To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Kyunghoon Lee entitled "Theoretical Understanding of Female Intercollegiate Athletes' Perceptions on Career Development." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

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of

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on

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Degree

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Kyung-Hoon Lee

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,

Jong-Moo Lee and Bang-Ja Kim

who love and support me unconditionally.

Without their encouragement and trust,

I and this dissertation would not exist.

And to my two brothers,

Kyung-Ryul Lee and Kyung-Min Lee

who willingly share all the memories, both good and bad, with me.

And to my wife and son,

Hye-Jin Bae and Sang-Hyun Lee

for always loving me and being proud of your husband and father.

I also dedicate this work to my wife's parents,

Byung-Ro Bae and Jung-Soon Kim

who respect my potential and honesty.

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ABSTRACT

There are rapidly rising numbers of female athletes who enter and graduate from colleges and universities in the United States. Among those who graduate from colleges/universities, there are significant numbers of female athletes who have to encounter and overcome various types of social barriers as they pursue athletic career opportunities in American society. Under the influence of male-dominated social orders, female athletes may have limited opportunities in their chosen sports careers when compared to their male counterparts. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Subsequently, this study focuses on how these women athletes make career decisions based on these understandings.

Qualitative research methodology is utilized and consists of semi-structured interview questions based on the feminist perspective of standpoint theory and cultural studies. The participants for this study are eight National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division-I female athletes who are pursuing some type of career in sport and sport-related fields. These participants are geographically located in the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States.

The major themes which emerge during the analysis phase of this study include (a) athletic experiences, (b) perceptions regarding career, and (c) barriers. Sub-themes also emerge within each of these major themes. Within the theme of athletic experiences, positive experiences, negative experiences, career decision making and career

opportunities in sport, and building personality emerge as sub-themes. Perceptions regarding the career theme is comprised of six sub-themes including perceptions in general, location, impact of Title IX, qualifications, socialization, and role-models. The barriers theme includes the three sub-themes of social barriers, playing opportunities after college, and homophobia.

The results of the study reveals that the participants have positive attitudes toward their athletic career experiences. They also have high levels of self-confidence about their qualifications as a professional person based on their athletic experiences and academic preparation throughout their career. It is evident that the participants make their career decisions based on the perceptions and understandings of their athletic and academic experiences. At the same time, the participants are aware of the various types of social barriers which may significantly restrict their athletic career opportunities. Despite the social barriers, the participants have strong intentions of continuing to pursue their careers in sports as a player or in some other sport-related areas.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are rapidly growing numbers of girls and women participating in physical activities and sports in American society today. This growth is primarily the result of increased athletic opportunities supported by government legislation and increased public attention for women's sports (Coakley, 1997). Since the passage of Title IX in 1972, all educational institutions receiving federal funds have been required to provide equal opportunities based on gender (Francis, 1993-94). Since the enactment of Title IX, athletic opportunities in educational institutions have become more readily available for women (Barnett & Rozin, 1997; Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Goldman, 1991; Hammer, 1979; Hilliard, 1996; Hogan, 1987; Roberts, 1992; Snyder, 1993). However, while there have been increased opportunities for participation, it is still evident that female athletes in the United States generally have limited athletic-related career opportunities beyond the college/university level. Except for a few sports, such as basketball, beach volleyball, figure skating, and, notably, golf and tennis, which are primarily nurtured in the private country club settings for the white upper class (Theberge & Birrell, 1994), there are limited professional sports career opportunities for female athletes at the professional level (Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Snyder, 1993). Being a female professional athlete means working hard and overcoming numerous social barriers, such as the lack of public recognition and social support and misconceptions or stereotypes against them.

Fortunately, there are meaningful attempts to improve the current situation to provide more athletic career opportunities for female athletes beyond the college/university level (Barnett & Rozin, 1997; Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Snyder, 1993; Washington & Lehr, 1986). The creation of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and American Basketball League (ABL) has significantly influenced women's sports in American society. The emergence of these leagues is a significant turning point for female athletes at both amateur and professional levels in American society. At this time, greater numbers of women athletes are performing at their physical best to accomplish their athletic participation goals. However, these athletes should be provided equal access to opportunities to pursue professional careers within a supportive social environment. From this point of view, it is important to explore the current status and situation of women athletes and athletic programs and how female intercollegiate athletes continue their careers in sports settings beyond the college/university level.

Gender equity issues are among the most controversial topics in American society and are also the focus of one of the most significant research areas in the current field of sport sociology. Compared to their male counterparts, inequality of opportunities for women athletes still exists, a situation some have described as evidence of an environment of male hegemony. Due to comparatively limited opportunities, significant numbers of female athletes have been known to simply quit their life-long athletic careers or try to find alternative career development paths, such as coaching, athletic administration, or other positions in sport-related areas.

Despite the limitations, many female intercollegiate athletes are willing to remain within their own athletic environment as long as possible (George, 1989). Pursuing a coaching position is one of the vital sports career opportunities for former female intercollegiate athletes. However, compared to the constantly increasing numbers of female athletes, the numbers of female coaches or administrators still remained the same or decreased even after the passage of Title IX (Women's Sports Foundation, 1984). This unexpected impact or backlash of Title IX has resulted in more males coaching female athletes or teams now that some girls' and women's sports programs are receiving increased budgets and acclaim (Roberts, 1992).

The absence of meaningful female role models in leadership positions in sports may also contribute to the decrease in opportunities for women to pursue their athletic career at an advanced or professional level (George, 1989). Female intercollegiate athletes are significantly influenced by their role models, such as female coaches or other female administrative members. Because of the declining numbers of female coaches, it is absolutely essential to provide various types of positive female role models for female athletes which may encourage them to stay in their athletic environments.

In addition, the sports socialization process for girls and women plays a significant role in their continued athletic participation. Based on their socialization experiences, it is known that women may in fact be socialized both toward and away from sport. If socialized away from sport altogether or away from some sports in particular, women may be excluded from mainstream sports and athletic environments (Greendorfer, 1983). During their athletic experiences, unfortunately, many female

athletes have faced various types of social barriers which have seriously prevented them from continuing their athletic career. Their perceptions of this socialization process should be identified and evaluated in order to help change the current situation and help them recognize the positive aspects of their experiences. Identifying the social barriers experienced by female athletes is directly related to the main theoretical framework of this study, which analyzes the unique status of women in a male-dominated social environment.

Although gender equity and career opportunity issues in sport warrant examination, it is still true that there are relatively limited numbers of solutions for these issues. For example, while Title IX legislation addresses equity, it does not offer specific steps for educational institutions to follow to achieve that end. In other words, it is necessary to understand who has been marginalized and oppressed by society and what that oppression means for female athletes and their career development in American society.

It is from this point of view, that is, from the context of the female athlete's perspective, that these issues should be explored. This perspective also needs to be examined through a theoretical framework which considers the gender equity issues and the problems female athletes encounter. Furthermore, it is also necessary to evaluate this perspective based on an understanding of the conceptual frameworks of standpoint theory and cultural studies which establish the foundation upon which this work is based and through which it is informed.

Feminists have been concerned about male-female comparisons which seem "to endorse the doctrine of male supremacy" (Guttmann, 1991, p. 251). For example, despite women's unique physiological and psychological characteristics, many female athletes have been represented in terms of the standards that have been decided by male-dominated perspectives, for example, homophobia and masculinization. Because of the influence of a male-dominated perspective, it is essential to become more aware of the self-identity of women based on their own unique perspectives and experiences. Therefore, it is important to understand the meaningful aspects of standpoint theory in order to understand the status of female athletes and women's sport in American society.

The main theme of standpoint theory is also related to cultural studies, in which the gender equity issue is one of the most significant components. "Cultural studies embodies various aspects of social phenomena, and the issues of gender, race, and power are its central theoretical and methodological concerns" (Gorn & Oriard, 1995, p. A52). However, "cultural studies still seeks an organizing structure of concepts" (Inglis, 1993, p. 109). It is relatively difficult to define cultural studies within the boundaries of one single discipline. However, various definitions contribute to an understanding of cultural studies as a microcosm of society and culture: "Cultural studies is a process, a kind of alchemy for producing useful knowledge; codifying it might halt its reaction" (Johnson, 1986/87, p. 38). According to the conceptual frameworks of standpoint theory and cultural studies, sport sociologists could explore female intercollegiate athletes' (athletic) career opportunities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Subsequently, this study focuses on how these women athletes make career decisions based on these understandings.

Definitions

The following terms are defined to provide an understanding of their use in this study.

Barrier

Any relative and/or relevant external factor that interferes with possible physical activity and preference for participation in that activity (Henderson, 1994).

Career

"An individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person's life" (Hall, 1976, p. 4). For the purpose of the study, athletic careers refer to the possibilities that include, but are not limited to, playing in a professional league, coaching, athletic training, team management, and sport journalism.

Gender

Social and psychological characteristics and behaviors associated with females and males.

Heterosexism

An ideological system that denies and criticizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community (Herek, 1992).

Homonegativism

Determined negative attitudes and behaviors toward non-heterosexuals (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980).

Homophobia

"The irrational fear and hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex." (Pharr, 1988, p. 1)

"The fear of or hostility toward gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals." (Blum, 1994, p. A35)

Professional Sport

The level of skill and performance is of the highest quality, competition is intense, spectators pay to attend contests and often insufferable media attention is lavished upon the participants and the events, and the best participants are rewarded handsomely with high salaries and national or international recognition (Belliotti, 1983).

Professional Athlete

A performer on a recognized professional team or a participant in a sanctioned individual event in which prize money is awarded (Clement, 1987).

Socialization

The process of learning and adapting to a given social system. "In the context of society the activity of socialization is called cultural transmission and is the means by

which a society preserves its norms and perpetuates itself" (Eitzen & Sage, 1997, p. 61).

Standpoint Theory

Standpoint is the term adopted by Sandra Harding to encompass a number of feminist epistemologies which privilege women's ways of knowing above others. The term has since been adopted more widely, by both proponents and critics. Standpoint theorists look two ways, offering on the one hand a critique of dominated conventional epistemologies in the social and natural sciences, and on the other hand, defending the coherence of feminist knowledge against postmodern uncertainty (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997).

Feminist standpoint theorists reject the notion that there are universal truths or universal answers to social questions by pointing out that gender, class and race always shape any individual understanding of the world. This skepticism towards universal claims brings standpoint theory close to postmodernism (Humm, 1995).

Title IX

The Higher Education Act of 1972 and its Title IX provision, which prohibited sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds, marks the first time that the issue of women's access to sport has achieved the status of a public agenda item (Education Amendment Act of 1972).

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, passed in 1972, prohibits sex discrimination in any program provided by educational institutions receiving federal aid (Hogan, 1987).

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions are made in this study:

1. In general, female intercollegiate athletes have fewer professional athletic career opportunities than their male counterparts (Blinde, 1989; Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Snyder, 1993).

2. The female intercollegiate athletes who participated in this study were able to verbally share their experiences related to athletic career opportunities.

3. The interview was a valid method of obtaining information about the experiences of the participants.

4. The participants in this study truthfully communicated their understandings and perceptions concerning their athletic and academic experiences.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The basic conceptual framework of this study is significantly related to the exploration of gender equity issues in sport. The most fundamental issue is equal athletic career opportunities for female intercollegiate athletes in sport and sport-related fields. Women have been making impressive progress in narrowing the gap between male and female performance (English, 1995). When there are no female athletic role models, or when women receive much less respect and public recognition than men do, this negatively influences the self-respect of all women, not just female athletes (English, 1995). Gender equity, standpoint theory, and cultural studies are the fundamental frameworks needed to understand the equal athletic career opportunities for women in American society.

The perspectives of men and the theories of moral development constructed on the basis of their experiences have been prominent throughout history. It is necessary to notice not only the absence of women's perspective, but the difficulty in understanding what they try to present (Gilligan, 1982). Standpoint theory is a significant theoretical framework to understand the meaning of female athletes' athletic experiences and the status of female athletes in sport. Women are generally considered as non-dominated members of society, especially in sports society. However, through the perspectives of standpoint theory, women have more ability to understand and view their experiences as female athletes. Standpoint theory also helps female athletes to represent and identify themselves more significantly. It also helps their male counterparts realize the importance of understanding female perspectives. Standpoint theory could explain unique aspects of women's experiences and status in the male-dominated social environments.

As an international student who has been in American society only a few years and who is interested in gender issues in sport, I am able to understand the meaningful aspects of standpoint theory for those who were labeled as non-dominated or subordinate people in the society. According to my unique status and experiences in American society, I can realize or imagine how female athletes understand their own status and the importance of their athletic career experiences throughout their life. As a member of a non-dominated group in American society, I can reflect upon the significant influence of standpoint theory for female athletes. Similar to my personal experiences in American society, many female athletes have been through different types of unequal environments

and situations because of their gender. Therefore, these similar experiences could help me understand the significant aspects of standpoint theory for female athletes in American society. Furthermore, it could be a very significant procedure to broaden how people with different backgrounds understand standpoint theory from their own perspectives.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it may reveal knowledge concerning female intercollegiate athletes' perceptions of their athletic career opportunities. Due to the significantly increased numbers of female athletes throughout the various levels of sport (Barnett & Rozin, 1997; Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Goldman, 1991; Hammer, 1979; Hilliard, 1996; Hogan, 1987; Roberts, 1992; Snyder, 1993), it is absolutely essential to improve the various sources of athletic career opportunities for female intercollegiate athletes. The perspective of female intercollegiate athletes regarding their own athletic career opportunities is explored throughout this study. This particular perspective has not been of interest in American society. This study may also suggest the various possibilities for athletic career development paths for female intercollegiate athletes and may expand the knowledge and attitudes toward the current career possibilities for female intercollegiate athletes. According to this study, it is possible to establish fundamental solutions about the status of athletic career development of female intercollegiate athletes as professional players or in any other career in sport and sport-related fields.

This research also makes use of a significant theoretical framework which may help to clarify important issues in women's sport in American society. Utilizing these

theoretical frameworks, gender equity issues for women's sport can be effectively analyzed and understood. It is hoped that this study's contribution to the literature will help broaden the understanding of the perspectives of female athletes and their sports career potential and opportunities in American society.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Subsequently, this study focuses on how these women athletes make career decisions based on these understandings.

Each category of this chapter reflected the rationale of the literature review and supported the purpose of this study. The relationship between sport and women in society is explained using gender as one of the central concepts within cultural studies. More recently, sport in American society has been regarded by Gorn and Oriard (1995) as one of the most important components of cultural studies while the issue of gender also is one of the core components of cultural studies (Gorn & Oriard, 1995; Hargreaves, 1987).

Various theoretical approaches could be utilized to study the unique status of women athletes in American society. For the purpose of this study, cultural studies and standpoint theory served as the theoretical foundation. During the sports socialization process, female athletes begin to realize their identity in society and personally evaluate the status and meaning of women's sport and their own participation in sports and physical activities. Role models for female athletes provide positive support during the sports socialization process for female athletes and serve as a motivation for women to pursue their careers in sport and sport-related fields. Playing, coaching, and other

administrative athletic careers in women's athletic departments and professional leagues are current career opportunities for women athletes, but for various reasons, they do not always aspire to these positions. The positive impact of Title IX and its associated backlash have been influential in determining the status of female athletes, their sport, and career opportunities. Homophobia and homonegativism may also serve as major social barriers against not only women athletes but also women in general and their sport participation in society. Therefore it is necessary to understand how female athletes' athletic careers are influenced by social components in American society.

Female intercollegiate athletes' experiences and perceptions about sport and sport participation could be explained based on the theoretical framework of standpoint theory. The central concept of standpoint theory argues that subordinate groups of the society have more complete understanding and knowledge of the world (Costa & Guthrie, 1994; Humm, 1995). Finally, qualitative research methodology is the research design chosen to explore the female intercollegiate athletes' own experiences and perceptions regarding their status and career opportunities.

Available literature mainly focused on specific areas of career development for female intercollegiate athletes such as coaching position and teaching physical education programs (Blind, 1989; Whitaker & Molstad, 1985). What follows is the literature which significantly supports and enhances the purpose of this exploration. This chapter includes the following categories of literature review: (a) cultural studies, which includes a background of this area, sport and cultural studies, and women and cultural studies; (b) women athletes in American society, which includes socialization, role models, career

opportunities in sport and sport-related fields and social barriers; (c) the impact of Title IX; (d) standpoint theory, which includes women's unique aspects and identity and sport as a resistence; (e) homophobia in women's sport; and (f) qualitative research methodology.

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is a rather newly-developed inter-(cross or multi)-disciplinary field in modern Western societies. The relationship between culture and power is the fundamental discussion of cultural studies. The purpose of cultural studies is similar to the purpose of traditional social sciences is to produce and understand an interpretation of how culture works and what it means in society (Theberge & Birrell, 1994b). In general, it is relatively difficult to define cultural studies within one discipline. However, various sources of meaningful definitions of cultural studies enhance the understanding as a microcosm of society and culture. Cultural studies is "a process, a kind of alchemy for producing useful knowledge; codify it and you might halt its reaction" (Johnson, 1986/87, p. 38). According to Turner (1996):

> The term cultural studies is now well known as the title for an important set of theories and practices within the humanities and social sciences; and the field is dedicated to the notion that the study of cultural processes, and especially of popular culture, is important, complex and both theoretically and politically rewarding (p. 1).

The lack of homogeneity within cultural studies suggests an ongoing struggle over definition and meaning (Andrews & Loy, 1993). However, cultural studies has not been

able to establish an organizing structure of concepts as an academic discipline (Inglis, 1993).

Despite its lack of homogeneous definition, cultural studies analyzes culture through various perspectives. Cultural studies has embodied various aspects of social phenomena. Gender, race, and power are central theoretical and methodological interests of cultural studies (Gorn & Oriard, 1995). According to Turner (1996):

> Cultural studies is gradually finding ways to make use of sociological approaches, albeit through modifying their definitions of ideology and adopting Gramscian notions of hegemony rather than the more instrumental notions identified with the early political economics; and critiques of cultural studies have their effect on changes in practice, and in the seriousness with which the processes and mechanisms of cultural production are taken (p. 180).

As Storey (1996) pointed out, "cultural studies regards culture as political in a quite specific sense such as a terrain of conflict and contestation" (p. 2). It emerges as an attempt to understand the changing nature of sociocultural experience within a national context radically different from anything that preceded it (Andrews & Loy, 1993). It intends to restore a balance crucial to all the human sciences between "spontaneity" and "seriousness" (Inglis, 1993, p. 15).

Cultural studies encompasses the theories and methods associated with literary humanism, culturalism, structuralism, Gramscian Marxism, poststructualism, and most recently postmodernism. Moreover, these theories and methods have been brought to bear upon such diverse matters as subcultures, education, working class history, leisure,

women's studies, race and ethnicity, and media studies (Andrews & Loy, 1993; Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992). Storey (1996) effectively analyzed the relations between origins of cultural studies and influence of Marxism:

> Cultural studies is grounded in Marxism. Marxism informs cultural studies in two fundamental ways. First, to understand the meaning(s) of a cultural text or practice, we must analyze it in its social and historical conditions of production and consumption. The second assumption taken from Marxism is the recognition that capitalist industrial societies are societies divided unequally along, for example, ethnic, gender, generational and class lines (p. 3-4).

Cultural studies can serve as "an intervention, making a space for forms of intellectual discourse to emerge that have not been traditionally welcomed in the academy" (hooks, 1990, p. 90). It also "reflects and reproduces a traditional mind/body dichotomy which entails a type of cultural elitism" (Hargreaves, 1982, p. 16). Therefore, in a general sense, cultural studies has always been "an unfolding discourse, responding to changing historical and political conditions and always marked by debate, disagreement and intervention" (Storey, 1996, p. 2).

Storey (1996) made an important statement for defining culture based on the perspectives of cultural studies:

> 'Culture' in cultural studies is defined politically rather than aesthetically. The object of study in cultural studies is not culture defined in the narrow sense, as the objects of aesthetic excellence ('high art'); nor culture defined in an equally narrow sense, as a process of aesthetic, intellectual and spiritual development; but

> culture understood as the texts and practices of everyday life. This is a definition of culture which can embrace the first two definitions; but also, and crucially, it can range beyond the social exclusivity and narrowness of these, to include the study of popular culture. Although cultural studies cannot (and should not) be reduced to the study of popular culture, it is certainly the case that the study of popular culture is central to the project of cultural studies (p. 2).

From this point of view, popular culture is also a significant part of cultural studies. Popular culture is determined by and made in relationship to the powers of domination (Fiske, 1989). Popular culture has to be viewed as a site of ideological struggle where the individual lives and experiences are involved in a process of interpretive negotiation with the surrounding social structures, thus cultural studies primarily functions within the context of popular culture and with reference to contested struggles (Andrews & Loy, 1993). These struggles fundamentally generate the power of developing diverse levels of cultural forms which embrace the different types of cultures.

Sport and Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is complex in terms of both theory and method and draws from diverse academic disciplines--such as history, philosophy, politics, and sociology; thus cultural studies is both cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary (Ingham & Loy, 1993). However, it has been a common situation that cultural studies has overlooked the meaningful status of sport in modern society. Despite the obvious importance of sport in American history, "only a small number of American academicians have made a specialty of analyzing the relationship between sport and culture, and their work remains

ghettoized" (Gorn & Oriard, 1995, p. A52). Cultural studies focuses on sport as a cultural practice that is component of sociopolitical forces of culture (Theberge & Birrell, 1994b). Andrew and Loy (1993) clearly state:

> Although the appropriation of cultural studies into existing academic domains is fraught with potential problems, we believe that with proper precautions the emergence of a cultural studies of sport in North America has the potential for enhancing the critical understanding of sport as a form of popular culture in particular and of contemporary cultural existence in general (p. 255).

However, recently and fortunately, the study of sport and athletics is now becoming one of the growing areas in cultural studies. According to Hargreaves (1982), the analysis of sport and its presentation in society is well-explained:

> I have identified two sources of the analysis of sport in society: the traditional physical education paradigm with a powerful scientific component and an unmistakable policy orientation underpinned by predominantly function of cultural studies whose parameters are much wider and whose whole history has embodied the social (p. 5).

Hargreaves also indicated that "cultural studies implicitly includes sport in the ways in which culture is defined, and in the theories used for analysis, but, for the most part, sport remains something like an epiphenomenon in practice" (p. 15).

Cultural studies also "employs an extended use of the concept of culture, with its underlying assumption that consciousness and experience are no less informed by sporting practice than by other cultural practices" (Hargreaves, 1982, p. 17). Because

cultural studies–the interdisciplinary analysis of history, cultural expression, and power–could represent the theoretical foundation of sport studies, the main concept of cultural studies analyzes and explains the importance of sport in the society (Gorn & Oriard, 1995).

Hargreaves (1987) has noted that the body constitutes "the material core of sporting activity" (p. 141). In the same study, Hargreaves also stated:

> The body constitutes a major site of social struggles and it is in the battle for control over the body that types of social relation of particular significance for the way power is structured-class, gender, age, and race-are to a great extent constituted (p. 140).

Consequently, sport provides a relevant and illustrative context in which to show how the interpretive meanings associated with particular cultural practices are connected to the experiential and structural aspects of existence (Andrews & Loy, 1993). Therefore, cultural studies could utilize the meaningful concept of sport to understand diverse aspects of the society.

Hall (1996) also clearly stated the meaningful relations between sport and popular culture from the perspectives of cultural studies:

> The significance of sport...can only be grasped through an analysis of culture. Sport is such a visible aspect of popular culture, at least in the so-called developed countries where the cultural meanings and values enacted through participation, competition, and spectacle help make and remake us both as individuals and as collectivities (p. 31-32).

Hoggart's (1957) literary humanist approach viewed sport as a popular practice that easily relates to the material conditions and experiences of working-class existence:

> At work, sport vies with sex as the staple conversation. The popular Sunday newspapers are read as much for their full sports reports as for their accounts of the week's crimes. Sports conversations start from personalities, often spoken of by their Christian as well as by their surnames, as "Jim Moston," "Arthur Jones," and "Will Thompson": technical details of play are discussed, often to the accomplishment of extraordinary feats of memory as to the history of matches many seasons back. The men talk about individuals whom they know, at least as figures on the field, in situations eliciting qualities they can respect and admire (p. 91).

Women and Cultural Studies

In the area of sport, gender issues have historically been among the most controversial. The struggle between gender and culture exists primarily with regard to women in area of the feminine because cultural practices and sport are defined by male-dominated perspectives (Hall, 1996). Especially in the recent era, debating gender issues in sport has generated some remarkable milestones for female athletes such as changing public attitudes toward women's sport and their participation, expanding and promoting women's professional sport, and the enactment and enforcement of Title IX. "Sports are clearly about gender, although until recently this has been overlooked, and certainly athletics have shaped American masculinity" (Gorn & Oriard, 1995, p. A52). Hall (1996) suggested that sport studies scholars adopt a cultural studies approach in order to explore

relations of power in sport which are based on constructs of race, gender, sexuality, and class. The general concept of cultural studies significantly focuses on the relations of these socially-constructed power struggles.

Nike television commercials about girls' and women's strong intention in sport participation, and the annual swimsuit issues of Sports Illustrated, one of the America's most influential sports magazines, clearly represented the controversial relations between cultural studies and gender issues in sport within a male-dominated social environment. Both dominated mass-media icons--Nike T.V. commercials and Sports Illustrated--significantly exposed the current status of women and their sport in American society. Cole and Hribar (1995) presented how corporate marketing strategy influences the perspectives of (feminist) cultural studies into (female) sport through the example of a Nike T.V. commercial. These same authors outline versions of popular feminism which have dominated the last two decades of the twentieth century and interrogate Nike's role in their development and proliferation. They concluded that not only has Nike co-opted feminist rhetoric to sell products, but that through its advertisement campaigns, Nike has provided "women with identities that impede the recognition of historical conditions and circumstance" (Cole & Hribar, 1995, p. 365). Davis (1997) presented how the swimsuit issues of Sports Illustrated which symbolize the male-dominated perspective or masculine sports marketing influences into understanding and defining the women's body image in American society.

For women, "organized sport become available as feminism grows and women gain access to higher education and other areas from which they have previously been

excluded" (Gorn & Oriard, 1995, p. A52). Various types of organized sports for women are being introduced and expanding rapidly, for example, clubs and community-based leagues. The recent introduction of the Women's World Cup Soccer Games and the United States winning of the 1999 Women's World Cup Soccer Games Championship significantly reflects the changing public opinion and attitude toward women's athletic performance and participation in high level athletic programs and competitions. Furthermore, the U.S. winning of the1999 Women's World Cup Soccer Games Championships draws enormous public attention into the ultimate issue of women in sport and their participation in American society. From this point of view, women are no longer a forgotten group of people in the field of sport, especially team sport.

"Despite the continuing discussion in American sport studies of the body (of how human beings conceive of themselves physically), athletes' bodies remain curiously off-limits, but power and eroticism meet most conspicuously in the athletic body such as Florence Griffith Joyner's, Greg Louganis's, or Michael Jordan's" (Gorn & Oriard, 1995, p. A52). Male hegemony in sport seriously misleads the true essence of the quality of female sport. No matter what a female athlete achieves, it is interpreted in terms of how it affects her attractiveness to men (Robinson, 1991). Conniff (1993) found that the images of women in sports magazines fall into two categories, "the heroic portraits and the more common picture such as sports cuties" (p. 36). He also mentioned that more and more women have become involved in sport, and that women athletes have become more visible. Female athletes need to be evaluated by their athletic ability or performance, not just by a body image that is established by a male-dominated philosophy.

Gender issues in sport have created various controversial debates, but these issues need to be considered as one of the major aspects of both cultural studies and sport studies in modern society. Cultural studies significantly supports feminist perspectives in sport and women's active participation within the sports environment. Gender issues in sport are well-discussed through the fundamental philosophy of cultural studies including how gender is constructed in society and understood within a social context. It is important not to consider female athletes and their sport participation in society based on narrow stereotypic definitions. Female athletes are not labeled by their body image or a social stereotype which has been established by male-dominated perspectives. Therefore, it is important to present a meaningful theoretical framework to support fundamental perspectives of (feminist) cultural studies about women and women's sport.

Women Athletes in American Society

Socialization

The sociological analysis of the relationship between women and sport was actually initiated in the late 1970s (Theberge & Birrell, 1994a). The issue of socialization and sport can be divided into two subcategories, socialization into sport and socialization through sport (Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Theberge, 1994; Theberge & Birrell, 1994a). Socialization into sport focuses on the agents and agencies which draw people into sport (Eitzen & Sage, 1997). Socialization through sport focuses on the effects of sport participation or involvement such as attitudes, perceptions, or orientation (Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Theberge & Birrell, 1994a).

Women have a different socialization process than men (Bryant & McElroy, 1997). According to this socialization process, women learn socially-acceptable role-specific behaviors (Vincenti, 1997). Women's socialization process is influenced by other social environments. Women's sociological differences are fixed in socialization factors such as "the role of significant others, socializing situations, and social institutions" (Bryant & McElroy, 1997, p. 121). According to this socialization process, women are able to construct their perceptions and understandings about sport and their participation in society. Therefore, during the socialization process, women are able to realize their socially-constructed gender identity. Sports socialization basically discusses "how sport participation influences the development of particular characteristics and the learning of non-sport roles" (Birrell & Cole, 1994, p. 188). Sports socialization for female athletes, especially for those who are young girls, is extremely difficult and complex. The longer a female athlete has the opportunities to play and/or participate in sports and/or physical activities, the difficulty of stopping and beginning a new career could be quite challenging (Bessone, 1987). Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983) also claimed the difficulties of women's sports socialization.

In general, "the influence of sports experiences is stronger: (a) when the degree of involvement is frequent, intense, and prolonged; (b) when participation is voluntary rather than involuntary; (c) when the socializer, for example, the coach, is perceived as powerful and prestigious; and (d) when the quality of relationships is high in expressiveness" (Eitzen & Sage, 1997, p. 65). According to systematic analysis and understanding about the socialization process of women athletes in society, it is possible

to examine the issue of why women may leave or perhaps not even enter the coaching and/or administration profession, and how women athletes understand the current status of women's sport and their career opportunities (Corcoran & Courant, 1985; Knoppers, 1987; Thorngren, 1990). However, sport and participation in sport need to be considered as a solution by which the female athletes could realize their career potential and achieve a sense of self-actualization (Blinde, 1989). Sport participation occurs in connection with "processes of decision making and identity formation" (Coakley, 1997, p. 113). For female athletes, sport consumes a large portion of their daily life. The sports experience has also been influential in formulating women athletes' knowledge and perception on the social environment in which they live. Women athletes have been encouraged into or discouraged from sport participation by the social environment or male-dominated standards throughout their entire socialization process, but the crucial aspects of the socialization process and its enormous impact on women athletes' career development opportunities has been relatively misvalued. Therefore, the socialization process of women athletes needs to be properly evaluated and identified for improving the opportunities of career development opportunities for future participants in women's sport, especially in professional sport.

Role Models

Female intercollegiate athletes have experienced greater difficulties and barriers in accomplishing the demands of the student and athlete roles (Blinde, 1989). They also experienced similar difficulties when they do not have the same gender role models. The lack of female coaching and/or administration professionals deprives the female

intercollegiate athlete of valuable female role models in leadership and decision-making positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992). Establishing significant positive role models for female athletes is crucial for the future status of women's sports and athletic programs in American society (Kuniholm, 1997; Lamoriello, 1992). Female athletic role models should be regarded as visible leaders who could be found at any level of athletic programs. The presence of the female athletic role models is a motivating force for women, sending the message that playing and/or participating in sport should be, not only an acceptable thing to do, but also a status symbol for females (Hilliard, 1996). In the case of athletic career opportunities for intercollegiate female athletes, the presence of positive female role models provides the motivation to women to continue to pursue their athletic careers, the expectation that a successful athletic career is possible as well as desirable, and guidance on the gateway to success in life-long career opportunities (Whitaker & Molstad, 1985).

As the authors of the New Agenda Conference resolutions wrote, "...the existence of successful female role models as sport participants, coaches and administrators is essential to the development of achievement aspirations and career opportunities for women in sport..." (Women's Sports Foundation, 1984, p. 2). Among most cases, female athletes experience more positive influence from the existence of same gender role models–such as female coaches (Nelson, 1991).

There should be an increased concern that the persistent absence of positive female role models could negatively influence the perceptions of young female athletes, so that they do not see themselves as future coaches and leaders in sport for women

(George, 1989). The disappearance and absence of female coaches as a positive role model in high school and/or college/university level raises some questions for administrators about the importance of role models and the reasons for the decreased number of female coaches (Goldman, 1991). Female athletes who prefer same-gender coaches state that the most important reasons for their choice are that the female coaches understand their needs and sustain closer rapport with the players. In addition, they may perceive female coaches as positive role models (George, 1989). According to the presentation of female role models, women athletes are able to formulate the value of their sport and its participation.

Career Opportunities in Sport and Social Barriers

Understanding the current professional athletic career opportunities for female athletes is important in this investigation, since the female athlete, unlike her male counterpart, has a limited number of professional sports opportunities available once her college/university sports career has ended. Most female athletes have to "retire" from competitive sport participation following their college/university career. Therefore, the sports skills which female athletes worked long and hard to develop are of limited value after college/university, thus they may consider academic and social skills more importantly. As a consequence, an unrealistic emphasis on college/university sport may disadvantage the female athlete in her search for success in other areas following the completion of her college/university athletic career (Blinde, 1989). Even though more women are entering and studying in sport management programs, their opportunities for employment maybe limited by social biases.

Opportunities for women to engage in professional sport have been severely restricted, and differential rewards have been the standard, with professional female athletes gaining less public recognition and less money for their performances (Bakoulis, 1987; Bolig, 1994; Eitzen & Sage, 1997). The world of sport has discriminated against women not only as professional athletes but in other professional sport-related occupations, as well (Eitzen & Sage, 1997).

Although male domination in sport-related careers is still the dominated standard, there have been some indications of change (Snyder, 1993). The large numbers of opportunities at the amateur level have been balanced by the expansion of professional sports opportunities for women athletes (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983). Various professional opportunities for female athletes after college/university encourage many female athletes to pursue careers in professional sport and sport-related fields (Field, 1991; Figler & Figler, 1984; Petitpas, Champagne, Chartrand, Danish, & Murphy, 1997). The fact that an increasing number of women athletes plan to pursue an athletic career in professional golf may be an indication of the incentive provided by increased purses, public recognition, and prestige now accorded female professional golfers. Results regarding the high percentage of female collegiate golfers who aspire to professional golf careers would, by virtue of the number of professional sport available to women, perhaps be unique to individual sport (Washington & Lehr, 1986).

Athletic career opportunities for professional female athletes are still quite limited and competitive, but the athletic career opportunities are greater than before (Snyder, 1993). Appealing and outstanding figures as positive role models also have emerged on

the women's professional tours to capture the public recognition and respect (Eitzen & Sage, 1997). With positive changes in the social environment and public interest, women's professional sport have gained more respect and have drawn more public attention, an example is the Women's World Cup Soccer Games in 1999. Further investigation of women's professional sport reveals a rapidly growing business, thus the importance of sports agencies, for example, Bruce Levy & Associates, that properly solely represent the female professional athletes need to be recognized (Jeffrey, 1993). Women's professional sport has the potential to make the female athlete a more popular individual in American society.

For the future success of women's professional sport, it is crucial to draw media attention to such events, for both fans and advertisers. Increasing the level of media exposure of women's sport, especially at the professional sport level, is a key objective. Women's sport gets seven to eleven percent of newspaper sports coverage, and television networks, unless it's figure skating, gymnastics, Olympic highlights or a special report, usually invest even less effort (Berg, 1997).

Many sports firms also finally seem committed to the mission of devoting significant shares of marketing and advertising budgets to their registers of women athletes. Nike's Air Swoopes signature shoe debuted last year, while Reebok's lineup included soccer shoes in honor of stars Julie Foudy and Michelle Akers and basketball shoes by Rebecca Lobo and the American Basketball League's (ABL) Saudia Roundtree. Fila, meanwhile, marketed a "soccer clothing line and footwear with Carla Overbeck" (Bhonslay, 1997, p.61). Market research must have shown that women like being treated

as human beings and not just women, because the new advertisements have caught on and developed into a whole new genre with sophisticated feminist appeal (Conniff, 1993).

According to Barnett and Rozin (1997), it is evident that the social and economic status of women's professional sport has improved in American society. AT & T Wireless Services paid $3 million to become the title sponsor for the Women's Professional Fastpitch League (WPF). The ABL had a group of local and national sponsors, including Reebok International Ltd. and McDonald's Corp. The Women's Professional Volleyball Association (WPVA) has taken in more than $5 million from such sponsors as Evian, Nissan, and Coors Light. The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) also has assembled a register of sponsors that in addition to Bud Light, includes Nike, Champion, Spalding, and Lee Jeans. The WNBA estimates that each brand has committed about $10 million apiece over three years. In a capitalistic society, gaining economic power of women's sport reflects critical development and change from the dominated social group.

To achieve gender equity in professional sport, women must capitalize on their successes and achievements, and make the sport in which they have been successful important to school and collegiate decision-making organizations. At the same time that promoters are marketing women's past athletic achievements, effort needs to be dedicated to develop sports events which will attract public interest and recognition in society. Leaders in business, industry, and communities also need to take on the responsibility for promoting professional sport for female athletes and improving the status of women's sport in American society (Clement, 1987).

Due to the still limited number of professional playing career opportunities, significant numbers of female athletes enter coaching positions as their life-long professional occupation. For female athletes, "the knowledge that the coaching field is open, that there is no dead end after their playing career, and that a network exists which can aid them in pursuing their career goals, is most likely a valuable incentive, a high-value expectancy in the gender-heterogeneous environment" (Whitaker & Molstad, 1985, p. 18). It is also evident that, according to George (1989), female athletes' most important reason for an interest in coaching is a desire to stay associated with their particular sport.

Although the total number of women who participate in sports or athletic programs continues to increase because of the passage of the Title IX, the total number of female coaches and/or administrators generally have decreased (Women's Sports Foundation, 1984). It is also a problem that there are many eligible female coaches available in the field, but there are fewer female coaches in colleges/universities (George, 1989). A survey of men and women involved in athletic administration revealed several reasons for the decrease of women in athletics. These include a male-dominated athletic environment, lack of qualified women coaches and administrators, unconscious discrimination, and unwillingness of women to recruit and travel (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985). Female coaches might perceive that they do not have the same athletic career opportunities as today's female athletes and therefore would like to see female athletes maximize their athletic career opportunities after college/university (Pastore, 1991).

Unfortunately, research data on women and women athletes have not been integrated into the mainstream social context, which continues to use as its foundation understandings obtained on white, adult, male, elite athletes (Greendorfer, 1983). Generally, males in American society are, simply because of their gender, more highly valued and respected than females. Therefore, historically, female athletes have seldom experienced levels of recognition and respect comparable to those of their male counterparts (Hall, 1978; Whitaker & Molstad, 1985). According to Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983), women's sport increasingly has been defined and structured by men's values and perspectives, men's understanding of the world, and men's experiences--all of which suppress the development and expression of female values. Women might not be attracted to the coaching and/or administration profession because of their own unique sports experience (Pastore, 1991). Although there has been a great increase in organized sport and athletic programs for women, the traditional gender roles continue to be maintained through socialization experiences (Weiller & Higgs, 1989).

As student-athletes, women also face several difficulties in career development issues. The lack of identification of academic and career plans, unrealistic goal setting, and lack of self-confidence outside of athletics are among the serious issues female athletes face (Berry & Sorensen, 1981; Blann, 1988; Coleman & Barker, 1993; Hilliard, 1989; Lanning, 1982; Remer, Tongate, & Watson, 1978; Shiflett & Galante, 1985; Sowa & Gressard, 1983; Wittmer, Bostic, Phillips, & Waters, 1981). Some schools try to provide counseling programs to address these issues, but the availability of these programs is limited for female intercollegiate athletes. Limited professional opportunities

after college/university also minimize the effectiveness of these programs.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to understand how systemic support such as affirmative action and Title IX for women actually help women athletes in American society. Although many women may believe that such supports guarantee their job opportunities in society, not every woman benefits. For example, while there are strong and weak types of affirmative action, neither produces guaranteed opportunities for minorities and women in the job market (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996).

Impact of Title IX

> *"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."*
>
> (From Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)

The passage of Title IX is one of the most important landmarks for women's sport in American society (Acosta, & Carpenter, 1992; Carpenter, 1993; Kase, 1994; Snyder, 1993). The fundamental purpose of Title IX requires that gender equity be achieved in educational programs which are federally funded (see Chapter I Definition Section). Since its enactment in 1972, girls' and women's sport in American society has gained social recognition and public attention. After the passage of Title IX, large numbers of scholarships became available for female intercollegiate athletes in various college/university athletic programs (Young, 1994). Prior to the passage of Title IX, there were few opportunities for girls and women to participate in organized athletic programs. In addition, under the influence of male-dominated standards, participation in sport was believed to be unfeminine and too strenuous, and not recommended (USCCR,

1980). Title IX attempted to provide equal opportunities in athletic programs for both women/girls and men/boys in educational institutions which received federal funds. Girls and women should have the same opportunities equal to boys and men in every aspect of sport including: opportunities to play, train, and travel; scholarships; dollars spent; coaching; uniforms; facilities; scheduling; and publicity (Roberts, 1992).

The opportunities for female athletes in high school and college/university athletic programs rapidly increased during the years after the passage of Title IX (Snyder, 1993). In 1970, only one in 27 girls participated in a high school athletic program, but, by 1996, that figure was one in three, according to the Women's Sports Foundation (Barnett & Rozin, 1997). A meaningful revolution for girls' and women's sport was realized by this change.

Prior to the passage of Title IX, there were reports of only limited numbers of high school girls participating in interscholastic athletic programs, but the numbers of high school girls increased after the enactment of Title IX; and the total number of girls participating in interscholastic athletic programs also sharply increased (Hammer, 1979; Hogan, 1987). In 1995, hundreds of high school girls participated and competed in nontraditional athletic programs for women such as football, wrestling, and baseball (Hilliard, 1996). However, the total number of girls who participated in interscholastic athletic programs in 1990-91 was almost unchanged since the late 1970s, but, at the same time, there was an enormous number of boys participating in high school athletics programs during the same period (Goldman, 1991).

Based on the impact of Title IX, many colleges/universities provided numbers of women's athletic programs and varsity teams (Francis, 1993-94). After the passage of Title IX, the amount of the athletic budgets for women's athletic programs in colleges/universities multiplied. Before the passage of Title IX, athletic scholarships for female intercollegiate athletes were virtually nonexistent but there are various types of athletic scholarships available (Hogan, 1987).

Despite the enormous positive impact of Title IX on the status of women's sport in American society, it has also brought about a negative backlash against women's sport. Faludi (1991) claimed that backlash against women "has been set off not by women's achievement of full equality, but by the increased possibility that they might win it" (p. xx). Backlash influences general society through means of the media, popular culture, and advertising (Faludi, 1991). Therefore, backlash against girls and women in sport have the potential to influence and minimize the development of the status of women's sport in society.

One of the unexpected backlashes of the passage of Title IX is that as more money becomes available for coaching and administering women's athletic programs, more men coaches and administrators move into those positions, thus the number of women coaches and administrators in women's athletic programs decreases (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992; Carpenter, 1993; Roberts, 1992). Also the number of women coaching female intercollegiate teams was half of what it was in 1972, and the number of women administrations was even less (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992; Roberts, 1992). While men became coaches for women's teams in large numbers following the passage of Title IX,

there was no accompanying increase in the entrance of female coaches into the coaching positions of men's team. More than half of the most popular NCAA sport for females have more male coaches than female coaches, while only a few female coaches are in charge of a Division-I men's team (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992). In fact, only limited numbers of the head coaches of men's teams within the NCAA are women and almost half of those are coaches of combined teams (teams practicing together) such as swimming, cross country, and tennis; and less than half of the intercollegiate programs for women in the United States have no women involved in athletic administration (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992; Hogan, 1987).

Standpoint Theory

According to Tannen (1997), men and women are raised differently in the culture, thus they essentially have a different context and perspective from which they understand social phenomena. Furthermore, boys and girls have different socialization processes. According to socialization processes, men understand and perceive their dominated status in society. Consequently, compared to women, men have played a more dominated role in society. Goldberger (1997) stated:

> Today both women and men in the Western world are taught to value what is assumed to be the objective, male mind and to devalue knowing that is identified as female and emotional and personalized. Our androcentric culture sends out the message to women that in order to succeed they need to learn to think like men (p. 256).

As a result, women have been forced to understand the hierarchical social order and male-dominated social environment. Consequently, it is a highly controversial perception for women, because women's value has been intentionally underestimated in society. Feminists are also sensitive about male-female comparisons which support male-dominated perspectives (Guttmann, 1991). The failure to see the different reality of women's experiences develops in part from the assumption that there is a single perspective (i.e., male) of social experience and interpretation (Gilligan, 1982). Despite women's unique characteristics, both physiological and psychological, many female athletes have been represented under the influence of male-dominated perspectives.

There is and always has been another point of view, another record of social reality, a women's standpoint (Andermahr et al., 1997; Aptheker, 1989; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Collins, 1991; Humm, 1995). Recently, women's standpoint and identity have been noticed among social institutions (Gilligan, 1982). Standpoint theory has its base in the idea that subordinate or less powerful groups of the society have a more complete understanding of the world than the dominated groups because they have to understand both their own subordinate and the dominated perspectives (Humm, 1995). The origins of standpoint approaches are based in Marxist social theory, itself an analysis of social structure rooted in Western and/or dichotomous thinking (Collins, 1991). Among the most pressing items on the agenda for research on adult development is the need to describe in women's own terms, the experience of their adult life. The interpretation of women's experience in terms of their own imagery of relationships thus clarifies that experience also provides a nonhierarchical vision of

human connection (Gilligan, 1982).

Feminist standpoint theorists (i.e., Andermahr, Aptheker, Belenky, Clinchy, Collins, Goldberger, Gilligan, Humm, Levell, Tarule, Wolkowitz) argued that women's experiences informed by feminist theory provide a better foundation for more complete and less distorted knowledge claims than do men's experiences. It is through feminist struggles against male-domination that women can produce a truer picture of social reality than can the dominated group of men. Standpoint theorists also argue that men's vision of reality is incomplete because they are most often involved in only certain kinds of activities (e.g., the public world of work) and they assign activities they disregard to women (e.g., housework, child care), thus men can know only part of reality (Costa & Guthrie, 1994).

Standpoint theory significantly reflects the feminist perspectives into the relationship between women and other social contexts. This standpoint has always existed, but, until recent years, it has not been valued, nor been seen, even by women, and it has certainly not been considered as anything important (Aptheker, 1989). All feminist theory is dedicated to finding a way of knowing the world that is a truer standpoint than existing paradigms (Goldberg, 1997). According to Humm (1995), feminist standpoint theorists argue that women's experience of marginality combined with material activities of reproduction, labor, and refusal of dualism such as culture/nature, mind/body, provide an understanding of social life which is distinct from that of men.

Knowledge produced from a woman's standpoint is distinctive in form as well as content. The strongly essentialist foundation of standpoint epistemologies, especially the

implicit assumption of a universal women's perspective, and their tendency to conflate women's experience and perception, led by the late 1980s to a more critical approach to women's experience as the foundation of feminist knowledge (Andermahr et al., 1997). Therefore, measuring women's consciousness and providing examples of women's cultures from this point of view is to make women's beliefs intelligible within their own paradigm. It is showing connections and forming patterns which make visible representation of women's understanding (Aptheker, 1989).

Other writers in both women's studies and feminist theory have begun to raise the issue of differences, because women have different ways of knowing (Goldberger, 1997). Belenky et al. (1996) identified five epistemological perspectives which explain women's differences. These perspectives include silence, received knowing, subjective knowing, procedural knowing, and constructed knowing (Belenky et al., 1996). Indeed, in the years since the publication of Women's Ways of Knowing (WWK), several important movements have enlarged the conversation among these writers and transformed these fields. First were the demands by women of color, lesbians, Third World women and others silenced by the universalizing tendencies of earlier stages in feminist thought, to be included in the range of women's experiences being researched, theorized and taught. Just as Women's Ways of Knowing had revealed the false universalism of traditionalist male theory, so, now, theories of different "identities" have begun to reveal the limitations of the Women's Ways of Knowing and other work in its field in speaking for all women without sufficient attention to variations among them (Belenky et al., 1996).

According to Fordam (1993), there is an implicit message that reaches both men and women, as they move through the American educational system and social environment. If someone wants to succeed in this society, she cannot let emotions and personal considerations disturb her thought and knowledge. It is necessary to learn and understand male-dominated social context. This message has affected the way women in this society evaluate and perceive their intellectual and social potential. This current stereotype of masculine and feminine thought effectively disregards the self-evaluations and ways of knowing of women.

Women's Unique Aspects and Identity

A women's standpoint emerges from the scenes and stories suggesting ideas, feelings, and sensibilities about the nature of beauty, personal and social change, the conditions necessary for life and growth, and the importance of interpersonal communication. These ideas contrast sharply with those of the dominated culture (Aptheker, 1989).

Under conditions of enslavement, persecution and subordination, women have had no way of articulating and hanging on to a systematic, collective, sustained way of knowing. Women's ideas and heritage have been fragmented, uprooted, interrupted by these conditions. Many things have been deliberately destroyed. Yet, many fragments have been and are being recovered by the feminist perspectives and social reformation such as development of women's social status. Women have always labored to give meaning to their experiences in daily life. In these ways, the notion of an alternative way of seeing has been kept alive. In the women's lives, there is and always has been an

alternative to the beliefs, priorities, and values of the dominated cultures we have endured (Aptheker, 1989).

In everyday and professional life, women often feel unheard even when they believe that they have something important to say. Most women can recall incidents in which either they or other women were discouraged from pursuing some line of intellectual work, on the grounds that it was "unfeminine" or incompatible with female capabilities. All women grow up having to deal with historically and culturally--ingrained definitions of femininity and womanhood--one common theme, i.e., being that women, like children, should be seen and not heard (Belenky et al., 1996).

Explorations of their own histories on their own terms by members of these and other marginalized groups give rise to a number of so-called identities, or standpoint theories. The increase of such standpoint feminism represents a new set of problems, namely, those generated by the implications of a series of parallel knowledge which exist alongside each other without intersecting, or being able to claim the knowledge of each other except as regards those experiences held in common. The results have been the stalemate of "identity politics," where members of different dominated and exploited groups, in trying to understand who they are, struggle against the barriers between them and other groups that these same identities create (Maher & Tetreault, 1996).

Sport as a Resistance

Resistance is the process by which disempowered groups or persons refuse to submit fully to their disempowerment. Current theories of women's oppression and the reproduction of inequitable gender relations increasingly emphasize physicality and the

control of women through the control of their bodies. As a central issue in gender relations, the body can be seen as political territory and as the central site in the struggle over gender relations. The prescription for change is for women to take conscious control of their own bodies so that the site of oppression becomes a site of resistance, transformation and liberation (Birrell & Theberge, 1994).

For instance, what appears as collaboration or accommodation in a masculinist perspective (i.e., from men's point of view) may be reinterpreted from women's standpoint as resistance. This is not a contradiction in the sense that one point of view must overturn the other. It is rather a paradox that results from the imbalance in human affairs in which men have not only set the ground rules for social existence, but have also had the power to name what is collaboration, what is accommodation, what is resistance, and what is progressive, as though the only viable and correct perspective was theirs. Women's culture and perceptions provide us with the evidence of another way of seeing these issues, and of thinking about resistance (Aptheker, 1989).

Woman's standpoint must be viewed from her perspective as well as the pre-dominated masculinist one. The moment this is done--the moment she is accorded equality with him in the assessment of human affairs--the conventional definitions of resistance must be reexamined and expanded to encompass the vastly complex life experiences of women (Aptheker, 1989).

Homophobia in Women's Sport

The influence of homophobia in women's sport and their sport participation needs to be properly identified to eliminate distorted views–such as stereotypes against the

presentation of women's sport. Throughout the history of Western culture, "restrictions have been placed on women's sport participation and women in sport have been intimidated by fears of losing social approval" (Griffin, 1992, p. 251). The influence of homonegativism in women's sport in American society is one of the most controversial gender issues in the field of sport sociology (Griffin, 1992; Harry, 1995; Phillips, 1996). This issue has been discussed and developed by a broad range of scholars and feminists (Blum, 1994; Galst, 1998; Griffin, 1992; Harry, 1995; Heaton, 1992; Richardson & Tandy, 1985; Weis, 1995). In athletics, "the lesson of hegemonic masculinity, including homophobia, are taught and learned well" (Weis, 1995, p. 25). Homophobia is a serious problem which negatively affects women athletes' career development, regardless of whether they are lesbian or straight (Heaton, 1992). Being identified as homosexual might "jeopardize a women's athletic career, damage a coach's ability to recruit, and further alienate women from the male-dominated world of sport" (Blum, 1994, p. A35).

Men tend to learn and develop traditional male-dominated social arrangements and heterosexual perspectives through sport which supports sexism and patriarchy (Kidd, 1990; Messner, 1988). Through this socialization process, men, and even some women, tend to underestimate the value of women and their participation in sport (Messner & Sabo, 1990). Male-dominated perspectives and masculine hegemony still control the entire field of sport and athletics for both men and women, especially at the professional and college/university levels. According to Nelson (1991), "women athletes in traditionally masculine sports, such as contact sports and team sports, challenge social dictates about proper behavior for women" (p. 144). Under the influence of a male-

dominated social environment, most women athletes, especially professional athletes, understand that it is necessary to show a proper heterosexual image to the public in order to have support from society, for example, scholarships, endorsements, and sponsorships (Galst, 1998). Basically, "sport is part of the patriarchal gender factor for men but not for women, and it also might define and validate prejudices against women, gays, and lesbians" (Harry, 1995, p. 115).

In sports settings, gender differences have been controversial issues, especially for female athletes. The gender distinction is a theory of natural differences which means some of the differences between the genders are naturally given in the two different facts of human biology (Williams, 1995). However, gender differences in sports settings generate many controversial issues within American society. The presence of homosexuals in sports settings is one of the most interesting issues of current gender research in sport. Homosexuals are socialized within a homonegative and heterosexist society where they learn homonegative attitudes (Krane, 1996). Sports settings provide even more difficult barriers to overcome for lesbian athletes. However, personal sexual orientation and sexuality should not be major barriers in society. No one should be treated improperly because of personal preferences or sexual orientation. From this point of view, lesbians in sports settings need to gain their own right to participate in the sport which they want to play. These women athletes are not outsiders in this society. When they 'come out' as lesbian athletes, this decision should be based on their own choice and not from any impact from society which may provide negative stereotypes against non-heterosexual athletes.

In general, personal biases against non-heterosexuals reveal a lack of acceptance, prejudiced beliefs, and discrimination (Krane, 1996). Due to prejudice and social stereotypes against lesbian athletes, some of women athletes may experience both psychological (e.g., low self-esteem, low confidence, low satisfaction, high stress) and physiological (e.g., poor sports performance, substance abuse) problems. Furthermore, negative stereotypes of lesbian athletes in American society are widespread throughout many institutions. Lesbians also suffer seriously because they are the double victims of both sexism and homophobia (Pharr, 1988). The negative stereotype against the lesbian athlete also minimizes their participation in sport. Many lesbian athletes do not want to reveal their sexual orientation in front of the public, for example, teammates, friends, coaches, so they attempt to stay away from any risks which may negatively influence their social life and status. Consistent participation in sport, especially in tough sport, may bring another suspicious anxiety toward lesbian athletes. The denial of athletic participation and opportunities may be used as a method to prove their heterosexuality. Therefore, most lesbian athletes tend to disguise their sexual orientation and sexuality and avoid participation in sport. However, the denial of participation in sport does not improve the status of lesbian athletes in sports settings which are very hostile against lesbian athletes.

The lack of punishment for discrimination against lesbians reinforces that homonegativism is acceptable behavior in sport (Krane, 1996). It also generates an athletic environment which is filled with fear, distrust, and hatred against lesbian athletes, even female athletes in general. The negative influences of homophobia usually create a

hostile environment against lesbian athletes in sports settings. Also, participation in such hostile athletic environments enhances the negative experiences for some female athletes. Women's sport participation has been challenged by male-dominated perspectives which have seen women's participation as unfeminine or as unnatural behavior. Women's sport participation strongly challenges the function of "socially constructed gender roles" and "sexual identities" in the male-dominated social environment (Griffin, 1992, p. 252). Women's participation in sport has been "resisted, considered unfeminine, and been a basis of questioning the sexual orientation of those women who took sport too seriously, e.g., the stereotype of the female physical education teacher" (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 102-107). Women have been "welcomed unconditionally as spectators and cheerleaders for men's games" (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 101), but resisted by society as serious competitors.

Compared to the other parts of the American society, the sports field is one of the most conservative and negative institutions regarding the issue of homonegativism or homophobia. In women's sport, the assumption exists that there are many lesbian athletes and coaches, but the reality is inconsistent with this stereotype of female athletes. Women in sport are particularly sensitive and vulnerable to the use of the lesbian label to intimidate (Griffin, 1992, p.253). This is true in professional sport and especially true on college and university campuses. As Galst (1998) indicated:

> Where closeted coaches are coaching closeted athletes how to play the game: both the one on the field, and the one required of them by administrators who say they do not discriminate, but who fear they will lose students and money if their women's teams are thought to be made up of lesbians (p. 75).

In other words, maintaining the appropriate feminine image is necessary to survive in the field of sport.

At the college or university, many young women athletes begin to plan their career. At the same time, they realize that it is very hard to continue their career if they are publically known to be lesbians. It is common knowledge that lesbian coaches are fired and lesbian athletes lose their scholarships. Furthermore, lesbian athletes, especially those who want to work as coaches or physical education teachers, or hope for professional sports careers, understand that "their future is dependent on not being open" (Galst, 1998, p. 77).

Sport is one of the most influential social institutions that manifests and perpetuates negative stereotypes against lesbians and is also relatively hostile toward all women, and even more so for lesbians (Lenskyj, 1992). Homophobia in sport perpetuates "male dominance and the male monopoly of existing resources" (Nelson, 1991, p. 145). This notion clearly shows that female members of the society and in sports settings especially have to face and overcome ultimate barriers because of their gender. A hostile environment toward lesbians is created when anti-lesbian language is common (Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995). This type of environment is worsened when homophobia is tolerated and accepted by the people in powerful positions, for example, coaches and administrators. In sport, sexist and homonegative practices are common and often go unpunished. Additionally, concerns about athletes' femininity, or the lack thereof, further reinforce and enhance homonegativism (Griffin, 1994). For women, being an athlete is considered masculine, thus, despite this misunderstanding, many female athletes are

simply labeled as a lesbian. This lesbian label usually discourages female athletes from participating in sport with their maximum capabilities. Invoking the lesbian label is equivalent to discrediting all of women's sport, indicating that successful athletic performances are due to unnatural advantages (Krane, 1996). Homonegative reactions to lesbians are used not only to control lesbians in sports settings, but also to control all women in sports settings. The tremendous dishonor associated with being labeled lesbian leads many women in sport to fear participation in it (Griffin, 1994). Subsequently, as long as women (athletes) suffer from these stereotypes and social discrimination, they are not be free to fully test their skills and abilities and to achieve their potential (Krane, 1996).

A common personal disclosure of homonegativism is attempting to hide her sexual orientation from others in order to avoid potential homonegativism (Krane, 1996). This type of behavior leads to a contradiction between one's private and public lives and causes an individual to deny and silence her self-identity (Herek, 1991). Lesbians who attempt to hide or deny their experiences and feelings are isolating themselves and maintaining only superficial interactions with others (Herek, 1991). Lesbians in sport who experience personal reactions to homonegativism, distract energy away from sports performances and toward hiding or denying their lesbian identity to avoid discrimination (Krane, 1996). Examples of homonegativism in sports settings are easily found. Female coaches are hired and fired based on their sexual orientation. Female athletes have been removed or restricted from athletic programs because of the suspicion of their sexual orientation. More male coaches are hired instead of female coaches to avoid the lesbian

issue. Furthermore, lesbian athletes sometimes experience sexual harassment because of their sexual orientation. Negative recruiting (discouraging young athletes from attending rival universities through a rumor that the coach or athletes on the team are lesbians) is becoming a common tactic (Young, 1994). According to Griffin (1992), there are six manifestations of homophobia in women's sport including: silence, denial, apology, promotion of a heterosexy image, attacks on lesbians, and preference for male coaches. In addition, as Heaton (1992) indicated:

> Observers cite a range of cases, such as women turning down scholarships at schools unfriendly to lesbians; lesbians getting married and divorced to maintain a heterosexual image; women terrified to reveal they were fired because they were suspected of being lesbian; single women who are not hired as coaches; heterosexual women declining athletic careers for fear of being labeled lesbians–which may lead to the assumption that there are numbers of lesbians in sport (p. 62).

Certain athletes also "publicly ridicule and even physically confront gays in order to construct their own identity as a straight person" (Weis, 1995, p. 25).

Lesbian identity is one of the major aspects of self-identity. Understanding and admitting the lesbian identity is very important to improve the status of lesbian athletes in sports settings. The experiences of sharing one's lesbian identity with others involve an improved sense of self-respect, self-confidence, self-pride, and self-understanding (Rhodes, 1995). Lesbians who successfully work through their personal reactions to homonegativism embrace a positive lesbian identity (Gonsiorek & Rudolph, 1991).

Troiden (1988) describes 'identity commitment', as when a lesbian determines that it is easier and more comfortable to live as a lesbian rather than to attempt to pass as a heterosexual. In order to discredit the negative socialization about lesbians, it is necessary to find, and learn about, lesbians who do not fit the societal stereotypes (Sophie, 1987). In this way, it is possible to maximize the social support for lesbians. Individuals who are able to defy their negative personal reactions to homonegativism, do so within a positive, supportive environment, especially with the social support of other lesbians (Gonsiorek & Rudolph, 1991). Active interaction with the lesbian community, individual lesbian, and supportive heterosexuals facilitate positive identity building and minimize feelings of being neglected (Dempsey, 1994).

Positive role models are also important to develop the positive lesbian identity. The absence of positive role models can increase feelings of isolation and loneliness (Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995), whereas the presence of positive role models can be beneficial. Therefore, many lesbian athletes try to find their own role models through their personal experiences. Sometimes these role models may be peers (Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995). According to these processes, most lesbian athletes are able to understand and construct their own identity as a lesbian.

Personal reactions to homonegativism include negative attitudes, prejudiced beliefs, and negative emotions toward non-heterosexuality (Shildo, 1994). Because of the hostility toward lesbians experienced in most sports environments, it is difficult to imagine lesbians in sport who are not negatively affected by homophobia. In other words, most lesbian athletes usually have certain types of problems and/or barriers when

they consistently participate in sport. Typically, lesbians learn socially accepted anti-gay and lesbian prejudice before they realize their own sexual orientation (Gonsiorek & Rudolph, 1991). For this reason, negative reactions to homophobia has been considered a normal procedure in the developmental process of self-acceptance for lesbians (Pharr, 1988; Sophie, 1987). Every lesbian athlete has her own way of reaction toward homophobia. However, homophobia may decrease athletic performance, involvement with teammates and self-esteem level; thus managing the influence of homophobia in sports settings is very important aspect to continue athletic career as a female athlete in American society. Especially for some team sport, the influence of teammates, coaches, and administrators is very important to play consistently, so lesbian athletes should try to keep their status inside of the group (Griffin, 1992). Facing homophobia in sports settings may be the best way to improve effectively the status of lesbian athletes in American society.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative approaches are generally supported by an interpretivist paradigm, which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever-changing (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). According to Schwandt (1994), the interpretivist paradigm can be presented through the following epistemologies: Geertz's version of interpretive anthropology, symbolic interactionism by Blumer and Mead, and Denzin's reconceptualization of interpretive interactionism. Interpretivism adopts a relativism ontology, a transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology. Inquiry in an interpretivist paradigm generates the production of reconstructed

understandings and realities. The interpretivist paradigm assumes a relative ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. Findings with such a paradigm are presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The interpretivist paradigm constructs the realities or understandings of social phenomena and tries to understand these phenomena based on an emic point of view (from the insider's point of view). The world of everyday life as viewed from the standpoint of insiders is the fundamental reality to be described by an interpretive paradigm (Jorgenson, 1989). Therefore, realities or understandings can be presented through situation-specific meanings which need to be interpreted. The meaning of social phenomena from this paradigm embodies various aspects of people (Schwandt, 1994). An interpretivist generates realities or understandings based on social interaction which is complex (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The ultimate goal of a qualitative approach is to develop meaningful understanding as a grounded theory to describe multiple realities in the society. Qualitative research is the process of gathering and analyzing data and information in the natural setting through methods such as case study, ethnography, and narrative reports (Thomas & Nelson, 1990). It is crucial to understand how qualitative research methodology effectively enhances the quality of a study. It is also important to examine the various aspects of qualitative research. The strengths of qualitative research methodology derive primarily from its inductive data analysis, focus on specific

situations or people, theoretical sampling, grounded theory, contextual interpretations, and emphasis on words rather than numbers (Denzin, 1994; Maxwell, 1996).

Qualitative inquiry is evolutionary, with a problem statement, a design, interview questionnaires, and interpretations developing and changing along the way (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). From this point of view, proper understanding of the significant variables in qualitative inquiry is one of the most crucial factors of maintaining the quality of qualitative inquiry. Along with conducting qualitative inquiry, thoughtful controlling of the variables that interacted in various ways is very important. To generate various interpretations, research design should reflect the multiple perspectives of participants, thus research design focuses on in-depth interaction with relevant participants.

Since qualitative research methodology deals with multiple, socially constructed reality can be interpreted how various people understand the social phenomena in different social settings (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Each social or cultural setting may have different meanings or interpretations for the same social phenomenon. Furthermore, even within the same social or cultural settings, the absolute meaning of reality may have different forms to be understood or interpreted. Therefore, in qualitative inquiry, reality should be constructed by social understanding and interpretation. If the reality is not socially constructed, one of the major purposes of the qualitative approach, interpretation, cannot be accomplished properly. Socially constructed reality significantly reflects people's experiences in society. All participants in social or cultural settings also have various perspectives, so the qualitative researcher should be able to understand the

different types of interpretation of the socially constructed meanings. Each participant may respond with significantly different reactions or interpretations about the same socially constructed meaning or phenomenon within the same social or cultural settings. Therefore, the reality in qualitative research should be supported by the socially accepted process or interpretation to be constructed.

The openness of qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to approach the inherent complexity of social interaction and to do justice to that complexity, to respect it in its own right (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Due to the various sources of social or cultural meanings in the society, qualitative researchers need to understand the interactional nature of social reality or meaning. Also, this social complexity is one of the main reasons why qualitative reality should be socially constructed. Socially constructed reality properly interprets the complex nature of social phenomena. Meaning sometimes cannot represent the social phenomenon effectively unless it is derived from various approaches or sources. Socially constructed understanding or interpretation significantly enhances the crucial aspects of qualitative inquiry.

In qualitative research, the researcher's role is to observe and measure, and care is taken to keep the researcher from misdirecting the data through personal involvement with the research subject (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The researcher is the main research instrument, thus the concern of a researcher's objectivity and subjectivity should be reviewed during the research process. Every variable in the qualitative research cannot be managed or controlled perfectly by the researcher. Because of the relativity or relationship of each variable, the qualitative researcher should be aware of the

fundamental significance of each variable for the trustworthiness of the research.

In other words, to maintain the quality the research, the researcher should provide proper control of every variable to be observed and measured. Qualitative research methodology significantly reflects the quality of information which is shared between researcher and participants. The close human relationship between a researcher and participants enhances the effectiveness of this approach particularly in a study that deals with gender issues and feminist perspectives. This approach also allows women to share more sensitive issues such as sexuality, and to understand individuality in relation to social environments such as power differentials in gender relation (Humm, 1989). As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated:

> Obtaining the reactions of respondents to working drafts is time-consuming, but respondents may (a) verify that the researcher has reflected the insider's perspectives; (b) inform the researcher of sections that could be problematic for either personal or political reasons; and (c) help the researcher to develop new ideas and interpretations (p. 147).

In terms of methodology, four main parts should be considered: (a) the researcher's relationship and bias concerning the participants and their social settings; (b) organizing the interview schedule and selecting participants; (c) developing interview questions and evaluations; and (d) data analysis techniques (Maxwell, 1996).

Qualitative research depends on various methods of gathering data and information. The use of multiple data-collection methods enhances the trustworthiness of the data and information gathered (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Johnson, 1997).

Trustworthy data and information also enhance the generalizability of the results of the research. Generalizability is the ability of the reader to evaluate findings and apply them to their own situation (Locke, 1989). Trustworthy materials depend on using the constant comparative method of analysis which grounded theory deploys. These materials are then developed through the criteria such as a comprehensive member check and an external audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition to these, data reviewing by a qualitative research group can be used. The validity of the qualitative study is presented by the terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, trustworthiness, generalizability, and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Validity is cited as truth, "the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (Silverman, 1993, p. 149). Validity depends on the trustworthiness of its presentation to convince the readers that the information is accurate (Valle & Halling, 1989). Triangulation may also be employed to enhance the validity of the qualitative approach. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data to substantiate a researcher's conclusion (Thomas & Nelson, 1990). The qualitative researcher needs to be concerned throughout the investigative process with the validity of the research procedure and content (Valle & Halling, 1989).

The interview technique is widely used for the data collection procedure (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The purpose of an interview is to construct meaningful knowledge from the language and experiences of the participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interviewing is a qualitative technique used to gain insight into another person's experience and in-depth knowledge from the participants about a particular social phenomena (Glesne &

Peshkin, 1992; Kvale, 1996). The interview technique significantly enhances meaningful interaction between the researcher and the participant, thus it is a distance-reducing experience (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The interview has several benefits that accomplish the purpose of qualitative research. It is adaptable, so questions can be rephrased and additional questions can be asked. Interviewing is versatile with regard to the personality and openness of the participants. The interviewer can observe how the participants respond and can accomplish better insight into the sensitivity of the topic and the intensity of feeling from the participants. This procedure can enhance the trustworthiness of results. Finally, because each participant is contacted before the actual interview, the quality of gathered data and information can be enhanced (Thomas & Nelson, 1990). Aspects of a well-designed interview questionnaire are: (a) qualifying the objectives of the study; (b) gathering complete and accurate data; and (c) completing the study within the available time and resources (Anderson, Baslievsky, & Hum, 1983). In addition, it is also important to keep the interview questions relevant to the purpose of the study (Downs, Smeyak, & Martin, 1980).

Gathered information through the interview is analyzed by a coding procedure. Coding is "a progressive process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting those scraps of collected data (i.e., observation notes, interview transcripts, memos, documents, and notes from relevant literature) that are applicable to the research purpose" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.133). The data should be synthesized and categorized through an inductive data analysis process. The process for analyzing the data involves a search for common patterns of interpretations. Consequently, analyzed data becomes the foundation

for the grounded theory for the research.

Summary

The purpose of this review was to understand the theoretical foundations which explain the status of women in society and to discuss experiences and issues of women athletes' career development and opportunities. Women in American society have been experiencing several different types of barriers throughout their entire life. It is also true that women athletes normally have to deal with these types of barriers when they try to continue their career in athletics. Furthermore, most women, including women athletes, have been forced to understand and learn the male-dominated social environment which significantly prevents many women from careers which present the values of women.

The central concept of cultural studies and standpoint theory explains the relationship between sport and females and female athletes' experiences and perceptions about sport and sport participation. According to these theoretical explanations of the ultimate question, "What does it mean to be female in this society?," women athletes, even any woman, should gather proper understanding about their value and identity in the society. These theoretical understandings also broaden the general concept of the status of women athletes and their career opportunities and developments.

The review of the current issues for women athletes in American society should provide the very first stage to understand the status of women's sport and women athletes. In this society, women have a different socialization process than men. According to this process, especially during early ages, most women begin to conceptualize their identity and value as females. During this process, they also realize

the real world which they have to deal with. The existence of positive role models for women or women athletes is a very powerful way to draw public and women's attention into sport. It also supports many female athletes to continue their life-long career in athletics. Especially, outstanding role models in sport-related fields provide women athletes very specific motivation to pursue their career into advanced levels. This presentation of specific career opportunities would bring more women into athletics, pursuing their life-long commitment. It is also important to review possible barriers of women's sport participation and women athletes. These barriers could be overcome by women and women athletes once they are identified. Some barriers generate controversial issues, but making the issue public also helps to eliminate the barriers.

Title IX is a very meaningful milestone for all women in sport in American society. Since its enactment in 1972, women's participation in sport has been increasing enormously, especially for those who are in high schools and/or colleges/universities. Due to the systematic support such as Title IX, women's sports involvement could be expanded into younger generations, and it is a very important phenomenon for increasing the popularity of women's sport participation. Expanding popularity and availability of women's participation in various sports and athletic programs is one of the most important and strongest approaches to overcome various barriers against women and women athletes in sport.

Female members of society should not be labeled as minorities. They are another half of the society. Therefore, no matter which part of the society, female members should have their own right and opportunity to pursue their ultimate goals without any

types of negative influences from the society. In the sports settings, women also need to have the same right and opportunity as men. Therefore, women in sport should not be discriminated against under the any circumstances. This is true particularly regarding sexual orientation which may be determined by nature.

Homophobia is a part of the socialization process. Lesbian athletes are socialized under the influence of homonegative and heterosexist society. In sports settings, it is inevitable that lesbian athletes should overcome more rigid homonegative influences. Under these circumstances, lesbian athletes never develop the positive attitudes toward themselves and other lesbian peers. Also, they are not able to construct the positive lesbian identity which improves the status of lesbian athletes in sports settings. Building a positive lesbian identity in the sports settings may eliminate any other negative stereotypes against female athletes. The environment of sports settings also should be supportive for lesbian athletes. The lesbian athletes definitely need positive role models in the sports environment who provide beneficial influences and motivation. Sexual orientation should not be treated as abnormal. In other words, positive self-evaluation of lesbian athletes could be the best way to develop the status of lesbian athletes in sports settings.

Lesbian athletes in sports settings is still a controversial issue. However, as a part of society, sports settings need to provide support to improve the environment for lesbian athletes. Because of the negative evaluation of lesbian athletes, they cannot have maximum performance, and they are discouraged from participating in sport and physical activities. Therefore, the societal stereotypes which dehumanize the lesbian athletes

should be transformed into positive development of personal sexuality. Lesbian athletes should be evaluated as athletes based upon their athletic performance, not their sexual orientation. Lesbian athletes are members of the sports environment. They explain themselves through their athletic performance and voice of human being. Therefore, it is necessary to have unbiased perspectives toward every aspect of the society.

Female members of society are usually labeled as minorities, but it is necessary to change the perspective which has dominated the society for a long time. Female members should not be evaluated through the criteria set by dominated male members of the society. Female members should be free from these societal stereotypes and misinformed beliefs. Lesbian athletes should not be treated as the problems of sports environment. They are the part of our cultural diversity which improves this society positively. Therefore, lesbian athletes should gain their own status in the sports environment. It is also necessary to understand the cultural background that lesbian athletes are labeled as negative influence. This society and sports settings should respect the every characteristic of both female and male members.

Interviewing can be one of the most significant research methodologies in the field of sport sociology. According to the interview procedure, the researcher is able to understand the entire context of the conversation and responses. In other words, the interview procedure properly projects the general concept of interview questions from the interviewees' point of view. It also provides significant responses to interview questions as well as a broad range of social understanding about the interviewing context.

Gender issues in sport have been studied for a long time. However, these studies mainly focus on issues on women's sport participation in general. These studies also focus on women's sport during school years, mainly through the college/university level. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on career opportunities for women athletes beyond the college/university. The information which deals with this issue is relatively limited, so providing various career possibilities for women athletes beyond college/university should be studied.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Subsequently, this study focuses on how these women athletes make career decisions based on these understandings. What follows is the description of the methodology of the study.

Description of the Research Process

This chapter is divided into eight sections: (a) developing interview questions and evaluations, (b) selecting participants, (c) bias exploration and bracketing interview, (d) approval for research with human subjects, (e) pilot testing, (f) procedures for organizing the interviewing schedule, (g) interviewing procedure and data collection, and (h) data analysis.

Developing Interview Questions and Evaluations

The interview questions (Appendix A) were open-ended and explored female intercollegiate athletes' understanding of their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Demographic questions focused on acquiring demographics and personal information from each participant. Other questions focused on each participant's understandings, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding their athletic and academic career preparations and opportunities as professional athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and/or other

possible career paths in sport and sport-related fields.

The interview questions were carefully reviewed and evaluated by dissertation committee members to ensure their appropriateness. Each interview question reflected the contextualization, interpretation, and understanding about the research topic and theme by the investigator and participants. The questions were also refined based on the information gathered through pilot testing and continuously evaluated throughout the data collection process.

Selecting Participants

The participants for this study were selected based on their availability and personal preference for involvement; and included three sophomore, three junior and two senior National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division-I intercollegiate female athletes who were geographically located in the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States and who were pursuing some type of career in sport and sport-related fields (see Table 1). The participants were selected from various sports because each sport has a different status within American society. There were three field hockey players, two tennis players, one swimmer, one diver, and one golfer. An effort was made to obtain participants from a variety of cultural and sociological backgrounds and athletic experiences.

Bias Exploration and Bracketing Interview

In qualitative research, the investigator is the instrument of the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Maxwell, 1996). Therefore, it is important to understand and realize the potential biases the investigator brings to the study. In addition, biases should be

carefully checked throughout the entire process of the research by the investigator engaging in a reflective process regarding the interviews.

In my home country of Korea, I had observed many outstanding women athletes who finished their athletic career after accomplishing only part of their career goal. In many cases, most women athletes were forced to retire from their athletic career against their wishes, because there were no more opportunities for them to continue. As outstanding athletes, most of them invested a lot of effort and time to accomplish their athletic goal, but Korean society did not provide sufficient sport-related career opportunities for them. Therefore, although there are some significant similarities and differences between Korean and American societies, I believe that it is necessary to explore how women athletes perceive and understand the issues regarding their athletic career and the status of women's sport in American society.

My potential biases as an international male doctoral candidate were carefully examined and evaluated before initiating the entire research process. As an international male investigator who has been in American society for several years and is interested in gender equity issues in sport, I clearly understand and realize the potential risks of my personal biases regarding the topic of this study such as influence of my own male perspectives on particular issue. It is, however, impossible to avoid entirely the investigator's biases toward the qualitative research (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). My rapport with the participants and subjectivity was significantly reviewed throughout the research process to ensure honesty and trustworthiness (refer to bias exploration section in Chapter I).

Table 1. Demographics

Name	Sport	Age	Years to play	Home	Year	Major
Andrea	Field Hockey	20	6 years	S. East	Soph.	Physical Edu.
Belle	Field Hockey	20	6 years	Midwest	Soph.	Physical Edu.
Cathy	Field hockey	22	12 years	Africa	Junior	Physical Edu.
Diana	Tennis	20	10 years	Midwest	Soph.	Sport Mgt.
Ellen	Tennis	22	13 years	S. East	Senior	Exercise Science
Fay	Swim	20	10 years	Africa	Junior	Exercise Science
Gayle	Diving	22	6.5 years	S. East	Senior	Sport Mgt.
Helen	Golf	21	12 years	Midwest	Junior	Business Mgt.

Prior to initiating the pilot study, I took part in a bracketing interview which further uncovered my biases regarding the topic of this study. According to the bracketing interview, I realized how my biases could influence this research. For example, the differences between myself and the participants and how we perceived issues, such as homophobia, raised concern of how my biases regarding the issue could influence the data and analysis. Therefore, I was able to review the entire research process considering my bias and the way I would handle the interviews. The bracketing interview also enabled me to understand the important aspects of reflecting the participants' voices based on their experiences and perceptions.

Approval for Research with Human Subjects

Approval for research with human subjects for this study was obtained from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Institutional Review Board (IRB). The investigator sent a letter to the institutions in the Midwest and Southeast asking permission to use a facility for interviewing. The permission letter from the institutions was submitted along with the IRB form. The investigator also sent the letter to the coaches (Appendix C) in both regions asking permission to contact the female athletes of their teams for set up interviewing timetable. The permission letter from the coaches was submitted along with the IRB form. In the Informed Consent Form (Appendix B), the investigator clearly stated potential risks and benefits for the participants. This process included the information to provide and protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Pilot Testing

Based on the results from the pilot testing, the investigator was able to improve future research environments. As Maxwell (1996) indicated:

> In qualitative study, the investigator could design a pilot study specifically to test the ideas or methods and explore the implications, or inductively develop grounded theory; and the particular use of pilot testing in qualitative research is to generate an understanding of the concepts and theories held by the people the investigator is studying (p. 44).

Pilot testing significantly helped to develop the interview questions and research process. It also provided opportunities for gathering knowledge and information of the particular issues along with an extensive literature review.

The pilot testing was conducted with several female athletes. They were asked interview questions about their athletic career experiences and the understanding of current issues from the interview questions. The pilot testing was conducted according to the same procedure as the actual study. After the completion of the interview session, the investigator transcribed the audio tapes and read the transcriptions for accuracy. Based on the outcome of the pilot interview sessions, further modifications were made of the interview timetable, interview questions, and research procedures to a better quality of the data collection. Following the pilot testing for this study, my advisor and I closely reviewed the process in an effort to improve the interview technique and data collection.

Procedures for Organizing the Interviewing Timetable

The coaches of women's athletic programs at NCAA Division-I universities in the geographical locations noted were initially contacted by a letter to explain the study and request permission to interview available athletes (Appendix C). From the information about the possible participants and coaches' consent to contact the athletes, each participant was then directly contacted by letter and/or telephone call so that the purposes and procedures of the study could be reviewed and to establish the first interview date and time. One week in advance of the first interview session, a telephone call was made to confirm the meeting schedule.

Interviewing Procedures and Data Collection

Interviewing may be the most effective and powerful technique for gaining insight into another person's experience (Kvale, 1983). As an instrument of qualitative research, the investigator is able to collect and analyze data by using interviewing techniques properly. Interviewing technique "allows the investigator to capture the complex and concentrated data needed for penetrating qualitative analysis" (McCracken, 1988, p. 11).

The interviewing session was audio recorded to maintain the accuracy and trustworthiness of the information obtained. Because of the nature of the qualitative research, the accuracy and trustworthiness of information is absolutely important and cannot be accomplished without using the audio taping procedure.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants and they were informed of their rights and guaranteed confidentiality. Each participant was advised that she had opportunity to withdraw from this procedure if she

so desired. They were then requested to read and sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix B).

Maintaining and analyzing data and the confidentiality of the participants were absolutely essential during the entire process of the research. Participants were assured that all the information regarding this study and their personal information was safely stored. The participants were also advised that they were identified on the tapes and on transcripts only by a pseudonym which they selected to ensure confidentiality. Access to all data was limited to the investigator, the advisor, and the transcriber. The transcriptions were available to the members of the cultural studies qualitative analysis group for confirmation of consistent themes in data analysis. Each member of this group signed a confidentiality form (Appendix D). The professional transcriber also signed a confidentiality statement (Appendix E).

Each participant was asked about current demographic information as well as her attitudes and understandings of her intercollegiate athletic and/or academic experiences and perceptions of professional athletic career opportunities after college/university. At the first interviewing session, each participant was able to obtain additional knowledge about the study and its process for ensuring better communication and understanding. For doing so, the participants were provided with information about the study and were encouraged to ask questions.

The initial interview timetable was established based on availability and personal time preference of the participants. Interview sessions were conducted in accordance with professional standards for providing and protecting the confidentiality of each

participant. The interview sessions lasted from one to two hours. Each participant was scheduled for two interview sessions during the entire research process. The purpose of the second interview session was to provide the participants the opportunity again to discuss their athletic experiences and perceptions and to review their first interview session. During the second interview session, the investigator asked additional questions of the participants to get more detailed information, and the participants added additional information if they wanted to.

After completing the first interview sessions, the audio tapes were carefully listened to by the investigator to clarify the information and evaluate the interview procedure. This process enhanced the quality of the second interview session in terms of the effectiveness, the accuracy, and the trustworthiness of information. After this procedure, the audio tape was transcribed by a paid transcriber. When the transcription of the interviews was completed, it was reviewed by the investigator to ensure the quality of the information shared. Each participant in the Midwest region was mailed a copy of her transcribed interview. A copy of the transcribed interview was hand-delivered to the participants who were local. When the participants finished reviewing the transcription, the second interview session was scheduled. These second interview sessions took place by phone with those participants in the Midwest region.

The second interview session primarily focused on the clarification of the participants' responses. The time frame of the second interview session varied depending on the participants' availability. In general, each participant, as well as the investigator, was able to obtain feedback and additional understanding concerning previous interview

sessions.

Data Analysis

Each interview session was audio recorded and transcribed. When transcriptions of the data were completed, the data were read by the investigator and reread in order to ensure accuracy and quality of the information. The transcribed data then were reviewed and coded by the investigator. This coding procedure involved an inductive data analysis process. This means that the transcribed data was analyzed and categorized to find themes for interpretation of the female intercollegiate athletes' perceptions and experiences. Common themes were also identified from all interviews. At the end of this procedure, analyzed data generated the grounded theory about the research topic.

The procedure from a collection of protocols to a trustworthy and informative structure description is complex. Because a whole protocol or a collection of protocols could not be analyzed simultaneously, they must be broken down into units and a process of sequential steps must be delineated that can assist the investigator in developing general structural descriptions (Polkinghorne, 1989). Therefore, the data analysis process was reviewed by the investigator periodically throughout the entire research process.

During the data analysis process, patterns of responses were identified through the review and analysis of the transcribed data. Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggested that analytic procedures fall into five modes: (a) organizing data; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns; (c) testing emergent hypotheses against the data; (d) searching for alternative explanations of the data; and (e) writing the report. Each of the points suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1989) helped to make the data understandable and

to generate meaningful information based on the experiences of the participants. In this study, there was no testing of a hypothesis, but rather a focus on generating a picture of the participants' experiences.

Qualitative investigation depends on a variety of methods for gathering information and data. The use of multiple data-analysis methods contributed to the trustworthiness of the data. Selecting the potential participants from various cultural and sociological backgrounds and sport also significantly triangulates the data. This practice is commonly called "triangulation" and may also involve "the incorporation of multiple data sources, investigators, and theoretical perspectives in order to increase confidence in research findings" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 24).

Continual alertness to the investigator's bias (or subjectivity) also assisted in producing more trustworthy interpretations. Two important threats to the trustworthiness of qualitative conclusions are the selection of data that fit the investigator's existing theory or preconceived ideas and the selection of data that appeal to the investigator (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shweder, 1980). Another guarantee to the trustworthiness of the data is the qualitative thematic evaluation process which permits a stronger way to report and understand the voices of the women participants regarding their experiences.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study is to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Subsequently, this study focuses on how these women athletes make career decisions based on these understandings.

For accomplishing the essence of qualitative research methodology, it is important to understand the narrative information about the participants. In the profile section, detailed information about each participant are presented. According to the information from the profiles, each participant's personal experiences and perceptions regarding her athletic experiences and career opportunities; and career decision making based on these understandings and perceptions could be identified. In the theme section, emerged themes from the participants' responses were presented. According to the themes which emerged from the analysis, the participants' understandings and perceptions regarding their athletic career and experiences are reported.

Profiles

Andrea

Andrea is a 20-year-old sophomore field hockey player from the Southeast who has played for six years as forward. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. Andrea went to a Catholic grade school and an all-girls high school, so she believed that she had different experiences than people who went to public schools.

Andrea played tennis and swam for her club team, but not for her school. She also ran track for two years in her high school. In her high school, she also learned how to play field hockey.

Andrea played field hockey for six years at a competitive level and has an interesting story about how she started to participate in field hockey. Before she went to high school, her mother wanted her to meet as many different types of people as possible, so she signed Andrea up for field hockey camp. She did well during camp and went on to high school tryouts. During her high school years, she enjoyed the competitive and active aspects of field hockey. Finally, she decided that she wanted to play field hockey as her major sport. In her freshman year, she participated in field hockey camp. From there, Andrea gradually improved her field hockey skills to make the college field hockey program with a scholarship.

At the very beginning stage, she started participation in field hockey for fun, but became better and better and decided to participate more seriously. In her all-girls high school, sport consumed a large portion of her life and most of the students were involved in athletic programs. It was a different experience for Andrea because athletic programs for girls had not been popular in the public schools. Therefore, she had very good experiences and positive reinforcement about her athletic career. She also liked competition and being active. She won Mid-American Conference (MAC) Championship and made it to the NCAA Division-I Final Eight last year.

She now plays at the forward position in field hockey at the college level. She also teaches field hockey at a summer camp and likes to watch the girls progress during

the camp. During the winter, Andrea plays on an intramural soccer team. Her roommate is a tennis player, so they play tennis and racquetball as recreational activities. Basically she enjoys playing outdoor sport.

Andrea's major is English and her minor is physical education. She plans to graduate in 2003. After college, she wants to be either a physical education teacher or an English teacher in middle school or high school because she likes to teach and help other students. She also wants to teach and coach field hockey at the same time because she thinks that if she becomes a teacher, she can spend more time with her family and children especially. She will have the same work cycle as a teacher as her children will have in the future. She said that family is her first priority. She has also met wonderful teachers throughout her schooling and wants to also help other students. In order to be a teacher, she wants to learn communication skills, so she can understand the students better. She also is trying to get her teaching license.

Belle

Belle is a 20-year-old sophomore field hockey player from the Midwest who has played for six years as a fullback. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. She defines herself as competitive, strong, and likes to be challenged. She feels these are perfect characteristics for a competitive player like herself. She played many different types of sports when she was young, but softball was her primary sport at that time. When she was growing up, she played competitive soccer and softball for the city in which she lived. In addition, she played softball in her high school.

Her family was very athletic and supportive of her athletic career. Belle always played with her brothers and was called a tomboy. Her athletic family background encouraged her to continue her sport participation. Because of the influence of her two brothers, Belle played and enjoyed competitive physical activities, developed aggressive characteristics because she was allowed to be active and strong while playing with them.

Belle started to play field hockey when she was a freshman in high school. Her mother suggested that she participate in field hockey camp, and she realized the positive aspects of this sport, such as fun, building self-esteem, making life-long friends, and keeping in shape. That was the first time she ever played field hockey. Belle was a successful player, an MVP in her high school and a leader of the field hockey team. Since she entered college, she has tried to gain the leadership position as an intercollegiate athlete similar to what she achieved at her high school.

Belle's major is physical education and she plans to graduate in 2002. She wants to be a field hockey coach and a physical education teacher in high school because she likes to teach physical skills and to help students participate in sport. In order to be a teacher, Belle has taken many different classes to be able to pursue her major. She is also trying to get her teaching license. In the future, she wants to play at higher levels such as the Olympic Games.

Cathy

Cathy is a 22-year-old junior field hockey player who attends college in the Midwest region. She is an international intercollegiate athlete who has played for 12 years as a forward. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. She prefers

team sport instead of individual sport because she likes to play with other people and build the connection with other players. She also thought that there were more possibilities for her in field hockey than any other sport. She has been in the United States for three and a half years. Every time she started to participate in sport, it ended up being competitive.

In her country, outdoor sport are very popular because of the good weather, so field hockey is popular. There also are not many indoor facilities available, so she mainly played outdoor sport. Cathy played many different sports competitively in high school and received national recognition for the sports of tennis, swimming, field hockey, and squash. She started to participate in swimming when she was five or six years old and, during her adolescence, tried out for the national team. She practiced three or four hours everyday during the summer time, which lasts six or seven months in her country. She started to play tennis when she was eight years old and tried out for different competitive levels based on different age groups with provincial and national teams. Later, she played squash at a competitive level. In her country, she participated in different sport each week, which is significantly different from the sports system in the United States. She only practiced one to three hours a week with each sport because she participated in so many different sports. After finishing high school, she coached tennis and also played field hockey in England for two years before coming to the United States on a field hockey scholarship in 1996.

Cathy's parents were very supportive of her athletic career, but she has made all decisions regarding her career development independently such as coming to the United

States. Cathy's major is physical education and she enjoys the academic challenge. She plans to graduate in May, 2000 and wants to stay in the United States after college to be a physical education teacher in middle or high school. Then, she wants to be a field hockey coach at the college/university level. In order to be a field hockey coach at that level, she is trying to wok toward meeting the needed qualifications. This includes building experiences as a field hockey coach and being certified from a national organization such as the National Field Hockey Coaches Association. She also plans to go to graduate school to study sport administration or sport management because she believes a master's degree will help her attain her career goals.

Diana

Diana is a 20-year-old sophomore tennis player from the Midwest who has played for 10 years. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. When she was very young, she started to play soccer, but that only lasted for a few years. When she was in kindergarten she began gymnastics and continued her participation for seven years. In the sixth grade, she started to play tennis. At that time, she wanted to stay in gymnastics, but her parents suggested that she begin to play tennis because of the high risk of danger and injury in gymnastics. Since her older sister was already participating in tennis, she followed her lead. Diana participated in many competitions in both gymnastics and tennis. Gymnastics competitions were held at the YMCA and tennis competitions were held through junior programs. In order to compete in tennis, she traveled to many different places throughout the country. Diana also took part in cross country running in school in order to take a break from tennis.

Diana lived with her parents who were very supportive of her athletic endeavors. Her father also got into sport seriously. Her father is a lawyer, so she wants to go to law school in order to expand her career opportunities after college. Her mother was a pharmacist, but she did not work and, therefore, has always been there for Diana. Diana's parents came to almost every match she played and even took care of scheduling her activities including time for school work, so she could concentrate on her athletic career.

Diana's major is sport management, because she wants to stay involved within sport after her college years. She plans to graduate from college in 2003 and wants to go to law school. In preparation for this, she has taken several law courses. She feels that if she has a law degree, it will be helpful in expanding her career opportunities into the related fields of such as a sports agent or a legal representative for sports organizations. Diana feels she has learned a lot of positive things from her athletic experiences, so she wants to help other people to become involved in sport. Furthermore, in order to help support other people's involvement in sport, she plans to work with tennis organizations such as the United States Tennis Association (U.S.T.A.) or the Women's Tennis Association (W.T.A.). Since her career as a professional tennis player is limited, she has decided to work for tennis-related organizations instead of attempting to play professionally. She also likes to help children to stay on the right path by participating in physical activities. Before she graduates from college, she wants to study abroad to expand her experiences outside of sports and athletic programs.

Ellen

Ellen is a 22-year-old senior tennis player from the Southeast who has played for 13 years. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. She was once ranked in the top 15 of the country in college tennis. At the age of eight, when she started to learn to play tennis, she was the first member of her family to become involved in sport. Ellen participated in many different sports at the YMCA and liked to play outside and competitively. When she was young, her coach motivated her to pursue her tennis career further and more seriously. She plays tennis on a national level in an NCAA Division-I program. She never thought that she would play tennis throughout her entire life, but she accomplished various achievements during her career as a tennis player. Although tennis is an individual sport, she noted that it also teaches her the important aspects of team work and connection with other team members.

During her middle school years, she played basketball for her school. However, at that time, she had to choose which sport she wanted to pursue as a career. She thought tennis would bring more opportunities for her in the future, so the decision was to play tennis. Ellen preferred individual sport to team sport because of her personality, but she also participated in softball and track in high school. She thought that participation in team sport helped build her character.

Ellen has two sisters who are also involved in sport participation. One runs track and another is a cheerleader for their school. Her family, especially her parents, were very supportive of her athletic participation. Even her grandparents supported her very much. Her parents took her everywhere for practice and sent her all across the country

for competition. She usually traveled with her sisters.

Ellen's major is exercise science because she wanted to be a physical therapist when she was a freshman in college, but she changed her plan because she got interested in the pharmaceutical business. She wanted to try something different than tennis and exercise science and liked to have work experiences, because during her entire life she has been involved in sport. Although she changed her career plans, her exercise science background still helps her to understand the basic knowledge of pharmaceutical sciences. The background of exercise science also helps her to understand her psychological and physiological aspects as a tennis player. She now wants to teach tennis as an assistant coach in college or to be the head pro at a private club or work in the pharmaceutical industry. No matter what happens to her after her college career, she wants to go to graduate school and study business or its related fields, because this will expand her experiences beyond the athletic environment. She also thinks that she needs a business background to pursue her career. She believes that this degree will help her career development path as a tennis coach or as a business person. She has already been offered a tennis coaching job during the summer. She plans to graduate in December 1999.

Fay

Fay is a 20-year-old junior swimmer (freestyle and butterfly) who attends college in the Southeast region. She is an international intercollegiate athlete who has participated in swimming for 10 years. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. She has been in the U. S. for three years. She enjoys her life in the U.S. It has

been a very supportive and good experience for her, so she wants to stay here after graduation from college. In high school, she practiced field hockey and track and field.

Fay's sister primarily influenced her to pursue her athletic career in swimming, because her sister also was a swimmer. Her sister participated in the Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain in 1992. This participation influenced Fay to concentrate on swimming. She also has two brothers who used to play rugby in high school through college. She participated in the Commonwealth Games twice and the European Championship once. She also participated in the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996 when she was only 17 years old. She thinks that these international competitive experiences were great athletic honors for both herself and her sister. It was a great experience for her, because it was the highest level of competition she ever participated in. It also was terrific to meet many world-class athletes. Although she did not get any medals, she learned many things as an athlete.

Fay's major is exercise science, because she is interested in the physiological aspects of the body. She wants to be a physical therapist. Her experiences as an athlete and background knowledge from exercise science will help her to become a physical therapist. She believes that the combination of her athletic experience and academic background gives her an advantage for being a physical therapist. She also wants to go to graduate school to study exercise science and related fields. In graduate school, she wants to study more in-depth knowledge about human bodies. After graduation from college in 2001, she wants to stay in the United States and also wants to work within an athletic environment especially as a physical therapist, because she can understand

athletes better and wants to stay involved with athletic environments.

Gayle

Gayle is a 22-year-old senior diver who is from the Southeast. She has practiced diving for six and half years. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. She started out in sport as a soccer player when she was seven or eight years old. After that, she practiced gymnastics until she was 15 years old. Although she participated in many gymnastics competitions, she started it as a recreational activity. However, when her skills improved significantly, she decided to participate competitively. When she entered high school, she tried to apply her gymnastic skill to diving, so she started to practice diving as her major sport when she was a sophomore in high school. Her background as a gymnast helped her diving, because the two sports have numerous similarities in form and techniques. It also provides a basic understanding of what the body can and does do, so she had an advantage from her past athletic experiences. She has been diving since then and it has been a great experience for her. She coaches middle and high school students now.

Gayle's family is very supportive. Her mother was especially involved in her athletic career when she was young. When Gayle was old enough to drive, her mother backed off a little bit, but she continued to be very supportive of her athletic career. Her sister danced and her brother practiced gymnastics and played soccer, so her family was very active and supportive.

When she was a freshman in college, she wanted to study zoology for training dolphins or whales, but she later found out that she did not like science classes.

Therefore, Gayle decided to change her major to sport management. After college, she wants to coach gymnastics and diving for children especially, because she wants to be a good role model for children. In order to become a coach for children, she took some sport psychology courses because the knowledge from sport psychology helps her to understand children better. She also wants to work at an administration position such as managing teams and facilities. For doing so, she plans to go to graduate school in sport administration after her graduation in August, 1999. She also wants to have more experiences as a manager of a team. Basically, she wants to stay within an athletic environment because her entire life has been involved within athletics.

Helen

Helen is a 21-year-old junior golfer from the Midwest who has played for 12 years, more than half of her entire life. She has been competitive throughout her athletic career. When she was young, she liked to play outside with boys in such sports as baseball and basketball. She usually was the only girl on the team in each sport, so she thought that she was a tomboy at that time. She also wanted to prove her athletic ability to boys, so she could have respect from other people. When she was in the fourth grade, she played football with boys. At the age of nine, she played her very first national golf championship tournament.

She played softball up until her fifth grade. She also ran track in middle school. However, she quit those sports in high school because they did not fit with her other seasons, especially golf. Later she became involved in golf specifically when she was no longer allowed to play with boys or guys together, so she played golf on an all-girls team.

At the same time, she also preferred to play individual sport because she liked to play sport more competitively. She still played basketball and volleyball throughout high school, but she found that there were more opportunities in golf for her.

Helen played all the sports very competitively. She played varsity basketball for three years and was named to the All State Team two times. She played volleyball only during her freshman and sophomore years in high school because she had hip surgery at that time. In golf, she was an All State player every year in high school. She won the state championship one year and second place three other years. She also won the Big 10 Championship in 1998 when she was a sophomore and it was a great experience for her. Winning the Big 10 Championship allowed her to transfer to the university she is currently attending, which gave her enormous self-confidence. Although she plays an individual sport, she also prefers the positive aspects of team sport such as team work and supporting each other.

Helen's family, especially her father, has been very supportive of her athletic career. He has been a significant motivator for her, but he never pressured her in any way. He supported her career emotionally and financially. He liked golf very much and she was a "daddy's girl," so she decided on golf as her major sport. Her father came to the golf tournaments where she played and loved to caddie for her. His dream is being her caddy on the professional tour someday.

Helen plans to graduate in December, 2000. She is majoring in business management because she feels it will give a broad background of preparation. It also is very flexible concerning what she wants to do. The broad background of business

management will help her to work in human resources, management, and manage a golf shop. She has a 3.5 GPA and tries to balance golf and school work. Her ultimate career goal is to join a professional golf tour such as the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA). However, she wants to prepare for all the possible cases, such as not making LPGA. Therefore, her back-up plan is to become a professional golfer at a country club.

In order to be a professional golfer, she needs to prepare for Q school which is the qualifying process for the professional tour. She would like to try two or three years on the tour. Then, if it is not working, she will try to pursue other career choices. She already knows all the positive and negative aspects of the tour, but she still would like to be a professional tour player because it has been her dream since she was a little child.

Themes

In an effort to determine the women athletes' understandings and perceptions of their career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields, the transcriptions were read and re-read by the investigator until common identifiable themes emerged. The major themes characterized the female intercollegiate athletes' experiences and perceptions of their athletic careers and opportunities. During the analysis of the interview transcriptions, three major themes were identified: (a) Athletic Experiences, (b) Perceptions Regarding Career, and (c) Barriers. The first theme, Athletic Experiences dealt with the various aspects of the participants' past athletic experiences. The second theme, Perceptions Regarding Career dealt with the participants' personal perceptions of their careers and future opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. The third theme, Barriers dealt with the existing social barriers and their influences on the status of women's sport. Within

each theme, various related sub-themes were also noted and are included in the discussion which followed.

Theme 1: Athletic Experiences

The Athletic Experiences theme was comprised of four sub-themes: (a) Positive Experiences, (b) Negative Experiences, (c) Building Personality, and (d) Career Decision Making and Career Opportunities in Sport. The sub-theme of Positive Experiences explained the reasons why these women participated in their sport and why they wanted to continue. The sub-theme of Negative Experiences explained some of difficulties these women had encountered as a female athlete. The sub-theme of Building Personality explained how the athletic experiences positively influenced the building of the participants' personality characteristics. The sub-theme of Career Decision Making and Career Opportunities in Sport explained how the participants were influenced by their athletic experiences and when they decided upon their athletic careers and also explained the participants' perceptions of potential career opportunities in sport or sport-related fields available for female athletes.

Positive Experiences. Positive experiences emerged as a common theme in the interviews. Most of the participants clearly remarked that the positive experiences were the most important influences for them continuing their athletic careers further. Throughout their entire athletic careers and at the different levels of their education, the participants all expressed that they had very positive experiences in their sport participation. Andrea stated her unique experiences in an all-girl's high school. As a female athlete at her high school, she had different, but very positive, athletic experiences

than other participants in this study. Andrea mentioned,

> I had a really good experience in high school. It was an all-girl's high school so the sports there for girls were like really big, you know, people came out and actually watched us play and stuff like that, whereas a lot of times when you go to public schools there was not much of an audience to watch us because they would be over watching like the guys at football practice or something like that. [Therefore] it made it kind of nice and I had a really good experience and really good coaches and stuff like that. There was always a lot of positive reinforcement. (Andrea)

Belle also remarked that she had more positive athletic experiences than negative ones. She stated, "I mean the positives far outweigh the negatives. But I think certain positives stand out more than other ones."

Cathy mentioned that she was able to play several different types of sports because she experienced positive feedback from her sport participation. Therefore, she had very positive attitudes toward her athletic experiences. She said, "It has been good you know. Having the opportunity to get to play in so many different sports and being able to do that and not having to sit on the sidelines and watch the guys play." Diana mentioned how positive athletic experiences can help other people, especially younger generations. According to her experiences, she believed that positive athletic experiences allowed people managed better life. Diana said,

> I just have seen how it helps people manage their time and their lives at college and just growing up in school. I think kids can become involved in a lot of bad things and if they have a sport I think they're going to stay away from more of the pressures and things like that. (Diana)

She also mentioned that she had found many examples of how positive athletic experiences have influenced people enormously. Diana said,

> It's not just from one thing that happened, but just going on through school and I have a lot of friends that play college sports and I just see them being really successful and I just think it's a good thing. (Diana)

In addition, she mentioned the importance of physical fitness as a result of her athletic participation. She stated,

> I guess another positive thing is just being physically fit. I think that's a big thing and I know it's something that I'll want to keep up the rest of my life and lead a healthy life style and it just helps you not fall into things like drinking a lot and smoking a lot and stuff, which I think is easy to kind of fall into in college maybe. And it's kept me away from those things. (Diana)

Fay thought that she had very positive athletic experiences no matter what the results of her athletic performances. She said, "I think they're all positive because even though you don't win or do as well as you hoped to, you're always learning from your mistakes I think, so it's more positive than negative." She also mentioned enjoyment as an important component of her athletic careers and sport participation. Fay said, "...enjoying your sports, new settings, having fun. You've got to have fun. If you don't have fun then there's no point in being in it."

According to her athletic experiences, Gayle realized how these positive experiences influenced her entire life such as making life-long friends. She also wanted to contribute her positive experiences for other people. She said,

> Yeah, it's just been a great experience in my life. My college experience here has been wonderful. I've met people and friends that are going to be lifelong friends and my coach is a great person, and I just hope that I can give back to somebody what my diving experience has given to me. You know it's just awesome. The whole diving community is great and I just think it's really good people. (Gayle)

Athletic experiences were the major components of Gayle's entire life. She remarked, "Sport as a whole, I mean it's been the best experience of my life. I can't really think of

anything negative." She also mentioned what she learned through continuing her athletic experiences. She said,

> ...you know it's really hard to do and you just get up everyday and plug away and plug away at it. And I just think...of my competition [in] sport now, I mean, it just gives me a really good positive feelings for me and my life and that I can do anything that I want because I've done, I've been a part of what I've been a part of. (Gayle)

Helen mentioned the positive aspects of her athletic experiences. She stated, "Everything about my past experience in sports has been very good." She also said, "I think it's [athletic experience] a positive thing. I feel like it's given me a direction."

In general, the participants usually remembered the best moment of their athletic careers and this recollection seemed to constantly give them positive feedback about what they had been doing. Andrea stated how one of her best winning moments influenced her athletic career and life in general as a female athlete. She said,

> A positive one would be when we won the State [championship] my junior year. That was pretty exciting and just like all the emotions you know. We had worked so hard for something or when we won the MAC [Mid-American Conference] last year [which] was the NCAA Final Eight. We were not expected to do that and we worked every day, we worked so hard at practice you know, and it's like you finally get something out of it, finally get the privilege of saying you guys, that we really did beat them you know, we are the champions and that all that hard work did pay off in the end. (Andrea)

Helen also mentioned similar experience. According to one of the biggest successes in her athletic career, she believed that she gained a lot of confidence and satisfaction on her effort and devotion. She said,

> Last year in the spring, I won the Big Ten Championship, and that was an amazing experience for me because it was the first time that I had won at that point because I was a sophomore and it was, it just was one of those things that made every decision and every sacrifice that I had made up until that point seem

> worthwhile, because for a four month span I just couldn't be phased by anything after winning. I thought it was an unbelievable feeling and it was complete satisfaction and in athletics, as much as other people might believe in you and think you're good, there's a lot of times where you might doubt yourself. And that was just one of those things that reassured me that I should be doing what I'm doing. (Helen)

Negative Experiences. While some of the participants had a few negative athletic experiences, at the same time, they tried to understand these negative experiences as good lessons for which they paid the price. Therefore, eventually, even the negative experiences sometimes turned out to be a positive influence. Andrea talked about how she dealt with negative experiences when her coach would get upset. She stated,

> I don't like a lot of negativity and stuff and so like they just they know they had to like talk to me, but they just have to talk to me in a more you know, like tell me things, but I don't do well when people get really angry with me and stuff so, I don't know, they do a good job like telling me what I am doing wrong and yet getting the point across. I mean not that they can't get angry with me because I know they should, but like you know more positive like. (Andrea)

She also mentioned how she tried to learn some lessons from the negative experiences. She stated,

> It's always disappointing like we lost our tournament this year and we were undefeated the whole season and stuff like that, and we had one bad game and suddenly like, our whole, our season was over, because the tournament winner gets to go on and play in the NCAA and stuff like that. That was definitely disappointing. But it's something you have to deal with in life. You are not always going to be the winner. You are not always going to win, and you have to learn from your mistake then and make sure it never happens agin, so I mean, you can always turn things around. (Andrea)

Belle mentioned similar experiences with her coach. She stated, "I could be told right or wrong, whatever, but I could be having positive things said and done and try to make things continue to flow the correct way."

Various types of pressures were one of the negative experiences Belle expressed as an athlete. She stated, "You do get a lot of pressure and from the coaches and the teammates and maybe from your self. Maybe your parents too." Diana would liked to have the life of an average student because she liked to be involved in other activities than just her sport. She noted,

> Maybe just knowing what the average student is doing right now while you're spending all this time practicing and traveling for tournaments and stuff and sometimes I just wonder what it's like to be the average student and just have your day free to do what you want with, and to get involved with other activities and stuff. (Diana)

Regarding this same topic, Ellen mentioned,

> I felt like I was kind of missing out on some things that a lot of my other friends were getting to do, like as far as saying getting to go to the beach with my friends over summer, I couldn't ever do it because I was traveling playing tennis. (Ellen)

Fay mentioned that the pressure placed on winning might be a negative experience. She stated,

> Maybe one negative thing could be like expecting, like going into a competition or a meet, like expecting to like win, or like hoping to perform well and then you don't, and that's like the only negative thing could get you down, not performing at your best even though you can do well. (Fay)

As an intercollegiate athlete, Gayle felt that she had a lot of demands placed on her when she represented her university at the competitions. Gayle mentioned,

> I just think athletes have a lot of demands on them. You know, you have to go to school and you have to make your grades and if you don't make the grades, you don't get to compete. It's a demand and you go out and you're representing your university, and I just think you try to be the best that you can be. Demanding your time and your attention and your energy. It's hard, you know. (Gayle)

Helen remarked that her busy schedule as an intercollegiate athlete was hard to maintain. She stated,

> There's very little time for yourself and what you want to do. A full day of college, I go to class for three or four hours and have three, usually four hours of practice and whatever practice you do on your own outside of that, whether it's the training room workout, have your home work on top of that, tutors, different meetings. I'm a captain so I have to go to captain's table meetings every now and again, and there's a lot of responsibilities with it. Weekends we aren't home, we're playing golf. If you want to be the typical college student, you can't do it at all. (Helen)

Building Personality. The intercollegiate women athletes in this study indicated that their positive athletic experiences significantly helped them build their personality characteristics not just as an athlete, but also as a human being. Throughout their athletic experiences, the participants also learned and understood valuable lessons which they believed would significantly help them to survive in the life after college/university such as how to deal with other people in the real world. Andrea remarked how she handled negative reaction from other people. She said,

> I've had very positive experiences, or gotten a lot of positive influence and had some really good coaches I mean, I get criticism but it's constructive criticism. I think it helps you deal with people better because I know I can take criticism from people you know, or take criticism from people better, you know if somebody would say something to me I can take it, you know, it does not really affect me at all. Whereas like other people I know if a teacher told them that their paper was just wrong or something they would get really upset, do whatever, but me I can, I don't know, I think I can take things better. (Andrea)

She also mentioned how she utilized her experiences in the real world. She said,

> ...I think if I was a business person, I know a lot of people who are, they almost look at it [sport] as a benefit..., because that shows that you can use your time wisely, still manage to get good grades, do all those kind of things, go out and have fun. You know, have a life outside of field hockey, and they like that you can manage your time well and stuff like that. So it's a definite plus. (Andrea)

Belle also mentioned how her athletic experiences developed her personality and influenced her social life. She said,

> I just think that it helps my self-esteem when I can do something right or feel good about myself. And it keeps me in shape. And with, like all the teams, you make good friends. Some of them become life-long friends. You get to know a lot of people so it's like so many different little things and it's like there is discipline, you have to have self-discipline and coach's discipline. (Belle)

Most of the participants expressed that through their athletic experiences, they developed positive aspects of their personality such as self-confidence and self-esteem. Cathy said, "I personally feel confident just because of my success with what I have done." The solid confidence about their ability and personality brought the participants other benefits. Cathy mentioned how her self-confidence improved her ability to deal with problems. She said, "I think the experience with just challenging myself and breaking down the limits that I had before, I have more self-confidence that I can do it." Diana also stated positive aspects of her athletic experiences. She said, "I think it's been a good experience. I think it's really kept me on the right track. It just makes you budget your time." She also mentioned how she handled difficult situations with her new-formed confidences from her athletic experiences. She expressed,

> It's also stressful too, but I think life in general you are going to run into stressful things, so it's a good way to learn how to deal with stuff like that so I think it helps with your self-esteem and self-confidence to be in sport. And especially for girls because I don't know, I think it just helps you be more sure of yourself. (Diana)

Diana also stated that it was necessary to understand how to deal with negative situations as an athlete. She stated,

> Learning how to handle like pressure situations and just that life is going to be competitive so it's good to kind of know how to handle that, and to learn how to accept failure if you don't well. And just like to try to figure out what you can do to make yourself better, things like that. (Diana)

Ellen mentioned how her athletic experiences developed her time management skills. She said,

> It all snowballs, so you have to learn to be like okay, I'm going to allow this amount of time to get my school work done so I'm not up late, so then I can have a productive practice, and I think it's that aspect of, I think any collegiate sport keeps you disciplined that way. (Ellen)

Time management skill also help her to succeeded in life outside athletics. She said,

> I think it's helped me to become better, it's helped me to manage my time and to become better, more organized person, so when I do graduate from college and get out in the working world, I mean I know I'm not 100 percent ready for it, but I think that as far as being able to manage my time and stay organized, I think it will help me for that aspect to being out in the real world. (Ellen)

She also mentioned that competitive aspects of athletic experiences helped her manage life in the real world. She was very confident with the effectiveness of her athletic experiences. She said,

> I mean it's just good to get that kind of competitive edge because I think...playing competitive sports has given me the competitive edge which I think has helped me succeeded in my school work, because I know how to push myself, because you pretty much have to do that in competitive sports. I mean the all around experience of playing competitive sports is a positive experience in that respect. (Ellen)

According to her career, athletic experiences were very important resources for her to manage inter-personal relationships. Ellen mentioned,

> Those four years of tennis in high school helped build character as well, because I met a lot of people and had to deal with a lot of things and I think it helped me with my college experience in being able to accept other people and things within college. (Ellen)

Gayle was also very satisfied with her athletic experiences and felt confident as a result. She said, "I mean I really just think I am who I am because of what I have done in athletics. I feel like it's given me a lot of self-esteem and confidence." Gayle felt her athletic experiences developed many aspects of her personality. She stated,

> I just think it's really shaped my ideas of just everything in life...time management, and you have planning and all that kind of stuff, like you have to look ahead and you have to look at what's coming at you next so you're ready and on top of things because if you're not you'll fall behind. (Gayle)

She also mentioned the important aspects of having strong self-confidence as an athlete, especially when she represented for her school at the competitions. She said,

> I think self-confidence is one of the most important things that sport gives to people, you know, that you go out and you do your thing and you train and you train and you train and you get stronger and stronger and stronger. And you go on and perform, and you know you represent something bigger than yourself when you compete in college athletics. If you go out there and you mess up, you really don't have anybody to blame but yourself. I think that's another thing that gives you a really strong sense of what you're doing everyday and why you're doing it. (Gayle)

Helen mentioned the important aspects of her personality which she felt were built by her athletic experiences. She said,

> Everything about my past experience in sports has been very good and they helped to determine the personality that I have. I think sports can teach you about team work, about motivation, about desire, determination, and these are all things that I think up to this point have shaped my personality. And the decisions I make, who I am, how I interact with the people. I've had both successes and failures in sports. And those are things, the failures are the things I think sometimes you remember more, and those are the things that push you and drive you to make you better. They are the things that keep you going, to know that it isn't a waste of time, a waste of effort. I mean that's been my life, to the point of sports, and I think that it's completely shaped my personality. (Helen)

Helen indicated that her athletic experiences directed her life-long career development. She said,

> I think it's a positive thing. I feel like it's given me direction. I've known since I was in third grade what I was going to do. I've had it laid out. I knew exactly what I wanted and it's given me focus and drive, and when I fall off that path I can get back on and it leads you away from the wrong roads that you might follow, whether it's getting too far into the partying scene and not getting out or being able to be irresponsible, but being involved in sports doesn't allow you to do that. (Helen)

Positive athletic experiences significantly helped the participants deal with other people and situations. Andrea mentioned that her positive athletic experiences helped her to connect better with other people. She said,

> You learn how to deal with people. You know, you learn how to deal with so much when you play a sport in college. I mean dealing with coaches, dealing with other people's personalities, how to get along with people on trips. You cover a whole wide basis of just learning how to deal with people's attitudes and stuff like that. (Andrea)

Belle also mentioned this point. She stated, "It's positive when you win and when you do something right and you connect with somebody on your team, with the coach, whatever, whether you are playing on or off the field." Cathy remarked about the important aspects of team work. As a team member, she understood the meaning of better connections and interactions with other people. She mentioned, "and also like with team work, like relying on other people, and asking other people to help me out, and making things come together with not just me, but with other people." Ellen had met various types of people because of her athletic careers. According to these experiences, she felt that she communicated with other people better. She also realized the important aspects of a team sport and being a member of the team. She said,

> My athletic experience has been very positive. I've met all different kinds of people, so it's helped me to be able to communicate with every type of person and..., it's kind of opened my eyes to some things that are out there because I've gotten to travel and kind of seen all part of the country. (Ellen)

She believed that all those experiences made her better person in professional fields. She mentioned, "Playing a sport and getting the experience and being able to work with people and being disciplined and all that adds a lot to your success to being a professional person." Strong support among players made her to realize positive aspects of team sport. She mentioned,

> Being on a team it's just a good feeling to know that I have seven other people that support me and are behind me every day. And that I support and am behind seven other people every day. It's just a team camaraderie, a togetherness that you know, there's a lot of people out there everyday that can't say they have seven or eight people behind them every single day. (Ellen)

Meeting different people expanded Fay's understanding about the world and herself. She mentioned,

> It's positive because like you get to challenge your self and see how good you can get and you get to meet a whole people that you've never met in your life and make friends from countries that you've never imagined. Just broadens your outlook on life, I mean just from competing and getting to meet all people. Everything is like positive. (Fay)

Although she plays individual sport, Helen clearly understood the meaningful aspects of team sport which she used to play. She mentioned,

> ...playing team sports is good in that it [is] different than individual sports, the camaraderie that you share with people and the winning as a group, and it takes all kinds of efforts together. And usually in team sports there is a lot more emotion that you can show or demonstrate. (Helen)

Career Decision Making and Career Opportunities in Sport. Most of the participants responded that their positive athletic experiences significantly influenced

them, thus they decided to continue their athletic careers further. Andrea clearly remarked how these positive athletic experiences influenced her life and career decision. She said,

> I had such a good experience in high school. I loved it. My team, we all hung out together. I like the competitive spirit of things. I liked to be active, you know. I enjoy competition and it was a good way for me to be able to, you know. I just couldn't imagine my life without playing field hockey, I really couldn't, like in two years when it's over, I can't even imagine if I don't teach, I have to coach a field hockey program or something because I just can't, you know. It's part of my life, it's part of my daily routine. I just can't imagine [being] without it. (Andrea)

Cathy mentioned the important reason for her sport participation. Because of the positive athletic experiences, she decided to continue her sport participation. She said, "Obviously they have been pretty positive because I am still playing." Diana also mentioned her positive athletic experiences made Diana decide to continue her career in sport. Although she would not play as a professional player in the future, she wanted to stay involved with athletic environments. Diana stated,

> I am so involved in sports now that I think I want to stay involved the rest of my life and I just think a lot of good things come out of being involved in sports. I don't necessarily want to play sports the rest of my life, but I want to be involved. (Diana)

She believed that sport participation was beneficial components for many people as well. She mentioned,

> I enjoy it so that's kind of made me want to stay in it, because I want to enjoy my career, but I also see how it benefits other people and I just think it's really a good thing to be involved in so I guess that's why I want to pursue this career, just beneficial, hoping maybe I can get other people involved too. (Diana)

Fay met different people every time she played, so she was able to have various experiences. She remarked,

> I think...getting to meet a lot of people has influenced me like keeping me in the sport longer...Because you meet so many different people, it's not the same people every single day and you're getting, every meet is a different experience. That's like influenced me to keep going. (Fay)

Gayle clearly decided that she wanted to stay in athletic environments no matter what kind of possibilities she had. She mentioned,

> I know I want to stay in sports. I know I want to work with, I mean whether it ends up being college athletics or if I do that and don't like it or whatever, professional sports or working with kids. I just know I want to be involved in sports. (Gayle)

Most of the participants perceived their career opportunities in sport-related fields very positively and realized that the possibilities of these opportunities have expanded. Andrea indicated,

> I think they are actually pretty good...and I think there needs to be more women and I think many schools are looking for women. It's a definite plus to be a women going into a teaching career and being able to play a sport. (Andrea)

Cathy mentioned the various ranges of her career opportunities. She said, "I just think that there are a lot more opportunities right now. It just depends on how you are pursuing it." Diana perceived that there are more possibilities for women athletes in various fields. At the same time, she clearly understood the important factor for getting hired as a professional person. She mentioned,

> I think there's quite a few opportunities for women in my field because I know like the teams or the sports teams and organizations have to have a certain numbers of women I think on their staff, so I don't think there's really discrimination there or anything. I think it's really competitive though because there are a lot of men in the field too. I think we're probably the minority, but there's quite a few opportunities. (Diana)

She also stated that women could have more equal opportunities like men do. She remarked,

> I think there's plenty of opportunities for women and you might run into a lot of competition with men but I think with gender equity and everything that there are going to be a lot more opportunities emerging and that you won't, I don't think you will run into discrimination in the work force in this field. I think it's getting a lot better in general, the whole work force equity. (Diana)

Diana believed that the status of women's job opportunities improved with gender equity. She mentioned,

> I think it's getting to the point where it doesn't matter with gender equity. Business are more aware of who they are hiring and how many men and how many women they have just to make it more equal. (Diana)

Fay perceived significant improvement for not only women athletes but also women in general. She mentioned,

> I think it's getting better for women now. Beforehand I think it was harder for them to get jobs. Maybe because of the gender, I don't know. I think now there's so many female doctors, female lawyers, whatever. (Fay)

With the improved opportunities open to women which prepare them for career, Gayle was very confident about the her possibilities of finding a job. She mentioned,

> I think they're getting better and better because we're better prepared you know. We're getting more education or whatever and have more experience, practical experience, and Title IX. I mean Title IX is a huge thing. I know I keep talking about it, but for women it's a huge thing, to give us more opportunities across the board. (Gayle)

She remarked that women had more opportunities if they wanted to pursue. Gayle also mentioned, "I just think the opportunities are out there if women seek them and I just think we're getting better and better at finding what we want to do and going after it."

Some participants responded negatively, but, at the same time, they had quite positive anticipation about the future. Belle said, "I think that it's kind of hard I guess right now, but I think that it will eventually get better." She also mentioned that the situation would improve constantly. She stated,

> I think they [jobs] are very limited as of right know, but hopefully, I don't know, maybe in 20, 30 years, they won't be limited at all. I mean hopefully it will be getting bigger and for more people to continue with their sports. (Belle)

Ellen perceived more opportunities for men in sport-related fields. She said, "I guess maybe there are more opportunities for the men as far as going on and playing professional sport, I'd say there are more opportunities for men." Gayle also mentioned that men have more opportunities because of their dominated connection in society. She said,

> I think that men probably still have a better opportunity just probably more for other people's mentality than anything that the men can do the job better or whatever. I think that a lot of people in the work forces still think that way. It's still sort of a good old boy network, but I think once women prove themselves that they get jobs or whatever. (Gayle)

The available sport-related job possibilities for these women athletes were serious concerns. The participants realized the various possibilities of sport-related job market for their career development. Most of the participants seemed to be very positive about their job possibilities after college/university. Regarding the current job market, Andrea indicated,

> I think the job market is pretty good right now. I think there actually, there are probably plenty of them [jobs] I'm sure. I think, for the most part, they are always looking for new people to help out with the programs and especially new ideas because sport has changed so much. (Andrea)

Andrea also mentioned the various possibilities for women. She said, "I know there are tons of job opportunities that are there in different athletic fields that can be [obtained] by women or men." Cathy understood that her athletic careers in college will eventually help her to get a job in a sport-related field. She said, "If you are playing sport, I think you have definitely an advantage of getting a job because what is expected of you playing sport can relate to your job so much better." Diana basically perceived various types of sport-related job possibilities, but she, at the same time, was aware of the competitive aspect of job market. She said,

> I think in my major [Sport Management] coming out of college a lot of people, I don't think they have trouble finding jobs but I think they have trouble..., they think they're going to come out of college and earn like a good salary right away, but that's not the case hardly at all. I mean I think you really have to work your way up in my field. But I think there's a lot of jobs available. I don't think that's a problem. Because a lot things like sports is growing a lot and I just think the problem is that people are surprised at how much they are going to actually make out of college. (Diana)

Ellen was very positive about the possibilities of her job market after college/university. She mentioned, "I think the job market for teaching tennis is excellent for someone who's completed four years of college tennis. As far as that aspect, I think the job market is huge." She considered her intercollegiate athletic experiences and educational backgrounds as major components of her job opportunities. She said,

> I think there are a lot of career opportunities out there. We've put in our time of working hard for four years and I think that the job market will respect that. If you complete four years of competitive collegiate sports, I mean you've pretty much, you have to be disciplined, you have to know how to get your work done and how to communicate with other people and how to handle things, and I think the job market would respect that and look highly at that. (Ellen)

Fay perceived her job possibilities positively and as a high demanding field. She mentioned,

> I think it's great. It's [physical therapist] in high demand and like you can, I think you can go pretty much anywhere like around the States and get a job more easily than in other areas I think just because they [physical therapists] are in demand and pay good money. (Fay)

Including herself, Gayle believed more women athletes actually started to become interested in the sport-related job possibilities. She said,

> I think [the job possibilities are] probably really good. Especially for women with Title IX. Everybody's trying to get up to speed and whatever. I think more women are getting interested in it [sport-related job] and I think there are going to be positions for women. (Gayle)

With proper educational background, Gayle also perceived the wide range of sport-related job opportunities for her. She said,

> I think the door is wide open. Whether you're doing promotions or marketing or coaching or working for a professional team or working for an apparel company, I think the door is wide open for women. You know, [women are] better educated and they're going out and pursuing big time jobs. I think they're getting them. (Gayle)

Helen specially had very positive perception about her job market and career development possibilities. She remarked,

> My perception of the job market in golfing, in that right now golf is up and coming, that they're constantly having new jobs, new courses, new facilities, new technology, that opportunities are endless in it with it right now because it's just growing and taking off. It's just going to get bigger and better as the years go on. (Helen)

Helen strongly perceived the opportunities in her sport-related field. She said,

> Because there is a professional tour and an opportunity to make money and also because there is that fall back where you could be a club pro or an assistant pro. I mean the golf industry is huge right now, so there's always an opportunity for a

career in that. (Helen)

However, some participants responded that job market is still more available for men than women. Belle said, "I think people might lean more toward the males. I believe that it's probably easier for a male still to be able to get the job if they wanted it." Diana also agreed that men still have more opportunities over women, but she believed that this situation has changed. She remarked,

> I think that's the way it's been for a long time and, but it's changing, that things are being done to make that, to close the gap on opportunities for men and women. How fast it will happen I'm not sure, but as long as things are changing, I'm just going to still do the best I can I guess and try to overcome that. I mean there might be more opportunities for men than women, but I think the trend is kind of getting better. (Diana)

Theme 2: Perceptions Regarding Career

The Perceptions Regarding Career theme was comprised of six sub-themes: (a) Perceptions in General, (b) Location, (c) Impact of Title IX, (d) Qualifications, (e) Socialization, and (f) Role Models. The sub-theme of Perceptions in General explained the participants' overall perceptions of their athletic career experiences and the status of women's sport in society. The sub-theme of Location explained how location of the participants' school or their sport participation influenced their career opportunities. The sub-theme of Impact of Title IX explained how the participants perceived the important impact of Title IX into the status of women's sport in American society. The sub-theme of Qualifications explained how the participants' perceive their qualifications as the most important factor of their career opportunities and how they prepare for the qualifications academically. The sub-theme of Socialization explained how the participants' sport

participation was influenced by other people or social factors and the participants were encouraged and supported by their family members to participate in sports or physical activities. The sub-theme of Role Models explained how the participants were influenced by their significant role models throughout their athletic careers.

Perceptions in General. The participants' perceptions and understandings of their athletic experiences and career opportunities were paramount in this study. Most of the participants clearly realized the changing social attitudes toward women's sport participation and understood the positive aspects of sport participation for women. In general, most of the participants perceived their athletic experience and career positively. As one athlete mentioned, sport participation among girls and women seemed to be getting popular. Andrea said,

> I think more and more women are participating in more activities and are becoming more athletic I think. I mean that female athletes all find it very acceptable that girls play sports, the guys do, and I know a lot of other people and everybody seems to find playing sports very acceptable and they almost look at it as well, you spend so much time, you are a very committed person, you know, you learn how to deal with stress in your life. (Andrea)

Belle perceived that sport participation among women is becoming better. She said, "Well, I know like sports are getting more widely known. That women can do this, and so like the teams are getting bigger." One participant remarked that women's sport participation is becoming more receptive in society. Cathy said, "I think we are very receptive, like society right now is being pretty receptive." Gayle also mentioned the various opportunities in sport participation for women. She said, "I mean it's only going to get better. More women I think are going to come into sport and participate."

Although there still are several difficulties in society, women's sport participation is improving significantly. Helen said,

> I think opportunities [in sports for women] are becoming more and more available. They are slowly on their way to getting more. There could be barriers seen by society regarding homophobia or gender and those things deter society from becoming involved in your sport, but that does not have to deter you from becoming involved in your sport. (Helen)

She also interpreted the popular tendency among women, participating in outdoor activities frequently, as part of women's socialization process. Helen said, "People are thinking to get outside more and are kind of on an exercise craze these days and golf is a way to do that. For women it's a way to socialize."

Although sport participation among girls and women is becoming popular, some of the participants were aware of the negative attitudes toward their participation. Some participants remarked about various types of negative perceptions of women's sport. However, at the same time, the participants had very strong intentions to continue their sport participation further. Andrea responded that she was aware of negative social attitudes against women's sport participation, but she was willing to continue her athletic career. She said,

> I am sure there are going to be some people who are going to have a problem with girls playing sports. I mean I am sure there are probably plenty of people who think that is not right, but the majority of the population today, at least in the United States. It seems like almost all women play sports these days, or do some sort of physical activity for the health related benefits. If somebody has a problem with it, I am not going to quit just because they have a problem with it. (Andrea)

Cathy talked about the lack of opportunities and public support for women athletes. She said,

> For women I think even though there have been a lot of advances and there are a lot of opportunities, but I still think that there are a lot of things that are not available for women as far as scholarships, as far as popularity basically. It's almost breaking from tradition to support women in sport, and so that is what is going to take a really long time I think. (Cathy)

Cathy also mentioned that women have not been perceived as potential counterpart of men in physical contest. She said,

> I mean I just think that women can obviously be a lot stronger, because it's always been the contest of women are supposed to be weaker, but they are never going to match up, so in a sport where strength is the most common factor, the most essential factor, women are not going to be the competitor. (Cathy)

Some of the participants understood sport participation as women's respectful aspect. Andrea said,

> I almost think it's a plus to play sports now because I mean men are always pretty impressed. I think we earn a lot of respect just from people that said they want to learn how to play or something, so I think we get a lot of respect for playing sports and they know all the time that we put into it. I mean it's a definite commitment. (Andrea)

Gayle also understood her athletic careers and sport participation as a respectful aspect of her life. She said,

> There's never anybody that bullied me about being a girl and being in sports, or being athletic or anything. And for me it was almost the opposite, like everybody, especially in high school, all my friends, they were always amazed at how strong I was and that I did what I did you know. It wasn't any feeling that anybody cared that I was a girl and playing sports. (Gayle)

Location. Most of the participants understood that the location of their college/university was one of the most important factors which could significantly influence the potential possibilities of their athletic career opportunities. They realized the important aspects of the location of their athletic programs when they pursue future

career opportunities. Andrea said, "It just depends on where you are from or end up living." Belle understood that her sport [field hockey] is not popular in the United States, so she perceived the location of the sport participation would be important aspect for her when she considers her career. She stated,

> I just feel that it needs to be, I mean it's very big on the East Coast, and I kind of want to try to expand it, you know, whatever power I can do to try to extend it in the Midwest. This state has never even heard of the sport, so maybe just get them to know what it's. I mean probably the only people in this state that know of field hockey are the ones that go to my school, even if they know my school and still never heard of field hockey. And I just kind of want to just make it, it's a big sport all over the world, but it's not very big in the U. S. (Belle)

Fay also mentioned the important aspects of the location of the sport participation. She said,

> It depends like which school you go to and which sports is the best at that school. Like maybe a college in California, swimming is their number one sport, so they would get all the attention. I think it just depends on where your top team are, what your top team is at that particular university. (Fay)

Impact of Title IX. Some of the participants significantly acknowledge the important impact of Title IX on the status of women's sport in society. Andrea mentioned that more sport-related opportunities were available because of Title IX. She said,

> I mean the Title IX comes through and all those kinds of things, so I mean it's definitely equal for men and women, or it's becoming equal and I don't know. I mean I think there are definitely sports-related professions for women after college. I think there is more of an equal opportunity for males and females. (Andrea)

Diana commented on the important influences of Title IX on the status of women's sport in society. She said,

> I mean definitely in women's sports there are a lot more opportunities since Title IX, and really I'm grateful for that because it used to be hardly any women played sports in college and now there's a lot. There's more scholarship and there are just a lot more opportunities I think. (Diana)

She also mentioned the positive influences of Title IX for women's intercollegiate athletic programs. Diana said,

> I can tell a lot has changed in college athletics with gender equity and I'm assuming it's a lot similar in the work force and things like that. So I guess that's where I have seen the change mostly, is just like college athletics. (Diana)

Gayle constantly mentioned significant aspects of Title IX for women's sport. She also understood the progressed made by Title IX. She said,

> Title IX is one huge thing about women's sports you know. It has changed a lot especially college [sports] you know. Title IX has been a great way for women to come into sports and have more opportunities and be good at it. We've added three sports since I've been here for women. We added rowing, softball, and soccer. And I mean it was really exciting when it happened. It expanded our programs and we have a lot more athletes on campus...I just think Title IX is good to just get us out there and the United States has come a long way with women's job opportunities and that kind of thing. I just think it will just keep progressing better and better. (Gayle)

Helen mentioned how Title IX improved women's sport for various levels in American society. She said,

> I think men have always had the opportunity in golf that women are just now starting to get, and because it's a very new thing to the women, that they may have a better opportunity to get those positions, because that's kind of what's available, is to get everyone involved in the Title IX and the 50/50 award place...It was huge impact on women's sports because it's opened up a lot of more opportunities for girls to play Division-I athletics, that wasn't there in the past, they just weren't providing them with those teams or those opportunities. So it has had a huge impact on women's sports. (Helen)

Qualifications. Most of the participants considered the qualifications as a major factor influencing their job opportunities. They understood that their qualifications may

be a more significant factor in their career opportunities than their gender. Andrea perceived that job opportunities were significantly equal for both male and female, so she believed the qualifications were more important components for job opportunities. She said,

> I think that there are pretty much equal opportunities for anyone out in the job market and I don't think job market shouldn't be dependent on if they are male or female. I think it should be based on who is the best candidate for the job... I don't see problems with anything, like I think women have just as much equal opportunities these days as men do in getting jobs and it just comes out a lot of times to who is the better candidate for the job. (Andrea)

Andrea also mentioned the positive direction of improvement of social environment for women's job opportunities. She said,

> I mean I think businesses today are pretty much looking for anybody that is qualified for the job. I don't think gender is as much an issue as it was back a while several years ago. You know, ten, twenty years ago I think there was definitely a major problem because women were starting to going to college and stuff like that and yet they were getting paid less. They did not have as many job opportunities and stuff like that. (Andrea)

Diana understood the important factor of qualification as a professional person. She considered that factor more seriously than her gender. She said,

> I think you make yourself more marketable by maybe going to graduate school or being involved a lot in a lot of things in college, then you have a better chance of finding maybe the more ideal job for you. (Diana)

She stated that there were more important components than gender in job market. She said, "I think a person's experience and their educational background and just what they've done in that field...I think that's pretty what matters." Diana clearly understood the important aspects of her qualifications as a professional person. She said,

> I don't think it's going to prevent me from pursuing my degree. Just because I don't feel that my gender is going to keep me from getting a job someday. If I have trouble finding one I'm not going to blame it on my gender. I'll probably blame it on not having enough experience or just, I don't think it will depend on my gender. (Diana)

Ellen had much confidence regarding her qualification. She mentioned,

> I've never really thought that I wouldn't be able to get a job just because of that [gender]. I never really thought that I wouldn't be able to get a job just because I'm female. I mean it might come up, but I don't think, I don't see it as being a big problem in my future plans. Because I feel like if there is job that I want I'm going to work for it and put forth my best interest and they can hire me for my work. (Ellen)

Fay talked about her perceptions regarding the qualifications for career opportunities. She remarked,

> Well there will be barriers if you don't have the qualifications in order to get to where you want to go, but if you've got that I don't think society can really stop you. So if you produce the goods then I think it's okay. You'll achieve whatever you want to achieve without society getting in the way. (Fay)

Gayle believed that women are getting more qualified for career opportunities in many aspects. She said, "I think women are better preparing themselves for jobs." Gayle also remarked her belief in job opportunities. She said, "The most qualified should be going there no matter who it is. Whoever is going to do the better job is going to get the job." She clearly understood how she could improve her qualifications with various approaches. She mentioned,

> Just getting a better education, having credentials to back up your education and getting a lot of practical experiences whether it's working events or volunteering. Just building your resume and have as many as you can in all different kinds of sports not just the sport that you play. (Gayle)

Most of the participants considered the academic aspects of their experiences as important component of their career development. As a student athlete, the participants understood and perceived their academic discipline and preparation as one of the most significant factors of their qualifications. Andrea mentioned, "Most of my classes are for physical education..." She tried to have some teaching experiences for her future career as a physical education teacher. She also stated,

> I've done some observations at schools where you go into a classroom and observe how they're teaching the classrooms. I've also tutored students to get a better field of how to communicate with students and help them out with solving their problems and everything. And it's really nice because you kind of like form a bond with them, helping them out and everything. (Andrea)

She specifically prepared her academic background to take important course works. She stated, "I'm taking educational psychology and multi-cultural education classes and classes that will help me understand the students better, understand where they're coming from and their culture and that sort of thing." Belle also mentioned how she selected her course works for improving academic backgrounds. She stated,

> I've taking many different classes to be able to do my major [physical education], and there's like introduction courses and then you do all different types of like learning specific, like terms, whatever, earning the body parts to learning different sports to help the kids out... (Belle)

Cathy stated that her athletic experiences and academic preparation effort made her qualify for physical education teacher. She said,

> I definitely want to be qualified as a physical education teacher, because there's a lot that I can use from that, implement into dealing with younger people and that sort of thing. So obviously with my degree that's going to be a huge factor in preparing academically and having lesson plans, and seeing, because we do a lot of psychology, psychological growth, and biological and social, you know, what people are at different ages. (Cathy)

Diana mentioned how she prepared her academic background for graduate school. She said, "I'm just trying to get the best grades possible so I can get into law school and I guess I probably need to look into what that involves. I'm starting to take some law courses now." Fay indicated the important aspects of academic part for an intercollegiate athlete. She stated,

> Just get all the courses out of the way that I need to do in exercise science and then just keep your grades up basically. That's all it is I think basically, just really concentrating on your academics in order to get there because if you drop out of school, there's no way you will ever get there. It's just you have to discipline yourself to work, try to be a good student at least. (Fay)

Gayle mentioned the important aspects of taking crucial course works for coaching and administrating positions. She stated,

> I'm taking a psychology of sport class because I think that will help with my coaching. I think that will really give me some insight on how to help kids mentally. And that's a class I'm really looking forward to...I just want to take classes that I'm interested in that will give me some kind of background in the bigger aspect of sport...Just like I said about that sport psychology class that I'm going to take, I think that's going to be a great help, and you know I have taken an administration class and you know if you work in a front office somewhere or in management anywhere, any kind of administration is going to help. (Gayle)

Helen mentioned how she understood the academic aspects of her career in college. She said, "I think school is important, and I have a 3.5 GPA, so I do take school seriously."

Most of the participants tried to have various types of licenses or certificates for improving their potential qualifications. Andrea stated, "I'm working in the progress of getting my teaching license..." Belle mentioned how she prepared for the teaching license. She stated, "You have to take, I know you have to do this run and finish that in a certain time. I remember that. I do that. I qualified for that." Cathy mentioned specific

aspects and procedures of being certified as a coach. She said,

> You can go through what they have is a futures programs and you can coach different things. Most of what they're looking for is experiences, kind of like with anything. But there are clinics that you can go to...You can be nationally certified, you can be regionally certified, you can be certified within your state. Those kinds of things, and I think what they look at is what you're involved in and you go to clinics and obviously they need to know that you know the rules, and there's governing body and just the National Field Hockey Coaches Association. There are things that you can be certified in and obviously if I wanted to be a national, involved in like Division-I field hockey, I need to be nationally certified. (Cathy)

She also understood specific procedures and requirements for teaching license. She explained,

> You have to be licensed. There's a ton of things. Basically you have to take a teacher's exam or teacher certification, like when you graduate, and you take it specifically in your area. Since mine is in physical education. They have it in all different areas. And every five years, and you have to, or if you get your master's within that, that counts towards being certified...You have to have your masters, or at least working towards it when you are getting a coaching job...You have to participate in like conventions, and progressive study and that sort of thing. Being up with the times kind of thing, and you know, if you submit things for journals and all of that will count towards being certified. You don't have to write exams, but you have to submit a bunch of stuff. you know, different kinds, I mean a lot of things will count, but to be certified you have to re-apply every five years, and state what you've done and that. If you want to go further then you take different routes and that kind of thing, but you have to stay certified if you want to teach. I mean if I'm coaching then it's a different kind of thing. Obviously it changes for each state too, with teaching, they have different requirements. I mean if I change, go to a different state, and I have five years before I need to be certified, I'd still have to do it for that state. (Cathy)

Cathy considered the graduate school as part of her academic challenge. She mentioned,

> Maybe because I want to keep challenging myself academically...getting my master's. It's an easier way to keep stimulated because you're going for a grade and you're going for a piece of paper instead of just reading for my own enjoyment. (Cathy)

Diana mentioned that she considered her educational background for improving her qualifications. She said, "They [sport organizations] would probably look at your educational background. I don't think you need like a specific degree. I mean they probably want you to study business or like the sport administration or sport management." Gayle indicated about the positive aspects of having master's degree in qualifications. She mentioned,

> I think it [master's degree] makes you more marketable. If I get out there and I decide I don't want to coach anymore and I want to get a job in sports somehow, whether it be a front office somewhere or whatever, I think a master's degree makes you more marketable. (Gayle)

Socialization. The participants' sport participation was evaluated by social criteria. The participants' entire athletic experiences also were significantly influenced by their sports socialization process. As female athletes, the participants had experienced various types of socialization processes in society. Andrea mentioned how she had been taught by social environments as a girl. She also mentioned how society changed its perspective on women's sport participation. Andrea said,

> We start children off you know, children used to be guys, you know, went to soccer practice and girls went to Girl Scouts or Brownies or whatever you thought, or ballet class. I mean all those fine things you know. I think that they used to be like sectioned off, like guys played sports and then girls were supposed to learn proper etiquette and stuff like that. I think it's totally changed now because there are all those girls going out playing soccer just like the guys do when they are little, and it's something that everybody grows up with these days and everybody is playing sports, and I don't think it's looked down upon as much as it was before, like before it was considered odd for girls to play sports and to be athletic and stuff...I think men have always kind of controlled the whole athletic field and now they are looking for more women to come in and start helping out more. (Andrea)

Belle mentioned how a lot of women in society had been influenced by male-dominated perspectives from the early ages. She said,

> ...but that is just kind of what has been put into our minds since we were young. Just like it's male set, kind of we will succeed with those, and the women don't have, I mean they kind of have a chance, but it's not as known. (Belle)

She also mentioned herself as a tomboy. She explained this socialization process within her family backgrounds. She stated,

> I always kind of played with my brothers. It is probably basically how I've been called a tomboy, because of my brother...Because I know a lot of people who were always tomboys and I think it had to be before they were babies. I don't know if it was before they were born. People always say they were born like that. (Belle)

Because she had brothers, she was easily perceived as a tomboy. She said, "Since I have an older brother and a younger brother I was always getting beat up by someone or beating up somebody else. So that kind of a little aggressiveness I guess you could say." Fay realized the social perceptions of the status between men and women. She remarked, "Just because men are supposed to be like the breadwinner of the family and bringing all the money. Just because I think that society looks to man as like the dominated one I think." Gayle believed that her generation has had significantly different sport socialization process. She said, "I think my generation is really coming on to everybody-people with equal education and equal experience, it shouldn't matter whether they're male or female." According to her entire athletic experiences, she remarked strong intention to pursue her athletic career and presented solid self-confidence about her athletic careers. She mentioned,

> I don't care what anybody thinks of me. I'm going to do what I'm going to do and I'm going to have a good time doing it. I think sport is such an important part of my life. I think everybody should have an opportunity to do it. I just think everybody should do what they want and not really care about what anybody else thinks about them because you do it for yourself and not for somebody else. (Gayle)

However, at the same time, Gayle also admitted the social preferences for men's sport. She said, "Because that's the way it's always been. It's always been baseball, football, hockey that's what we watch on TV, that's what we see on TV." Helen's experiences and perceptions during her childhood provided her with unique understandings of the notions of what the term "tomboy" means in society. According to her remarks, her understanding of the term was one of a respectful aspects as a girl at that time. She said,

> I started out pretty much a tomboy growing up, loved to play sports, compete with boys in everything ranging from baseball when I was young to basketball. I was usually the only girl on the team in each sport and I really enjoyed it...I liked it at the time. I really enjoyed it. It was like a mission to earn the respect of the guys that you played with because coming on to the field at first, being the only girl out there and you're on a team and those boys are in elementary school with you and kind of like they see this girl on their team and they go...we got the girl. (Helen)

She did not perceive any negative influence from the notion of tomboy. She stated, "Tomboy. It's a very common word. It's just a very common term that I've always heard for a girl who just likes to be outside and play sport." However, at the same time, she admitted that she was different than average girls. She mentioned, "It's not typical girl things. I mean not playing with dolls. I'm not inside worrying about my hair or how I'm going to put mom's makeup on or dress up. I was out getting dirty, that's a tomboy."

Most of the participants responded that they were significantly influenced and supported by their family. In most cases, their family members were very supportive

regarding their athletic careers and sport participation. Andrea said, "...my mom was home with us when we were little kids and always was with us, and I think it's very important to be with your children when they're young and growing up and stuff like that." Belle felt that her family was very supportive of her athletic careers. She said,

> Well, my whole family are all kind of athletic, so we always kind of just started off when we were young. I mean I was always around an athletic family. They always kind of helped me, pushed me, whatever they did to have fun at the same time, but we jut always kind of did games. (Belle)

Cathy's parents, especially her mother, were supportive of her athletic careers. She mentioned, "My parents, well my mom was very supportive in whatever I wanted to do. She supported me and helped me out." Diana's parents took care of her schedule, so she could concentrate on her sport participation. She stated,

> Yeah, [my parents were] really supportive. My dad really gets into the sports and he comes to a lot of the matches and stuff, and just they keep up to date on my school work and stuff like that. My mom is really supportive. She makes sure I am doing well. (Diana)

Ellen's parents took her many tournaments all across the country and her sisters also were very supportive of her. She stated, "My family has been nothing but supportive. Especially my parents took me everywhere sent me all across the country. And my sister, they travel along a lot too, and they're very supportive." Ellen's sisters also participated in athletics, so she could feel more support from her sisters as well. She mentioned, "I have two younger sisters that do a lot in sport as well. One does track and one's a cheerleader." Fay's parents supported and trusted her decision and sport participation without any pressure. She said, "They [my parents] are so supportive like no pressure like in my school or my swimming. It's just whatever I think is the best decision for me

they are supportive. They don't pressure me into anything." Gayle's parents also supported her athletic careers. They encouraged her to be active, so she played outside with her sister and brother. She stated,

> Oh yes, [my patents were] very supportive. Like my mom was really involved when I was younger and once I got old enough to drive and all that I think she kind of backed out, but they go to all the meets and all that kinds of stuff. So they're really supportive of what I do. Like my sister danced and stuff growing up and my brother was in gymnastics and played soccer and so we've always been active and my parents have just always done whatever we wanted to do, taken us paid for it, like everything. My parents have always expected me to go out and do whatever I want. (Gayle)

Helen's family were supportive of her sport participation and they were also involved in various sports activities. She said,

> My family has been very supportive through the whole thing. My father is very encouraging. My mother as well. My brother and sister also are too. They come to as many tournaments as possible over the country and I think it's really done more to see me win than it actually does me. (Helen)

Some of the participants mentioned their family members, especially the father, as their most significant teacher, coach, and motivator for their particular sport. Belle was mostly influenced by her brother when they played together. She said,

> I think a good thing that I said to my brother one time is that I really liked that he always beat me up because then I knew I could always be strong or help somebody else to, and they just always kind of pushed me to achieve what I want, not what they want, but what I want. (Belle)

Fay's sister participated in the Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain in 1992 and that was a significant motivation for her to concentrate on swimming. She said,

> My sister, she used to swim and she went to the '92 Olympics. Like I like swimming, like when I was little I wasn't really good at it, but like I liked to swim, and I think she influenced me a lot. I just wanted to do what she did I guess, I don't know. It was fun too. I prefer to swim than to run. (Fay)

Helen's father was very supportive of her sport participation. He had taught her a lot of meaningful lesson as an athlete. She said,

> My father is very much into my sport. He comes to as many golf tournaments as he possibly can. He loves to caddie for me. He has the dream of being my caddie on the professional tour someday and has done everything emotionally and financially to support my career efforts for the playing. (Helen)

Her father has been one of the most important people for her entire athletic careers. She mentioned,

> He was always the one out playing catch with me and whether it was baseball or shooting basketball. He would run with me in track or whatever it was. He was very much an outdoor person and at the same time I was very much his little girl, little daddy's girl, so that made it very easy for him to influence me. I would play not for him, but I enjoyed playing to see his satisfaction that he got. He never pushed me in any way, never, I mean it wasn't like I had to play sports to get his approval, but it was always great at the end to see how happy he was with it. But I would never say that he was demanding or forceful in any way. (Helen)

Role Models. The participants were significantly influenced by various types of positive role models throughout their entire athletic careers. Andrea mentioned that she perceived more role models for girls and women in the athletic fields. She said, "...there are more role models for women, because often times there is mostly male role models in the athletic field." Because of her unique experiences in an all-girls high school, she was able to perceive more same gender role models. She stated,

> And I guess since I went to an all girls high school it was kind of different because it was sort of like, there weren't any guys around so it was just we were able to speak up for ourselves you know. We had a lot of female role models you know. it was just a different atmosphere than going to a guy-girl school. (Andrea)

Gayle perceived the important influence of a role model for other people, especially for younger generations. She said,

> Like I really love working with the kids I work with and you know, giving them a sense of themselves and accomplishment and you know just make them better as an athlete, as a person, and kind of give them a role model in what they need. (Gayle)

Some of the participants had positive teachers and coaches who significantly encouraged them to stay involved in sports or physical activities. These teachers and coaches were also understood as positive role models for the participants. Andrea remarked that positive teachers were important for her. She mentioned, "I had a lot of really positive teachers in my life and that really helped me out." Diana also appreciated her coach. Her coach tried to teach Diana various aspects of life as an intercollegiate athlete and a person. She said,

> I think the most positive thing is the way our coach relates what we do on the court with life in general. She just makes it seem like she really relates it a lot, so you're kind of learning about life as you play the sport, and I think it's things that you will use like the rest of your life, the stuff that I've learned just from these last couple of years. (Diana)

Ellen's coach motivated her to pursue athletic careers further. She said, "...my coach, the coach at the time, thought that I maybe should try to pursue it further and that's how it all kind of started for me, as far as tennis." Gayle understood her coach as one of the most important influences for her athletic careers. She said, "I mean like I said my experiences in college have been very, very good. I mean my teachers and everything. They've been real good." She also perceived the enormous influences from positive role models for her athletic careers. She stated,

> Like when I was younger my coaches in the gym, that kind of thing. I think they were real positive influences on me and gave me a really good strong work ethic and that kind of thing, and right now that I'm in college I think that you have much more of appreciation for the coaches, you know, for what they do for you and that kind of thing. And for yourself, too. (Gayle)

Theme 3: Barriers

The Barriers theme was comprised of three sub-themes: (a) Social Barriers, (b) Playing Opportunities After College/University, and (c) Homophobia. The sub-theme of Social Barriers explained common social barriers the women athletes perceived or experienced against women athletes and their sport participation and also explained specific types of barriers they personally had experienced throughout their athletic careers. The sub-theme of Playing Opportunities After College/University explained their perceptions or understandings about the non-existing opportunities as a professional player after college/university level. The sub-theme of Homophobia explained how the participants understood the influence of homophobia in women's sport.

Social Barriers. Although, in the previous section, most of the participants did not perceive their own gender as a barrier, they clearly understood that gender, in general, was one of the predominant barriers in American society. Andrea realized that gender was a potential barrier for her. She said, "I mean I know gender matters in a lot of cases and I know it does out in the real world." Belle understood her gender as a significant barrier which might prevent her from pursuing athletic careers further. She said,

> Most people don't think that women can handle the pressure that men can handle all the time. They think that, I mean true, women are like the weaker sex. I mean I don't think any barriers can be broken down because it's kind of, since women are weaker sex than males. I think society is what brings it out a little bit. I mean even though some people might be raised around tough things there still might be

> a woman but the male will still be stronger than her, most likely stronger than her. (Belle)

She perceived various types of social barriers for women. She mentioned,

> Well, probably just because we are female, we are, we could you know, we could have children, and that might stop us there, and like more people don't even see, they don't even think that females can do anything. Like they don't think they can catch a ball. They don't think they know how to throw. (Belle)

Belle also understood that the notion of 'gender as a social barrier' needed to be changed. She stated,

> I think that the barrier maybe is starting to be broken a little bit know, but it still has a ways to go, and who knows when it, how much further anything will ever be broken. I mean I have to get rid of the barrier first basically because I think it's always going to be there. (Belle)

Cathy perceived gender as a barrier, but she had a different understanding. She tried to avoid the potential social barriers rather than overcoming or chasing them. She said, "If you think it's [gender] a barrier, then you are going to be constantly trying to play catch-up. You never going to get there. You are going to feel defeated all the time." She remarked that gender barriers were sometimes not evident, but she perceived the gender as a social barrier. She mentioned,

> I still think that there is the gender issue where depending on who is hiring. It's hard to tell because nobody is ever going to say, well I hired him because I don't like women or I hired her because I don't like men. You know, nobody is going to say that, so I just feel that there is still a slight, you know, men still have the advantage. Especially the administrative ones, and that is where they shouldn't, you know, it's kind of like even keel kind of thing. (Cathy)

She pointed out social preference for men's physical performance as a type of social barrier. She mentioned, "Men are perceived as better players because they are quicker and they hit the ball, you know, hit each other harder, and lots of other things." Basically,

because of the physical aspects of sport, she perceived that gender seemed to be a permanent barrier in society. She stated,

> Gender could be a barrier if you let it I think. There is different way, I mean, if I wanted to play football then it would be a barrier. But I have my own set goals but I realize that the genders are never going to equal in sports because of the whole physical aspects. It's just not going to happen, so in that aspect you have got to find a way to be better in your own way. (Cathy)

Cathy also mentioned how she tried to avoid social genders in her career development. She stated,

> You can't tear up barriers because so many of them set up before, you are like I said, you have got to find your own way, you have got to find your own mark. If you were trying to stand out and be noticed you better do something different. (Cathy)

Fay clearly perceived and remarked gender issues in society as barriers such as lack of public support and public interest for women's sport. She mentioned,

> I don't think women will ever earn as much as men, and like get as high positions, because how many companies do you see where the woman is director of a company...Just because the public prefers more that the men participate than they do to see women. Men are like more aggressive and rough and plus the game is more exciting than to see women running up and down. I think that's why they get paid more. The public demand is more in guy sports that it's in women's...The barrier would be as less publicity for women I think, more publicity for guys, and there would be a lack of interest in the women's sports. (Fay)

She also mentioned the social preference for men's sport as a type of social barrier. She stated,

> I think they like to see men compete because it's like the faster game, more like tough, whereas women are more like, not as aggressive as the guys. You don't see women crashing heads like men. People I think like to see rough tough guys taking each other down. I mean they don't like to see those nice casual ballet dancers or something. Women will never be as strong as men. (Fay)

She mentioned that getting the decent job was another type of barrier. She remarked,

> I think a barrier could be for one finding a job straight out of college because some people prefer to have more experienced people working and things. I think that could be like a barrier to initially find that job, a company that wants to take you on the first year out of college. That would be the biggest barrier I think. Like getting a decent job, not like working. (Fay)

She personally did not perceive any serious social barrier up to intercollegiate level. Fay mentioned,

> It depends on which way you're looking at it. If you're just in it to have fun and compete then no it's not a barrier, but if you're looking to take it to the pros or stick further than just normal college athletics then it could be a barrier because women aren't in an high demand and don't have as much publicity, whereas on college level I don't think there's any barriers because you're not professional. (Fay)

Gayle mentioned that women's sports were negatively influenced by the different types of stereotypes based on gender. She said, "The biggest hindrance I see is the stereotypes that people have. And I think if the people just get educated more and more about those kind of things, it's just going to improve." She personally expected to experience social barriers after college/university. She mentioned,

> I think the barriers are out there and it would be nice if I go through my whole life and I don't hit one, but I'm sure I will and with not having any I don't really know what they're going to be, but I'm sure somebody somewhere isn't going to want to hire me because I'm a women at one point or another in my life. (Gayle)

Although she perceived a lot of improvement for women's sport in American society, she still believed that there are various types of stereotypes against women's sport. She mentioned,

> I think gender has the potential to be a barrier in sport. I mean it already has been you know. It's taken a long time to get to where we are with women in sport, and I think it's going to be better and better, but still I don't think that women are

> thought of the same as men in sports. I still think a lot of people have a lot of stereotypes about women in sports and coaching, in whatever aspects of sports. The stereotypes are being broken down everyday, but they're still out there and they're still barriers. (Gayle)

She also mentioned the social preference for men's sport as a type of social barrier. Gayle stated, "People pay to see, you know. They're [men's sports] revenue sports. They make money whereas most women's sports don't, you know. Most women participate in Olympic sports and traditionally women's sport bring zero revenue into a program." Helen understood the gender as a barrier for women's sport, but she believed that barrier could be overcome depending on the person's attitude. She said,

> They are barriers for, they can be barriers. They don't have to be. They can be, and women can make them be barriers and society might make them barriers...I think society still favors, I would say men in sports. You're going to see more people go to the male's game because they're quicker, they jump higher, they're faster. They're stronger, so that might be a little more exciting to watch. And it's not that the women aren't just as good at what they do. They just don't do it as quickly as men. It's not anything that we can remedy. It's just that men are a little more exciting. (Helen)

She remarked how to avoid gender-based social barriers in sport. Helen mentioned,

> I suppose gender could prevent you from being involved in some sports. If you're a woman, you're not going to play football too much or wrestling or whatever. But I don't think it's going to stop you from doing a sport that is typically done by that gender. (Helen)

She personally had strong self-confidence to deal with social barriers against her sport participation. She mentioned,

> I think if you really truly want something, truly wholeheartedly desired it that you're not going to let something like your gender stand in the way. Not in today's society...If you know what's going on and you're a strong enough person then it doesn't matter. I mean that's my answer for a lot of questions I know, but people in athletics particularly anymore are so involved and so wrapped up in what people are thinking of them that they forget what they're there to do, and if

> you're dealing more about what other people are thinking, that it leads you away from what you really want. (Helen)

Andrea also mentioned that the lack of women's support for women's sport as a type of the barrier. She said,

> I am saying men don't get any privileges that we don't get, being athletes in college and stuff like that. The only thing is like a lot of times women go to more men's games...more women will go watch men play sports, because a lot of times they're with their boyfriends. (Andrea)

Furthermore, some of the participants responded that even they preferred to watch men's sports than women's sports. Belle mentioned, "I mean WNBA just started a few years ago and it's, I mean I don't even watch it my self because I'm not even interested in it. I'm more interested in NBA." Fay remarked that she prefers to watch men's sports over women's sports. She stated,

> ...I prefer to see guys compete. Like they're more powerful and aggressive than women. I don't think they [women's games] provide enough, they're exciting but I don't think they will ever be as exciting as the guys. I think it [men's sport] will always be more interesting to the public. (Fay)

However, most of the participants responded that they personally did not experience any type of barrier because of their gender throughout their athletic careers. Andrea said, "I don't think I will try to find those things. I don't have any problem with it. So, if I have a problem with something, I will deal with the situation. I really don't honestly see any." Belle expressed similar experiences from the past. Furthermore, she tried to prove her ability to others. She remarked,

> I guess they don't expect you to do it, the males don't expect you to do it, expect females to do it. I know they don't expect me to do it. I have to show them first that I am able to catch it or throw it, because people they are so amazed I think by what I have done. Like when I play football, I think people like in my class have

> been amazed at some of the catches that I have had but I have to be able to show it to them at the beginning or they won't throw it to me. So I think, it took me some time to be able to show it to some people that I can do it. I think with women, like with me, it takes longer for me to be able to show that I can do it that it does for men. (Belle)

Diana did not recognize any specific barrier for herself. She said, "I haven't seen any barriers really. I guess I haven't really experienced that much, but from what I've seen I haven't seen any big barriers or anything." Ellen have not had any type of barrier. She responded, "I haven't personally." Fay also expressed that she had not experienced any barriers, but she thought she might after college. She said, Not yet anyway. I'm still in college. I'm so young. I haven't got out to the real world yet. Gayle did not perceived her gender as a barrier during her entire athletic career. She remarked, "I don't think anybody has looked down upon me or looked down on me because I'm a female." Helen mentioned that she had been viewed as an athlete not as a woman, so she had not recognized any personal barriers. She said,

> No, I think they have all been taken down. I have never been viewed as a female before and I was never hired or not hired because I was a girl...Gender has not stood in the way of anything I have done. And I haven't known anyone who hasn't pursued a sport because of their gender. (Helen)

Playing Opportunities After College/University. Most of the participants (except for two tennis players and a golfer) remarked that having no playing opportunities as a professional player was the ultimate barrier for them as a female athlete. Although they have not experienced any type of barrier, it's almost impossible to continue their athletic careers as a professional player. Therefore, they cannot even think about that kind of possibility as their career opportunities. Andrea mentioned that she did not

perceived any major possibilities after college/university. She said,

> We don't really have any programs for women right now. There really is not a place in field hockey for women to go on after college unless they join the national team or Olympic team. You can join club teams in your area but I really don't see a wide area for women to go into like continuing, actually being one of the players in sport. (Andrea)

Belle remarked that there is no playing opportunities for her after college. She perceived the reality when she started to participate in field hockey. She said,

> I know that if I was ever going to try to continue with as an athlete, there is just, it's just the Olympics for field hockey. I know that and there is no like NBA or whatever in field hockey or anything like that so that is kind of what you realize when you first start considering I am a woman and everything. I am not going to be doing anything to go any further with my sport [as a player] after college and I know that. (Belle)

She also mentioned that she would continue her athletic career if she played different sport and there were some possibilities. She stated,

> I mean probably just because if it were bigger, I guess a little more like baseball or basketball, I probably would think about it, but since it's such a small and I don't think it's like such a small thing to try to do since it's so hard for, like my sport at least, but maybe if I did play, if I were a woman basketball player then maybe I would probably think about it...I am sure a lot of people do still want to continue like after college year, and basically it's going to take some time before that will ever happen, because I know it won't be happening for me...There are only certain sports that really can continue and that is limited for you to go...You have to pick the right sports to be able to continue if you wanted to because even if you, with volleyball, men's or women's, it's not really a professional sport. (Belle)

Cathy stated that no playing opportunities as a professional athlete negatively influenced the status of women's sport and did not draw women's interests. She mentioned,

> Men can be a professional at their sports--more of the sports than women can--and in that sense, they are going to get more experience and they are going to get a job above a female because they have not had the experience at that level. (Cathy)

Cathy also remarked the important aspects of expanding athletic opportunities for women athletes as a professional player. She mentioned,

> I just think that they need many more professional sports for women. Once you are done with college, it's like, you are done. There is nothing more to do. But I just think that I am almost done. I have one more season left and I feel like I am playing my best hockey in my life and then I am done. You know I could play for at least another 10, 15 years. And so, like the WNBA, it's the greatest thing ever because you get to do what you love, you know, you get paid well, and you get to go. But if you are not playing basketball or golf or tennis, forget about it. (Cathy)

Compared to men' sport, women's sport usually received less financial supports such as sponsors. Fay mentioned,

> Well, yeah because men can like the guys in NFL or pro football or basketball whatever. Like once they're done with their career that probably will never have to work again because they'll have endorsement. They will have sponsors by Nike and they probably, where women, you find it very seldom are there like pro women players that once they've done with their sports never have to work again. (Fay)

Homophobia. Most of the participants realized the potential negative influence of homophobia in women's sport, but they had flexible attitudes toward it. Andrea perceived negative stereotypes against women athletes, but she believed that society was getting acceptable. She said,

> They always thought that women playing sports were more masculine or something, but I mean, today's society it's like anything is acceptable...I don't feel a problem with it, I think there is definitely like, everything is becoming a lot more acceptable in today's society. (Andrea)

Belle also stated that she had no problem with homosexuals. She said, "I don't have a problem with it. Like if anybody wanted to keep it secret it does not matter. I feel comfortable being friends with anybody." Diana did not realize any serious problems with homophobia in women's sport in general. She said,

> I don't think it makes people want to be less involved in sports. If they're afraid of being stereotyped, I don't think it really holds people back because I know who I am and people can think whatever they want and I think a lot of women feel that way too. (Diana)

Ellen was very flexible regarding homophobia. As long as she is not personally confronted by homosexuals, she did not try to find any problem. She said,

> I guess you should just learn to accept all different types of people because just because you're the way you are doesn't make them the right way to be. You just have to take people for why they are. You know learning from each type of person I guess. (Ellen)

She pointed out the respectful aspects of personal preferences. She mentioned,

> I definitely don't want them to make me feel uncomfortable, but as long as they don't make me feel uncomfortable I have to just accept them for that's the way they are. I can't look down on them or I really hope that they're not looking down on me because I'm not homosexual. I mean you have to accept them for what they are. (Ellen)

Fay mentioned that she did not approve of homosexuality, but she believed it is more acceptable in today's society. She said,

> You can't say it's wrong. I think it's wrong, but like as long as they stay over there then that's fine I think. Within the 90's now things are becoming more acceptable. People are becoming more open about it and nobody worries anymore. (Fay)

Gayle remarked that people should be viewed as people. It also was important to respect other people's decisions. She said,

> I think people are people and you are how you are and you do what you do. And I don't think it should come on the playing field at all no matter what you do. People's personal lives are their personal lives. And you can't judge somebody because you don't agree with them. I mean they have, people do what they do and even because they're different that you, it doesn't mean that there should be anything like that coming into sport I don't think...If somebody else is that way or chooses to be that way then there's not much I can do about it as a person. (Gayle)

Although the notion of homophobia negatively influenced the people, Helen also had flexible attitudes toward it. She said, "I think some people experience it and others don't and I think it's an ignorance that makes people scared. I think society is becoming more acceptable of it."

Various types of stereotypes against women athletes and women's sport were considered as serious barriers of women's sport. Belle said,

> People always say that because you are an athlete they always assume that. They don't say they assume it but they always seem to think that because I don't understand why they don't always think that if it's a male athlete. I just think people just seem to always, that is the first thing, well maybe not the first thing, but that is what always seems to come to their head, is that they must be. I think people are scared to admit it, scared to be around them. Scared that they might catch it, scared for whatever reason. I mean I think, I don't think it's going to really change for anything for a while. (Belle)

Cathy understood how the notion of homophobia negatively influenced women's sport. She said,

> Most people go around saying that if you are a woman, you are coaching, and you are not married, then you are a gay. It could affect some people who are younger and could be influenced and that kind of thing. So in that sort of situation, I don't want to be stereotyped if I am wanting to coach, and I am not married, that I am a gay person or I am a lesbian or whatever because I don't want that stereotype. But that could possibly have an effect on getting a job or not. They may not ask that kind of question but it could be in the back of their minds. (Cathy)

Diana also acknowledged the potential damage of women's sport because of the notion of homophobia. She said, "People might think that if you're playing a certain sport that you know, you are something, but that's the most stereotype." Ellen realized the negative aspects of stereotypes such as homophobia in women's sport. She said,

> I think there's a big stereotype about women in sports. You know that we're all gay or whatever. I mean I think that kind of has a negative. It kind of gives

> women's athletics kind of negative aspects. It kind of adds a negative aspects right there, you know that kind of stereotype of being a female athlete is that way, but I think that kind of negativity affects women's sports. (Ellen)

Gayle made a significant point that homophobia is not a product of women's sport. It just is a stereotype against women's sport. She said,

> I think homophobia could be a barrier and I think it probably is for some people. In my sport I haven't seen it much and I don't know why. You have stereotypes and that kind of stuff. I think it would be a terrible thing to miss out on sports participation because you don't want to be labeled as a homosexual or something...I think it's something that's placed on women's sports other than being a product of women's sports. (Gayle)

Helen indicated that the notion of homophobia would take the public support from women's sport away such as sponsors or advertisements. She said, "I think it [women's sport] doesn't get some of the crowd support because of it [homophobia]. I think it has gotten a negative reputation because of it. It's a perception that has negative impact." Helen effectively pointed out the difficult aspects of women athletes, especially professional athletes. It is difficult to balance between keeping feminine image and maintaining physical strength as a female athlete. She mentioned,

> In the sports where the physical fitness and the strength and that type of thing is required, there could be more barriers because girls aren't as feminine, and that's still even in golf if you want to have endorsement, you need to look nice, look like a girl and be feminine. On the other sports that's going to be tough to come by where you're looking for strength. And so there could be barriers in that respect. (Helen)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Subsequently, this study focuses on how these women athletes make career decisions based on these understandings.

Eight female intercollegiate athletes from NCAA Division-I universities who had participated in sport competitively and recreationally at various levels took part in this study. The participants were three sophomores, three juniors, and two seniors who were selected from various sports because each sport is considered to have a different status within American society. There were three field hockey players, two tennis players, one swimmer, one diver, and one golfer. The qualitative methodology of interviewing was employed which consisted of open-ended questions within the feminist perspective of standpoint theory and cultural studies.

The themes which emerged during the analysis of interview transcriptions were (a) Athletic Experiences which dealt with the various aspects of the participants' past athletic experiences, (b) Perceptions Regarding Career which dealt with the participants' personal perceptions of their careers and future opportunities in sport and sport-related fields, and (c) Barriers which dealt with the existing social barriers and their influences on the status of women's sport. Within each theme, various related sub-themes were also

noted.

Four sub-themes comprised the Athletic Experiences theme: (a) Positive Experiences, (b) Negative Experiences, (c) Building Personality, and (d) Career Decision Making and Career Opportunities in Sport. The sub-theme of Positive Experiences explained the reasons why these women participated in their sport and why they wanted to continue. The sub-theme of Negative Experiences explained some of difficulties these women had encountered as a female athlete. The sub-theme of Building Personality explained how the athletic experiences positively influenced the building of the participants' personality characteristics. The sub-theme of Career Decision Making and Career Opportunities in Sport explained how the participants were influenced by their athletic experiences and when they decided upon their athletic careers and also explained the participants' perceptions of potential career opportunities in sport or sport-related fields available for female athletes.

Six sub-themes comprised the Perceptions Regarding Career theme: (a) Perceptions in General, (b) Location, (c) Impact of Title IX, (d) Qualifications, (e) Socialization, and (f) Role Models. The sub-theme of Perceptions in General explained the participants' overall perceptions of their athletic career experiences and the status of women's sport in society. The sub-theme of Location explained how location of the participants' school or their sport participation influenced their career opportunities. The sub-theme of the Impact of Title IX explained how the participants perceived the important impact of Title IX into the status of women's sport in American society. The sub-theme of Qualifications explained how the participants' perceived their academic

preparation and qualifications as the most important factors of their career opportunities. The sub-theme of Socialization explained how the participants' sport participation was influenced by other people or social factors and the participants were encouraged and supported by their family members to continuously participate in sports or physical activities. The sub-theme of Role Models explained how the participants were influenced by their significant role models throughout their athletic careers.

Three sub-themes comprised the Barrier theme: (a) Social Barriers, (b) Playing Opportunities After College/University, and (c) Homophobia. The sub-theme of Social Barriers explained common social barriers the women athletes perceived or experienced against women athletes and their sport participation and also explained specific types of barriers they had experienced throughout their athletic careers. The sub-theme of Playing Opportunities After College/University explained their perceptions or understandings about the non-existing opportunities as a professional player after college/university level. The sub-theme of Homophobia explained how the participants understood the negative influences of homophobia in women's sport.

These emerged themes represented the participants' understandings and perceptions of their athletic experiences and career opportunities. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the relationship and patterns among the themes and the relationship of the themes to existing literature.

Themes Not Accounted for in the Literature

Included in this section are the themes which were not directly cited in the literature review, but emerged as significant themes from the interview transcriptions

during the analysis procedure. The themes included negative experiences, building personality, location, and qualifications.

Negative Experiences (from Theme 1, Athletic Experiences)

Although most of the participants responded with very positive aspects of their athletic experiences, there were a few negative athletic experiences which were still a significant part of their athletic participation. Furthermore, the participants eventually tried to perceive and learn positive aspects or lessons from the negative experiences.

Andrea remarked that she had several negative experiences as an athlete such as the coach's negative remarks about her performances and disappointing results of her performances. However, she tried to learn from those negative athletic experiences such as how to effectively deal with negative situations. Other participants mentioned the various types of performance pressures as their negative experiences. As Belle noted, the student athletes constantly received pressures from coaches, teammates, and parents. The emphasis placed on winning was another type of pressure for the participants. According to Fay's remark, the student athletes usually felt pressure as a result of their athletic performances. Although the participants responded that they believed they had very positive athletic experiences throughout their entire athletic careers, at the same time, they experienced significant amounts of pressure based on the outcome of their athletic performances. In addition, according to Gayle's responses, there was even self-pressure presented when she realized she represented her own school at the competitions. She also mentioned demands as a student athlete and having to maintain good grades. Helen mentioned her busy schedule as an intercollegiate athlete and a student as negative

aspects of her athletic career. Other participants, Diana and Ellen, also mentioned that their tight schedules as an intercollegiate athlete was a tremendous pressure. They felt that they missed what average college/university students enjoy or do in general, because of the high demands on their double-role as a student-athlete.

Building Personality (from Theme 1, Athletic Experiences)

Most of the participants remarked that their athletic experiences, both positive and negative, helped to develop their personality characteristics not just as an athlete, but also as a human being. Through their career athletic experiences, the participants also learned several important lessons which they perceived significantly would help them in managing their career after college/university.

Andrea mentioned how she handled negative reactions from other people such as coaches. It was not an easy process, but Andrea tried to utilize her athletic career to manage her life in the real world. The important lessons she learned throughout her athletic career such as using time wisely, managing good grade, and having fun significantly helped her to develop skills for life. As other participants remarked, positive athletic experiences helped them to build personality characteristics such as self-confidence and self-esteem. Belle mentioned how positive athletic experiences influenced her to develop her personality characteristics. In addition to the other benefits from positive athletic experiences, she was able to develop the positive aspects of her personality. Because of their success as female athletes, Cathy and Diana responded that they had a lot of confidence in themselves and their athletic ability. Also, their self-confidence helped them to deal effectively with other problems or difficult situations in

society. Ellen indicated that the competitive aspects of her athletic experiences helped her to develop time management skills. Based on her experiences she felt, she could succeed in life outside of athletic environments with much confidence. Gayle stated that her positive athletic experiences helped to develop positive aspects of her personality. Helen also mentioned the important influences of her positive athletic experiences in building her personality. She felt her positive athletic experiences also helped in her life-long career development.

The positive athletic experiences helped the participants deal with other people and/or difficult situations. Based on these experiences, the participants remarked that they were able to connect more effectively with other people. This remark is very significant because, as an intercollegiate athlete, the participants meet various types of people including other players, coaches, and athletic administrative personnel. They also needed to travel to many different places and developed skills which may help them establish a professional network.

Andrea and Belle mentioned how they learned to deal with other people or different situations. Cathy indicated the important aspects of team work while Ellen indicated the importance of mutual supports and effective communications with other people as a team sport player. The opportunities of meeting various types of people developed Fay's understandings and perceptions about the social environment and herself. Helen mentioned the meaningful aspects of team work in team sport. As a result of these experiences, most of the participants learned and realized the important aspects of dealing and communicating with other people in real world. This process also enabled

them to expand their perceptions beyond their athletic environments, so they will be able to manage their professional lives effectively after college/university.

Location (from Theme 2, Perceptions Regarding Careers)

Most of the participants understood that the location of their college/university was an important factor which could significantly influence the potential paths of their career opportunities. They realized the important aspects of the location of their athletic programs when they were pursuing future athletic career opportunities. Some of the participants remarked that the location where you play and participate in college/university athletic programs significantly influenced whether or not you could pursue your career at a higher level. An example of this included the professional tours.

Belle perceived her sport (field hockey) as a non-popular sport in the United States, so she never planed to pursue her career in professional tours as a player. Fay also indicated that the location of the female athletes' college/university athletic programs was one of the most important components to decide future athletic career development opportunities. The location factor is more influential for women's sport, because women athletes have significantly less opportunities in professional sport than their male athlete counterparts. Therefore, location fitted into the conceptual framework of standpoint theory for these women athletes, because it further defined the importance and popularity of their sport and their perceptions reflected this same idea.

Qualifications (from Theme 2, Perceptions Regarding Careers)

Most of the participants considered their qualifications as a major factor which would influence their potential job opportunities. They also clearly understood and

perceived that their qualifications as a professional person may be a more important factor than their gender in their career opportunities. This perception is significantly related to their perception of social barriers (refer to Social Barrier section in this chapter). Although most of the participants had high levels of self-confidence about their qualifications and athletic careers, they may possibly have to experience and overcome various types of social barriers when they actually try to pursue their career opportunities after college/university.

From Andrea's perceptions, career job opportunities will depend on their qualifications, not their gender. With the improvement of the social environments for women, Andrea perceived that women were becoming better qualified for a variety of job opportunities. Diana indicated the important aspects of making herself more marketable. Based on her perceptions about qualifications for job opportunities in sport and sport-related fields, she felt that obtaining a master's degree would be beneficial. Ellen clearly indicated how she trusted her self-confidence and qualifications. Although she acknowledged her gender as a potential barrier in society, she believed that her qualifications were more important than her gender. Fay made similar comments about the important aspects of her qualifications rather than her gender. Gayle also offered comments about her perceptions regarding qualifications. She mentioned how to make one's qualifications stronger such as building a strong educational background and having various types of athletic experiences.

Most of the participants considered the academic aspects of their experiences as important components of their career development. As a student athlete, the participants

understood and perceived their academic discipline and preparation as one of the most significant factors of their qualifications. As some of the participants such as Andrea, Belle, and Cathy indicated, they would like to have some teaching experiences as a physical education teacher for their future career development. Their academic background included classes which were significantly related to the role of teaching such as psychology and multi-cultural education classes. The participants believed that background knowledge from these related courses would help them to understand and teach their students better. Gayle also mentioned the important aspects of background knowledge in her career development. She perceived that as a diving coach, especially for children, a psychology-related background knowledge will enhance her coaching ability and skills. Diana, Fay, and Helen clearly understood the importance of maintaining good grades to prepare for their careers. As intercollegiate athletes, they also have to maintain good grade for their athletic eligibility. Maintaining good grades is a difficult requirement for the student-athletes, but, at the same time, the participants strongly believed that managing all the requirements effectively gave them more confidence in their qualifications.

The participants also planned to obtain various types of licenses and/or certifications. To be a physical education teacher or a coach in various sports, the participants have to be certified from various organizations or specific governing bodies, so these women athletes were clearly aware of the important aspects of obtaining professional certifications. In addition, some of the participants planned to go to graduate school for a master's degree because they perceived that this degree would help them in

their careers. As mentioned above, most of the participants clearly understood how they could improve their qualification and become more marketable.

Themes Related to the Literature

This section was comprised of topics which were related to the literature review. The related themes are positive experiences, career decision making and career opportunities in sport, perceptions in general, impact of Title IX, socialization, role models, social barriers, playing opportunities after college/university, and homophobia.

Positive Experiences (from Theme 1, Athletic Experiences)

Most of the participants had very positive experiences throughout their entire athletic careers. At the same time, they also clearly indicated that these positive athletic experiences were the most important reasons why they wanted continue to pursue their careers in sport and sport-related fields. No matter the results of their performances, the participants consistently understood and perceived their athletic experiences positively. Furthermore, these female athletes responded that their positive athletic experiences also influenced their entire life as well as athletic careers.

As one participant, Andrea, remarked that her athletic experiences during high school gave her positive reinforcements. Andrea believed that she had very unique athletic experiences because she went to an all-girl's high school. Her athletic experiences as a female athlete in an all-girl's high school were significantly different than the same athletic experiences in co-ed or public schools because girls' athletic programs received all the attention from the students in her school. Therefore, this experience enabled Andrea to perceived her athletic experiences positively. Because of

this unique athletic experience, Andrea was able to avoid certain types of social barriers regarding her gender and sport participation during her high school years (Barriers will be addressed later in this chapter). Other participants, Belle and Cathy, also mentioned the importance of positive athletic experiences for their athletic careers. Cathy perceived that she could participate in several different sports because of her positive athletic experiences. Diana's response explained other benefits of her positive athletic experiences because, according to her and her student-athlete friends' experiences, she believed that positive athletic experiences could help other people especially, the younger generation. She also felt that athletic experiences could help other people manage their life better. Fay also mentioned how she perceived positive athletic experiences from the results of her performances. She remarked that she even tried to learn lessons from losing situations as well. According to her athletic experiences, the relationship between winning or losing and athletic experiences is very positive. She also focused on the positive aspects of her athletic experiences such as fun and enjoyment, not just the results of her performances. Diana also indicated the influence of her current coach as positive athletic experiences.

According to Eitzen and Sage (1997), the influences of athletic experiences are stronger when the coach is perceived as an important figure. Gayle remarked that the positive athletic experiences significantly influenced her entire life and she continued to learn important lessons through her athletic experiences. Helen remarked about similar benefits of her positive athletic experiences. She also mentioned that her athletic experiences gave her a direction for her entire life which is another excellent example of

the positive aspects of athletic experiences for women athletes.

Positive athletic experiences also provided other advantages for the participants such as remembering the best moment of winning and their performances, having fun, helping other people, and physical fitness. These positive aspects of their athletic experiences reinforced the participants to stay in athletic environments as long as possible. As all of the participants remarked, they have been constantly participated in various sports many years throughout their life. According to Eitzen and Sage (1997), the influences of athletic experiences are more significant when the level of involvement is frequent, intense, and prolonged and the sport participation is voluntary rather than involuntary. The recollection of the best moments of winning constantly gave positive feedback to the participants. As intercollegiate female athletes, the participants understood their positive athletic experiences as one of the most important components of their entire life.

Career Decision Making and Career Opportunities in Sport (from Theme 1, Athletic Experiences)

Most of the participants responded that their positive athletic experiences significantly influenced their career decision making processes, thus they decided to continue their athletic careers further within athletic environments. According to the positive athletic experiences throughout their careers, the participants made important decisions regarding their careers after college/university. This point is very important because, based on their desire, the participants should have the various types of sport-related career opportunities to stay within athletic environments. Therefore, society

needs to develop and provide various types of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields for female athletes.

Andrea indicated that it was impossible to imagine her life without her athletic career and experiences. Cathy also indicated the similar remark. Her athletic career has been enormously positive, so she wanted to continue this career. Diana responded even if she is not playing as a professional player, she still wanted to be involved within athletic environments. She also wanted to help other people participate in sports and physical activities because she had very positive experiences and she understood the active sport participation significantly helped other people. Fay mentioned she was able to expand her experiences through her athletic career and the various positive experiences helped her continue to participate in her sport. Gayle even indicated more clearly that no matter what kind of possibilities she had, she definitely wants to stay involved within athletic environments as long as possible.

Most of the participants perceived their career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields very positively and realized the possibilities of these opportunities have expanded. This perception is also supported by the various research studies. According to Snyder (1993), despite the male's dominated positions in sport-related career fields, there are some indications of positive change for women's sport and female athletes. For example, the development of women's professional basketball, more women sport included in the Olympics, and more opportunities for young girls to participate in sport. Furthermore, several researchers also supported the fact that more female intercollegiate athletes wanted to purse their career in athletic fields because of various sport-related

professional career opportunities for female athletes after college/university (Field, 1991; Figler & Figler, 1984; Petitas, Champagne, Chartrand, Danish, & Murphy, 1997). According to Snyder (1993), athletic career opportunities for professional female athletes are still quite limited and competitive, but the athletic career opportunities are greater than before.

Andrea responded that she believed her athletic career as a field hockey player will help her when she tries to find teaching positions. As she mentioned, her athletic career is a "definite plus" for her to pursue her career further. Furthermore, she also had very positive perceptions of the job market. Cathy perceived various ranges of her potential career opportunities in sport-related fields. Andrea, Belle, and Cathy wanted to be either a coach or a physical education teacher and they perceived the potential possibilities in these job markets very positively. This fact is consistent with Whitaker and Molstad's (1985) study. According to their research with female athletes, there are coaching positions available after their playing career is finished and there is an existing network which could support female athletes in pursuing their career goals. It is also evident that, according to George (1989), female athletes' (such as Andrea, Belle, and Cathy) most important reason for an interest in coaching is a desire to stay associated with their particular sport. However, there are several problems as well in this field. George (1989) also stated that it is a problem that there are many eligible female coaches available in the field, but there are fewer female coaches in colleges/universities in American society.

Diana's perception of her career opportunities reflects several important issues. First, she clearly realized that the career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields for female athletes were very competitive and limited because of the predominance of male candidates. Second, her perceptions and understanding of gender equity in career opportunities for both women and men were very positive. Fay mentioned that she perceived noticeable improvements in career opportunities for women including women athletes. Gayle's responses reflected her strong self-confidence for finding career opportunities. She also indicated that most of women candidates were better prepared than before, and thus, more competitive in the job market. It may be the case in this instance, that the participants misconceived the important concept of affirmative action. According to DeSensi and Rosenberg (1996), there are two different types of affirmative action, strong and weak, but neither type provides guaranteed opportunities for women in the job market. Therefore, in many cases, women athletes would find the social reality which is a lot different than what they perceived during school years when they actually try to find career jobs after college/university.

Some of the participants remarked about the limitations for women in pursuing job opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Acosta and Carpenter's (1985) survey of men and women involved in athletic administration revealed several reasons for the decrease of women in athletics. These included a male-dominated athletic environment, lack of qualified women coaches and administrators, unconscious discrimination, and unwillingness of women to recruit and travel. Pastore (1991) also indicated that female coaches might perceive that they do not have the same athletic career opportunities as

today's female athletes and therefore would like to see female athletes maximize their athletic career opportunities after their college/university experiences. The participants of this study however maintained their positive attitudes regarding perceptions of their own athletic experiences and the changes of social attitudes toward women's sport which may provide them with more career opportunities. Belle mentioned her perceptions on how women's limited career opportunities could be improved in the future. Gayle mentioned similar indications and she also mentioned men's advantage in career opportunities such as their dominated connections and hegemony in society.

Most of the participants remarked that they had very positive attitudes toward job opportunities in sport or sport-related job market. Andrea indicated that she perceived the current job market for women athletes very positively. According to her comment, various improvements could be found in sport and sport-related fields, so these fields needed to recruit more new comers with new and diverse ideas. Ellen also perceived her job opportunities very positively. Furthermore, she considered her college experiences in both athletics and academics as a very significant factor for the job opportunities after college/university. Her perception also reflected meaningful relationships with other sub-themes such as positive athletic experiences and building personality. Fay perceived high demands in her future career field as a physical therapist because of the popularity of sport in American society. Gayle mentioned that more women actually started to become interested in sport-related job opportunities because of Title IX (see Impact of Title IX section in Chapter II for further discussion) and there were more positions available for women.

According to Washington and Lehr (1986), especially for intercollegiate female golfers, there are more sport-related career possibilities available in addition to playing as a professional golfer on the professional tours. These authors also stated that results regarding the high percentage of female collegiate golfers who aspire to professional golf careers would, by virtue of the number of professional sport available to women, perhaps be unique to individual sport. Helen mentioned that there were various possibilities of job opportunities and career development possibilities for women in golf industries.

Some of the participants perceived that their male counterparts still had more opportunities in the job market of sport and sport-related fields in general. Belle and Diana mentioned the current job market was more favorable for male candidates, but, at the same time, they anticipated changes and improvements in the current social situations for women's sport. Ellen also mentioned that she perceived more sport-related career opportunities available for men.

Perceptions in General (from Theme 2, Perceptions Regarding Careers)

In this section, various ranges of participants' perceptions were discussed which included perceptions of athletic experiences, career opportunities, status of women's sport, and women's sport participation in society. The participants' perceptions and understandings of their athletic experiences and career opportunities were paramount in this study. Most of the participants clearly realized the changing social attitudes toward women's sport and their participation in sport and understood the positive aspects of sport participation for women. In general, most of the participants perceived their athletic experience and career opportunities positively. They also realized that sport participation

among girls and women were becoming more popular in American society. These remarks were significantly supported by various sources of research presented by Acosta and Carpenter, 1992; Carpenter, 1993; Francis, 1993-94; Hammer, 1979; Hilliard, 1996; Hogan, 1987; Roberts, 1992; and Snyder, 1993. This significant social change was also influenced by the passage of Title IX (see The Impact of Title IX section in this chapter).

Andrea, Cathy, and Gayle mentioned that sport participation among girls and women was becoming more popular in American society and this popularity was receiving acceptance from the general public. In addition, Belle also noticed a similar change. She indicated that the sports teams and athletic programs for girls and women expanded at various levels. These points were supported by the research of Barnett and Rozin, 1997; Francis, 1993-94; Hammer, 1979; Hilliard, 1996; Hogan, 1987; and Snyder, 1993.

Although sport participation among girls and women is becoming more popular in American society, some of the participants were clearly aware of the negative attitudes toward their participation in sports and physical activities. Some participants indicated the various types of negative perceptions of women's sport from society such as negative stereotypes and lack of public supports. However, at the same time, the participants had very strong intentions to continue their sport participation further.

Andrea mentioned that although there were still negative attitudes toward women's sport participation, more women started to participate in sports and physical activities for important reasons and subsequent benefits such as health related benefits. This change was consistently supported by the various research of Barnett and Rozin,

1997; Hammer, 1979; Hilliard, 1996; Hogan, 1987; and Snyder, 1993. Andrea and Gayle mentioned that women's sport participation needed to be considered as a respectful aspect of women. Cathy mentioned that lack of available benefits for women athletes such as scholarships and popularity as similar difficulties. She also indicated the physical difference between men and women as another type of difficult social perception with which women athletes have to deal.

Impact of Title IX (from Theme 2, Perceptions Regarding Careers)

Most of the participants acknowledged the important impact of Title IX on the status of women's sport in American society. This point is also noted by Acosta and Carpenter, 1992; Carpenter, 1993; Kase, 1994; and Snyder, 1993. Each indicated that the passage of Title IX is one of the most important landmarks for women's sport in American society. In addition, Young (1994) noted that after the passage of Title IX, large numbers of scholarships became available for female intercollegiate athletes in various college/university athletic programs. Consequently, as Gorn and Oriard (1995) noted, organized sport for women became available as feminism grew and women gained access to higher education and other areas from which they had previously been excluded.

A few of the participants clearly understood the meaning attached to the passage of Title IX and its impetus in raising the status of women's sport in American society. Andrea indicated that the passage of Title IX enabled women to have more equal opportunities at various levels of sport participation in the educational institutions and potentially in sport-related career opportunities. Snyder's (1993) study supported her

remark. According to his study, the opportunities for female athletes in high school and college/university athletic programs rapidly increased during the years after the passage of Title IX. Barnett and Rozin (1997) also stated that only one in 27 girls participated in a high school athletic program in 1970, but, by 1996, that figure was one in three. Diana also commented on the increased benefits from Title IX in college/university athletic programs for female athletes. As Francis (1993-94) noted, based on the impact of Title IX, many colleges/universities provided numbers of women's athletic programs and varsity teams. According to Hogan's (1987) study, it was evident that after the passage of Title IX, the athletic budgets for women's athletic programs in colleges/universities in the United States multiplied. As Acosta and Carpenter (1992) noted, The National Association for Girls and Women in Sport also pointed out that prior to the passage of Title IX, athletic scholarships for female intercollegiate athletes were virtually nonexistent but now athletic scholarships are available. Gayle mentioned that because of Title IX, women's sport has made significant progress in American society. This point is supported by the research. According to Roberts (1992), Title IX attempts to provide equal opportunities in educational programs for both women/girls and men/boys in educational institutions which receive federal funds. This legislation stipulates that girls and women should have the same opportunities as boys and men in every educational program. Regarding the area of sport, this includes opportunity to play, train, travel, scholarships, coaching, uniforms, facilities, scheduling, and publicity. Helen perceived more equal career opportunities for female intercollegiate athletes in her sport of golf, especially as a professional golfer.

Prior to the passage of Title IX, according to Hammer (1979) and Hogan (1987), there were reports of only limited numbers of high school girls participating in interscholastic athletic programs, but the numbers of high school girls increased after the passage and enforcement of Title IX. The total number of girls participating in interscholastic athletic programs also sharply increased. In addition, Hilliard (1996) indicated a critical change in that hundreds of high school girls were participating and competing in nontraditional athletic programs for women such as football, wrestling, and baseball in 1995.

Socialization (from Theme 2, Perceptions Regarding Careers)

Women's sport participation was significantly influenced by social standards because women's socialization process is different than that of men and is influenced by other socialization components (Bryant & McElroy, 1997; Goldberger, 1997). According to Tannen (1997), men and women are raised differently in the culture, thus they essentially have different contexts and perspectives from which they understand the social phenomena. As one participant indicated, girls/women usually have different socialization processes than boys/men in society. Andrea remarked that "...boys play soccer and girls are supposed to learn proper etiquette." This statement clearly indicated how most of the female athletes perceived the status and meaning of their sport participation when they were growing up in male-dominated social environment. According to the socialization process, women are able to construct the perception and understanding about sport and sport participation in society. Therefore, during the socialization process, women could also realize and develop their gender identity.

Andrea also mentioned the dominated power of male influence in athletics.

Belle mentioned that society tends to construct a uniform image of women and women athletes. Society tends to define women's image and meaning which in turn, determines their status in society. According to Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983), women's sports have increasingly been defined and structured by men's values and perspectives, men's understanding of the world, and men's experiences--all of which suppress the development and expression of female values. Although there has been a great increase in organized sport and athletic programs for women, Weiller and Higgs (1989) indicated that the traditional gender roles continue to be maintained through socialization experiences. Belle also mentioned the relationship between the presence of her brothers and her aggressive personality characteristics.

Fay mentioned her socially-constructed perception of the different status between men and women. According to Kidd (1990) and Messner (1998), men tended to learn and develop traditional male-dominated social arrangements and heterosexual perspectives through sport which supports sexism and patriarchy. Messner and Sabo (1990) also indicated that through this socialization process, men, and even some women, tend to underestimate the value of women and their participation in sport. However, Gayle expressed a significantly different perception of her generation which is in opposition to the socially-constructed status of women in sport. With equal education and experiences, she believed that her generation had different paths within the sport socialization process. Helen mentioned that her sport socialization process through sport participation was a respectful aspect of her experiences.

Interestingly, Belle and Helen mentioned their early age experiences as being called "tomboy." Both participants usually played with boys when they were growing up such as brothers and male friends. They actively participated in various ranges of sports and physical activities. They did not however mention any negative remarks about being called tomboy, but this experience may have influenced their sport socialization process in society.

There are two subcategories in the issue of socialization and sport, socialization into sport and socialization through sport (Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Theberge, 1994; Theberge & Birrell, 1994a). According to Eitzen and Sage (1997), the subcategory of socialization into sport focuses on the agents and agencies which draw people into sport. On the other hand, the subcategory of socialization through sport focuses on the effects of sport participation or involvement such as attitudes or orientation (Eitzen & Sage, 1997; Theberge & Birrell, 1994a). As Birrell and Cole (1994) stated, sport socialization basically discusses "how sport participation influences the development of particular characteristics and the learning of non-sport roles" (p. 188).

The participants' entire athletic experiences also were significantly influenced by their sport socialization process. As female athletes, the participants had experienced various types of socialization processes in society. Furthermore, Bessone (1987) and Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983) pointed out that the sport socialization process for younger people is more difficult. Understanding the socialization process of women athletes in society makes it possible to examine the issue of why women may leave or perhaps not even enter the coaching and/or sport administration profession, and how

women athletes understand the current status of women's sport and their career opportunities (Corcoran & Courant, 1985; Knoppers, 1987; Thorngren, 1990). According to Pastore (1991), women may or may not be attracted to the coaching and/or administration profession because of their own unique sports experience.

Most of the participants also responded that they were significantly influenced and encouraged by their family members from the early stage of their sport participation. In most cases, their family members were very supportive regarding their sport participation, thus the role of family was very important to initiate the participants' athletic careers, especially during the early stages of their athletic participation. Furthermore, the acceptance and support of sport participation from family members significantly motivated the participants to pursue their athletic career into higher levels of competition as a female athlete. In most cases, the participants had either sisters or brothers who also actively participated in sports and physical activities.

Andrea mentioned the significant role her mother played during her younger years of sport participation. With full support from her mother, she was able to participate in various types of sports and physical activities. Her mother actually introduced her to field hockey and she subsequently chose field hockey as her major sport. Belle called her family an "athletic family," because she always played with her family members and they motivated her continue to participate in sports and physical activities in her early age. Her mother also introduced her to field hockey when she was in high school. Cathy and Diana also mentioned strong support from their family members. With the support from family, they could concentrate on sport and their athletic career development. Ellen's

family took her to many tournaments all over the country and her sisters also traveled with her. She perceived this experience as an evidence of enormous family support. Fay's parents truly trusted and supported her decision to continue her athletic career development. Gayle's parents encouraged her to be active and play with her sister and brother. Helen's family was also involved various types of sports with her and supporting her athletic career and sport participation.

More importantly, the participants' family members, especially the fathers, were the most important person to motivate the participants in their athletic participation. They served as a teacher, a coach, and the most dedicated person for their daughters' or sisters' athletic career and sport participation. During the early stage of the women's sport participation, the effectiveness of the family members' motivation was significant.

Belle was mostly influenced by her brother who sought her out to play with him. Fay's sister was a big influence for her. When her sister participated in the Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain in 1992, it was a significant motivation for her to continue her athletic career at an ever in higher level. Helen's father was the most important reason of her entire athletic career. He taught and supported her from the very beginning of her athletic career. Along with her athletic experiences, her father played the most important role for her success in athletics.

Role Models (from Theme 2, Perceptions Regarding Careers)

The participants were significantly influenced by various types of positive role models throughout their entire athletic careers. According to their research, Eitzen and Sage (1997) stated that appealing and outstanding figures as positive role models also

have emerged on the women's professional tours to capture the public recognition and respect. Furthermore, Conniff (1993) noted that more and more women have become involved in sports and physical activities, and women athletes have become more visible as positive role models.

Andrea indicated that because of her unique experiences in high school, she had various types of female role models who played an important role in her athletic career. Hilliard (1996) supported that the presence of the female athletic role models is a motivating force for women, sending the message that playing and/or participating in sport should not be only an acceptable thing to do, but also a status symbol for women. Whitaker and Molstad (1985) also stated that in the case of the athletic career opportunities for intercollegiate female athletes, the presence of positive female role models provides the motivation to women to continue to pursue their athletic careers, the expectation that successful athletic career is possible as well as desirable, and is a guide on the gateway to success in life-long career opportunities. Gayle indicated the important aspects of being a role model, especially for younger generations. As George (1989) supported, there should be an increased concern that the persistent absence of positive female role models could negatively influence the perceptions of young female athletes, so that they do not see themselves as future coaches and leaders in sport for women.

Most of the participants perceived their teachers and/or coaches who encouraged them to participate in sports and physical activities and pursue their athletic careers further as important role models. Andrea mentioned her teachers as life-long role models. Diana mentioned the important influences from her current coach. This remark

was also evident in Nelson's (1991) research which stated that among most cases, female athletes experience more positive influence from the existence of same gender role models–such as female coaches. The coach taught her various lessons which helped and supported Diana's career development both as an intercollegiate athlete and a person. Ellen's coach motivated her pursuing her athletic career further as a tennis player. Gayle mentioned how her coaches influenced her in various aspects. According to her coaches, she was able to learn positive lessons such as a strong work ethic.

According to Friskopp and Silverstein (1995), the absence of positive role models could increase feelings of isolation and loneliness. Blinde (1989) also indicated that female intercollegiate athletes have experienced greater difficulties and barriers in accomplishing the demands of the student and athlete roles. In addition, according to Acosta and Carpenter (1992), the lack of female coaching and/or administration professionals deprives female intercollegiate athlete of valuable female role models in leadership and decision-making positions. Therefore, as Goldman (1991) noted, the disappearance and absence of female coaches as a positive role model in high school and/or college/university level raises some questions for administrators about the importance of role models and the reasons for the decreased number of female coaches. Based on George's (1989) study, female athletes who preferred the same-gender coach stated that the most important reasons for their choice are that the female coaches understood their needs and sustained closer rapport with the players, and they understood female coaches as positive role model of their own.

Social Barriers (from Theme 3, Barriers)

As student-athletes, female intercollegiate athletes also face several difficulties within their career development. The lack of identification of academic and career plans, unrealistic goal setting, and lack of self-confidence outside of athletics are among the issues women face (Berry & Sorensen, 1981; Blann, 1988; Coleman & Barker, 1993; Hilliard, 1989; Lanning, 1982; Remer et al., 1978; Shiflett & Galante, 1985; Sowa & Gressard, 1983; Wittmer et al., 1981). Andrea indicated that gender is a serious barrier for women in society. Belle mentioned that her perception reflected her gender as a social barrier, especially in the athletic world. Robinson (1991) indicated that female athletes' athletic performance was easily interpreted in terms of how it affected their attractiveness to men. In addition, under the influence of male-dominated standards, participation in sport was believed to be unfeminine and too strenuous, and not recommended (UCCR, 1980). Furthermore, Belle stated clearly that the notion of "gender as a social barrier" needed to be corrected for women. Cathy mentioned that she had different understanding on how to deal with the gender as a social barrier. Rather than try to overcome the barrier, she wanted to avoid potential social barriers and pursue her career in a sport which is more suitable for women athletes in the United States such as field hockey.

Fay indicated her understanding of social barriers for women athletes as less money available for women's professional tournaments, less media coverage for women's sport, and lack of public support and interest in women's sport. Gayle's understanding of social barriers against women's sport reflected a different view. In

addition to the other barriers mentioned above, she pointed out the stereotypes against women athletes and women's sport. Helen indicated similar social barriers, but she believed that these barriers could be overcome depending on the person's attitude.

Some of the participants indicated that lack of women's support for women's sport would be a serious social barrier for women in sport. Andrea mentioned that many women usually go to watch men's games rather than women's games and this was a type of barrier from her stand point. Furthermore, even participants themselves responded that they preferred to watch men's performance over women's. Belle mentioned that she was more interested in men's basketball games. She said, "...I don't even watch it [WNBA] myself because I'm not interested in it." Fay also stated that she preferred to watch men's game because the men's game is more exciting than women's sports performance. There were various reasons expressed as to why some of the participants did not watch women's games such as the facts noted above.

However, most of the participants--such as Andrea, Belle, Diana, Ellen, Fay, Gayle, and Helen--responded that they personally did not experience any type of barrier because of their gender throughout their entire athletic careers. In most cases, female athletes usually did not experience any type of social barrier until they graduated from college/university. Because as long as they played or participated in sport as a student athlete, they were supposed to be supported by the legal systems such as Title IX (refer the section of Impact of Title IX in Chapter II). However, female athletes may experience various types of social barriers when they enter the real world as a professional person (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Clement, 1987; and Costa &

Guthrie, 1994).

Most of the participants mentioned they did not have any type of social barriers in the past. Belle also stated that proving her (athletic) ability to other people was the way she handled the situations when she experienced any type of problems. Fay indicated that she assumed that she might have to deal with various types of social barriers after college, but she did not experience any type of barriers throughout her athletic career. Furthermore, Gayle even did not consider her gender as a type of social barrier. Like Gayle, Helen indicated that she understood herself as an athlete not a woman. At the same time, she believed that other people also viewed her as an athlete not a woman, so she did not experience any type of social barriers.

Although, in the previous section, most of the participants did not perceive their own gender as a barrier, they clearly understood gender as one of the predominant barriers in society. Unfortunately, as Greendorfer (1983) indicated, research data on women and women athletes have not been integrated into the mainstream social context, which continues to use as its foundation understandings obtained on white, adult, male, elite athletes. Generally, according to Hall (1978), males in American society, are, simply because of their gender, more highly valued and respected than females. Therefore, like Whitaker and Molstad (1985) indicated, historically, female athletes had seldom experienced levels of recognition and respect comparable to those of their male counterparts.

As Hall (1996) noted, the struggle regarding gender and culture exists primarily with regard to women in area of the 'feminine' because cultural practices and sports are

defined by male-dominated perspectives. In addition, Hall also stated the need for sport studies scholars adopt a cultural studies approach in order to explore relations of power in sport which are based on constructs of gender and sexuality. Gorn and Oriard (1995) claimed, sports are clearly about gender and certainly athletics have shaped American masculinity.

Playing Opportunities After College/University (from Theme 3, Barriers)

Not having playing opportunities after college/university is one of the most serious problems for female intercollegiate athletes, except for a few sports such as basketball and golf. According to Bakoulis (1987); Bolig (1994); and Eitzen and Sage (1997), opportunities for women to engage in professional sport have been severely restricted, and differential rewards have been the standard, with professional female athletes gaining less public recognition and less money for their performances. Andrea, Belle, and Cathy mentioned that there are no playing opportunities after college/university in their sport of field hockey, so they clearly realized the fact when they began to participate in their sport and never perceived playing professionally as a career opportunity. There are limited opportunities for these women athletes to pursue in the way of playing except on either Olympic or club team, but these opportunities are very limited, competitive, and extremely difficult to achieve. Cathy also mentioned that limited playing opportunities for female athletes negatively influenced the status of women's sport because women athletes have less opportunities to experience higher level of performance as an athlete. As long as they decide to play particular sports such as field hockey and swimming, continuing their athletic careers as a professional player is

not an option for them.

Fay also mentioned that the lack of sponsors' financial support for women's sport, especially for professional sport and athletes, negatively influenced the popularity of the women's sport. In addition, according to Conniff (1993), market research must have shown that women like being treated as human beings and not just as women, because the new advertisements have caught on and developed into a whole new genre with sophisticated feminist appeal. Furthermore, according to Barnett and Rozin (1997), it is evident that the social and economic status of women's professional sport is improved in American society. Clement (1987) also stated that leaders in business, industry, and communities also need to take on the responsibility for promoting professional sport for female athletes and improving the status of female sport in American society. According to Cole and Hribar (1995), it is evident how corporate marketing strategy influences the perspectives of (feminist) cultural studies into (female) sport. Davis (1997) also noticeably addressed how male-dominated perspectives or masculine sports marketing influences are used for understanding and defining the women's body image in American society.

Most of the participants in this study remarked that having no playing opportunities as a professional player was the most difficult barrier to deal with for them as a female athlete. Although they had not experienced any type of social barrier, it is almost impossible to continue their athletic careers as a professional player after college/university. Therefore, they could not even think about that kind of possibility in their career opportunity options. According to Blinde (1989), as a consequence, an

unrealistic emphasis on college/university sport may disadvantage the female athlete in her search for success in other areas following the completion of her college/university athletic career. In addition, Eitzen and Sage (1997) stated that the world of sport has discriminated against women not only as professional athletes but in other professional sport-related occupations as well.

Homophobia (from Theme 3, Barriers)

Most of the participants realized the potential negative influence of homophobia in women's sport, but they had flexible attitudes toward it. Andrea stated that it is her perception that current society is more accepting of women's sport participation as well as homosexuals in sport. Belle and Helen also mentioned that they had flexible attitude towards homosexuals even though homophobia negatively influences women's sport. Ellen mentioned that as long as lesbians do not bother her, she was very flexible in her attitudes toward them. She also mentioned that it is important to accept and respect different people as what they are in society. Fay did not approve of homosexuality, but she believed current society is more tolerant of any type of preferences especially in 1990's.

However, various studies indicated that the presence of lesbians in women' sport seriously isolated women's sport from the social attentions and supports. As Griffin (1992) pointed out, throughout the history of Western culture, women's sport participation and women in sport have been restricted and socially unacceptable, so women in sport were intimidated by fear of losing "social approval." Lenskyj (1986) claimed that "women's participation in sport has been resisted, considered unfeminine,

and been a basis of questioning the sexual orientation of those women who took sport too seriously, e.g., the stereotype of the female physical education teacher" (p. 102-107). Lenskyj (1986) also stated that women only have been "welcomed unconditionally as spectators and cheerleaders for men's games" (p. 101). Therefore, as Griffin (1992) noted, women's sport participation strongly challenges the function of "socially constructed gender roles" and "sexual identities" in male-dominated social environment (p. 252).

According to Griffin (1992), Harry (1995), and Phillips (1996), the influence of homonegativism in women's sport in American society is one of the most controversial gender issues in the field of sport sociology. Heaton (1992) indicated that homophobia is a serious problem which negatively affects women athletes' career development, regardless of whether they are lesbian or straight. Blum (1994) also claimed that being identified as homosexual might "jeopardize a woman's athletic career, damage a coach's ability to recruit, and further alienate women from the male-dominated world of sport" (p. A35). This issue has been discussed and developed by broad range of scholars and feminists such as Blum, 1994; Galst, 1998; Griffin, 1992; Harry, 1995; Heaton, 1992; Richardson and Tandy, 1985; and Weis, 1995.

As Weis (1995) claimed, in athletics, "the lesson of hegemonic masculinity," including homophobia, are taught and learned well (p. 25). Diana mentioned the potential negative influences of homophobia into women's sport such as discouraging girls and women in sport participation. Krane (1996) stated that invoking the lesbian label was equivalent to discrediting all of women's sport, indicating that successful

athletic performances are due to unnatural advantages. As Griffin (1992) noted, "women in sport are particularly sensitive and vulnerable to the use of the lesbian label to intimidate" (p.253). This is true in professional sport and especially true on college and university campuses. As Galst (1998) indicated:

> Where closeted coaches are coaching closeted athletes how to play the game: both the one on the field, and the one required of them by administrators who say they don't discriminate, but who fear they'll lose students and money if their women's teams are thought to be comprised of lesbians (p. 75).

Furthermore, the same study stated that lesbian athletes, "especially those who want to work as coaches or physical education teachers, or hope for professional sports careers, understand that their future is dependent on not being open" (p. 77).

Gayle believed that the issue of homophobia should not come onto the playing fields. In other words, she believed that it is people's personal choice and it should not negatively influence the entire world of women's sport. It is also important to view other people without any type of stereotypical attitudes.

Including the notion of homophobia, various types of stereotypes against women's sport participation and women's sport need to be considered as serious social barriers against the status of women' sport in American society. Furthermore, the general public seemed to have negative perceptions about homosexuality in women's sport, but the issue is a difficult one to discuss and it is never dealt with directly. Once this issue is discussed, the potential risks of negative influences would be significantly decreased. According to Lenskyj (1992), sport is one of the most influential social institutions that

manifests and perpetuates negative stereotypes against lesbians and is also relatively hostile toward all women, and even more so for lesbians. Nelson (1991) also indicated that homophobia in sport perpetuates "male dominance and the male monopoly of existing resources" (p. 145). As Friskopp and Silverstein (1995) stated, hostile environment toward lesbians is created when anti-lesbian language is common. Griffin (1994) supported the concerns about athletes' femininity, or the lack thereof, further reinforce and enhance homonegativism.

Belle mentioned that the general public's irrational assumptions about women athletes perpetuated negative stereotypes and these assumptions made other women athletes worry about these stereotypes even though they were not involved in homosexuality. Cathy, Diana, and Ellen clearly remarked that these irrational stereotypes also discouraged women athletes' continuous pursuit of sport-related career opportunities. According to Griffin (1994) and Krane (1996), the tremendous dishonor associated with being labeled lesbian leads many women in sport to fear participation in sport; thus, as long as women (athletes) suffer from these stereotypes and social discrimination, they are not be free to fully test their skills and achieve their potential .

Gayle pointed out that homophobia was not a product of women's sport. It is a stereotype which is negatively placed on women's sport. Helen indicated that negative influences of homophobia and/or presentation of homosexuals in women's sport decreased the public supports such as sponsors and spectators for women's sport. Even in her sport of golf, many female professional golfers are forced to present feminine images to the general public. As Krane (1996) stated, homosexuals are socialized within

a homonegative and heterosexist society where they learn homonegative attitudes; and a common personal disclosure of homonegativism is attempting to hide her sexual orientation from others in order to avoid potential homonegativism. Herek (1991) indicated that this type of behavior leads to a contradiction between one's private and public lives and causes an individual to deny and silence her self-identity. The same study also claimed that lesbians who attempt to hide or deny experience feelings were isolating themselves and maintaining only superficial interactions with others. Therefore, as Krane (1996) stated, lesbians in sports experience personal reactions to homonegativism which distract energy away from their sports performances and toward hiding or denying their lesbian identity to avoid discrimination.

According to Griffin (1992), there are six manifestations of homophobia in women's sport, i.e., silence, denial, apology, promotion of a heterosexy image, attacks on lesbians, and preference for male coaches. According to Nelson (1991), "women athletes in traditionally masculine sport such as contact sport and team sport challenge social dictates about proper behavior for females" (p. 144). Galst (1998) also stated that under the influence of a male-dominated social environment, most women athletes, especially professional athletes, understand that it is necessary to show a proper heterosexual image to the public in order to have support from society, for example, scholarships, endorsements, and sponsorships. Basically, from Harry's (1995) study, "sport is part of the patriarchal gender factor for men but not for women, and it also might define and validate prejudices against women, gays, and lesbians" (p. 115). In addition, Williams (1995) claimed that the gender distinction is a theory of natural differences which means

some of the differences between the genders are naturally given in the two different facts of human biology.

Typically, as Gonsiorek and Rudolph (1991) noted, lesbians learn socially accepted anti-gay and lesbian prejudice before they realize their own sexual orientation. For this reason, Pharr (1988) and Sophie (1987) claimed that negative reactions to homophobia has been considered a normal procedure in the developmental process of self-acceptance for lesbians. Weis (1995) stated that some of athletes publicly humiliate and even physically challenge homosexuals in order to construct their own identity as a straight person. As Shildo (1994) indicated, personal reactions to homonegativism also included negative attitudes, prejudiced beliefs, and negative emotions toward non-heterosexuality. Consequently, as Krane (1996) indicated, the lack of punishment for discrimination against lesbians reinforces that homonegativism is acceptable behavior in society.

Conclusions

Gender equity issues in sport are discussed in many studies. However, when these studies discuss the equity issues in sport, women athletes' own voices have not been considered as a major component of the data. In other words, despite their importance in the discussion of gender equity issues in sport, these works for the most part, do not reflect women athletes' own voices. From this point of view, the findings of this study are informed through women athletes' own voices and address important information regarding the status of women's sport in American society.

According to the findings of this study, most of the participants have very positive attitudes toward their athletic experiences and career. These women athletes are from a generation which benefits from social movements and equity legislation, such as Title IX. In particular, they have observed and experienced the somewhat improved status of women athletes and women's sport in American society. They also perceive their career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields positively. Most of the participants observe some of the positive changes in women's sport such as expanding opportunities for women athletes in professional sport. Although they are aware of various types of social barriers against women's sport in American society, these women athletes clearly want to continue their career in athletic settings. They also realize the potential strengths of their qualifications as a professional person and they try to improve their personal preparation. Consequently, most of the participants made their career decisions based on understandings and perceptions of their athletic and academic experiences.

During the entire process of this study, I considered myself a feminist, because I have been interested in gender issues in sport and believed that I realized my personal biases as a male investigator. However, the findings of this study made a strong impact on my beliefs. The responses from the participants made me realize the true meaning of standpoint theory for understanding the important aspects of women and sport in American society. It was not easy to admit my personal misconceptions, but this experience taught me the valuable lesson as a researcher; that is, how to discover and understand another's voice and the truth of their experiences.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study is to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and their perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields. Subsequently, this study focuses on how these women athletes make career decisions based on these understandings.

Eight female intercollegiate athletes from NCAA Division-I universities who had participated in sport competitively and recreationally at various levels participated in this study. They were three sophomores, three juniors, and two seniors. The participants were geographically located in the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States and were pursuing some types of career in sport and sport-related fields. The participants were selected from various sports because each sport is considered to have a different status within American society. There were three field hockey players, two tennis players, one swimmer, one diver, and one golfer.

The qualitative methodology of interviewing was employed which consisted of open-ended questions within the feminist perspective of standpoint theory and cultural studies. The interview questions were open-ended and explored how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and perceptions of career opportunities in sport and sport-related fields in American society. Demographic questions focused on acquiring personal information from each participant.

Other questions focused on each participant's understandings, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding their athletic experiences and academic preparations; and career opportunities such as professional athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, administrative members of athletic departments, and/or other possible career development paths in sport and sport-related fields. The interview questions reflected the contextualisation, interpretation, perceptions, and understanding about the research topic and theme by the investigator and participants.

My potential biases as an international male doctoral candidate were carefully examined and evaluated before initiating the entire research process. As an international male investigator who has been in American society for several years and is interested in gender equity issues in sport, I clearly understand and realize the potential risks of my personal biases regarding the topic of this study such as the influence of my own male perspectives on particular issues. My rapport with the participants and subjectivity was significantly reviewed throughout the research process to ensure honesty and trustworthiness. Prior to initiating the first pilot interview session, I took part in a bracketing interview which uncovered my biases regarding the study of which I was not aware.

According to the results from the pilot testing, I was able to improve upon my interview techniques. The pilot testing significantly helped to develop the interview questions and research process. It also provided opportunities for gathering knowledge and information of the issues at hand as well as the literature review. Based on the outcome of the pilot interview sessions, further modifications and improvements were

made of the interview questions and research procedures to ensure the integrity of the data collection.

Each interview session was audio recorded and transcribed. When transcription of the data was completed, the data were read and reread by the investigator in order to ensure accuracy and quality of the information. The transcribed data then were reviewed and coded by the investigator. This coding procedure involved an inductive data analysis process. This means that the transcribed data were analyzed and categorized to find themes for interpretation of the female intercollegiate athletes' perceptions and experiences. Common themes were also identified from all interviews. At the end of this procedure, analyzed data generated the grounded theory about the research topic.

Consequently, the participants of this study had very positive attitudes toward their athletic experiences and future career development opportunities. They also perceived their academic experiences and athletic career as important components of their life. As a female student athlete, they have participated in and played sport at various levels for many years. These athletic career experiences are significant aspects of their entire life as an athlete as well as a person. Therefore, it is very important that the participants have strong self-confidence about their athletic careers and experiences. They also understood Title IX as one of the most important systematic supports from society for the improvement of status of women's sport in American society.

Although the participants perceived their athletic career and experiences very positively, they clearly understood and realized the potential risks of social barriers against women's sport and their participation in sport in American society. They are

aware of these social barriers from various types of past experiences throughout their athletic career. They also think that these social barriers would not change within a short period of time. However, with all these difficulties, the participants believe that society is changing towards a positive direction for women's sport. Social attitudes and environments are now becoming more acceptable toward women's sport and their participation in sport. Even several types of negative stereotypes against women's sport are eliminated by the improvement of mainstream social environments.

The participants believed that they do not have to deal with serious social barriers as student athletes. Because, as indicated above, they understand that the systematical supports--such as Title IX--ensure their athletic career and opportunities until they graduate from college/university. However, at the same time, they perceived that they may have to experience various types of social barriers after college/university such as the limitation of playing opportunities as professional athletes. The participants understand this fact as a social reality.

Recommendations and Implications

As mentioned throughout the entire process of investigation, it is impossible to generalize the perceptions and experiences of the female intercollegiate athletes in this study to all women athletes in American society. Based on the perceptions and experiences of the participants of this study who have participated in sport and physical activities at various levels for many years, only a few voices have been exposed. However, the perceptions and experiences of eight female intercollegiate athletes reflected the important aspects of continuing investigation on the gender issues in sport as

well as in American society. These perceptions and experiences also provide significant opportunities to reexamine the status of women's sport in society.

Under the influences of male-dominated social orders, women have been forced to experience various types of unequal social environments for many years, especially in athletic fields. In general, women had infrequently been encouraged to play or participate in sports and/or physical activities during their socialization process. These women's socialization process significantly decreased the potential possibilities of women's sport participation. This is an ultimate social barrier for not only women athletes but also women in general. Despite the women participants' strong intentions of sport participation and continuing their career in sport and sport-related fields, they may have to finish or change their athletic career at a certain point in time such as after college/university. Furthermore, most of women athletes do not have any playing opportunities as a professional player after college/university. This prominent limitation for women athletes significantly influences the career development plans of women athletes. As long as this limitation exists, a lot of women athletes cannot obtain their career plan as a professional player, so they have to pursue alternate possibilities in sport-related fields.

Most of female intercollegiate athletes have participated in and/or played sport and physical activities for many years. These athletic career experiences are an important part of their entire life history. More importantly, a lot of female intercollegiate athletes have strong desires to continue their career in sport or sport-related fields. However, various types of social barriers, restrictions, and limitations do not allow them to continue

to pursue this career path. This current social situation negatively influenced the important aspects of women's self-actualization in sport and society, especially compared to the status of men's sport. Since female intercollegiate athletes have devoted enormous efforts and satisfaction to their athletic career, they should have opportunities to accomplish their athletic career plan in the future.

Qualitative research methodology provides the framework within which people interpret their experiences and understandings. It also provides the framework within which explores individual experiences and perceptions about social phenomena. Therefore, it is necessary to interpret and understand individual female intercollegiate athlete's situation with qualitative approach. This investigation explored the significant aspects of the participants' individual perceptions and experiences; and career decision making based on their understandings about the social phenomena and environments.

The implications of this research has the potential to impact the field of sport sociology and its related discipline of sport management. Based on my background, cultural studies, standpoint theory, and male-dominated perspectives, I am able to breakthrough the issues of women's sport in American society. I am also able to objectively study pertinent issues regarding women in society. As gender issues in society are one of the most important aspects of sport studies, the research community needs to provide more information and knowledge for improving current status of women's sport in American society. It is necessary to challenge male-dominated influences in sport in order to improve the status of women's sport and female athletes. Furthermore, future investigations need to focus on not only the fundamental issues of

gender issues in sport but on the career opportunities for women athletes of color as well. In addition, women athletes from different age group, cultural contexts, upbringing, backgrounds, and collegiate participation levels need to be explored. The timing of this study is significant. If this study was conducted before Title IX or after 1990's, the results of the study would be significantly different. Therefore, conducting this study in different time frame would elicit different responses.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions and Probes

I. Demographic Questions:

Tell me about yourself and your sport.
Have you participated in any other sports (competitive or recreational)?
What is your major?
What year are you in college/university?
When do you expect to graduate?

II Main Questions:

Tell me about your athletic experiences.
- Have they been positive or negative?
- Which ones have influenced you the most?

How long you have been participating in your primary sport?
- Why did you decide to pursue playing this particular sport?
- Does your career choice have anything to do with this decision?

What is your chosen career sport?
- Why do you wish to pursue this career?
- How did you prepare for this career academically? (Courses/Practices/Internships)

What is your perception about the job market in your chosen sport career?

What is your perception about the career opportunities available for women in sport?

Is this different than those opportunities you perceive available for men?

Have you experienced or do foresee any barriers which may hinder you or other women from obtaining a professional career in sport? If so, please share these with me.

Do you believe gender to be a barrier which may prevent you from pursuing your career in sport?

Do you have any other comments regarding women athletes seeking professional opportunities in sport?

III. Debriefing Questions:

Do you have any questions or comments regarding the types of questions I have asked or regarding the process of this interview?

Were you uncomfortable with any of the questions I asked or the manner in which I asked them?

Please feel free to add any comments you wish.

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

TITLE

Theoretical Understanding of Female Intercollegiate Athletes' Perceptions on Career Development.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study will be to utilize interview technique to explore how female intercollegiate athletes understand their athletic and academic experiences and perceptions of their career opportunities in sports. Specifically, this study will focus on how they make career decisions based on these understandings.

PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

The interviews will be conducted in a private office setting on your campus. Each interview session will last anywhere from one hour to two hours. After the tapes are transcribed, you will have an opportunity to review the transcriptions. You will receive the transcription within two weeks following your interview. A second will then be scheduled and conducted either in person or by phone. The purpose of the second interview will be to clarify points made during the initial interview and should take less than hour.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Your participation in this study involves no anticipated physical or psychological risks. You are not under any obligation to answer questions or complete the interview. You may end the interview at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name and interview information will be coded with a pseudonym to ensure your anonymity and your interview responses will ne treated with confidentiality. In order for me to keep accurate records of our conversation, the interview sessions will be tape-recorded. The consent forms will be stored for three years past the completion of the study in a locked file at a UTK location. All related information will be securely stored within the department until the study is completed (December 31, 1999) at which time the tapes will be erased. My advisor, the professional transcriber, analysis group, and myself will be the only individuals with direct access to the interview tapes and transcriptions. The qualitative analysis group will have access to the transcriptions only which will use your pseudonym. Each member of this group and the transcriber will sign a confidentiality form. You are guaranteed complete anonymity since a pseudonym will be used and neither you nor your school will be referred to by name.

You are entitled to have any further questions answered regarding the procedures of the study, and until the tapes are erased, you have the right to listen to your interviews at a mutually agreed upon time and place. You may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation in the study at any time without risk of penalty or prejudice.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE STATEMENTS AND UNDERSTAND THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES, MY ROLE IN THE RESEARCH, AND THE POTENTIAL RISKS INVOLVED IN MY PARTICIPATION.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Kyung-Hoon Lee
Ph.D. Candidate

Dr. Joy T. DeSensi, Ed. D.
Advisor

Cultural Studies in Education
1914 Andy Holt Avenue.
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-2700
Phone: (423) 974-1282

APPENDIX C

Letter to Coaches

Date

Dear _____

My name is Kyung-Hoon Lee and I am doing a qualitative research study for my doctoral dissertation in the Cultural Studies in Education Unit at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I am writing to request your permission to have some of your female intercollegiate athletes participate in my study.

The purpose of this study is to interview female intercollegiate athletes who are preparing for a career in sports and sport-related fields to explore how they understand their college/university athletic and academic experiences and career opportunities in these areas. I would specifically like to interview female athletes who will continue sport-related careers after college/university and are in their sophomore, junior, or senior year at your college/university.

Each athlete will be requested to take part in two interview sessions. The first interview will be audio-taped and take approximately 1-2 hours and will involve the questions which are enclosed. The second interview may be completed by phone and will involve the participants reviewing the transcription of the first interview. To ensure confidentiality, the participants will select a pseudonym and no reference will be made to them by their actual name, team name, nor the college/university which they attend. Participation in this study is voluntary and the participants will be advised that they may terminate their participation at their discretion with no penalties.

There is much to be learned from these women athletes about their experiences and career hopes. The information gained as a result of this research will add to the literature on women in sport and would serve to better identify potential career paths for women in this area and be of valuable information to families, friends, and educational institutions of women athletes.

I would greatly appreciate your support in this research project. If your response is affirmative, I will contact you to set up the interviews.

Thank you very much for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Kyung-Hoon Lee
Ph.D. Candidate

Dr. Joy T. DeSensi
Advisor

Cultural Studies in Education
1914 Andy Holt Avenue.
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-2700
Phone: (423) 974-1282

Enclosed Form

_____ I give my permission for female athletes from my team to take part in the interviews conducted by Kyung-Hoon Lee, Ph.D. Candidate on the topic of sport career paths of female intercollegiate athletes.

_____ I regret that I cannot at this time give permission for my female intercollegiate athletes to take part in this research.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____

University: _____

Phone Number: _____

APPENDIX D

Qualitative Analysis Group's Pledge of Confidentiality

As a member of dissertation committee for this study, I agree to not reveal any information regarding the participant's responses to the interview questions.

Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Transcriber's Pledge of Confidentiality

As the transcribing typist of this research project, I understand that I will be hearing tapes of confidential interviews. The information on these tapes has been revealed by research participants who voluntarily participated in this research on good faith that their interviews would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information on these tapes with anyone except the primary researcher of this research.

Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

Transcribing Typist: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

VITA

Kyung-Hoon Lee was born in Jumchon, Korea, on October 10, 1967. He attended Kyungki High School and graduated in 1986, and entered Yonsei University that same year. He received a Bachelor's of Science degree in Physical Education in 1990. He entered Ball State University and began work on a Master's degree in August 1990. He then returned to Korea and spent two years in Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) for military service. Following military service, he returned to Ball State University and completed a Master's of Arts degree in Physical Education with a minor in Applied Gerontology in August 1995. He entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville that same year and received a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education, with concentration in Cultural Studies and Sociology of Sport, in December 1999.