is to have them develop as people, as leaders, and develop in pressure situations so that they can somehow leave and carry that into, you know, the world with them.

In her reflections of her coaching philosophy and on what she thinks she is responsible for teaching her athletes, Kelly never once mentioned skill development (though she notes later in the interview that she is certainly interested in enhancing the playing ability of her athletes). In this way, Kelly is a good example of a coach who is largely interested in the overall education of her athletes.

In the same vein, Kim discusses her priorities as a coach while articulating her coaching philosophy. She said:

I think that sport is a way of learning. I think that in the environment that I coach in, or that I choose to coach in...it's a liberal arts college, it's a private liberal arts college. I think it actually enhances the liberal arts experience, because you learn a lot more that you don't learn in the classroom that will enhance the person overall. So as a coach, I look to be an educator or teacher and a role model, too, I guess.

Kim later described in more detail what these roles meant to her and how they affected her job as a coach. She noted that she attends lectures and workshops that focus on politics, public policy, and nutritional health in an effort to relay knowledge to her athletes off the court. She felt this showed them that she is empathetic to their classroom demands, and that it also hopefully taught them about learning for learning's sake. Kim also feels that her extra time in these classes and seminars help prepare her for intellectually challenging her athletes. She noted that:

At (university), they teach the kids to challenge, you know, um even their peers and their professors on their ideas. The kids are very intelligent. So, a lot of things that we do are challenged in a lot of ways.

Kim asserted that this promotion of questioning is one of the things that she loves about her job because she believes that she is helping to push her athletes think critically about life, and they are helping her do the same. Her statements help illustrate one of the ways in which critical pedagogy can be used as a good analytical tool for evaluating the sport setting. Kim acknowledges the reciprocal relationships that she has with her athletes, and realizes that athletes (students) come into sports arenas (classrooms) already holding knowledge and should be given space to express themselves freely. Kim's reflections about her interactions with her athletes fall in line with the critical pedagogy concept of voice which, "refers to the multifaceted and interlocking set of meanings through which students (athletes) and teachers (coaches) actively engage in dialogue with one another" (McLaren, 2002, p. 245). She has set up a dynamic through which she can continually challenge her athletes both physically and intellectually, and has given them the permission to do the same for her.

Julie also discussed a coaching philosophy that included more than just a desire to promote physical development in her athletes (though that is part of her wish). She said:

...I would say that communication, effort, and work ethic are what I place a high premium in that if anybody comes to me at the college level with those abilities I will work with them to make people stronger ... I place a high premium and on creating a team culture and team identity so people feel they have a place on the team no matter if they play or not, no matter if they play ever. I want to make sure people feel like I've invested in them. And make sure that people are getting, even if they're not the strongest player, getting something out of the sport whether it's personal improvement or gains in other areas of their lives. That's what I place a premium on, and building confidence is inherent in all of those things.

In Julie's philosophical statement, I can tell that the most important thing to her is that her student-athletes look back on their sporting careers and remember them as something that they enjoyed and felt good about. She seems particularly concerned with building up her athletes' sense of self confidence and making sure that she fosters a team environment that is inclusive. In addition to her position as head soccer coach, Julie is also a trainer with the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA). The PCA utilizes a mental model for coaching that is meant to help revolutionize the current "win at all costs" model of coaching. The PCA believes that the current model restricts young athletes from reaching their full potential and deprives them of valuable life lessons that sport is capable of teaching athletes. Instead, the Positive Coach Mental Model gives coaches the tools necessary to redefine the ways that they think about winning, helps them focus on mastery rather than outcome, and encourages coaches to teach athletes about honoring the game through good sportsmanship (Positive Coach Mental Model, 2005). The way that Julie described herself as a coach fit the principles that the PCA espouses. Julie works to create an atmosphere that promotes these fundamental tenets of the Positive Coaching Alliance. She also noted that she believes very much in the promotion of team bonding. She recognized its importance both with regard to on the court/field cohesion, but also finds value in it in that it helps her athletes learn things about one another that they might not otherwise learn during a practice session. She said:

...I think that the time that it takes to do like a team building activity or to go do community service together is worth more at times than one extra training session. So, I do a lot of those things. And a few times they were during fall break. Fall break here is a week, kind of like spring break. And during preseason

where it just the athletes, and at all women's college there's just not that many teams on campus. So were able to do a lot, even if it's just spending...like, we'll rent out a house on campus and we'll watch movies together.

It seems clear that the women in this category see their roles as coaches as much more than simply teaching their athletes the physical skills that are involved in their respective sports. They work to foster challenging and inclusive atmospheres for their athletes, and they attempt to emphasize the invaluable learning experiences that can come from participating in sport and being a member of a team.

Emphasis on experience. As I have said in previous sections, the model of sport that the coaches in this category work with teaches that providing positive experiences for their athletes is the number one goal. While no one complains about winning by any means, no one complains about not winning either; the issue is whether or not the student athletes are learning valuable life lessons, having fun, and getting the chance to participate in sport. Julie summed the goals of Division III athletics up quite nicely when she said:

...they hold the whole experience at a premium, so athletics and academics and sort of mixing all those things. All the rules and restrictions are in place to make sure that students don't feel pressured from athletics to miss or to have any part of their academic life suffer. There's a big emphasis on the junior year abroad here, so a lot of times people miss juniors because are studying abroad, which is hard. But it's competitive, but it's more, well obviously they're less involved. I don't know what it was like where you went, but at (names DI school) there were like 1,000 people at our soccer games. At (names school) you're just playing the sport because you love it, and less about scholarship, expectations, and things like that. I would say, just on another general level, Division III puts the student-athlete ahead of anything else. The coaches don't get paid very much. There's less pressure on the coaches, it's not like if you don't win you're automatically fired ...It's giving people a chance to play the sport they love.

Webster juxtaposed the experiences that she had had as a Division I soccer player and assistant coach, with her Division III coaching experience in order to articulate her understanding of Division III athletics:

...I think I have found at the Division III level...I've found a little bit more, I guess, how do I say this, equal to my philosophy. In Division I, I felt like you know it was a job and kids are there because they're on money, and that kind of thing. And then going to Division III, definitely my philosophy is more line with the balance between social life, academics, your family, and athletics.

It seems clear that Webster has moved away from being focused on winning or recruiting as she was when she was at the Division I level, and has found the Division III model of sport more in line with her desire to work in a system that promotes balance in the lives of her athletes. She discussed this further when she said:

...as a player coming through the system, yeah you've got more time delegated to do different things than just soccer, soccer, soccer or tennis, tennis, tennis. Um, more free time for that, and less importance [placed on it]. You know athletics aren't as heavily, you know cherished I guess as other parts of your life. It's all kind of balanced together, and I like that.

As was stated earlier, the four coaches who held philosophical beliefs that placed the experience of the athlete at a premium each worked in Division III settings. Most of them had chosen to do so because the philosophy of the Division III model of sport meshed well with their own personal beliefs. The colleges where these coaches worked each professed in their mission statements that athletics enhances ideas about community, helps relieve the rigors of academic work, and helps athletes transcend individual differences. Kelly highlighted this point when she discussed her understanding of her athletic department's expectations of her and her colleagues:

...there is a no real pressure to win. It's more so, are the student athletes having a good experience, a positive experience? So there are teams here that haven't won a lot in the past years, or whatever, and I think that coaches are probably putting pressure on themselves as to what they can do better. But it's not like you're hearing from the A.D. or the President like oh my God, you have to win. Then there are some teams that aren't necessarily winning, but they're also not happy with the coach for whatever reason. And those coaches have more of chance to go.

A coach who held winning in the highest esteem and placed it above all else might not be altogether happy in a Division III setting because she/he might not have the full support of the athletic administration or of her/his colleagues. Kim noted that she often wrestled with fellow coaches about whether or not the sports program at her college ought to try and be more competitive. She said:

(College) is also a Quaker school, so they're very much into participation. So I find myself a lot of times with my colleagues at (school) and in sport in volleyball, too, am I really doing what is... I'm constantly having dialogues about am I pushing it too far being competitive, trying to go for the wins. Cause you know I think if you're coaches and you want to be successful and you're really working hard, you have to want to win. It does come down to that. But in teaching your athletes, I think that you need to first start talking about success and take the focus away from the win/loss.

Kelly expressed a slightly different perspective:

...the last couple of years, there are a core group of people here who are just all about winning or more so about winning. And I have issues with that, with people and peers of mine walking around this department being like, well, they don't talk to you when you don't win. And when you do, they say 'Oh isn't winning great. Winning is everything.' I'm like, it's really not to me. I like to win, but it's not everything to me.

Kelly made it clear that just because she does not hold winning as her ultimate goal, this does not mean that she does not care about sports. She said,

But I'm very passionate about athletics; it's a huge part of my life. Obviously, I am here doing what I do. But I really like that balance that I had as a student athlete

in college, and I believe strongly in that. People, you know, the years that we have had some big success, people have said, you know, you surely want to move up the ladder. The Princeton job is open, don't you want that? I don't know if people thought I was lame, but I was like no, I don't. Because I like that balance that Division III provides student athletes. And it's my philosophy. It's what I played in and it's what I feel comfortable with. I don't think I would feel comfortable with other... the Division I mentality and certain institutions. Also, I like to have balance in my life.

Here we see two examples of coaches who have slightly different perspectives on winning, and we see how those perspectives might fit in with institutional philosophies in Division III colleges. Kim appeared to be trying to contain her desire to win because that kind of mentality about competition is not suited for her particular college, and Kelly felt somewhat appalled when she heard her fellow coaches talking about winning like it was the be all/end all of college sport. An interesting note is that these women came from the same institution, and their differing opinions seem to represent a slight rift in their athletic department.

Open communication. So how do these coaches let their athletes know that winning is not everything, that they are interested in creating atmospheres which promote positive experiences? Largely, the coaches in this category talk about having their athletes partake in activities that are not sport-related, and they talk about the kinds of honest interaction that they have with them. By emphasizing life outside of sport, these coaches make clear that their first priority is the holistic experience of the athletes. Two coaches, Kelly and Julie, mention having their athletes participate in team bonding type activities, including playing board games or watching movies as a team. Kelly noted that these activities were an addendum to practice, but Julie said:

I think that the time that it takes to do like a team building activity or to go do community service together is worth more at times than one extra training session. And if you set everything up in terms of planning your whole year, you can set those things up where they can be completely beneficial. So I do a lot of those things.

Both mentioned that with their athletes being pulled in so many other directions in terms of academics and extracurricular activities, they tried limit the number of demands they placed on them so that they were able to achieve success in all avenues of their lives without focusing too much on just one of them. The issue of time will be discussed in more detail in a later theme.

Additionally, all of the coaches talked about the relationships that they had built with their athletes in terms of knowing them off of the practice field. Kim mentioned that she worked really hard at maintaining open lines of communication. She said,

...I say, my door is always open; you can always come in and talk to me. And they do know that, and they really use that. And they also know that I will not always agree with them and they will not always agree with me, and its fine. ...We do a lot of talking, a lot of communicating.

Applied to sport, this quote by Kim reflects McLaren's (2002) belief that teachers (coaches) must work to understand how their students (athletes) experience and make sense of the world in order to better understand the motivation and drive that gives each student (athlete) her own unique voice.

Julie also enjoys the open lines of communication that she has established with her athletes. She noted that they come and talk with her about a number of different subjects, and that they often seek her advice on school and other topics. She also enjoys getting to know them as well, and this is obvious in the following statement:

Like here [at college] we have to drive, you know going in vans to games, and we have to get our own food, and eat at the dining hall of opposing teams sometimes instead of going out with meal money. So even though we may complain about that sometimes, I actually like it because you get to know your players more. Not just their strengths and weaknesses on the field, but all-around what do you want to do with your life, or how can I help you. Different things like that.

She added that she believes that this type of interaction could be done at all NCAA levels, not just at Division III, but that because it's not focused on as a priority for everyone, it is often an engaging opportunity that gets passed up. By gaining a better understanding of her players, Julie is better able to meet their needs both on and off the field and is better able to provide them with positive overall experiences. Engaging with athletes directly is an important topic that will be explored later in the chapter.

This group of coaches viewed the overall experience of their athletes as their “number one” priority. They often referred to themselves as educators and saw passing along technical knowledge second to teaching their athletes valuable life lessons. Most of them worked to de-emphasize winning, and each of them discussed their pleasure at working in a model of sport that allowed for balance. Most of these women had put a great deal of thought into why they were coaching and how they wanted to coach, and this came through for most of them in well articulated coaching philosophies. The coaches in this category exhibited a “student-first” mentality that was backed by their intentional actions to get to know their athletes in formal and informal settings.

Theme #3: Spaces for Addressing Social Difference/Justice

I have written in other parts of this dissertation about the usefulness of using critical pedagogy as an analytic tool for exploring sport. I have made the argument that

the institution of American sport, like the institution of American education, is a powerful socializing agency that has largely served to reify dominant cultural ideologies. I have also proposed that sport, like school, has the potential to become a “site of possibility” wherein its courts and playing fields “provide conditions for empowerment” (McLaren, 2002, p. 254). In order for this to occur, sport must become dedicated to (and as a precursor, coaches must become dedicated to) teaching athletes the skills necessary to live in a democratic society. Many critical sociologists have pointed to the ways in which modern-day sport produces and reproduces the aspects of the wider society which contribute to racial, class, and gender injustices (Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2003; Svare, 2003; Brooks & Althouse, 1999; Griffith, 1998), and it is this critical assessment that is the necessary first step towards social change. The next is for those involved in sport to work toward the creation of meaningful dialogue and to promote action that gives athletes the chance to learn social responsibility (McLaren, 2003). It is with these principles in mind that I reviewed the transcripts of my interviews to look for spaces that occur in everyday sporting situations that coaches could use to address social difference. What emerged were four sub-themes: informal settings, formal settings, community service, and recruiting for diversity. Informal settings refer to the spontaneous times in which conversations about diversity, relevant social issues, and politics may occur. Formal settings represent official team meetings, team rules, or assigned readings in which the topic of social difference might be addressed. Community service is a sub-theme which recognizes the value inherent in community service for teaching athletes about social difference and civic responsibility. And finally, recruiting for diversity refers

to the intentional recruiting of women of color or international students as a means of exposing athletes to different ways of being in this world.

Informal settings. Many of the coaches described instances where they talked about hot-button social issues, politics, or broached the subject of diversity with their athletes as being very informal. It seemed that for some of them these topics just came up naturally while on long road trips, when putting away athletic equipment, or while sharing a pre or post-game meal. For instance, both Mike and Julie said that driving in cars to and from games was a time when many of these informal conversations took place. Julie said:

I really like it, if we're on a bus trip for like five hours, we always get in these long discussions about women in sport, women in the media... It comes up so naturally here that I'm sort of lucky. I don't have to bring it up. If there is like a racial issue, if there's a sexuality issue, we can just put it on the table in talk about it and it's great, like, we'll have a pretty informed discussion.

Julie's statement indicates that bus trips are a great time for coaches and athletes to discuss pertinent social issues. Since everyone is confined to a small space for an extended period of time, and there are few other options to talking, making constructive use of this time seems like a viable option for coaches. However, Julie went on to make an important observation when she said:

I think it's because of my background in sport psych and sport studies that I like talk about these things. But if there something that comes up or something in the popular press that comes up like we'll just have a conversation about it and are pretty frank about, you know, what's going on in the world and how relates to them. And all those things. I think it's interesting that you asked that because I think that given where my interests are in general, like I think that every sports could benefit from talks about different social issues and different cultural issues that sort of cross athletic boundaries but don't really cross other lines.

What is interesting here is that not only does Julie talk about a space (bus trips) when social issues could be addressed, she also attributed part of that to her own interest and knowledge in the subjects. She noted that she has a background and is well-read in sport psychology and sport studies, so she is able to facilitate a conversation about how different social issues may affect the sporting arena. She also indicated that she gave her athletes the chance to voice their opinion and share their own experiences rather than just attempt to carry out a lecture on different world topics. I cannot say for sure how these conversations play out, but it appears that long bus (van/car) trips hold the potential to become “critical classrooms” where coaches (who are well informed and prepared to do so) can become transformative intellectuals who “treat students (athletes) as critical agents, question how knowledge is produced and distributed, utilize dialogue, and make knowledge meaningful, critical, and ultimately emancipatory” (McLaren, 2002, p. 255). Of course, the trick then becomes educating American coaches to become social agents themselves, which will be discussed in a later theme.

Kim also talked about having informal conversations with her team, and mentioned specifically talking about Title IX and diversity with her athletes. She said they often come into her office during the day or talk with her after practice. She mentioned that what she has found to be the easiest way to incorporate conversations about social difference with her athletes is when different issues come up for other teams in the athletic department that she can use as an example to emphasize the importance of having dialogue around what she described as being touchy subjects. She offered an example of an African American on the women’s soccer team who had a dispute with a

coach and felt that race was a contributing factor. Kim used this to talk about issues of race with her team and gave them the chance to voice their thoughts and feelings about the specific example and then pushed them to talk about how systematic racism affects the wider society as well. While the idea of using personal experience as a means of approaching a topic is a good one since social issues can be made relevant to almost every athlete, I am concerned that had an issue of discrimination not come up at Kim's college that she might not have ever talked about it with her team. Having conversations about issues like race, gender equity, or homophobia can be done casually, yet purposefully when the coach makes introducing these issues a priority.

September also discussed having conversations with her athletes in an attempt to understand them and give them the space to bring their experiences to the table, but she was quite vague about when and where these conversations occur. She said she will talk about it whenever the conversations come up, so one can assume that she talks with them on the track during practice, on the road to meets, at training table, and so on. She noted that she feels it is her responsibility to teach her athletes about the "real world" and tries to do this every time she gets a chance. However, as with Kim, September seems willing to engage her athletes at relatively mundane times, but I am uncertain how it is that she defines the "real world," how interactive these conversations are, and what is actually talked about. My assumptions about where these conversations occurred for her seem to be fair examples of times and places where informal conversations with athletes can occur. In sum, conversations about social difference and social justice can occur in

informal settings, such as long van/bus rides, over meals, or before or after practice while setting up or putting away equipment.

Formal settings. There are four main formal situations for putting the topic of social difference or social justice on the table. The coaches in this study mentioned having structured team meetings, structured individual meetings, assigning readings, and having athletes participate in community service. In this sub-theme, we see examples of how coaches could use team and individual meeting times to talk with their athletes about subject matter that is unrelated to performance enhancement and is instead focused on heart-to-heart talks between athlete and coach about personal issues; this gives both the coach and athletes a chance to voice their own thoughts and feelings about various social issues that are relevant to the team. We see examples of coaches who assign readings that they believe to be pertinent to their athletes. And, finally, we see how effective community service has the potential for changing the views and dispositions of athletes.

As an example of how a team meeting can be used as a formal space to talk about social difference, I have chosen an example told to me by Kelly. She told me about a situation where she heard rumors that there were some homophobic comments being made by particular members of her team, and so I asked her to explain how she dealt with the issue. She said:

So I kind of approached it as these are kind of our team policies. Be tolerant of one another, and these are the areas that I think we should consider...I said, whether it's racial difference or cultural difference, geographic difference, differences with regard to sexual orientation, blah blah blah blah. I just did a kind of list of all areas where I think we need to be tolerant and that you know if we're not that's really hurtful. I kind of approached it in a general way, but I made it

clear that that if it got back to me that people weren't being tolerant, that it would be unacceptable.

The way that Kelly chose to handle this situation was to lay down a list of team rules that made explicit the kind of behavior that she expected from her team. This was a formal setting where a conversation about tolerating social difference was had, and while I think that it is a good example of a space (i.e. team meetings) where coaches and athletes can interact with one another over this topic, I find Kelly's handling of the situation somewhat problematic. Kelly's efforts were well intentioned, but they were also somewhat elitist and autocratic. In effect, she took what could have been a valuable teaching moment and silenced the voices of her athletes. Kelly fell into the trap of what McLaren (2002) calls ideological correctness by simply stating what she believed to be a more appropriate way to live in this world and not allowing her athletes to express their own thoughts and experiences, which she could have then helped them to question. All Kelly really did in this situation was to tell her athletes what to think and how to behave, rather than helping them to reflect critically on problematic behavior. Structured team meetings and the establishment of team rules is a valuable space to help students become better critical agents and broach the topics of difference, inclusion, and acceptance. They can become safe spaces for team members to discuss their opinions and engage in meaningful dialogue with one another, which, while having value unto itself, would also create a more cohesive environment and enhance the chances for on-field success.

A second formal setting that allows for conversations about social difference is individual meetings between a player and coach. These types of meetings generally occur

monthly in the NCAA Division I setting, and cover topics like goal-setting, academic standing, and overall mental/emotional health. I mentioned that Mike did this earlier with his athletes and noted that he mostly talked with them about their monthly swimming goals. However, just because this was Mike's focus does not mean that this space would not be useful for talking with athletes about relevant social issues, particularly if they were directly relevant for the athlete. For instance, there are lesbians, women of color and working-class athletes on almost every team across the country, and I would venture to say that having the chance to talk with their coaches about what their experiences have been would be greatly beneficial for both coach and athlete.

McLaren (2002) talks about a teacher (coach) who serves as a social/moral agent by going beyond the obvious (taken for granted) culture and digging out subjugated knowledge. This gives those from disadvantaged groups a chance to express their views and have their narratives held up in contrast to normative frames of knowledge. In this way, athletes and coaches can create a "critical discourse that calls for a new narrative through which a qualitatively better world can be both imagined and struggled for" (p. 258). While it might seem beneficial to have these conversations in a group setting, an individual meeting with a coach might feel like a safer space for an athlete to initially speak out, and so has merit at least as a beginning step.

Another dynamic that exists in athletic programs which could be a potential means for addressing social justice/difference, is the capability of the coach to assign reading material to athletes that deal with social issues, social difference, and social justice. Mike told me that he posts readings on a bulletin board, and has also set up boxes

for each of his athletes where he places reading material, quotes, and pictures that he thinks his athletes might find useful. While he admits that most of his reading material is related to performance and staying motivated, he is still talking about two spaces (bulletin board, reading boxes) that could be used for addressing other topics, like social difference. Similarly, Kim talks about she often assigns readings to her team, but she also notes that they are mostly related to sport psychology. However, both of these coaches helped me see that it could be possible to have athletes read materials that focus on difference. After all, if coaches feel like they can give their athletes articles about motivation and relaxation, they must also feel like they could assign readings on other topics, if they thought that those topics were important enough. Dispensing reading material is an invaluable tool that could help revolutionize the meaning that we assign to sport. Articles that challenge functionalist views of sport, or that provide both athlete and coach with more knowledge on a number of important topics like gender equity, racism in sport, or homophobia (to name a few) is an important first step in providing those involved in sport the tools necessary for changing it.

Community service. The next sub-theme in this category is about community service and its ability to teach athletes about social difference, help them develop new skills, and promote civic consciousness. All of the coaches in this study structured at least one community service outing with their athletes every year, and some did far more than that. Four of the coaches had semi-mandatory policies in place that required their athletes to serve in the community, and most of them spoke of programs on campus that served as liaisons between the college and the community which made promoting community

service a bit easier. While the motivation behind why some of these coaches pushed community service on their athletes was somewhat suspect, it does not erase the benefits of that service to the athlete or the community. For instance, while Linda initially pushes her athletes to participate in community service because there is an award from her athletic director that goes to the team who puts in the most service hours, she also pointed out that being exposed to families or people who are disadvantaged helps her athletes realize how much they have. She said:

I think that's another step that this program can give the girls to becoming a wonderful young lady, and understanding that they should be grateful everyday for what they have because a lot of families and people out there don't.

Linda's assessment that her athletes get a better sense of their own good fortune by helping others is one of the reasons that many schools participate in community service outings. This exposure to difference is a valuable learning tool, as it helps to create a sense of empathy that is difficult to teach young people who seemingly live in a bubble filled only with themselves and their familiar and comfortable surroundings.

Mike justified his belief that service should be mandatory when he stated:

...it's important that we are seen out in the community and you know, the big thing is that athletes who are reluctant to go and do something and then once they do it, they absolutely loved doing it and they feel really good and fulfilled for having done it.

While there is great value in service no matter the reason for doing so, I would be remiss in not pointing out how problematic Mike's statement is. First, he pointed to the importance of looking good in the eyes of the community as a main reason for doing community service, and then he seemingly places great weight on how this service makes

his athletes feel. By doing this, I know that Mike is not particularly interested in having his athletes do service for the sake of social justice. He does not indicate that he believes in doing service for the greater good of the community, or to teach his athletes about their civic responsibility. Instead, he is concerned with the image that his program projects to the community and that his athletes feel good about themselves for having given of their valuable time to those in need. I would like for Mike to have had sounder reasons for having his athletes go out into the community, reasons that were informed by theory. I would like even more if Mike gave his athletes access to those theories, then had them connect their experiences to those theories in weekly reflective journals, but perhaps that is too much wishful thinking on my part. The important thing is that Mike, like the rest of the coaches in this study, is having his athletes do community service, and this a possible space where they can learn about social difference.

Recruiting for diversity. This last sub-theme refers to the way in which coaches can intentionally recruit athletes from diverse backgrounds as a way to expose athletes to social difference. Many of the coaches in this study talked about the desire to successfully recruit minority athletes, though most of them mentioned that they had little success in this regard. I think that Rhonda did a good job of explaining this sub-theme when she said:

I think one thing about being a team member is that you're in a group and you're interacting with that team so much of the time. You know, we travel on the bus sometimes 6 hours and they are talking off and on all the time. And to be in a group, I don't even know how many different states are represented, 7 or 8 states across the country. We've had players from Puerto Rico, Brazil, Hawaii... everybody comes in with such different backgrounds and such different ideas, and for them to talk among themselves and learn from each other about differences

and learn from each other about the different backgrounds among all the people that they come into contact with is extremely important.

In this quote, Rhonda refers to the way in which athletes can learn from each other by sharing their experiences and realities with one another. While some of the coaches in this study are interested largely in recruiting athletes who will help them win, I think that Rhonda shows the value in having athletes on a team who are more than just skilled players, athletes who are capable of bringing new ideas and backgrounds into the team setting.

Theme #4: Barriers to Addressing Social Difference/Justice

While there were a great number of spaces that the coaches gave for addressing social difference with their teams, there were simultaneously a number of barriers to it as well. The main sub-themes that emerged from this higher order theme are perceived lack of time, perceived lack of responsibility, and a lack of education/training on the issues. Perceived lack of time refers to the belief among the coaches that either they or their athletes have so many demands on them that they do not have the time to deal with issues of social justice. Perceived lack of responsibility refers to the fact that many of the coaches pointed to other venues or programs that were responsible for teaching these young women about this topic. And finally, lack of education/training refers to the fact that many of the coaches felt like they themselves were not informed about these areas and, therefore, did not feel comfortable trying to talk with their athletes about it.

Lack of time. Many of the coaches discussed the fact that either they themselves did not have time to teach their athletes about topics that were above and beyond physical

skill, or referred to the multitude of demands that are placed on athletes as a means of explaining why they did not address topics outside of the technical realm of sport.

Rhonda, who was a head coach and also administrator at her university, said plainly that she did not have much personal time to devote to her athletes beyond the time she spent with them on the volleyball court. She noted that she would want to do more community service or team building activities with them, but because she had so many other things on her plate, she could not justify taking that time. Kelly also mentioned not having personal time to devote to her athletes. Kelly is the head coach of the women's basketball team, a physical activities instructor at her college, and recent mother of two. She asserted that before having children, she was able to lead her team in more community service and team building activities when she said:

I will be honest with you; I did a lot more when I did not have kids. I have just been really busy lately with babies. We try to do community service every year. We do free clinics for the local kids. In the past, we did more community service projects then we have in the last couple of years, but...

However, she noted that she feels in some ways having to wear so many hats makes her a better role model for her athletes. She believes her struggles help them see the importance of time management and maintaining balance in life. She also discussed that she felt it was healthy for her athletes to see that she was not perfect, and said:

I think it's really valuable that they do they see that I'm not perfect. I mean when I had my first child I would have to run out of practice and like pump, you know, because I was breast-feeding. And it's not always pretty. Life is not always pretty, but you can somehow get it done.

She went on to note that showing her athletes that real life is sometimes messy might be particularly useful for some of the women on her team who would like to be mothers some day. She said:

I've had conversations with them...last year when we were in California, we were out to dinner once and I was talking to them. One of them said, well I wanna be a mom, I've decided that I want to have kids young. Or I'll start my career later, or I will do both. They were all saying that kind of thing and I was like you know its fine that you're all saying this now, but no matter what you do, it's not going to be as easy as you think it is.

In spite of making the most of a difficult situation in terms of time, Kelly's acknowledgement that she is not able to do as much service as she would like speaks to the personal time constraints that some of the coaches have. Interestingly, though, not all of the coaches have as many roles as Kelly and Rhonda. Each of the Division III coaches were responsible for teaching classes and/or had administrative duties, but the Division I coaches only had to coach their squads and were not expected by their university to teach, nor do they have administrative duties. September believes those added responsibilities set coaches up for failure. She said:

I'm afraid to have to go to a lesser place. That don't have nearly, it's almost like in some institutions, they set you up to fail. You have to teach, you have to fund raise, and you have to coach, and you have to win. You have minimal resources, and minimal help.

September makes two notable points. First, she describes collegiate settings other than Division I as being inferior. This indicates she believes that, because Division I is the most competitive model of sport, it should serve as the standard for which all other models should strive. In some ways, this is dismissive of the values that the Division III model ascribes to such as teaching athletes collaboration and communication. Her second

point that the large number of responsibilities that coaches face at smaller colleges makes their job frightfully difficult only makes me question further why Division I coaches are not able to do more with their time. Additionally, none of the Division III coaches had assistant coaches and were forced to rely on team captains to take on assistant-like duties. Conversely, all of the Division I coaches had at least one and sometimes two assistant coaches.

The other barrier related to time was the claim that the athletes themselves were too busy. Webster noted,

The girls are very busy. And that's another thing, we have a small campus, we only have 1600 on the campus. And you find the same people, you know the athletes which make up a third of the campus about 500 or so athletes, that these core group are what run everything. So they are super involved with, not only academics and athletics, but campus services. Or they're in sororities, and they're really pushing their time as it is.

Similarly, Julie said:

One of the constraints that we have here is that, the practice times are pretty much set and the game times are set, and if you say we're going to take this Sunday and do this, everyone kind of goes berserk. It's like, I have this schedule, and I have this meeting with the professor. So it's hard to do that here.

Here Julie and Webster both point to the fact that athletes are already so involved in campus events that to ask them to give more time to their athletic coach is asking too much. Julie also pointed out that at the Division III level, coaches do not have as much control over athletes time and cannot be as demanding as Division I coaches. She said:

Also at the level here, we don't really have control. Like I felt like at Division I, if it was January and my coach says ok we're having a meeting and we're going to do community service in January it was like okay that's what we're going to do. But off-season here is literally like off-season.

However, Mike who is a Division I coach also concluded that his athletes are too busy even though he has more control over their time than a Division III coach. He said that if he had a shorter season or was in a less demanding sport in terms of practice time, then maybe he could get his athletes to do more in terms of service to the community, outside reading, or team bonding type activities. Since that was not the case, he felt that to ask for more time from them would be unfair. Specifically he said:

I mean, we start their training the week they get here and they really don't stop. We have about a two week break after NCAA's and then we get right back into it. And one of the things that we do have to balance, and this is something that became a topic at the head coaches meetings, that there were beginning to be too many demands on the athletes. Not necessarily just community service, but outside groups you know wanting the basketball team to be a part of this banquet, or the swim team or whatever.

He concluded that his athletes are “going 24/7, non-stop and they need some time to breathe.” This may well be the case for his athletes, but one wonders if he is so concerned that there are too many demands being made on their time and had to go to the athletic department to help him say no to outside groups who wanted his team to attend a benefit or what have you, why did not he let up on the amount of time he was making them spend in the pool. Mike is clearly most interested in getting his athletes to perform to the best of their ability, and not as interested in what is most beneficial to the development of his athletes' critical consciousness.

So, with these statements we see that some possible barriers to addressing social difference include: (a) the coaches are too busy; (b) the athletes are too busy; (c) the coaches do not have enough control to make extenuating demands on athletes time; or (d) the coach is unwilling to sacrifice practice time in order to spend time with athletes on

outside issues (i.e., team building, community service, assigned readings). The question is: Could the barrier of time constraints be overcome and if so, how? I believe so. Julie noted in an earlier quote that coaches could build service and team building (and I would add time to read, reflect, and discuss) into a schedule at the beginning of the year and that to do so would be extremely useful for the athletes, possibly even more so than if they were to spend that time on the field practicing. It would take some foresight and planning on the part of the coach, but scheduling group outings or team discussions far enough in advance so that both coach and athlete have plenty of advance warning seems like a fairly simple task. Additionally, the coaches do not always have to lead a community service outing, or even a discussion group. Coaches who were themselves too busy could delegate some of these tasks to other assistant coaches, team captains, or managers if necessary. In fact, placing the responsibility of planning and executing team community service outings squarely on the shoulders of the athletes of the team might be the best way to go about it. First, the athletes in charge would know that their coaches believed them to be capable of planning such an excursion and could possibly instill a greater sense of confidence in the athletes. And second, athletes would be in charge of finding out what the needs of the community are, determine their own interests, and could come up with service projects that were both meaningful to them and beneficial for the community.

The assertion that athletes are too busy is a tricky hurdle to overcome with the data that I have collected in this project. Because I did not interview any athletes and do not know their perspectives I can only draw conclusions that are based on my own

athletic experiences in college. My sense is that this is a false assertion. Certainly athletes are very busy people who must carefully balance their time among practice, games, and academics. However, I do not believe that one afternoon a month, or one hour spent on reading and journaling is too much to ask from these young people. I doubt that you would find a single female athlete who said she had no time for hanging out with friends, dating, or visiting with family. People make time for the things that they want to do, and they prioritize their schedule accordingly. If an athlete was committed to her development into an agent of social change, she could make time to doing what it took to get there.

Lack of responsibility. Nearly all of the coaches in this study referred to other programs or venues as having a larger responsibility for addressing issues of social difference than they did. As some pointed out, athletes often learn of these issues in classes; others said that they relied on CHAMPS/Life Skills to advocate for and plan community service and still others pointed to centers on campus that served as a resource for all students for community service opportunities in the area. In fact, when asked if she felt it was her responsibility to teach her athletes about diversity issues, Webster indicated that she did not feel that was part of her job. She said, “Uh, you know I think they’re getting that in the rest of their education.” She went on to make a disturbing statement about believing that she would only need to talk about acceptance or diversity with her athletes if she had women of color on her team. She said, “...it's not even an issue with us right now. We do not have anyone that is a minority.” Not only does this statement reveal her obliviousness about white advantage in this country (i.e., her assertion

indicates her belief that being white is normative and colorless), but she also overlooks possible class and sexual orientation differences that might exist on her team. This is a dangerous dismissal on her part and one that is critically unreflective. It indicates to me that not only is she largely unconcerned with working toward social justice in the wider society, but that she has not even created an inclusive environment for her athletes.

Linda echoed Webster's statement that she does not talk about social difference, diversity, or politics with her athletes because they are learning that in the classroom. She says, "Their classes that they take in sociology and stuff, they touch on these things. And sometimes they talk about issues like that." She goes on to say that they do not need her to start the fire for them as they are very intelligent "girls" who can make their own decisions without her telling them what to think. She was very adamant about not wanting to influence her athletes unfairly, and made it very clear that she did not share her own personal beliefs or politics with her them.

Webster also pointed to an organizing committee existing on her campus as being largely responsible for getting her athletes out into the community. She said:

I think what happens is that we got our SAAC, the Student Athlete Advisory Council, on campus about four or five years ago....We started ear tailing every community service towards that group. So if we do things now it's through SAAC and then all sports are involved.

Similarly, Mike gave credit to the CHAMPS/Life Skills program at his university for getting his athletes involved in the community. He said:

But having CHAMPS be the liaison between the community and the athletes has been I think really really helpful. From my standpoint we probably end up doing more in the community because we have them in place. And they preach to the athlete about how important it is to be involved in the community.

Linda, who is also at a university where there is a CHAMPS/Life Skills program, agreed with Mike's assessment. She says, "I just think that it's a wonderful program. I am very grateful that it's there are because it's less time and work that I would have to do that was something that I really wanted my kids to do."

While both Mike and Linda are thankful for having a program in place that is responsible for getting their athletes out into the community, September pointed out that just because the program is there does not mean all coaches are taking advantage of it. She noted that while the CHAMPS programs certainly makes itself available to both athletes and coaches, when coaches do not discuss the issues with their athletes, the program is less effective. She said, "I think we could do a better job of that, honestly. We could do a better job. I think we all get caught up in our own personal coaching deals, and we can do better job of making them go more." I agree with her belief that coaches need to talk with their athletes about how service to the community ought to be a priority, but do not like her phrase, "...we can do a better job of making them go more." This could possibly make outings feel like a duty or even punishment for the athletes. Discussing the importance of giving back and taking active roles in the community is extremely important and should be set up in the form of an interactive dialogue rather than as commandments handed down from a ruling party.

Julie also spoke of a campus organization that served as liaison between her college and the surrounding community. She often pointed her athletes to the center at her school when they came to her wanting to do service, and she also reminded her

athletes of events that the center was sponsoring and encouraged them to try and attend. But, as was noted earlier, Julie did not feel that she had enough control over her athletes to insist that they participate in these activities, though she did feel a sense of responsibility for spreading the word if there was an activity going on. Kim noted that, while there was a center on campus whose specific purpose was to organize, sponsor, and fund community service activities, often the times were not conducive to athletes' schedules. She said:

We're actually working with this center on campus because a bunch of the athletes, there is some huge time conflicts between what programming they have for the general student population and what athletes can do, you know because most of the stuff they do is on weekends and during our game times. So we have been trying to work the last year, our department with this center on campus to try and divide some programming that is more conducive to athlete's schedules.

While making an effort to get this organization more in tune with athletes' schedules, we see an example of what can be problematic when a coach attempts to rely on an outside resource to teach her/his athletes about the value of serving the community. Programs that do not exist explicitly for athletes (unlike the CHAMPS/Life Skills program) often do not take into account and make exceptions for special scheduling needs.

Overall, I was surprised at the many ways that the coaches in the study put the responsibility of teaching athletes about social difference, social justice, and community service off on someone or something else. Though many of them seemed to rely on valuable campus resources (as was noted by September), these resources are meaningless to athletes when coaches do not make what they have to offer known and prioritized. Additionally, Kim points out that some centers do not cater to athletes' schedules and,

therefore, can be rendered ineffective for athletes. Overall, I think that if coaches were to take responsibility for discussions surrounding social difference, and for at least the partial organization of service outings, then the athletes would be exposed to these issues a number of times throughout the course of their collegiate career; then, they could make more informed and critical decisions about their beliefs, politics, and sense of social responsibility.

Lack of education/training. There were a number of explicit and implicit statements about the coaches' lack of education and training surrounding issues of social difference, gender equity, and so on. When asked if they had ever been through diversity training workshops or been presented with issues of social justice at any point in their careers, most of the coaches said no. These types of workshops and seminars are apparently not commonplace in athletic departments, at national coaching conventions, nor do the coaches in this study perceive them to be a fundamental part of the continuing coaching education curriculum. Some of the coaches conceded that it was possible that sessions on dealing with diversity in a team setting might have been occurring at local and national conferences, but that they had either not known about them or had chosen not to attend. Kelly informed me that she mainly attended the sessions that dealt with strategy when she said, "I go to our national convention most years, but the things that I attend are mostly like X's and O's kind of stuff." She went on to say that because of her lack of training on issues like diversity awareness and so on, she would not feel comfortable trying to lead her team through a workshop where these issues were covered. She said:

Well, I don't know if I've had enough training to do like you know some kind of the workshop or even exercise. I don't know...I would want to have some kind of training before I went out and did something major with my team.

I asked Kelly where she thought she could or ought to be able to get that kind of training and she told me at the national coaching convention or by attending a workshop that her college sponsored. After she said that, it became clear to me that getting training in this area was not a particular priority for Kelly. What was interesting is that Kelly is one of the two coaches in this study who have Master's degrees in Coaching Education. I asked her what type of courses she took in her graduate program and she mentioned a few (i.e., sport sociology, history of women in sport) that should have informed her on at least some of these issues. However, since she graduated nearly a decade ago and had not been taking continued education classes dealing with these topics, it is not surprising that she felt incompetent to lead discussions on those topics.

Conversely, Linda, who had only a bachelor's degree and admitted to no diversity training felt very competent about the subject matter. However, when she explained why, I had my own questions about her level of knowledge. She said:

But I was born in Scotland, grew up in Canada , so I was always around a lot of people from different ethnic backgrounds. I have always been very fair since I was little. Like everything has to be very fair.

I asked her to explain further what she meant by fairness, and she said:

Everybody's equal. Like racism, discrimination and all those other isms, males/females, black-white. Whatever it is, it's just very wrong to me and it doesn't sit well with me. I just like everybody in a perfect world to be happy and for everybody to get equal things.

I found Linda's definition lacking, and concluded that it was in line with a liberal feminist critique of discrimination. I questioned whether or not her sense of fairness disqualified her as a candidate who still needed education on topics like difference. There is so much more to racism, sexism, and heterosexism (to name only a few isms) than individual acts of discrimination and meanness, and Linda's description offered me no sense that she understood this.

Linda also discussed her beliefs about Title IX and gender equity in such a way that led me to the conclusion that she was not (a) particularly informed about the topics and (b) that her functionalist worldview was such that it would take more than a mere presentation of the "facts" to change her opinion. This is how Linda described her thoughts on the implementation of Title IX:

I don't want people to be treated unfairly, but sometimes, and take this the right way, sometimes there have been cases where there has been reverse discrimination against the guys because they've been losing scholarships because of Title IX.

Again, this assessment showed me that Linda had not spent much time critically reflecting on the state of women's sport in this country, and that she did not understand all the facts surrounding Title IX.

Other situations which let me know implicitly that most of the coaches in the study were somewhat incompetent in this area were Mike's assertion of his own obliviousness and Webster's misguided belief that it was only necessary to tackle social justice issues when you had a minority group member on your team. Mike noted that he did not talk about issues of social justice because he was not really aware that there were

any to talk about. This leads me to believe that because he is unaware of his own privileged status as a middle-class, white male, he can keep his head in the sand and feel no sense of responsibility for teaching his athletes the importance of working for social change. Mike, like Linda and Webster, could possibly benefit greatly from attending a workshop which covered topics about power from unearned privileges among other things.

In this sub-theme, we see explicit examples of coaches who openly acknowledge that they lack education on topics surrounding social difference, as well as more subtle indications of the need for education. What makes this disturbing is that coaches are never taught to see the way that they reproduce dominant ideologies or how their coaching practices might legitimate established conventions. Bringing these issues to light in ways that relate specifically to coaching could go a long way toward social transformation.

I have struggled since my first year as a graduate student to come up with a way to make issues of social justice more compelling for women and men who hold the most privilege in our society. In our society, there is a dangerous form of obliviousness that has continued to allow white, male heterosexual domination to remain so embedded that most people believe that meritocracy reigns in this country. This oblivion occurs because members of advantaged groups are not taught to see their privileges as unearned or unfair, and are taught to see discrimination as individual acts of meanness rather than a systemic problem that dehumanizes all members of a society (McIntosh, 1990). Some feminist scholars suggest our social systems need to be completely redesigned in order

for real change to occur (McIntosh, 1990). The first step towards doing so is to bring the topic of privilege to the table, and the next step is for each of us to work towards giving up some of the unearned negative privileges that serve only to distort humanity, and extending those privileges that result in positive advantages to all members of society (McIntosh, 1990).

In this study, I saw countless examples of coaches who were blissfully unaware of their unearned privilege. One example was Linda who pontificated about the pursuit of excellence like we could all make it to the top if we were just worked hard enough. Then there was Webster who did not believe she or her team was affected by racism because she did not see white as a racial identity and had only white women on her team. And, lastly, there was Mike who supported the status quo (which, by the way, works completely in his favor) because he “didn’t see injustices” and was not politically aware or active.

There are many more examples in this study of the oblivion that McIntosh (1990) refers to in her article on white privilege, but the bottom line is that beyond confirming that it exists, what can we do to change it? My answer is that it begins with education. These coaches perpetuate dominant ideologies and do not even know that they are doing so. The first step towards changing these practices is making them aware of what they are doing, and that has to begin with education. This whole study is about how coaches can be agents of social change and is predicated on the fact that they themselves were well-educated, self-aware, critical thinking men and women. However, what I have discovered is that not all of them are, nor do they see working toward social justice as part of their

responsibility. It is unreasonable to think that they could teach these skills and attitudes to athletes when they do not have them themselves. So, while I have created an idea for “athletic praxis” I believe can be implemented by coaches and taught to athletes, I propose that each coach must have access to classes that put topics like privilege, social difference, discrimination, and homophobia on the table and encourage them to think about those matters critically. These classes could be offered by graduate programs, adult education programs, coaching organizations, or activist groups who are focused on changing the way we do sport. These courses should be made mandatory by either the NCAA or individual higher education institutions. Unfortunately, it is going to have to be mandated or it will not happen. The issue of education is an important one, and as such will be revisited in the next chapter.

Concluding Remarks

Throughout this study, I have wondered if I would find information that would lead me to conclude that there was a chance that sport could indeed be used as a space to effect social change, and if so, if coaches could be agents in the process. There were times throughout the study that I was disappointed with the answers and disheartened with current practices. I heard from coaches who held winning as the highest premium, who dismissed Title IX as reverse discrimination, who felt no need to talk with their athletes about accepting and inclusive behavior unless there was a person of color on the team who needed special accommodations, and who made no attempt to educate themselves on topics like gender, race, and class discrimination in sport or on the detrimental effects of homophobic practices. And, yet, I also heard from coaches who

yearned to foster open and accepting sporting environments, who highlighted the pleasure and participation component of athletics, and who thoroughly enjoyed being challenged by and challenging their young athletes. In the end, I do not know if I can make grandiose conclusions that there is likelihood for change at all levels of intercollegiate athletics. But, I do think that I can say with confidence that there is a possibility for it. As I said before, coaches are both part of the problem and part of the solution. As a result, I have chosen to make suggestions for change that are based on Dr. Handel Wright's (2002) cultural studies as social justice praxis model that has been altered according to the information gleaned from my interviews with coaches. I summarize my suggestions in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Summary, Presentation of “Athletic Praxis,” and Future Possibilities

The purpose of this research was to undertake an empirical study designed to explore the spaces and perceived barriers identified by intercollegiate coaches of women’s teams when it comes to the issue of addressing social difference and justice with their athletes, and to use that data to reformulate Dr. Handel Wright’s (2002) model of cultural studies as social justice praxis to create a notion of “athletic praxis.” The function of this is to promote social justice through sport by helping athletes and coaches to become agents of social change. The following is a summary of the research, the presentation of the idea for “athletic praxis,” and a brief discussion of possibilities for future studies.

Summary

There are many critics of sport who see its current focus on outcome as an anathema to working to achieve social justice. They perceive winning and striving toward athletic excellence as mutually exclusive from the creation of a more just society, but I don’t believe that. While I understand that some forms of sport, particularly the power and performance models (Coakley, 2003) promote individualism and competition, I also believe that there is flexibility within sport’s boundaries that would allow those involved in it to work for social change without sacrificing the drive toward victory. Through this research, I was better able to understand the construction of women’s sport and the possibility that coaches in women’s sport hold for effecting social change through their work with athletes. I gained valuable insight into philosophical beliefs about coaching

that were held by the eight coaches who participated in this study. These beliefs were pivotal to the study and correlated greatly with the ways in which coaches behaved and were central to the overarching goals of each coach's individual program. With regard to philosophical beliefs, two themes emerged: (a) some coaches were focused on the goal of winning, and (b) some coaches were focused on the overall experience of the athlete. Through these themes, I was able to gain insight into coaching styles, how these styles matched overall goals of specific athletic programs, the day-to-day behaviors that reflected each philosophy, and each coach's ability to critically assess sport.

In addition, I was able to gain an understanding of what space was available for addressing social difference in the arena of sport. The spaces that were identified included informal interactions, such as using the time spent on road trips in vans or on buses to have meaningful dialogue around issues of difference. This informal setting could also be used for readings on a variety of topics surrounding social issues. Another sub-theme under the category of space was formal interactions. Some of the coaches discussed establishing team rules or having team meetings where acceptable norms were established. These times could be used for effectively discussing issues of diversity, the politics of difference, and activism. Another sub-theme that came to light under the theme of spaces was community service outings. Almost all of the coaches advocated for community service, and many spoke of programs on campuses that were available to their athletes which made the setting up of outings easy for all involved. Community service, when done in a particular way, can be an invaluable experience for athletes, coaches, and the surrounding community. A final sub-theme that emerged was the use of

recruiting as a means of teaching athletes about diversity. One coach talked about her intentional efforts to bring in female athletes from all over the world, and from all different racial and social classes because she believed there was great value in having each of her athletes exposed to individuals who were positioned very differently from one another.

The final theme arising from the data concerned the potential barriers which exist that might prevent social difference in sport from being addressed. Coaches talked about lack of time as a potential barrier, and noted that either they were too busy to concern themselves with some of the more humanistic qualities of coaching or that their athletes often had too much going on with their schedules for coaches to make “extra” demands. Another potential barrier was that many of the coaches did not feel as though it was their responsibility to tackle issues of equity and social justice with their athletes. Many pointed to the classroom as a more appropriate place for this kind of learning to occur. Some noted that their schools already had programs in place on campus to serve as the liaison between students and the community, and, thus, there was no need for them to address the issue as well. A final barrier was the lack of education or training on the part of the coaches. While all had college degrees, only a few had any specific training in diversity awareness or various other social justice-oriented topics. The lack of knowledge and awareness came through in almost every interview I conducted, and as such, I believe that exposing women and men in the coaching field to these concepts is of utmost importance when considering how to use sport as a means for social justice.

While these coaches by no means represent the beliefs and practices of all

intercollegiate coaches across the United States, I do feel the information gleaned from interviews provides me with the necessary information for putting forth the notion of “athletic praxis.” Cultural studies served as the theoretical frame for this study, and using it allowed me to take sport seriously as a form of popular culture and evaluate it critically. It allowed me to analyze the social practices of this particular group of coaches, and it was useful in helping me explore the politics of social difference as it exists, is grappled with, or is ignored in particular athletic settings. By using cultural studies as my theoretical frame, I was able to collect the information needed to reformulate Wright’s (2002) cultural studies as social justice praxis model so that it fits into the arena of sport, rather than a classroom. In addition, I believe that a connection was made between cultural studies and coaching that has possible implications for the development of a coaching as social justice practice curriculum sometime in the future.

Presentation of “Athletic Praxis”

So how can cultural studies as praxis fit into the highly commercialized, multi-billion dollar industry of competitive sport, and why should it? Arguments have been made in previous sections about the need for students (student-athletes) to complete their scholastic careers with critical and reflective thinking skills, and a sense of accountability to the communities in which they live. At the present time, the majority of our schools and certainly the majority of our sport teams are not taking on the responsibility of teaching these skills to young women and men. As a result, critical educators have advocated for a movement in the education system called critical pedagogy, in which it has been theorized that schools can become sites for social transformation and emancipation,

and where students are taught to believe that their actions can make a difference in this world (McLaren, 2003). There is a similar movement in physical education teacher education programs (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003), but this has not been the case in the sport arena. This is why I am proposing “athletic praxis,” which is based on theoretical preparation, service, and structured reflection, all of which can be implemented by intercollegiate athletic coaches and take place in athletic team settings.

Theoretical preparation. Like the cultural studies as social justice praxis model proposed by Wright (2002) which suggests that the best way to teach active citizenship is to tie together theory and service, I assert that “athletic praxis” must be grounded in theory in order to be effective. Athletes must first enhance their critical knowledge and subsequently link that knowledge to social practice in order for social transformation to occur. In order for this to happen, organizers and administrators of sport must become dedicated to teaching athletes the skills necessary to live in a democratic society. By doing so, team settings can begin providing conditions for empowerment, which is similar to the suggestion made by McLaren (2002) about the potential conditions of the classroom. It is necessary for coaches to lead athletes through readings and discussions which promote ways of thinking critically about where they are situated in the world and why they are situated as they are, how sport is constructed in American society, ways that power and privilege distort social relations, and how oppression and domination can be overcome through deliberate and collective action.

However, it should be noted that before athletes can learn to become agents of social change from their coaches, there is a preliminary step that must be taken. I acknowledged earlier that coaches themselves must be armed with the necessary tools in order to facilitate these discussions. It is my strong belief that we must begin holding coaches to a higher standard when it comes to their interactions with student-athletes. I believe that the NCAA could issue mandates that require coaches to receive training in the areas of diversity and social justice. In addition, I believe that Master's programs in coaching education, sport psychology, sport sociology, and sport management ought to incorporate training in these areas as well. Coaches should be required to have continuing education outside of Bachelor's degrees, and there should be a multitude of opportunities for them to learn about the different elements that I am proposing in this notion of "athletic praxis." I believe that an appropriate "athletic praxis" curriculum could be developed, but the outline for how to do that must come from another study. What I attempted to do with this research was to illuminate the places and spaces that exist in current sport settings that could be used if a coach were to commit herself/himself to "athletic praxis."

As was noted in the previous chapter, many coaches mentioned having discussions with their athletes about all sorts of social, political, and personal issues in the team vans or buses going to and from games. On these trips, both the athletes and coaches are confined together in a space for a relatively long length of time, and there are no significant numbers of other things that they could be doing. This space provides coaches with the perfect opportunity to either introduce readings or facilitate discussions

about topics that could help student athletes deconstruct certain taken-for-granted notions they might have about the way the world operates. In this way, van/bus trips can become “critical classrooms” (McLaren, 2003) where both coaches and athletes can learn to be critical agents by questioning the production of knowledge and turning it into something meaningful. In this space, both the athlete and the coach can share experiences and life histories, express their ideas and concerns about the readings, and intellectually challenge one another. The time that team’s spend together on road trips particularly traveling in vans and on buses is a perfect occasion for incorporating the theoretical component of “athletic praxis.” That being said, there are a number of other ways for coaches to work it in, such as additional team meetings, or individual meetings with athletes. What is important is that coaches do not feel like they have to take time away from the practice field or whatever it is they feel they have to do to run a successful program in order to engage in dialogue or assign readings about things that do not directly relate to performance enhancement. A final venue that could be used for addressing social justice with young athletes is to require all athletes to take a class which incorporates the elements of “athletic praxis.” There are already some colleges across the country that require freshman athletes take a course each semester that is supposed to help them acclimate to their new setting. If these classes are already occurring, it does not seem unreasonable to think that they could expand their boundaries to include all three elements of “athletic praxis.”

Having given several examples of what I feel are appropriate spaces for coaches and athletes to use for the theoretical component of “athletic praxis,” I would like to offer

four main topic areas that I feel would be of value when trying to teach athletes about active citizenship. These are: (a) reflecting about values, ethics, and morals; (b) reflecting about physical activity and exercise as healthy behavior; (c) reflecting about media representations, and (d) reflecting on discrimination issues. These areas come from Fernandez-Balboa's (1997) work in physical education pedagogy, the readings assigned by Dr. Handel Wright in his fall, 2002 Issues in Cultural Studies course wherein he attempts to apply his model for cultural studies as social justice praxis, my own experience in athletics, and from other coursework I have taken in sport sociology and feminist theory.

Reflecting about Values, Ethics, and Morals

Coaches could create exercises and assign readings that facilitate reflection about values and ethics so that athletes are able to clearly define for themselves what decisions and choices they believe are in their best interest. Choices that we each make about our own values should be conscious and intentional, not based solely on our upbringing or made by simply adopting the values that society places before us. This type of self-reflection could help athletes begin to see themselves as whole people who play a role in a larger system. In this way, reflections on values, ethics, and morals is a foundational step in teaching athletes to become critical agents in society. Additionally, having a firm understanding of one's values might help revolutionize the current win at all costs model of athletics. After all, as Julie mentioned in our interview when I asked her how change could be brought about, she said, "I don't know, teach coaches a better value system, I guess." This assessment is crucial when considering the restructuring of sport. Replacing

the current model of sport with a more ethical and socially just model is no easy task, and it could begin with the need for individuals to critically reflect on their own value systems. That we have let sport get to its current highly commercialized, extremely competitive state says something not only about those involved in it, but also about fans and spectators who have been complicit in sport's demise.

Reflecting about Physical Activity and Exercise as Healthy Behavior

In our society, exercise and practice are perceived by many to produce only positive results (Coakley, 2003; Eitzen, 2003). In the world of sport, there is a widely held belief that the more one practices, the better off one will be come game time. Although there are many benefits to exercise participation, excessive amounts can have detrimental effects. Excessive exercise can be associated with eating disorders, addictive behavior patterns, gender related problems, and low self-esteem (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). It would be important for athletic programs or individual sport teams to discuss these issues. Maintaining an open dialogue between a player and coach would be necessary in order for these topics to be taken up candidly. Being realistic about both the positive and negative characteristics of exercise and practice, and moderating the amount of time one spends participating is an important priority for those who wish to take a more humanistic approach to coaching. These issues could be taken up through various forms of communication, including listening to experts speak on the topic and reading materials that deal with these issues. One coach in the study suggested that if athletic departments were to bring in experts to talk about various health and women's issues, this would give the athletes not only a chance to learn of these topics but also the opportunity

to get to know other female athletes. She suggested that athletes were a segregated group not only from the regular student body but also from other athletes. She believed, and I agree, that meeting in large numbers and then breaking up into small groups would allow young women to establish valuable networking opportunities. In this way, young female athletes could learn about important health behaviors and establish bonds with other athletes outside of team boundaries.

Reflecting about Media Representations

As a society, we must learn to read media texts and images critically. It's important to reflect on the portrayal of female athletes and if possible to read articles which draw attention to this issue. Racial discrimination can be analyzed by deconstructing media portrayals of minority group members and taking note of the ways these individuals are silenced, omitted, or misrepresented (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). Conversely, it would be important to look at the ways that privileged groups are highlighted or overemphasized (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). Collective efforts to spend time critically examining television commercials, pre-game shows, magazine articles, and texts related to sporting events could be a good way for teams to discuss the media's manipulative strategies and how they are interpreted by the student-athletes. It would be particularly pertinent for women's programs to note the effects that media representations have on women's ideas about their bodies (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). Some women have internalized media images of the female body and may see themselves as sexual commodities or as a construct to be rearranged (i.e., plastic surgery); and it would be important to discuss where these notions come from and how they could be

deconstructed. A few of the coaches mentioned that team building was an important component of their coaching practice, and I would argue that taking one evening a month to watch some sort of women's game on television would provide both a bonding experience and an opportunity to critically examine the representation of women in the media.

Reflecting on Discrimination Issues

Educational environments where many athletic departments reside do not occur in a vacuum and as such are not impervious to issues of discrimination. It would be important for coaches and team members to discuss ways that individuals of diverse groups might have had less access to resources and facilities due to socioeconomic, ethnic, gender, or sexual orientation issues. Encouraging frank and open discussions where athletes share their own varied backgrounds would go a long way in increasing the value of the overall educational experience. Additionally, almost all of the coaches mentioned the desire to attract women of color to their campus and noted their inability to do so. While none of the participants were able to explain why individuals of color were successfully recruited less often than desired, one can assume that both overt and subtle forms of discrimination are occurring on campuses all across the United States. Making discrimination a topic of conversation, producing readings on racial ideology and white privilege and discussing mythical beliefs about social mobility through sport and meritocracy (Eitzen, 2003) could be a valuable first step to using sport to work for social justice. Further, most of these athletes and coaches attend colleges where courses addressing issues of race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation as they pertain to

society in general or even sport in particular are available. I would argue that it would be extremely beneficial for these individuals to take advantage of these courses throughout their collegiate careers or coaching tenures. Doing so could heighten awareness about various social issues and might make the readings mentioned earlier even more accessible. In addition, mandating that athletes take at least a course or two that addresses the topic of social difference could help ease the burden on coaches who wished to facilitate this learning but did not yet feel competent to lead discussions or assign readings.

Service learning for social justice. All of the coaches in this study structured community service outings with their teams and most of them spoke of programs on campus that athletes could use which served as liaisons between the college and the community. While there were times when I was uncomfortable with the way that community service was promoted to the athletes (winning campus-wide service awards as a motivator, enhancing the image of the athletic department by seeming to care about the community), I was heartened to hear that a multitude of opportunities exist for athletes who are so inclined to do community service. However, while I believe that the use of campus programs probably makes it more likely for coaches to encourage community involvement because it is not something they have to set up on their own, there are a few caveats I think still need to be addressed by the coach.

First of all, athletes must be informed through various readings about the importance and rationale behind service learning. Second, as was pointed out in my review of the cultural studies as praxis literature, the community service that is engaged

in needs to be of a certain kind. The service learning for social justice that is used in Wright's model is overtly political, aims to examine issues of social difference, and to address issues of discrimination based on social difference either in or through organizations. It is this kind of service and its link with theoretical learning which teaches active citizenship. Service learning for social justice allows individuals to experience social difference, develop new skills, and promote civic consciousness (Gregg, 1998). Therefore, while athletes can certainly use the community service programs available to them on campus to help them set up internships or a regular volunteer schedule, they need to choose their own non-profit organizations, primary and secondary schools, or various other local community outreach programs who need volunteers, and who speak to the passions of each athlete. Working with disadvantaged groups can help the athlete see firsthand the detrimental effects of poverty, discrimination, malnutrition and heterosexist white privilege. It is through participation in service projects that have meaning to the individual which allows athletes to see that they are more than just autonomous individuals; but rather, they are active members of a larger community that needs help in moving toward social justice.

Structured reflection. Critical self-reflection and critical experiential reflection is the final integral piece to "athletic praxis." I say final because it is the component which allows the athletes to show the ways in which they have learned to link the theory and literature in which they had been engaged and their service learning for social justice practice. Reflection allows time for athletes to discuss their experiences as well as perceptions they have of what their responsibilities and roles in the community might be.

Making time for reflection allows athletes to think “deeply about themselves and the world” (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p.126). I suggest that both athletes and coaches keep a journal chronicling their service experiences, thoughts on and questions about the readings being done, and ways that the readings can be linked to practical experience. Individuals might also wish to keep track of thoughts or feelings they may have about other socio-political events that take place in the world and what their views on these events might be. The important thing here is that reflection allows athletes and coaches to see the ways in which their own individuality comes into play. Remembering that they are only part of a whole might be a good way to emphasize the importance of this component.

Critical educators have long argued that we have a responsibility not only for our individual roles in society but also for the system in which we participate (McLaren, 2003). I contend that by infusing some of these practices into sport settings, and working to create atmospheres which intentionally foster the development of athletes as committed and critical citizens will aid in the process of building a better society for us all. The coaches in my study helped me see that spaces do exist in the sport arena for these types of practices and that it does not necessarily have to come at the expense of working toward the goal of winning.

Future Possibilities

There are a number of directions in which this research could head. Because there are no examples of teams which have incorporated all of the components of “athletic praxis,” it would be interesting to conduct ethnographic research on a team who would be

willing to devote themselves to its principles. As the notion of “athletic praxis” is largely theoretical, it is difficult to know how it might affect team dynamics, the athlete-coach relationship, or town-gown relationships between the community and athletic teams (Benson & Harkavy, 1997). Further, valuable insight could be gained into its effectiveness or perhaps ineffectiveness in teaching athletes how to think critically and reflectively and to take an active part in the community. By studying a team that is willing to put all of the components of “athletic praxis” into play, one could begin to design an effective curriculum that could be taught to young student-athletes who are interested in entering the field of coaching.

Another line of research that could come from this study would be to interview female athletes from all three NCAA levels to find out how athletics prepares them for adulthood. One thing that came through clearly in this study were coaches’ perceptions of how sport builds character, teaches discipline, and instills a “no-quit” attitude in athletes. I wonder if athletes would articulate those same sentiments. Or, even if they did articulate those thoughts, I wonder if they could give day-to-day examples of how sport positively contributes to their personal development. I would also like to know the athletes’ perceptions of programs like CHAMPS/Life Skills, and the Diversity Education Initiative which are available through the NCAA. Coaches seem to think that they are wonderful programs, and a large reason for this may be that they make the job of the coach a little bit easier by serving as mediators between an athletic department and the community. Future research concerning athletes’ perceptions on the benefits of these programs would be interesting. This type of research could be conducted with both current athletes and

athletes who had completed their athletic eligibility and have had the chance to reflect on their collegiate experience.

Collegiate sports programs are often sculpted to please favored alumni and boards of regents, and individuals in these groups often receive special privileges and comforts when they are especially (financially) supportive of the interests of athletic programs. These individuals represent elite businesses and corporate class interests of the political status quo, which makes changing the current structure of sport extremely difficult. In addition, a movement that encourages social responsibility and political activism could be deemed as threatening to those with power and influence in both sport and the wider society. As such, more research needs to be conducted to solidify this model of “athletic praxis.” It needs to be examined from all angles, including but not limited to the administration, athletes, and coaches.

Overall, I believe that this study has provided me with valuable information that could be the start of a long line of research. Continuing to expand ideas for “athletic praxis” and working toward the reorganization of sport so that it is committed to social justice is a heavy task, but one that I believe I am better prepared for by having done this dissertation. I believe that at the NCAA Division III level of sport, we see a more collaborative model that does not exaggerate the importance of sport in our society. In my mind, this model is the best that sport (as it is currently structured) can be. However, I think that it is hugely important that we do not stop there. Organized sport in America has untapped potential for changing our culture in that it is one of the most influential social institutions existing in the United States. As such, sport has the ability to play a key role

in an athlete's citizenship education. By incorporating the components of "athletic praxis" which can help to promote critical thinking skills, cooperation, and social action, an athlete could develop a heightened sense of civic responsibility during her collegiate career. Integrating these principles into sport could result in large groups of young women who feel a sense of responsibility to their surrounding community and who see themselves as potential agents of social change.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to discuss spaces for addressing social justice and social difference within the context of an intercollegiate team setting.

INFORMATION

Your involvement in this study includes one interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, with the possibility of a second abbreviated interview as a follow up. The interview will focus on your current coaching philosophy and how you address (if you address) issues of social justice within the context of your team. The interview will be audio-taped. Any mention of your name, names of other people, and other features that could be used to identify you will be removed or coded in the transcripts.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

BENEFITS

Potential benefits of this study include obtaining information that could assist in the creation of an environment which enhances critical and reflective thinking skills, creates empathy for fellow community members, and provides invaluable service opportunities for young female athletes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your identity and any identifiers that reveal your institution will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and any transcripts with your true identity on them will be available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. All audio-tapes of your interview will be destroyed after three years in accordance with APA guidelines. A research group will be utilized in the data analysis portion of this study, and all individuals who are privy to the interview transcripts will sign agreements verifying that your identity will remain anonymous. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,) you may contact the researcher, Elizabeth Slator, at 1914 Andy Holt Ave, and (865)974-1282, or Dr. Joy T. DeSensi, at 1914 Andy Holt Ave, and (865) 974-1282. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Research Compliance Services section of the Office of Research at (865) 974-3466.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have received a copy of this form.

Participant's name (print) _____

Participant's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

Demographics:

Age:

Race/ethnicity:

Years of experience playing sport:

Years of experience coaching sport:

Years of experience coaching sport at present institution:

Win/Loss record for last season:

Level of education:

Personal Philosophy/Experience:

- Tell me how you learned to be a coach.
- Tell me about your personal coaching philosophy.
- What kind of things do you specifically do daily that you feel like translates into promoting the core pieces of your philosophy?
- Discuss any possible differences that you might perceive exist between your personal philosophy and the predominating philosophy of the athletic department at your institution. How do they affect you?
- In what ways do you feel the current constructs of women's athletics inhibit or promote your personal philosophy or coaching style?

Social Difference/ Social Justice

- Describe what you feel is your responsibility to your athletes beyond skill/performance enhancement.
- In what ways do you see yourself as a role model to your athletes or peers?
- Describe whether or not you feel it is important for you to initiate your athletes' involvement in the community above and beyond what is mandated by the NCAA or the university. Why?
- Tell me about some times during the course of your career where you have come across any information that has dealt with issues of social justice.
 - o Describe the settings of these times (i.e. coaching clinics, training seminars, etc.)
- Are you familiar with the concept of diversity? If so, what does it mean to you?
- In what ways do you discuss issues or concepts of social difference with your team?
- Do you recruit in a way that is mindful of creating a diverse team? How so or why not?

APPENDIX C

Key Informant Script

Elizabeth Slator, a graduate student working on her PhD in sport sociology, is doing a study which explores the spaces and perceived barriers that intercollegiate coaches of women's teams identify for addressing issues of social justice and difference. She is anticipating interviewing a group of 8 to 10 head and assistant coaches of various women's teams in an effort to learn more about the ways in which social justice might be taken up in athletic team settings. The interview will begin with personal coaching philosophies, as well as perceptions held by the participants of departmental and institutional philosophies, and move towards a discussion about social difference, community involvement, and social justice. If you are interested in participating in this study, please fill out an interest form, and Elizabeth will contact you in the immediate future.

Interest Forms

My name is _____ and I am interested in participating in a study which explores the spaces and perceived barriers identified by intercollegiate coaches of women's athletic teams when it comes to the issue of addressing social justice and difference with her/his athletes. Please contact me at the number or email address listed below.

Phone

Email

APPENDIX D

Statement of Confidentiality For Research Group

As a member of a research group who has access to sensitive information, I will not breach my promise to keep all material confidential. If any information must be made public, I will use signifiers or pseudonyms in an effort to keep the identity of the participant secret. I will not pass along any information about the identity of the participant to anyone outside the research group. My signature on the line below verifies that I have read and agree to this statement.

Name

Date

APPENDIX E

Presentation of Participant Demographics

Name	Sport	Age	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Yrs. of playing experience	Yrs. of coaching experience	Yrs. of coaching experience at present institution	Level of Education	Institution Level
Kim	Volleyball	26	F	White	9	5	3	Masters	III
Julie	Soccer/Basketball	28	F	Japanese American	14	5	2	Masters	III
Rhonda	Volleyball	46	F	White	11	23	23	Masters	II
Kelly	Basketball	35	F	White	12	14	9	Masters	III
Linda	Soccer	33	F	White	21	9	5	Bachelors	I
September	Track & Field	35	F	African American	10	11	3	Bachelors	I
Mike	Swimming	42	M	White	11	21	15	Bachelors	I
Webster	Soccer/Tennis	33	F	White	12	11	9	Masters	III

APPENDIX F

Outline of Themes

THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

THEME 1: Individuals Focused on Outcome

- technocratic coaching
- emphasis on winning
- recruiting for skill
- functionalist outlook

THEME 2: Individuals Focused on the Experience of the Athlete

- coach as educator
- emphasis on experience
- open communication

THEME 3: Spaces for Addressing Social Difference/Justice

- informal settings
- formal settings
- community service outings
- recruiting for diversity

THEME 4: Barriers to Addressing Social Difference/Justice

- lack of time
- lack of responsibility
- lack of education/training

Vita

Elizabeth Ann Slator was born in Beaumont, Texas, on November 26, 1976. She is the daughter of Mark and Carol Slator, and the sister of Aaron and Emily Slator. After graduating in 1995 from Memorial High School in Houston, Texas, she attended Auburn University where she played softball, and received her bachelor's degree in Health Promotion in December of 1999.

In August of 2000, Elizabeth received a graduate assistantship from the Physical Activity Department at Auburn University where she completed her Master's of Education degree in Exercise Science in August of 2001. Upon completing her Master's degree, Elizabeth worked for one year in an AmeriCorp program called Athletes in Service. In August of 2002, she entered a doctoral program in Sport Studies at the University of Tennessee. During her doctoral work, she received an assistantship first with the Physical Education and Activities Program, and then served as Editorial Assistant for the journal *Quest* and taught undergraduate Sport Studies classes. She was awarded her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education with a concentration in the Sociocultural Foundations of Sport in May of 2005.