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Masculinities and Sexualities of Elite Male Team Sport Athletes: An Ethnographic Examination

Mark F. Ogilvie

Abstract

Previous research on masculinities in team sports, in Western cultures, has shown that stratifications of men were based on athletic capital, homophobic and misogynistic language, and the maintenance of characteristics associated with orthodox notions of masculinity; the more of these qualities that a man possessed, the closer the man placed to the top of the masculine hierarchy (Connell, 1995). However, research shows that homophobia has been on a rapid decline since 1993, leading to a rise in inclusive attitudes towards homosexuality (Anderson, 2014). In this doctoral research, I conducted a year-long ethnography with five elite level male sports teams (Volleyball, Water Polo, Lacrosse, Basketball, and American Football), to examine how masculinities, and attitudes towards non-heterosexual athletes, are changing at the highest level of sport.

This research shows that elite male athletes demonstrate a decline in homophobia, a shift towards inclusive masculinities and positive attitudes towards non-heterosexual athletes. With jock masculinities softening and attitudes towards homosexuality becoming more positive, these men are more willing to engage in pro-gay language, rather than homophobic language, and to discuss sexual fluidity within themselves. This group of elite male athletes also had unique ways of bonding with each other, leading to my development of The Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism, which describes male athletes increase in positive body talk, physical tactility and Bromances. Furthermore, inclusive attitudes have also reshaped the ways that elite male athletes interact with elite female athletes, fostering high levels of respect for each other, and a push for Gender Collaborative Training for male and female athletes of the same sport.

Masculinities and Sexualities of Elite Male Team Sport Athletes: An Ethnographic Examination

Mark F. Ogilvie

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Sociology

University of Durham
Department of Applied Social Sciences
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Chapter 1: Introduction

November 13th

I sat on the train, Edinburgh bound, anxiously watching the minutes tick by, nearing eleven o'clock at night, while I listened to my Harry Potter audiobook. "God I hope we can pull off this surprise", I thought to myself with just minutes remaining until the train was scheduled to arrive. Planning this surprise was quite a task. I had to run right from volleyball practice to the train station, and I knew I could only be in Edinburgh for about 11 hours before I had to catch another train back to Northern in the morning to make it to my 3 o'clock practice the next day. I really hoped it was worth all the effort. After taking a nice long drink straight out of a bottle of a cheap whiskey to calm my nerves, I packed up my belongings and went to wait at the door of the train.

I stood outside of the Costa, in the centre of the train station, just as my friend had instructed, waiting for her to arrive with my teammate, Bryan. It had been months since I had seen Bryan. He had been living in Italy with his wife, who is also a professional volleyball player, for the past couple of months and hadn't been flying back into England to play in any of our national league games. When Amber, our mutual friend that plays professional basketball in Scotland, had informed me that Bryan had an overnight layover in Edinburgh on his way to a big volleyball tournament in Iceland, we concocted the plan for my surprise visit, and right now was the moment of reckoning.

They were easy to spot, a 6'4" handsome man walking next to a 6'5" beautiful woman, two attractive specimens that were clearly the product of serious athletic upbringings. Bryan, of course, was too busy rambling on about some story or another to notice me standing in the centre of the station, trying his best to always make eye contact

with Amber while he spoke to her because that's the respectful manner in which he treats all people, especially the people he loves. 'Finish your stupid story and look this way, you beautiful idiot', I thought to myself as I stood alone in the dead centre of the icy cold train station, like a scene from the final act of any 2000's romantic comedy- and that is precisely how this scene played it, albeit a bit more homoerotic.

Bryan looked away from Amber for only the slightest enough of a second to see, out of the corner of his eye, a man standing alone in the middle of seemingly nowhere. Upon his second glance at the scene, he recognised me, and my heart skipped a beat, I knew that Amber and I had succeeded in a true surprise. Bryan dropped to a kneeling position for a second and covered his face with his hands as I slowly walked towards him. He stood up and stretched his arms out towards me, beckoning me to move faster into his embrace, and so I did. He lifted me off the ground, I wrapped my legs around his waist, and we held onto each other so tight I thought I could physically burst. He put me back on the ground, and we stared into each other's misty eyes a bit longer, each basking in our own versions of this special moment- his pure happiness in the surprise of seeing me, and my glory of successfully delivering this moment of pure happiness to such a deserving friend.

Amber, eventually feeling left out, wrapped her long arms around the two of us, and at that moment Bryan realised the inevitability of it all- his quiet night in Edinburgh had just undergone a complete metamorphosis into something much different. As I saw the moment of realisation grow in his eyes, I pulled the bottle of whiskey out of my bag, as if to make a statement about my intentions for the night- it will be a reunion to remember, and everyone who isn't there with us will be jealous. Bryan's 8 AM flight to Iceland was going to be a rough one, without a doubt. The three of us took a taxi back to Amber's flat in order to Facetime Bryan's wife and Amber's little sister, so the five of us could regale in the glory days, mere months ago, when we were all in the same physical place together.

After enough stories were told and shots were taken, the three of us headed out to our favourite gay bar in Edinburgh. In order to cater to Amber's most recent sports injury, we decided to get a booth instead of dance, which gave us more quality time to spend with each other, which is exactly what we all wanted with our limited reunion time. I sat next to Bryan in the booth- a clever tactic of positioning used for when men attempt to flirt with me I have the option to either claim that Bryan is my boyfriend so they would leave me alone, or be honest and say that he is one of my straight best friends and then allow Bryan's friendly and chatty abilities to wingman for me; a gay bar technique that has worked like a charm on more occasions than I can count.

Bryan and I eventually convinced Amber that no sports injury is more important than Whitney Houston, and we dragged her out of the booth and onto the dance floor. The three of us danced together under the bright disco lights for the remainder of our time at the bar. Bryan owned the dance floor, pulling out all his favourite dance moves from his hours of gay research watching Rupaul's Drag Race and popular gay icon music videos with Amber and me throughout the years. After a full night of dancing, we decided to head back to Amber's apartment.

Amber, being exhausted from her full day of basketball training, took herself to sleep in the bed that I would inevitably be sharing with her since Bryan had the guest room to himself and had to be awake very early for his flight to Iceland. Bryan, not ready to end the night and give up precious hours of time with me, suggested that we watch an episode of Queer Eye before going to sleep.

We curled up on the couch and watched a very emotional episode about a gay man coming out to his stepmother during the makeover process of Queer Eye. Throughout the course of the episode, we had ended up wrapped in each other's arms, silently crying as we drunkenly watched the coming out process unfold on the television. No words were

exchanged, but Bryan squeezed me harder during this part. He has heard my coming out story before, the friends and family members that were lost or sustained relationship damage in the process, and the fear that I had burdened while I was in the closet, especially while being an athlete. Luckily, I didn't have teammates like the ones I saw in sports movies from the 1990s; I had teammates like Bryan.

As we dried our eyes and headed in separate directions for bed, Bryan whispered "Frog, you can sleep with me if you want", and so I followed him to the guest bedroom. Watching that show and reliving that experience had been emotionally exhausting, and there's nothing I wanted more than to fall asleep with someone I love, that really understands me. Bryan and I do love each other, not in the same way that he loves his wife, but in our own very deep way. We are best friends, we are teammates, we spend hours talking about all of our personal problems and how they do or do not affect our volleyball performance, and we work with each other, and for each other, to strive for the same athletic goals. It doesn't matter that I'm bisexual and he's straight, we rely on each other. So that night, we fell asleep next to each other, getting comfort just from the love and physical presence of one another. It was the perfect night.

The above excerpt is from my ethnographic diary and is just one of many that I could have used to provide a detailed portrayal of how my elite male teammates behave. To some, Bryan might sound like a fantasy, a type of teammate that might exist in some utopian world, but that would never exist today; yet, Bryan is real. In fact, the way Bryan behaves is not even unique, in my experience. I am this close with most of the men that have been my teammates during my decade-long career as an elite volleyball player, and a majority of those men would have loved to have joined us that night at the gay bar, and cried together afterwards.

However, during my upbringing as a bisexual boy in the 1990s and early 2000s, I was never told that elite male athletes could behave like Bryan; instead, I was fed a different narrative.

I became aware that I was attracted to both men and women after the first time I watched the movie *Varsity Blues* when it came out on VHS, I was ten years old at the time; I often describe my sexual awakening as the mix of Paul Walker's existence and the iconic scene with Ali Larter in the whipped cream bikini. As the youngest of four boys growing up in a blue-collar family in suburban Detroit, I was also acutely aware that my attraction to boys was something that I needed to hide, or else face drastic consequences from my peers and even my family.

I adopted the normal tropes to attempt to prove my heterosexuality, despite some of my natural feminine tendencies. I would objectify women with my brothers and make jokes at the expense of gay men. With the assistance of my older brothers and my father, I gained access to pornographic magazines (nude women only) and videos, attempting to further cement my status as heterosexual.

One arena, well known for producing and reproducing heterosexuality in boys, that I actively avoided was the team sports environment. One of my brothers was the classic high school jock, being a three-sport varsity athlete at my high school and playing on travel hockey teams his entire life. Through his reputation, I was often approached by coaches who had hoped that I had also acquired his athletic abilities and would try-out for sports. However, due to my fear of the team sports environment (which I associated with homophobia and hyper masculinity based on pop culture references), I always downplayed my athleticism and simply told the coaches that I preferred to focus on my studies instead of sports. I desperately wanted to avoid jocks in high school; I thought they would figure out my secret and I never thought that they would accept me, I never thought they would have the qualities of men like Bryan.

Although I remained in the closet until after high school, I still had a lot of feminine characteristics that I was trying to hide from my peers. Luckily, through the popularity and reputation of my star-athlete older brother, I was afforded a lot of protection as a teenager. The older jocks, all friends of my brother, referred to me as 'Frog', a nickname from my childhood that I still carry into my adult life. That nickname shielded me from aggressive peers in the hallway, as all the older jocks shouted it out and supplied me with ample high fives as I attempted to remain invisible on my way to classes. My nickname was the only sign of acceptance that I had during my earlier years, and I wore it as a badge of honour.

Although I did have a brief stint as a varsity tennis player during my later high school years, it was only when I began playing volleyball with my female friends that I truly felt like I found a sport I wanted to pursue; however, the thought of actually pursuing a career in volleyball, as a bisexual man, was terrifying. I had a perception of 'jocks', especially at the elite level, that they would embody all of the hypermasculine stereotypes that I was afraid of, and that they would never be able to accept me as a teammate. Elite level male athletes, from my understanding at the time, were likely to maintain certain attributes, specifically outlined by Anderson (2014) as:

- Muscular, athletic and attractive
- Rude, arrogant and self-centred
- Unintelligent and against working to educationally succeed in school
- Aggressive, and a bully to people that were considered 'uncool'
- Abusive of alcohol and drugs
- Popular with girls and highly sexual
- Highly homophobic and misogynistic
- Reluctant to cry and unwilling to show weakness or fear
- Afraid to show physical affection with each other

These characteristics frightened me because I had very few of them myself. I was a scrawny, sensitive, intelligent virgin who was always worried about being 'the bullied' and never 'the bully'. Heightening my fears, by the time I was considering pursuing volleyball at the elite level, I had already committed to attending Michigan State University, a Division 1 university known for an extremely athletic student population, in which University Athletics is a major priority of student life.

I pushed past my fear, and tried out for the Men's Volleyball team, thus starting my career as an elite athlete which would eventually bring me overseas to continue to play the sport I love, and I am so thankful that I made that leap of faith. The men I've encountered, both at Michigan State University and Northern University, have become lifelong friends, and I have never had a single homophobic experience from any of my teammates.

Instead of encountering men who were homophobic, misogynistic and aggressive, I had encountered men like Bryan, who were sensitive, open-minded and treated their teammates like family. By the time I came out as bisexual during my third season at Michigan State University, I had no fear about repercussions from my teammates, and my sexuality was embraced. My teammates were even happy to attend gay bars with me, and intimately discuss details of my love life, just like they do with every other teammate; my sexuality was made to seem normal, I was never an outsider.

After graduating from Michigan State University, I heard about an opportunity to play volleyball at Northern University on an academic scholarship to compete in the British University and Colleges Sport (BUCS) student league as well as the National Volleyball League (NVL), and even travelling to other European countries for tournaments. To be honest, I wasn't even a starting volleyball player at Michigan State University, but I applied to the opportunity anyways. After being accepted, albeit as the last recruit and on the day of the recruiting deadline, I was once again nervous about whether my sexuality would hinder

my success overseas with my new teammates and opponents. This fear stemmed from the fact that I knew I would be competing against and alongside many American athletes with 'All-American' titles and even British Olympic athletes and I had assumed that the more elite an athlete became, the greater the chances that they might be the hypermasculine athlete of my nightmares.

Once again, I had underestimated the inclusivity of the athletes of my generation. This mix of British and American athletes was even more accepting of my sexuality than in the US. I had thought that maybe that first year at Northern University was an exceptional bunch of men with open hearts and soft masculinities; however, every year our team got a handful of new recruits, and each new group of men was just as inclusive as the last. Looking back, my initial fears seem unfair, like an internalised prejudice against my peers that I was taught to expect from them; but I have never been so happy to be proven wrong.

The PhD

This PhD is not an autoethnographic account of my experiences as a sportsman. While I recognise that my sporting life – as an openly bisexual elite volleyball player in both America and Britain – is interesting and noteworthy in the context of homophobia and sexuality in sport (see, for example, Anderson's (2000) autobiography of his coming out as an openly gay running coach), I am more interested in the changes related to men and sport that mean my story has been full of experiences with men like Bryan rather than a victimhood story of homophobia and erasure. Of course, my experiences as an elite athlete are important: they made me question the sociological framing of the 'jock', and the messaging that we send out to young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) athletes in Western culture. They ultimately pushed me towards pursuing a PhD at Northern University to understand the

sociological aspects of sport in greater detail. And, of course, they impacted on the data collection process.

My main personal question motivating this research was this: why was I raised to believe that elite jocks are [see the list of qualities above], when all of my personal experiences with jocks have been contradictory to those qualities? Even through academic research, I was made to believe that the past ten teams I have been a member of during my career have been flukes, or that these men were an exception to the ‘rule’ of how jocks really behave—a form of erroneous conventional wisdom that I have theorised as pluralistic ignorance elsewhere (Ogilvie and McCormack, 2019). Yet this was the motivation rather than the formal research question, and it is important to have clear research questions that oriented the project.

Research Questions

I developed three main research questions:

1. To what extent is homophobia still prevalent in elite male sports, and what processes exist within the team culture that produce/reproduce homophobia in team settings?
2. In what ways do elite male athletes bond with each other, and what effects does that have towards the team culture, whether that be a homophobic culture or an inclusive one?
3. Does a correlation exist between different sports teams and their attitudes towards female athletes, and what social processes affect these attitudes?

In this context, it is important to clarify that when I refer to elite male athletes, I use the term “elite” for a variety of reasons. First, all of the American athletes participating in this research have successfully completed collegiate athletic careers in the NCAA in America, and are

continuing their athletic careers overseas in the UK. All participants, American and British, compete in various premier leagues in the UK: the educational based league (BUCS) and the national leagues for their sports. While many of these athletes are on student visas, some athletes are in the UK on visas just to compete in national level premier leagues. These premier leagues in the UK, at the time of this research, were home to many Great Britain National Team members, as well as some Olympians from 2012, who acted as teammates and opponents to the participants of this research. Therefore, to refer to these participants as anything other than 'elite' would be a disservice to their commitment and athleticism.

Originality

My research offers an important insight into existing sociological research into the topics of masculinities, gender and team sport. Since very few academics were also elite athletes, researchers often lacked genuine access to the most intimate areas of male team sports cultures, such as locker rooms and athlete living spaces. Although Eric Anderson (e.g. 2009a, 2014) has made a substantial contribution to understanding the changes in sporting men's lives, his research ultimately lacks the full immersion that you can only have from being a true insider. He was able to watch close bonds form, or notice that close bonds had already formed, between male athletes. However, my positionality of teammate and roommate allowed me to witness the beginning (when teammates first meet), the middle (the trials and tribulations of an entire September-to-May athletic season), and the end (saying goodbye at the airports at the end of season) of numerous relationships between elite male athletes.

As a bisexual ethnographer and teammate, my research provided an important opportunity to richly study sporting culture from an insider perspective. Furthermore, my research explores homoeroticism in elite male athletes deeper than any other previous research by expanding on homoeroticism themes developed by Matthew Hall (2015). Lastly,

this ethnography is the first to interview female athletes in order to further understand male masculinities of their athletic peers, while also engaging in rich discussions of gender dynamics between male athletes and female athletes.

Theoretical Framework

In this doctoral research, I use a year-long ethnography with my own volleyball team, along with four other elite male team sports (basketball, American football, lacrosse and water polo) to analyse the masculine behaviour in public and private spheres of these elite athletes to understand how modern elite 'jocks' behave in their everyday lives, interact with other men, and interact with female athletes. This research utilised ethnographic observations over the period of one year, as well as 53 in-depth interviews with elite athletes, 35 male and 18 female, in order to gain a deep understanding of the elite athlete cultures, and the answer the research questions.

This research builds on Eric Anderson's theory of inclusive masculinity, which details new ways that jocks behave in times where men no longer fear being perceived as gay or feminine- a concept defined as 'homohysteria' by Anderson (2009a). The subsequent chapters start by reviewing prominent literature surrounding team sports as a social institution, including how sport became socially prevalent in western society and how this prevalence has variably affected different genders and minority groups. Additionally, this research examines how organised sport has disproportionately affected sexual minorities and how team sports was used to perpetuate orthodox masculinities.

This research also builds on Kane's (1995) theory of sport as a continuum, which discusses the erasure of women's sport capabilities in relation to men's by positioning *all men* to be superior to *all women* in sports; whereas, the reality of sporting talent is that some women are better than some men at sports, creating a continuum of skill. My research with

five elite men's sports teams and four elite women's sports teams demonstrate an acknowledgement of the sport continuum and is the first to conduct such an extensive ethnography with this amount of teams of various sports.

Structure of the Thesis

Beyond this first introductory chapter, this thesis takes the following structure:

In Chapter 2, I examine the ways that sport is shaped by society and how sport actively shapes society, outlining the history of organised sport and the ways that organised team sport maintains its position of relevance and status as a social institution by reproducing its value in the broader sociological structure in various ways. Beginning with the historical origins of contemporary organised sport, I introduce the argument that organised sport is a response to mass industrialisation, designed to instill proper masculine values in young men. This focus on traditional notions of male-centric values led to the exclusion of women and homosexual from sport.

In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of gender and sexuality, outlining necessary definitions for understanding the complexities of gender and sexuality in society, and especially in the context of sport. Using homophobia as a foundational concept, with the theoretical supplementation of hegemonic masculinity theory, I discuss the history of homophobia in society and sport. I then proceed to discuss the cultural shift away from hegemonic masculinity theory, towards inclusive masculinity theory in modern culture.

In Chapter 4, I detail the methodology of this research. Starting by outlining the ethnographic method, and its ability to obtain rich, detailed data through its immersive approach. I then review the methodology of my research, describing the unique set of elite male athletes as participants, my mixed methods approach of participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews, and my data analysis.

In Chapter 5, I discuss how my data supports the cultural shift away from homophobia. I find that modern elite male athletes do not overtly prescribe to homophobia; rather, they are inclusive of gay and bisexual teammates. Furthermore, elite male athletes police the use of homophobic discourse and have instead evolved their language with each other and their gay/bisexual teammates to use pro-gay discourse.

In Chapter 6, I demonstrate that because of the attitudinal shift away from homophobia, and towards pro-gay behaviour, the masculinity of these modern jocks has softened considerably from our previous stereotypes associated with jocks. Elite male athletes have adopted homosocial and homoerotic tendencies that would have been uncommon in previous generations of athletes. They complement each other's bodies, hair and fashion choices openly. They are also unafraid to show physical affection with one another, both in humorous settings and in genuine settings. Furthermore, these athletes have embraced a new type of homosocial relationship, the bromance, in which they are emotionally vulnerable with their male friends and express deep feelings of love and admiration towards each other, both publicly and privately.

In Chapter 7, I discuss the ways that modern elite male athletes are developing new and varied relationships with elite female athletes. Introducing the concept of Gender Collaborative Training, and discuss its socio-positive benefits: Male athletes whose sport also has a concurrent women's team, which have only slight variations in rules and that promote gender cooperative training sessions or have some sport-specific contact hours with each other regularly, maintain attitudes towards female athletes that are generally more positive than the stereotypes of jocks in previous generations. Male athletes self-report high respect for female athletes, including an understanding that mixed gender training does have benefits for their team; female athletes confirm that their male counterparts respect them and that these men uphold ideals of gender equality.

In Chapter 8, I discuss the social and theoretical implications of my three results chapters. Positioning this research as an advancement in the theoretical contributions of Anderson's inclusive masculinity theory (2009a), and Kane's theory of sport as a continuum (1995). Through these theoretical lenses, I recommend that further research on Gender Collaborative Training ought to be implemented at the youth level in order to change gender inequality in sport in the future.

It is through these findings that I conclude that modern elite male athletes do not fit the stereotypes that have previously been associated with them. I also discuss the socionegative effects that occur due to jocks remaining to be associated with these hypermasculine tropes of the 1990s, a term I call 'hypermasculinification' (Ogilvie & McCormack, 2019).

At one point in my life, I would have been made to believe that my teammates at Michigan State University and Northern University were the exception to 'the rule' and that most elite level athletes are actually hypermasculine and homophobic; however, my experiences and research have taught me that the opposite is true. What is currently missing from the culture of sport is representation of openly gay and bisexual elite level male athletes. Perhaps by telling my stories, I will inspire courage in a young non-heterosexual boy to play the sport he loves without fear and without hesitation.

Chapter 2: Sport as a Social Institution

Sport is a social and political institution. To make this claim is to recognise that sport is more than a leisure activity; not just a fun way of occupying free time, but an organised and structured set of activities that have tangible and significant effects on people in society.

Sport, which has traditionally been organised by people with power, has always been contextually situated within society and had sociological consequences.

Consider, for example, the ancient Olympic Games, dedicated to the Greek god Zeus which incorporated activities that involved the participation of young, able-bodied males who were often wealthy and of high social standing; the games explicitly excluded women, the elderly, disabled persons, and other persons of low social standing (Coakley, 1997).

Furthermore, women were not permitted to attend the event as spectators, thus reproducing their inferior social status compared to that of men. As such, social exclusion was structurally incorporated into the organisation of elite sport since its inception. Unfortunately, and as we shall discuss in this chapter, the uneven distribution of privilege and power has continued throughout sport's history. Although these first Olympic Games occurred centuries ago, some exclusive traditions carried over to the first 'modern' Olympic Games. Women were not allowed to compete in Olympic events until 1932, and even today, athletes with disabilities are excluded from the main Olympic events, competing separately in the Paralympics (Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Similarly, the status of women as spectators and fans of sport is still markedly different from men, even as their fandom is increasingly recognised in particular sporting contexts (Pope, 2017).

Sport culture differed in ancient Roman society, pitting Roman gladiators against each other or against wild animals in dangerous battles to the death. Roman gladiators were generally not willing competitors; rather, they were criminals or slaves that were used to fuel

a cruel and ancient entertainment industry. Placing bets on gladiators became a form of sport for the non-competitors, creating a new sporting experience for the Romans. Women of affluence were permitted to watch the events, while some slave women were forced to compete in the events against wild animals. Sport, in this context, was a tool visibly used by the government leaders as a way to control other factions of Roman society (Sartore-Baldwin, 2013).

Sport also has a history of racism and structural exclusion of ethnic minorities. Prior to 1863, when slavery was abolished in America, black sport participation was limited, only permitting slaves to play sport with each other (Wiggins 1977, 1980). After the abolition of slavery, racist attitudes made it difficult for black men to compete in sport with white men, forcing black men to compete in their own 'Negro' leagues in the 1920s and 30s (Ashe, 1988). Prior to legal racial integration, as a result of Brown vs the Board of Education in 1954, the most notable example of integrated sport was the signing of Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1945. Following mainstream racial integration in sport, black athletes still suffered from institutional prejudices. One example of institutionalised racism in sport is 'stacking', which refers to the racial segregation in sport that maintains that certain races are overly represented at certain positions in a sport. Stacking meant that white athletes were more associated with positions that were considered 'intelligent', such as quarterbacks in American football, while black athletes were pigeon-holed into positions that were more physically aggressive and did not seemingly require as much thinking, or complex decision making (Edwards, 1967; Eitzen, 2003).

More recently black male athletes have been associated with individual sporting events that require strength and explosiveness, such as boxing and sprinting, and with team sports that are known for being highly competitive and physical, such as American football and basketball; the association of black men with these sports reproduces cultural stereotypes

and naturalises black abilities (Anderson and McCormack, 2010). Importantly, Anderson and McCormack argue that these stereotypes and exclusions by race have been similarly experienced by sexual minorities. In an article comparing their experiences, they argue for a four-stage model of social exclusion.

In stage one, they discuss that a marginalised group experiences ‘total domination’, in which dominant cultural scripts and academic research utilise a totalising framework to examine subordinated groups in order to explore the groups’ inadequacies, faults, and wrongdoing. This examination often constructs a hierarchy of privilege between the groups, even if unintentional (Anderson and McCormack, 2010).

The second stage, called ‘contestation’, is when the marginalised group acquires their own voice by combining social trends and identity politics to produce autobiographical and ethnographic texts which help the group resist their cultural domination (Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1984). The third stage is characterised by the cultural perception of equality. The final stage is ‘meritocracy’ which occurs when the stratification of the groups within the context no longer serves as an ordering principle in society, which is the aim of most identity politics systems (Anderson and McCormack, 2010). This shows that sport itself is not “just bad” or inherently damaging; rather, that the social exclusions of sport are the direct result of interactions and plans by its organisers at diverse levels.

These early notions of sport laid the groundwork for the way we structure, interpret, and engage with sport in contemporary society, starting in the late nineteenth century.

Sport’s Post-Industrial Revolution

The popularisation of organised sport, as we know it today, emerged during the second industrial revolution (Rigauer, 1981). This was a period of rapid technological and social change in the West. During this time, the survival of the family was no longer dependent on a

large number of hard-working family members, the fortune of good weather, or agricultural success. Families gave up their pastoral life in order to pursue a stable wage and the prospect of class mobility in the cities. An abundance of industrial work guaranteed a wage that the family could rely on weekly, even if in poverty, and this newfound financial security enabled families to purchase property, take out loans, and plan for their futures in ways that were inconceivable to previous generations (Anderson, 2009). Predictable and reliable working hours took men away from the home and their family extensively every day.

Contrary to agricultural work, the regularity of working hours allowed for a cultural shift in the ways men organised their time. Working men had free time after work ended each day, enabling men to engage in a range of new activities. Leisure time, a concept that was once reserved only for the white, wealthy upper-class, spread to the middle and lower working class (Rigauer, 1981). Indeed, an important strand of sociological research in the latter half of the 20th century has been to document a critique of leisure and recognise how it is imbued with particular forms of value (Veblen, 1979) and even, now, a new form of labour (Rojek, 201).

The industrial revolution led to a less egalitarian depiction of heterosexual relationships in many aspects (Cancian, 1986). Revenue generation shifted from inside the home, with shared work between both partners in a relationship, to outside the home. Women became dependent upon their husband's ability to work in a factory and generate income for the family to survive. Men worked in hard and dangerous conditions to provide for their family, believing that being a breadwinner and providing for their family was the best way to show their love, while women, having less income-producing options, used domestic efficiency and emotional expressiveness to prove their worth to the family (Anderson & White, 2017). Cancian (1986) describes this cultural shift as part of a separation of gendered spheres in which the social expectations of being a man or women grew bifurcated; thus,

serving as an origin for the social importance of men's stoicism and women's expressionism in their gendered spheres.

The industrial revolution led to a mass migration to urban life. This move to the cities meant population density increased massively, and this facilitated the possibility of more same-sex sexual encounters. Indeed, sexual subcultures emerged in many cities, including in bars and clubs where gay men could congregate for social and sexual purposes (Ravenhill, 2014). This was noticed in cities across the West, including by psychologist Sigmund Freud in Vienna. It led to his hypothesising that homosexuality was caused by an absent father figure and an over-domineering mother, as homosexuality was, in fact, gender inversion—or the failure of appropriate gender development (Freud, 1905). While entirely discredited today, these arguments held considerable public influence and mirrored broader concerns about the damage of sexuality and the feminisation of society at the time of the industrial revolution.

Furthermore, tensions between the gendered spheres were heightened during this time due to an increase in accessibility to female-led activism within the cities, leading to women's suffrage. Men became threatened by this first wave political movement that led to social and political advancements for women, fearing they were losing their patriarchal power that had been heightened by their breadwinning role during this time period (Hargreaves, 1982; Smith-Rosenberg, 1985).

With men away for long hours and the upbringing of children depending heavily on women, men became worried that young boys would be deprived of time required with masculine role models to properly masculinise them. The concern was that women could not truly teach their boys how to become men (Rotundo, 1993; Messner, 1992). Being heterosexual became of utmost importance to men during this time, which entailed exuding a

hard masculinity and having an aversion to anything deemed feminine and homosexual (Kimmel, 1994).

An importance to exude heterosexuality pushed this gender-panicked culture towards competitive, organised sport as a political project to reverse the feminising of young boys growing up with the absence of father figures. Organised sport was tasked with properly teaching boys to become men, and to instil the values necessary to be successful in the industrial economy (Miracle, 1994). This meant to instil qualities of discipline, obedience, and honour that would be necessary virtues for men to have in order to excel in the dangerous environments of industrial labour and mining (Rigauer, 1981). Organised team sports taught young boys the importance of sacrifice for their team so that they would understand the value of sacrificing oneself for the good of the family at work. This need to undo the softening of young boys led to an expansion of organised sport designed specifically as a homosocial institution to counter the fears of feminism and homosexuality in men, truly resulting in a crisis in masculinity (Filene, 1975).

Lacking enough time with a masculine father figure at home, the role of a coach in organised team sport became essential in ensuring young boys were socialised into heterosexual, masculine men (Anderson, 2009a). This wasn't just about gender and family, however, but also about the importance of the economic mode of production in society at the time. It became the responsibility of the coach to instil the value of sacrifice (for the team) upon these young boys so they would later sacrifice their health at work in factories for the well-being of their families (Anderson & White, 2017). More importantly, workers needed to be obedient to authority, and being masculinised by coaches in sport taught boys this sort of docility (Chase, 1909; Eitzen, 2001).

Prior to this period, sports were organised, played, and coached by students; however, the value of sport being heightened, adult coaches were paid to manage youth sports (Spring,

1974). While sport had casually been a part of educational systems since the mid 1800s in western cultures, in order to instil virtue in the next generation of the ruling class (Allen, 2014), the newfound importance to introduce male coaches as a masculine role model to young men highlighted the necessity of sport in educational systems (Anderson & White, 2017). During this time, sport became a part of American school systems—as part of the *institutionalisation* of sport (Anderson & White, 2017). The marriage of school and sport pushed young boys into legitimate sporting programs, guaranteeing that the time after school, but before factory work hours ended, would be spent further masculinising them in to men with the help of a heterosexual male role model as their coach. This was true in the UK as well, where rugby and football became key components of boys and men's occupations and identities (Dunning and Sheard, 1979; Magrath, 2017a), fully integrated into educational systems.

Modern sport was, therefore, a product of the second industrial revolution as an attempt to prevent male youth from becoming 'soft' or feminised by the lack of a consistently present father figure. Organised sport was designed by men to instil the values of hard work, sacrifice and obedience to produce good industrial workers, soldiers, and fathers out of young boys. With an emphasis on the separation of gendered spheres as a catalyst for the early stages of organised sport, young boys' masculinity has been rooted in anti-femininity, patriarchy and homophobia.

Sport: Violence, Injuries and Complicity to Authority

Understanding the history of sport as an institution that distributes power and privilege unevenly across groups is an important tenet of the sociology of sport. Similarly, the recognition that sport has historically (and even contemporarily) discriminated against various minorities is important to maintain. Both of these notions are about a macro-

understanding of the role and position of sport in society. Now, I want to turn to a more meso-analytic approach to examine the ways in which sport achieves these aims. In talking about sport “achieving” such aims, it is not to conceive of sport as an active agent that consciously plans to harm people, just as patriarchy is not a boardroom of elite men strategising the marginalisation of women (New, 2001). Rather, it is to understand the various ways in which sport is structured, and the dynamics of interaction within sport, that results in these effects. This section develops an understanding of some of the structures and dynamics that yield those effects.

Twentieth-century masculine ideals are deeply embedded in the culture of contemporary sports. Common team creeds such as “There’s no ‘I’ in team”, “There’s no crying in baseball”, and “Sweat plus sacrifice equals success” clearly demonstrate the type of ideals organised sports emphasise young children to adopt. Accepting and promoting these types of mantras is key in perpetuating hyper-masculine jock norms that have been promoted since the second industrial revolution in order to expunge homosexuality and femininity from western youth.

The ability to promote such a culture is accredited to the social structure of organised sport. The following sections will outline these social structures in sport. First, I argue that sport operates under the pretence of valuing team building and character building in youth; however, it is clear that organised team sports place a higher value on competition in regards to promoting a zero-sum mindset to sport, often fostering an in-group vs out-group mentality (Thurow, 1985). I then highlight, in the second section, the importance of the Coach in framing and reproducing these values in sports. In the third section, I maintain that one tactic that has been useful in manipulating athletes into accepting the hardships of organised team sports is by developing their master identity as an athlete, making all other identities secondary in comparison. In the fourth section, I argue that the acceptance and importance of

athlete as a master identity leads to acceptance of legitimate and illegitimate violence against athletes in sporting contexts, often leading to the acceptance of injuries as a result. Lastly, I discuss how organised sports maintain their power and influence over athletes by creating a military-type near-total institution of constant monitoring from coaches and peers that promote all aspects of sport culture. Overall, this section is used to argue that organised sport is structured to promote masculine, self-sacrificial ideals (such as misogyny, homophobia, violence and risk-taking), divide and exclude certain participants from others, and reward athletes that best buy into the culture of organised sport.

The Dominant Values and Ostensible Purpose of Sport

The dominant values of sport are often portrayed to be: to teach people how to work together, to build character by teaching children how to properly accept winning and losing, and to promote physical health and social integration; however, the structure of sport does not emphasise these ideals (Anderson & White, 2017). Structurally, the purpose of sport is to determine a sole winning individual or team, as well as losing individuals or a losing team. This structure that prioritises winning has promoted a cultural ethos of inflicting violence, accepting injuries, and being complicit to authority (Anderson & White, 2017).

Perhaps the most resilient myth of team sports is that it teaches athletes to value teamwork and to work together 'as a team', building on values of team unity and cohesion to work towards a common goal- winning; however, this focus on winning comes at a cost. Socially, developing team cohesion has also been associated with reducing prejudices and increasing social integration among athletes; however, the in-group mentality of team unity has the possibility of also creating an out-group to unite against (Anderson & White, 2017). In elite sports, especially international elite competitions such as the Olympics, the exclusive mentality of 'team unity' can lead to tensions between nations, perpetuating stereotypes and

exposing international prejudices in a public atmosphere. Therefore, the in-group/out-group nature of team sports is less likely to result in positive social integration and is likely to produce an atmosphere in which opposing teams end up hating each other, leading to verbal and physical hostility between players as well as international malice between fandoms.

Elite team sports is a zero-sum arena in which one team's advancement comes at the expense of another team's failure. This idea is problematic from a micro-level psychological standpoint because, in order for an individual or a team to accomplish the underlying goal of winning and gaining personal affirmation, the other individual or team must feel the humiliation of defeat. Furthermore, elite sport takes place in front of a live audience, making sport more than a zero-sum arena; it is a public zero-sum arena (Thurow, 1985).

At an elite level of sport, with the introduction of team statisticians to the coaching staff, sport is a public zero-sum arena with perfect information in which teams at all times know which moves have taken place so far by themselves and by the opposition. Therefore, mathematically, there exists a pair of strategies for each team that allows them to minimise their maximum losses by adjusting their own team dynamics or by exposing less talented individuals of their opposition (Von Neumann, 1944). These team strategies and statistics are often common knowledge among the athletes, meaning if you are the least talented player (or least efficient point scorer) on your team, your team's strategy is to minimise the importance of your role, while the opposition's strategy is to maximise your participation with the hope of gaining from your individual failures. While developing and successfully executing a winning strategy might have a positive effect on the self-esteem of winners, the negative psychological nature of losing publicly, or being the individual exploited by the opposition, is problematic.

Publicly winning a sporting event, or losing, has more consequences than micro-level psychological complications for individual athletes- the ingrained concept of *schadenfreude*

in sport can lead to intense malice locally, as well as nationally. Sports theorists often describe elite level sports as a primary vehicle for articulating and perpetuating national pride and cohesion within a country due to highly popular sporting events such as the Olympics and the World Cup (Van Hilvoorde, 2010). Similarly, in America, where college sport is equally as popular as professional sport, team fandom unifies areas of the United States, creating a feeling of cohesion as well as a sense of pride for the specific region (Partridge, 2010). Negatively, the cohesion created by sports also leads to intense rivalries between regions and nations. In order to avoid feeling the shame that is associated with a country losing an event in the Olympics, or an affiliated university losing to a rival in America, fans often root for the failure of their opposition in extremely malice ways. Elite sport, as a zero-sum game with perfect information, viewers of teams often know the names of players and the history of a player's past successes and failures in their sport, leading to extreme levels of pressure for athletes to publicly succeed in order to avoid the shame of letting down their fan, or worse- their nation (Abrahamsen et al., 2008).

The Role of the Coach

The ostensible values described in the previous section are regulated by coaches, who act as the main conduit of the socially exclusive nature of sport. Coaches, as gatekeepers and products of the sporting system, maintain a great deal of power in socialising individual athletes into adhering to sporting cultural norms, as well as determining an individual's athletic worth and success. Important within this are the ways in which coaches maintain significant amounts of power. Social scientists have conceptualised power into five types (French and Raven, 1959):

- 1) Legitimate- power given by one's elected or appointed status
- 2) Coercive- power because one can punish others for noncompliance

- 3) Reward- power derived from the ability to compensate for compliance
- 4) Expert- power earned from one's experiences, skills or knowledge
- 5) Referent- power given because of the respect a coach might have as a leader, mentor, or as an inspiration

What is notable, as Anderson (2005a) highlights, is that coaches maintain all five types of this power. Coaches have legitimate power from the sporting institution that employs them, such as a university or a professional organisation. The coercive power of a coach is demonstrated by coaches' ability to punish the team for noncompliance, such as making a team run sprints for being late or failing to succeed in a drill. Reward power would occur if a coach rewards a team by ending a workout early because the team was working very hard without complaining or questioning the coach's authority. Expert power for a coach would come from coaching qualifications or years of experience coaching. Finally, referent power would come from the coach's previous experience playing or coaching the sport, such as if they had previously been a professional athlete or achieved success as a coach/leader.

The power given to a coach cultivates an ethos of compliance amongst the athletes in which challenging a coach's intelligence or authority, or giving less than 'one hundred percent' effort is punishable. This level of complete power is mirrored in few other occupations (Jones, Armour and Potrac, 2004). Coaches use this power to encourage hyper-masculine cultural norms that can be detrimental to the well-being of individuals (Anderson & White, 2017).

The Identities and Behaviours of Athletes

Encouragement from highly respected, and seemingly powerful, coaches leads to the acceptance and infusion of harmful norms. Coaches encouragement coupled with athletic success can lead individuals to develop their master identity as that of an athlete, prioritising

‘athlete’ over their race, sexuality, or religious affiliation. Adopting the master identity of an athlete is the difference between being someone that plays football and being a ‘football player’. This is a proclamation that one adheres to the cultural and social norms set forth by the structure of organised sport, and placing a high value on winning, ‘giving it your all’, and sacrificing yourself for your team (Anderson & White, 2017). Prioritising sporting success above all else leads athletes to sacrificing many other aspects of their lives to adhere to sporting norms, oftentimes disrupting family relationships, work responsibilities, and physical health (Ewald and Jiobu, 1985).

The cultural ethos of sacrificing one’s physical health in order to benefit the team has serious implications for young athletes (Anderson, 2009a). Successful athletes that follow sporting norms are likely to harm their bodies through overtraining, accepting a coach’s emotional abuse, partaking in dangerous or unhealthy methods of dieting, playing with injuring, or using various drugs to numb pain or increase the level of their performance (Anderson & White, 2017). Socialising young athletes to increase the risk of harm, while promoting a zeitgeist of self-sacrifice for the sake of the team socialises them to perform masculinities with an underlying expectation of being tough, aggressive, violent, courageous, reckless, and able to withstand pain (Allan and De Angelis, 2004; Kivel, 1999).

Male athletes are often required to maintain a certain body type in order to be successful at their sport, or in their individual niche within their sport (Coad, 2008). Body image, a person's individual perception of his or her body, has been linked to positive self-esteem for some athletes, while also being linked to numerous biopsychological consequences and eating disorders for athletes with a negative perception of their body image (Grogan, 2008; Thompson et al., 1999). Men in physical roles in sport, especially contact sports, are pressured into 'bulking up' and putting on additional muscle mass in order to be more successful in sport and to fit the aesthetic look of a proper athlete (Thompson and Cafri,

2007). Other athletes, such as male wrestlers and bodybuilders, are pushed into even more extreme scenarios- working out in garbage bags in order to reduce water weight to make it into the correct weight class for official weigh-ins before games, or engaging in the use of dangerous substances and steroid use in order to achieve an ideal physique (Monaghan, 2001). The intense pressure athletes must endure to maintain an ideal body for their athletic pursuits puts athletes at greater risk for eating disorders and body image issues than non-athletes (Sundgot-Borgen and Torstveit, 2004).

For elite athletes, maximising male physique while conforming to hyper-masculine characteristics and embodying them in extreme situations has become a learned and idolised behaviour for successful team sports athletes (Hughes and Coakley, 1991). Overconformity to these ideals leads to positive deviance, in which athletes transform the positive institutionalised outcomes of their sport ethic into deviant behaviours that are prohibited by the society and the sporting institution itself in order to portray oneself as a 'real athlete'. An example of excessive overconformity to the point of positive deviance is the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport as a way to achieve a superior physique and physical capacity of athleticism to benefit your team and institution, while clearly deviating from moral athletic practices (Hughes and Coakley, 1991).

Young et al. (1994) state that athletes receive 'official recognition' from coaches, teammates, and significant others for playing through immense pain and carrying injuries, which enhances the status of the individual athlete and legitimises the sporting ethos of 'playing hurt'. Athletes are often implicitly taught that there is a difference between 'pain' and 'injury': pain, in this context, is soreness or aches, while injuries are unbearable and unplayable body conditions. Fostering a good team mentality means masking your pain from your teammates and coaches in order to boost your masculine capital and to show that you are a reliable teammate. In a team sport context, 'masking your pain' refers to physically

masking pain with the use of painkiller and athletic tape, as well as publicly masking your pain by not announcing pain to teammates and coaches (Young et al., 1994). This serves to rationalise away the risks associated with playing with injuries, and prioritises athletic glory over individual health, creating a ‘culture of risk’ intertwined in organised team sports (Roderick et al., 2000).

Sports and Violence

Stemming from the culture of risk, and young athletes accepting these risks due to prioritising the role of *athlete* as their master identity, team sports are notorious in cultivating and promoting violence in young athletes (Young, 1993). Sports violence is a socially constructed, learned behaviour that serves to legitimise and foster aggressive behaviour in men (Coakley, 1997; Schneider and Eitzen, 1983). In many team sports, the achievement of goals depends on the successful utilisation of violence against opponents. In these circumstances, the body is routinely used as a weapon against other opposing bodies, regularly resulting in pain or serious injury (Messner, 1990).

Violence is often divided into two types: legitimate and illegitimate violence. Legitimate violence describes the violence that is necessary and legal. In a sporting context, this refers to bodily collisions that are often necessary during sport, such as a small collision while stealing the ball in football, or a legal check in ice hockey. However, even here, these forms of violence are deeply problematic. There is a growing body of research that highlights the serious damage from such collisions, around the damage from concussions. Concussions, brain injuries that are caused by the shaking of the brain inside of the skull, are a common result of legitimate violence in contact team sports (McCrory et al., 2013). While many concussions are classified as mild, the side effects can be fatal; while most side effects are deficits in verbal and visual memory, some concussions result in death (Collie et al. 2006).

Anderson and White (2017) point out that the majority of concussions occur during team sports, and the large participants in team sports are youth athletes, which puts young developing brains at risk of injury which could have severe long-term effects on their quality of life.

Illegitimate violence is illegal or unnecessary violence against another person (Spaaij 2014). In sports, this would result in a foul or a penalty, such as an illegal slide tackle in football, or a slashing penalty in ice hockey (Bredemeier et al., 1986; Parry, 1998; Smith, 1983). Illegitimate violence was central to sports like rugby and football in their conception, often played by healthy young men from lower classes; violence such as kicking, punching, biting gouging were all commonplace (Brailsford, 1991). Sports which are generally classified as 'lower class' or 'working class' sports, such as football and rugby, went through drastic changes in the rules to prohibit extreme acts of violence through commercialisation and being popularly televised (Dunning and Sheard, 1979; Magrath, 2017a). The ethos of organised team sport supports and promotes by types of violence, establishing both types of violence as a natural outcome of participating in the game (Anderson & White, 2017).

Violence in sport also extends beyond the players to the fans. Fan violence is a perennial problem in sport, especially among sports traditionally associated with the lower class, such as football and rugby (Dunning et al., 1988). Fan violence is deeply rooted in class issues, with more affluent sports fans blaming the rough working-class subculture and their desire for violence as a 'quest for excitement' lacking in their otherwise mundane lives (Elias and Dunning, 1986). The frequent violence and riots from sports fans and their association as white working-class men became stereotyped as a thuggish archetypal image of hyper-masculinity, traditionally using homophobia, racism, and extreme violence to display their dedication to the team they support and to boost their image of strength and masculinity (Magrath, 2017a). However, the association of fan violence as a working-class

problem has been critiqued (Free & Hughson, 2003), who says that being a football fan contributes to an 'imaginary' working-class identity, even though many football fans are middle class. These middle-class fans, especially female fans, must comply with 'traditional' behaviours of fans, such as laddish qualities of aggression and violence, or be deemed as 'inauthentic' football fans (Crawford, 2004; Pope, 2017).

Sportsnets and a Near-Total Institution

A culture of risk and the acceptance of violence in organised sports has been studied and understood by focusing on why athletes implicitly and explicitly accept such risks and focusing on processes athletes use to rationalise and normalise pain and injury in sport through socialisation. Nixon (1993) uses structural social network analysis to explain the conditions that make athletes vulnerable to being coerced into playing with pain and injuries, claiming that athletes are subjecting to communicating and gaining social support through agents with biased and self-serving agendas that favour the sport over the individual.

According to Berkowitz (1982), a social network consists of relations between a person, position, role, or social unit. Structural social network analysis of sport focuses on a series of entangled interactions that directly or indirectly link members of the social network to a particular sport-related setting (Nixon, 1992). Nixon refers to these webs of interaction as sports networks, or 'sportsnets'. A sportnet acts as a subculture for its members that share the dominant athletic ethos and cultural norms of organised sport. A social network analysis of the sportsnet focuses on how people within the sportsnet interact with each other, what resources are available in the sportsnet, what messages and influences are shared through communication, and how interactions within the sportsnet influence the people or social units involved (Berkowitz, 1982; Scott, 2012).

Sportsnets perpetuate the culture of risk in team sports by mediating biased messages and norms to the athletes that promote risk rather than providing support for the well-being of athletes (Roderick et al., 2000). Nixon (1994) claims that these biased social systems normalise the experience of pain and insulate athletes from regular medical care, often time even inhibiting athletes from seeking outside medical care. He suggests that athletes are entrapped by the sportsnet, making them very reachable by coaches and other members of the sportsnet with authority within the sporting context.

Over-conformity to members of authority within the sportsnet, such as coaches, makes organised sport a similar arena to what can describe as a 'total institution' (Hughes and Coakley, 1991; Goffman, 1961). Goffman defines a total institution as:

“...a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life” (p. 11)

Total institutions are isolated, enclosed systems with the primary purpose of controlling almost all aspects of a person's life, such as a prison or a mental hospital (Anderson, 2005a). Goffman goes on to explain that a total institution has a breakdown of barriers that ordinarily separate certain spheres of one's life from other people, such as a one's personal life compared to one's work life. The lack of barriers dictates that each member of the total institution carries out their daily activities in the company of other members of the institution, all under the same single authority. The daily activities of these members are tightly scheduled and all designed to fulfil the aims of the institution; similar to how athletes conduct their daily lives in the sportsnet. Peer culture of the sportsnet is used to achieve order; meanwhile, athletes are also strongly influenced by institutional guidelines that dictate rules, procedures, and certain paths to glory (Anderson & White, 2017).

Anderson (2005a) claims that organised sport approximates a ‘near-total’ institution. Anderson differentiates between a total institution, such as a prison that controls all aspects of a person’s life, and the near total institution of sport because athletes have the option to quit sport; however, athletes are still coerced into sacrificing other parts of their identity and nonathletic social networks in order to be successful in the near total institution that is elite sport. Organised sport uses similar tropes as the military to control and indoctrinate athletes in the sportsnet: myths of glory, patriotism, and hyper-masculinity as well as being controlled by structures of rank, division, rules, uniforms, and punishment that limit individual agency and promote a collectivist ethos of teamwork and masculine cooperation (Anderson, 2005a; Britton and Williams, 1995)

Of concern here, is that the cultural ethos created by the near-total institution of sport acts to regulate the daily activities of an athletes life, including the activities an athlete chooses to engage in during personal time, such as their other hobbies or their personal relationships. The collectivist team ethos does not permit an athlete to engage in activities that might exclude them from the team. Any such activity could lead to extreme marginalisation, as I will discuss in the next section.

Exclusions in Sport

As has been discussed already, a central issue in the sociology of sport relates to the social exclusions in sport. In the following sections, I explore these exclusions by gender and sexuality. I note here that there are many exclusions that I do not examine in similar detail: for example, by ability, race or class. It is not to marginalise these issues, but to focus on the core themes of my doctoral research as delimited in Chapter 1.

Gender and Sport

Violence and aggression as a cultural ethos of organised sport also served the purpose of maintaining men's power over women. Young boys were the main focal point of organised sport during the second industrial revolution in order to promote hyper-masculinity and elevate the male body as superior to that of women (Butterfield and Loovis, 1994). Overt displays of violence and strength established male superiority in sport, embedding elements of competition and hierarchy among men to be at the top by being antifeminine. Thus, men utilised their success in organised sport to establish superiority over less masculine men, and also to establish their superiority over women. Women were excluded from organised sport, leaving male superiority uncontested, further reproducing gendered spheres and establishing organised sport as a breeding ground for masculine behaviours and male domination (Connell, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994).

There is a long history of excluding women in organised sport (Ferez, 2012; Hargreaves, 1994; Mangan & Park, 1987; Pfister 2010; Williams 2014). While the 20th century saw great changes related to women's sport (Hargreaves, 1994), the starting point was one of exclusion and a binary understanding of gender that is still predominant today. As Pfister (2010, p. 234) states:

Sport, or at least as far as the great majority of sports is concerned, is also a system which, in its competitive and elite forms, is based on universally valid gender segregation that is scarce to be found any longer in other areas of western societies. Thus, as a rule, separate competitions are held for men and women, and it is strictly ensured that men do not take part in women's events and vice versa.

It is not possible to survey the full nature and scope of the research on women's participation in sport across history and the social and structural exclusions and barriers to participation that has existed and been challenged within sport. However, it is important to provide a

review of this history in order to provide context around gender, sport and inequality and frame some of my findings around gender collaborative training that I discuss later in this thesis.

At the competitive levels of sport, women have long been excluded. It was only in the year 1900 that the Olympics formally included women's events for the first time (Mallon and Widlund, 1998). Here, there was significant inequality. In the Paris Olympics of 1900, 22 women competed in events, while 1,235 men competed in that same year (Mallon, 1998, p. 26-27). Men competed in a variety of events in these early Olympics, sports that embodied masculinity, speed, strength, endurance, discipline and teamwork; however, women were only permitted to compete in sports that were deemed 'proper' for their gender, such as golf, archery and lawn tennis (Polley, 2014). Thus, there is a long history where women's sport is considered more technical or skilful as a form of gendered othering that serves to exclude women in other areas (see Fink et al., 2016; Kane, 1995).

The London Olympics of 1908 had 45 female Olympians competing throughout seven events: archery, figure skating, lawn tennis, diving, gymnastics, sailing and motorboat racing, and was the first Olympics to have men and women compete together, with male-female pairs in figure skating, as well as a husband and wife duo in motorboat racing (Polley, 2014). While this was the most gender inclusive Olympic programme of its time, Hargreaves (1984, p. 56) emphasized that:

“the entry of women into the Olympics occurred almost as an accident, part of the laissez-faire arrangements of the early years when authority was handed to the organising committees of the respective host countries, and before the IOC had made its administrative and policy-making procedures watertight”.

Polley (2014) notes that gender inclusion in 1908 was gaining popularity due to the debate of women's suffrage, quiet discussions of sexualities, an increase of women's gymnastics trainings at private schools and an influx of women in the workforce.

The 1908 London Olympics inclusion of women was met with the presence of gendered language from Olympic promoters, who often described men's events through the lens of hegemonic masculinity using descriptions of courage, endurance and enhanced technical ability (Polley, 2014). However, sports that were deemed less masculine were described less favourably by the promoters, when discussing men's gymnastics events, Cook (1908, p. 196) stated that "Young men who do not care to serve their country... might at least improve themselves, as citizens and fathers of citizens to be, by regular gymnastic exercise", implying that male gymnasts lack the masculine traits required to serve in their countries military. Polley (2014) notes that much of the newspaper reports of the time used military-themed metaphors to describe the male Olympic athletes, implying that male athletes were real men that valued masculine traits, whereas the media coverage of the women emphasised conventional femininity of the athletes, such as their rhythmic movements and apparent cheerfulness during compete.

These early shifts in gendered sporting competition matched changes in broader society. In the early 1900s, in America, women had gained access to higher education and were beginning to form informal athletic clubs, and organisations such as the Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA), the American Physical Education Association (APEA) and the National Amateur Athletic Federation (NAAF) had endorsed participation for women in sports and were beginning to organise intercollegiate competition among women (Park and Hult, 1993). While the NAAF had provided a platform for leaders of women's sports to formalise their beliefs and goals for competitive women's sports programs, the ultimately established goals the emphasised playing for the sake of playing, and not for competition

(Gerber et al., 1974). While the women's suffrage movement and the first feminist movement of the 1920s renewed emphasis on women's rights and freedom, resulting in gains for intercollegiate competition in women's sports, those gains were negated by the Great Depression in the 1930s (Bell, 2007). Additionally, media coverage during this time claimed that participation in competitive sports had the potential to damage a woman's ability to reproduce, and that women were not mentally stable enough to handle the roughness of physical competition, further resulting in a decrease in female sport participation (Osborne and Skillen, 2014).

In 1943, during World War II, Major League Baseball was cancelled and the All-American Girls Baseball League was established as an attempt to fill the void in American professional sports; during this time, women believed that since they had proven themselves able to work in factories in their husbands' absence, they could also be successful on the athletic fields (Chafe, 1972). In 1949, the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW) was formed to advocate for the participation of girls and women in physical activity; while this movement initially only focused on physical education, it has since expanded to include all women's sports and is considered to have been the start of the women in sport movement (Pike and Matthews, 2014). After the end of World War II, organisations that supported women in competitive intercollegiate sport continued to gain support (Gerber et al., 1974).

A push for Civil Rights in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as another wave of feminist activism in the United States, resulted in an amended statement from the Division of Girls and Women in Sport (DGWS) saying that intercollegiate programs for women 'may' exist, then again in 1963 when the statement was amended to state that it is 'desirable' for intercollegiate programs for women to exist (Gerber et al., 1974). Steady gains were made throughout the 1960s, including the DGWS appointment of the Commission on

Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) which was tasked to assist in conducting intercollegiate competitions for women, which led to women's gymnastics and track & field scheduling their first national championship competitions in 1969 (Gerber et al., 1974). Although these advancements in women's sport were evidence of continued equality for female athletes in intercollegiate competition, women were still severely limited in sporting options in comparison to men.

In 1972, a federal antidiscrimination law was mandated in the United States, called Title IX, which prohibited discrimination in admissions, access, and treatment in all federally funded educational programs, which included intramural sports, club sports and varsity athletics; additionally, the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 extended the gender equity generated by Title IX to Olympic sports, world championships and other international sports events (Lopiano, 2000). Additionally, the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act in the United Kingdom established a similar framework for gender equity. Due to Title IX, and the later implementation of the other antidiscrimination laws, the NCAA waived the regulation that barred women athletes from participating in men's events in 1973; however, this act was deemed insufficient, and in 1982 the NCAA pledged three million dollars to building and supporting women's intercollegiate championships (Festle, 1996).

While the effects of these antidiscrimination laws were a drastic increase in sport participation among school-age girls and undergraduate women, men's sports teams still secured most of the decision-making possibilities, leadership and high-level coaching, which reaffirmed male domination over women in sport (Hargreaves, 1994). Furthermore, female athletes were not as positively viewed as their male counterparts, Willis (1982) argued that female athletes' sexuality is commodified by spectators, and given precedence over their athletic ability, resulting in the sexual objectification of a female athlete. Willis (1982) also suggested that:

...a team of high-ability women will be better, even in so-called masculine qualities, than a low-ability men's team. And yet, the meanest local 5th division, male works' team gets more respect in popular consciousness, than a women's national team. (p. 117)

This suggestion is often corroborated with a common-sense justification about the 'natural' and 'unbiased' biological beliefs about gender differences in sport, which is used to reproduce the consensus that men ought to be treated as superior in sport (Hargreaves, 1994).

By the start of the 1990s, there was a growing awareness of social issues facing female athletes, yet the conservative agenda of institutions such as IAPESGW refused to combat these issues; until 1993, when Celia Brackenridge delivered a keynote address at the 12th IAPESGW Congress which addressed some of the 'harder issues' surrounding women's sport, such as sexual harassment and discrimination against lesbians (Pike and Matthews, 2014). Brackenridge (1993) argued that to advance the women's liberation movement objectives of gender equality in sport and to put an end to homophobia and discrimination against lesbians in sport, she argued:

If we, women in sport, cannot subscribe to these basic objectives as women then we cannot claim to be feminists, cannot claim to be part of the women's movement and cannot claim to be working for women's rights in sport and physical education. We may be in sport but we are not for women. (p. 5)

Overwhelming support for her keynote address, and the debates following the keynote discussing the 'harder issues' highlighted by Brackenridge led to the formation of WomenSport International (WSI) in 1994 (Pike and Matthews, 2014). WSI committed to using evidence-based research to act as an international umbrella organisation to bring about positive change for girls and women in sport.

Women participating in competitive sports in the 1990s found that their sexual orientation was often called into question by men and by other women (McDonagh and Pappano, 2008). In order to avoid being labelled a lesbian, heterosexual women would overemphasise their femininity and heterosexual identities (Felshin, 1974), thus creating a culture that forced lesbians to 'pass' as straight in fear of victimisation (Hargreaves, 2000; Kolnes 1995). Female athletes and coaches were wearing feminine clothing, jewellery and makeup to display hyper-femininity, despite its impracticality in the sporting context (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 2001). According to Sykes (1998), the 1990s saw a silencing of homosexuality in women's sport due to the fear of being labelled a lesbian; and the emphasis on heterosexuality was reinforced by media portrayals of female athletes with used sexualised images and statements about femininity when discussing prominent female athletes (Hargreaves, 1994).

While sport research in the 2000s has shown that prejudice against lesbians in women's sport is decreasing (Sartore and Cunningham, 2009), other social issues still plague women's sports, such as wage disparity between men's and women's professional sports teams as well as male dominated sport media coverage. Some argue that the best way to challenge, and possibly dismantle, the gendered hierarchy in sport is to change our conceptualisation of sport, away from biological positivism and towards gender integration in sport (Kane, 1995).

Gender Segregation in Sport

One current controversial topic among sport scholars is around the gender segregation of sport (McDonagh & Pappano 2008). Team sports have perfected the naturalisation of institutionalised gender segregation, much to the benefit of men (Washington and Karen, 2001). Team sports is one of few remaining occupations in which gender segregation is

explicitly visible, and this is largely a product of men's and women's socialised desires to operate in separate spaces (Hargreaves, 1994). Understandably, a culture of male sporting violence and aggression has socialised women to desire to play sport away from men in order to protect themselves from the violence of male athleticism (Kreager, 2007; Smith, 1983). It has been theorised that some women, to their own detriment, desire participating in sport in a female-only setting in order to feel empowered and promote female solidarity; however, Fielding-Lloyd and Meân (2008) suggest that gender segregation in sport hinders gender equity and reinforces gender differences, reproducing male privilege over women.

Gendered spheres put pressure on men to engage in sport to reinforce their hyper-masculinity, while compelling women to appear uninterested in sports (see Pope, 2011). Women that do engage in organised sport are encouraged to 'emphasise their femininity' by upholding certain beauty standards, and wearing women's sports uniforms (Connell, 1987; Krane, 2001). Even women coaches are expected to hyper-feminise themselves, wearing heels and feminine dress clothes to games and matches to emphasise their femininity and deflect suspicions of lesbianism (Cox and Thompson, 2001). Dominant constructions of femininity and masculinity are essential in influencing athletes' behaviour (Washington and Karen, 2001). Furthermore, female athletes are encouraged to resurrect and reinforce ideals of physical fitness through the lens of physical beauty, leading to an understanding that women only have permission to be strong if they can also look beautiful while doing so (Eskes et al., 1998; Wheaton & Tomlinson, 1998).

Additionally, the language associated with sport and masculinity reproduces male privilege over women through gender segregation. Young boys, socialised through sport and its 'character-building' benefits, construct a sporting language that earns them human capital (Cameron, 1998). This sporting language teaches boys and men to bond, work together, and solve problems in the male-only atmosphere of team sports, excluding women from learning

cultural language norms deemed necessary to impress masculine gatekeepers to other male dominated social institutions (Cameron, 1998). These male-only cultural norms are deemed as 'skills' in male dominated institutions, thus producing the idea that women are 'less skilled' than men in these fields, socially (Joseph & Anderson, 2015). Mariah Burton-Nelson (1994) argues that the more advances women make in other social and political areas, the more men rely on sport in order to symbolically dominate women. Furthermore, Burton-Nelson disputes the idea that 'male bonding' is a positive activity at all, claiming that "it makes no more sense to celebrate male bonding than it makes sense to celebrate white bonding" (p. 122), adding that the exclusive nature of locker rooms and other male-only spaces are utilised to devalue women. Thus, gender segregation in sport has been translated as male dominance and privilege in the work world and other male dominated social spheres.

Gender Continuum and Integration

Sporting institutions used gender segregation to create and fortify hegemonic masculinity in Western cultures by using 'commonsense' arguments of biological positivism to claim apparent physical proof that male athletes are superior to female athletes (Fink, 2008; Kane, 1995; Messner & Sabo, 1990). However, in 1995, Mary Jo Kane made a case against these 'commonsense' gender binary arguments, stating that sporting prowess ought to be viewed as a continuum. Kane (1995) states that, in reality, in a variety of athletic endeavours, female athletes can (and do) outperform male athletes; and she points out that these endeavours are not limited to athletic feats that emphasize grace, flexibility, or other traits that have been deemed as 'feminine' athletic traits. Kane's main argument is that this sporting continuum undoubtedly exists, yet we seldom have the opportunity to prove or experience it due to gender segregation. Conceptualizing sport as a continuum, rather than

a gendered hierarchy, would show that men and women compete with overlapping performance outcomes and capabilities, which would visually deconstruct male hegemony and superiority in sport (Fink et al., 2016); instead, gender segregation in sport never permits male and female athletes to compete with or against each other, so we are never able to witness the overlapping performances of all athletes together.

Since the proposal of Kane's (1995) concept of viewing sport as a continuum, many studies have attempted to understand the possible effects of gender integration in practice. In 1998, Theberge interviewed female hockey players in Canada who had previously had gender-integrated playing experiences. Theberge was interested in studying hockey because it is typically constructed as a 'masculine' sport and therefore might have offered anecdotal proof of 'leaky hegemony' (Birrell and Theberge, 1994). Theberge found that these female hockey players consistently emphasized the gendered physical differences between them and the elite male players they competed against, and described these 'natural' differences as a contribution to their inability to successfully compete against elite male hockey players; however, they did also acknowledge that these physical differences were on a continuum, and that they lacked success while competing against elite male hockey players but often succeeded against less elite male players in recreational leagues. Furthermore, these female hockey players believed that playing, and losing, against the elite male players made them better athletes (Theberge, 1998).

Other research focusing on co-educational recreational soccer leagues in 1999 revealed that the gameplay was dominated by the male players and that gender integration in recreational soccer did garner any positive changes towards their perspectives of female athleticism in soccer (Henry and Comeaux, 1999).

In 2008, Eric Anderson conducted research on university cheerleaders, a gender-integrated sport in the United States. Anderson (2008a) interviewed 68 male cheerleaders, who had previously been high school football players before joining cheerleading at their university. Anderson (2008a) reported that due to competing alongside women, and having women in leadership roles, nearly 70% of participants indicated that they had enhanced appreciation for women's leadership capabilities, coaching abilities and athletic abilities.

Cohen, Melton, and Welty Peachey (2014) examined Quidditch, a gender-integrated, contact, alternative sport that is popular as a club sport at many universities in US and UK, which features a mix of skills most easily comparable to dodgeball, rugby and tag, which includes tackling. Male quidditch players reportedly had positive attitudes about their female teammates athletic abilities, while female players reported that playing quidditch had increased their confidence in their own athletic abilities; and both, the men and the women, expressed that they would not want to play on gender segregated quidditch teams (Cohen, Melton, and Welty Peachey, 2014).

Fink et al. (2016) interviewed ten male practice players for a very successful NCAA Division-I women's basketball team at a university in the United States. These ten male practice players were often used as 'scouts' for the team, meaning that the coach would review video on an opponent and tell the practice player some specific tendencies of a talented player for the other team, and the male practice player would simulate the opponent's tendencies in practice in order to prepare the women's basketball team to compete against their opponent. Fink et al. (2016) found that the male practice players acknowledged the sport continuum, and many of these men admitted that they had positively changed their perspectives of female basketball players due to regularly competing with and against the women's team.

While positive attitudes were expressed by the male players, Fink et al. (2016) also report that the male participants reinforced traditional gender stereotypes in sport. Many comments that were intended to be positive comments by the participants, demonstrated regendering by making comments that these women "... don't play like girls, like you think a girl would play" (Fink et al., 2016, p. 1325). Kane (1995) described this language for describing female athletes as The Deviant Mutant, in which the player being discussed is so far outside the realm of conceivable feminine athletic ability that she is deemed something completely different than female. Other men described the women basketball players, and women's basketball more broadly, as being more fundamental and more skilled (Fink et al., 2016); According to Messner, Duncan, and Jenson (1993), this is a discursive strategy used by sport media to devalue the women's game by relegating it to a separate space from the physical and exciting men's game.

Sexual Minorities and Sport

As previously stated, organised sport has been used to socialise and reproduce traditional gender roles for men and women; furthermore, organised sport has elicited negative attitudes towards nonheterosexuals (Anderson, 2002, 2005a; Griffin, 1998; Pronger, 1990). Male and female athletes that do not conform to the idealised standards of masculinity and femininity in sport face prejudice and stigma (Connell, 1987, 1995; Griffin, 1998; Shaw and Hoeber, 2003).

Sexual prejudice, comprising all "negative attitudes based on sexual orientation" (Herek, 2000: 19) is the result of society's internalised negative regard for sexual minorities. Stigma is a reflection of culturally shared knowledge about members of a social group that establishes power differences between groups using stereotypes, separation, status loss, and

discrimination to maintain social hierarchies (Link and Phelan, 2001; Sidanius et al., 2001; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Sexual prejudice and the resulting stigma of nonheterosexuals is present in sport and has been found to influence the behaviours of heterosexual athletes, as well as nonheterosexual athletes in sporting contexts (Sartore and Cunningham, 2009). Sexual prejudice influences the decisions regarding athlete participation for nonheterosexual athletes; these athletes and their parents rely heavily on negative stereotypical beliefs to determine participation decisions (Sartore and Cunningham, 2009).

The heterosexist structure of organised sport suggests that sexual stigma and prejudice is sanctioned in order to preserve male dominance and power in sport. Male heterosexuality in sport has historically been assumed, whereas the opposite has been assumed for female athletes; furthermore, several studies have shown that, to some extent, heterosexual and nonheterosexual athletes are aware of this sexual stigma and expect negative consequences if they do not conform to the hegemonic sporting characteristics (Anderson, 2002, 2005a; Messner, 1992; Sartore and Cunningham 2009). According to Anderson and McCormack (2010), since homophobia is still widely accepted in professional sporting domain, gay athletes are still only in the *contestation* stage in their stage model of male athletes. This is evidenced by research that shows that, as adults, gay men choose to leave the dominant sporting institution in order to join their own segregated sporting leagues at an attempt to avoid the stigma of their hegemonic sporting peers (Hekma, 1998).

The ability to hide one's sexual orientation allows sexual minorities to avoid some risk to physical and verbal abuse; however, the stress of being stigmatised for being nonheterosexual can be psychologically and physically harmful (Meyer 2003, Lewis et al., 2006). This stress, called 'minority stress' by Meyer (2003), can negatively affect one's sporting performance as a result of a fear of confirming the negative stereotypes associated with one's social group (Aronson, 2004). This fear, called 'stereotype threat', has been

proven to affect the performance of gay men in situations in which their sexual orientation has been made salient (Bosson, Haymovitz, and Pinel, 2004). Additionally, gay male athletes whose sexual orientation has been revealed actively try to avoid the stereotype of the ‘gay man as a sexual predator’, the same can also be said about gay male coaches (Freedman, 1995; Plummer, 2006; Sartore and Cunningham, 2009). Due to the existence of this stereotype threat, among others, sexual minorities in sport often choose to manage the extent to which they reveal their sexual orientation (Anderson, 2002; Sartore and Cunningham, 2009).

Changing sport: An Increase in Inclusivity

Although sport, especially team sport, has traditionally been a bastion of sexism, misogyny, racism, homophobia and other prejudice in contemporary Western societies, these sorts of prejudice are not necessary components of sport. Sport, as a social institution, is liable to change, as evidenced by new generations that demonstrate increasingly progressive attitudes within sport culture today. In this section, I discuss a range of ways this is occurring, including gender integration for youth sports, increased reports of fan inclusivity towards non-heterosexual athletes, and a softer masculinity for elite male athletes.

Changing Youth Sports

As previously stated, gender segregation in sport denies male athletes opportunities to work alongside female athletes and to see them as capable athletes and potential leaders (Anderson & White, 2017); immersing men in a culture that consistently denies women power in social, sexual, and work-oriented spheres. However, gender integrated sports maintain more socio-positive outcomes for male and female athletes. McDonagh and Pappano (2008) suggest that gender integrated sports teams give male and female athletes to work together for the

outcome of a common goal, improving gender relations and decreasing sexism. Furthermore, research on university coeducational cheerleaders shows that when male athletes are put in a position to rely on female athletes for athletic success, men learn to view women as equal athletes, capable leaders, and worthy friends, greatly promoting attitudes of gender equality (Anderson, 2008a).

Changing sport from its traditional gender segregated domain into a gender integrated arena has already begun in the United States. *i9 Sports*, a youth sporting organisation grown out of consumer demand for youth sports to be a healthier, inclusive, and more enjoyable experience for American youth, has changed the structure of sport, including gender integration, in order to obtain more socio-positive outcomes for athletes ages nine to fourteen (Anderson, 2013). Structural changes in sport are not limited to gender integration; *i9 Sports* has structural policy in place to reduce over-adherence to authority, promote healthy over victory, and increase inclusivity and participation.

In order to reduce overconformity of athletes, *i9 Sports* changed their training and competition away from traditional sporting structures to a once-a-week training that occurs before the weekly competition. This more relaxed attitude toward training time is coupled with the policy that attendance to training cannot be used against a child in any way, and that every child on the team receives equal playing time, which reduces pressure on kids to perform (Carlson et al., 2005). This removes incentives for coaches to pressure their young athletes into training harder to gain more playing time, while also preventing young athletes from developing 'athlete' as a master identity (Anderson, 2013).

It is commonplace for successful athletes to sacrifice their physical health for the outcome of winning (Adams, Anderson and McCormack, 2010; Roderick et al., 2000). However, *i9 Sports* has strayed from tradition in order to ensure the health and safety of its athletes by changing rules and promoting a cultural ethos that favours the physical well-being

of youth athletes over victory. In order to reduce the risk of concussion in soccer, heading the ball has been removed from the game entirely. A policy of ‘when in doubt, sit it out’ has also been established, requiring a doctor’s approval before a child can return to participating in sport if there has been any minor or major injury (Anderson, 2013).

Frequent rotations of team rosters, rotating team positions, shorter sporting seasons, and no championship matches reduce pressure on both kids and coaches to win, while also reducing othering of other teams and the violent attitudes often associated with team exclusivity, such as overt hatred of the other team and violence against opponents. Furthermore, *i9 Sports* has policies that require inclusivity of all children regardless of gender, sexuality, ability, or race (Anderson, 2013). While these are all great changes being made to youth sports, it is important to note that educationally-based team sport, at the high school level and at the university level, and professional team sports remain segregated by gender.

Changing Sport for Fans

The prejudice and oppression within sport has traditionally been both mirrored and exacerbated by fans. Black men and gay men have similar experiences of prejudice in team sports, with their intersectionality being highlighted by Anderson and McCormack (2010). Additionally, they have also had similar experiences of hostility from fans, especially in fan chanting. The 1970s and 1980s was a time of overt Nazi-style chanting against black athletes (Holland, 1997), while contemporary prejudiced chants tend to be linked with homophobia (Hughson and Free, 2011); however, a more critical analysis of homosexuality themed chanting in football disassociates fans from overt homophobia.

According to Magrath (2017a, 2017b), football is becoming an increasingly inclusive space for sexual minorities, reporting positive attitudes towards homosexuality from its

players as well as football fans (see also Cashmore and Cleland, 2012; Cleland, 2018; Magrath, Anderson and Roberts, 2015). Counterintuitively, there is declining homophobia among football fans, coupled with frequent fan chants that are oft-described as homophobic (Cashmore and Cleland, 2011). In order to interpret whether these chants are homophobic, Magrath (2018) argues that one must analyse and measure the intent, context and effect of the language, and recognise that the fans chanting view them as a sporting technique to challenge their opposing team. Participants argued that homophobia was not the intent of the chants, and claim that they would stop the chant if they were consciously aware of upsetting gay fans inside the stadium. Ultimately, the chants may have a detrimental effect on gay or closeted fans, but the disconnect between fans attitudes and fans chanting is evidence of a cultural lag in which the fans' language does not reflect their more general positive attitudes towards gay rights and sexual minorities in sport. Magrath highlights that this dissonance between the inclusive attitudes and the practice of chanting actually serves as a critique of the competitive nature of elite sport rather than homophobic perspectives more generally.

Despite historical documentation of homophobia from fans against men and women in sports, male fandom has become more inclusive to multiple forms of masculinities, and female fandom has also developed complex relationships with expressions of masculinity and femininity. Pope (2011, 2013, 2017) has documented that despite a lack of academic attention, women sports fans have sophisticated, meaningful and profound engagements with sports that, for some fans, are central to their leisure activities and social identities. Pope (2017) interviewed 51 female football fans in the UK and found that there are complex identity facets to the ways these women combine their sporting interests and their social expectations, leading to some female sports fans displaying 'masculine' femininity, while others display 'feminine' femininity; however, women that display 'masculine' femininity often regard themselves as more authentic fans, and can even use their sporting knowledge

and masculinity to gain access to spaces and behaviours that are traditionally off limits to women that subscribe to more conventional forms of 'feminine' femininity.

Softer Masculinities

Team sport, traditionally used to masculinise men since the second industrial revolution, has created a cultural ethos steeped in heterosexual notions of masculinity including violence, risk-taking, self-sacrifice, and highly restrictive notions of human sexuality. Demonstration of this more orthodox version of masculinity was maintained through sporting success, misogyny, and homophobia; however, a cultural shift in acceptance towards sexual minorities has changed how masculinity is understood and performed (McCormack, Anderson and Adams, 2014). Young men today are inclusive of homosexuality, which was once chiefly exclusive to them, redefining the form of masculinity that exists among straight men today, which Anderson (2009) calls 'inclusive masculinity'. The general decline in homophobia and the restructuring of appropriate masculinity has changed the participation of sport, allowing for more fluid notions of acceptable behaviour and an inclusion of homosexual athletes (Anderson, 2011b; Anderson, 2011c). Rather than discuss this in detail here, the next literature review chapter is dedicated to understanding the complexities of male masculinities in general, as well as how inclusive masculinities of male athletes has changed sporting culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented how sport is shaped by society. Understanding sport this way enables one to consider sport not just as a leisure activity that inherently has value, but as a social institution that gains value because of broader social and structural trends. I examined how sport received its value from the changes that occurred during the industrial revolution.

This is important because it begets questions about equality, the value of sport, and how the dynamics of gender and sexuality are implicated in these issues. Thus, I discussed several important issues about how sport is complicit in social harm, including violence and harm to its players. I discussed the nature of sport as a total institution and then documented various of the exclusions that have occurred in sport, with an emphasis on the experiences of women in sport due to gender segregation. In the next chapter, I develop a theoretical framework by which to understand gender and sexuality in society, so that it can be applied to sport and the dynamics of elite team athletes.

Chapter 3: Sexualities and Masculinities

Chapter 3 of this thesis examined sociological understandings of sport and discussed how understanding sport as a social institution, shaped by people and social structures, can help identify inequalities and problems with the operation and practice of sport. This was vital as sport is the social institution in which this doctoral research is situated; the other core focus is on how masculinity and sexuality are experienced within these contexts. As such, this chapter provides a critical review of sociological research and theory on the ways in which men are gendered beings, and how their gender, a plurality of forms of masculinities, both imbues them with privilege but also has negative impacts on their personal and social lives. In order to do this, it will also engage with sociological research on sexuality, given the ways in which gender and sexuality are interlinked in contemporary society.

Thinking About Sexuality and Gender

Defining Sexuality

Sexuality is a complex phenomenon that is not easily defined, further complicated by the use of different terminologies across multiple academic disciplines (sociology, psychology, etc.). Indeed, within the social sciences, sexuality both describes people's internal states as well as a way in which society is structured—a mode of power that constricts the possible ways people can express their internal desires (Rubin, 1984). Related to individuals, I use the definition of sexuality that it is “an umbrella term for all aspects of sexual direction, including one's attractions, behaviours, identities and emotional orientation” (Anderson & McCormack, 2016a, p. 18). While this broad terminology can be useful, sociological research

has found it beneficial to distinguish terms within this, such as sexual *orientation* and *identity*.

Savin-Williams (1998, p. 3) describes the difference between sexual orientation and sexual identity as a “distinction between an ever-present, invariant, biological and psychological truth (sexual orientation) and a historically and culturally located social construction (sexual identity).” More simply, sexual orientation refers to “the gendered directions of one’s sexual attractions;” whereas sexual identity refers to “how one views their own sexuality in light of cultural understandings of sexuality (Anderson and McCormack, 2016a, p. 18). Sexual identity is a crucial component of sexuality because it is the way we make sense of our sexual desires and behaviours in a sociocultural context (Savin-Williams, 1998).

Another key component of sexuality is one’s sexual behaviours—which refers to sexual acts that individuals consensually engage in. One’s sexual behaviours can be strikingly different from their sexual orientation or sexual identity, although it does not have to be. For example, men that have sex with men in all-male prison settings, yet their sexual orientation and sexual identity are heterosexual, or people that choose to abstain from sex altogether, yet they identify as heterosexual (Anderson and McCormack, 2016a). Similarly, there is a significant group of people that maintain some same-sex sexual desires without identifying themselves as a gay or bisexual in order to avoid the social stigma and prejudices associated with identifying as a sexual minority. In western cultures, there is a social awareness that one’s sexual orientation and identity might differ from their sexual behaviours, such as men on the ‘down low’: men that seek same-sex sex in private while publicly identifying as heterosexual (Boykin, 2005).

In order to fully understand sexual orientation, sexual identity, and sexual behaviours, it is important to discuss sexual attraction and sexual aversion, which are the fundamental

components for defining all other aspects of sexuality (LeVay, 2010). Sexual attraction refers to the sexual desires that a person has, and is assumed to be consistent with one's masturbatory fantasies (Anderson and McCormack, 2016a). There are many aspects of humans that direct and influence sexual attraction: attraction to facial symmetry (Penton-Voak et al., 2003), body scent (Thornhill and Gangestad, 1999), or the muscularity and shape of the body (Frederick and Haselton, 2007). However, it is important to note that, although these physical attributes are biological or evolutionary, the attraction to these attributes is also reproduced and emphasised by social processes (Frederick et al., 2005)

Emotional orientation, which seeks to understand the parts of sexuality that are less biological and physical, is also integral to sexuality- that is, who one is emotionally, romantically, and socially attracted to (Savin-Williams, 2014). Anderson and McCormack (2016a) define emotional orientation as referring to "the gender-direction of one's desires for emotional intimacy" (p. 18). Although sexual activity can occur without emotional intimacy, modern understanding of sexuality is intertwined with deep emotionality - specifically love (Giddens, 1991). While defining love is complex, due to its dynamic nature with constantly changing intensity, mean, and type, Anderson and McCormack (2016a, 25) define romantic love as:

a relationship between consenting adults, in which goods, services, emotions and needs are exchanged and met. It is a form of relationship that is personally, socially and sometimes legally privileged above other equally valid types of love. It normally occurs with sexual activity, at least at the outset, but sexual activity is not required. Additionally, romantic love is strongly correlated with the person's sexual orientation; however, love and sexual intercourse function independently, and it is entirely possible to develop deep feelings of romantic love in the absence of sex (Diamond, 2003).

Measuring Sexuality

In order to accurately study and understand any phenomenon, you need to be able to measure it; however, measuring sexuality, sexual identities, and attitudes towards sexualities is difficult for a number of reasons (Matsuda et al. 2014). One issue, disrupting accurate measurements of sexuality, is the existence of 'the closet' - individuals hiding their sexual orientations, a widely acknowledged problem for researchers (Seidman, 2002). Furthermore, given the fluid nature of sexuality and the process of understanding one's true sexual identity, even in cultures where non-heterosexual attractions are accepted, measuring sexuality will be affected by the fact that some individuals do not yet fully understand, know, or accept their own sexual identity (Klein, 1993).

In order to avoid inaccurate data collection associated with self-reporting sexuality, some researchers have adopted physiological testing to decipher participants' sexuality; these tend to be focussed on understanding a particular component of sexual desire, rather than sexual minorities' experiences in the world. Some methods involve showing participants pornography in order to use phallometric measures to determine sexuality (Rieger et al. 2005), or pupil dilation to estimate sexual arousal (Rieger and Savin-Williams, 2012).

As an alternative scientific measure of sexuality, which is less invasive than brain scans and phallometry, researchers can measure implicit responses to stimuli to determine *attitudes* towards sexuality. Often used in race studies, researchers determine whether a person has positive or negative implicit attitudes towards a phenomenon by linking other words with the phenomenon and measuring participants' reaction to it (Fazio and Olson, 2003). Such techniques have been used to accurately determine whether a participant is heterosexual or homosexual (Snowden et al., 2008); however, the method has not been tested on participants that identify as something other than hetero/homosexual.

Given problems associated with physiological measurements of sexuality, researchers most often rely on the most inaccurate method of measuring sexuality identity, sexual orientation, and sexual attraction - self-reported sexuality. The first large-scale social scientific measure of a population's percentage of individuals' sexualities was pioneered by Alfred Kinsey (Kinsey et al., 1948). Kinsey and his colleagues proposed a sexuality continuum model, now called the Kinsey Scale, which focuses on the fact that sexuality is not binary and places sexuality on a heterosexual-homosexual rating scale from 0 to 6. On the Kinsey Scale, 0 is exclusively heterosexual, 3 is equally heterosexual and homosexual, and 6 is exclusively homosexual.

The Kinsey Scale, while highlighting the complexity of sexuality, has been methodologically critiqued by many since its introduction in 1948. Masters and Johnson (1979) critiqued the arbitrary manner in which participants were placed on the Kinsey Scale, claiming that two participants in the same category on the scale can have radically different sexual histories. Sell (1997) has noted that, although the Kinsey Scale is designed as a continuum, the seven discrete categories are methodologically designed on an ordinal scale, questioning whether or not the numerical categories should be equally spaced or if the intermediate space between values might differ. Lastly, Shiveley and DeCecco (1984) argue that the Kinsey Scale is designed to effectively measure homosexuality and heterosexuality against each other, creating what Anderson and McCormack call a *zero-sum game of sexuality* where an increase in homosexual desire corresponds to a decrease in heterosexual desire, and vice versa (Sell, 1997; Anderson & McCormack, 2016a). The zero-sum game approach to sexuality is particularly troubling when attempting to understand the differences in sexual attraction and sexual behaviour, especially among participants with varying levels of bisexuality. Indeed, it is necessary to think about how to study bisexuality as a unique sexual identity.

Studying Bisexuality

In order to better measure bisexuality, Fritz Klein (1993) and colleagues developed the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid that measures seven categories of sexuality, allowing participants to self-identify in each sexuality category based on their past, present, and *ideal* understandings of their sexuality. However, recent research highlights that the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid does not account for the intersectionality of gender identity and sexual identity, nor does it account for the fluidity of multiple identities (Galupo et al., 2014). Furthermore, Klein and his colleagues still adopt the zero-sum game of sexuality into their understanding of sexual identity (Anderson & McCormack, 2016a).

Other arguments around sexuality focus more on the influence of a person's sexual *aversion from* particular sexual acts or bodies (Safron et al., 2017). Studying aversion or sexual repulsion is particularly interesting for the purpose of understanding bisexuality. While bisexuality is traditionally defined as the *attraction to* both males and female; however, some bisexuals might have a strong attraction to one sex while having an absence of repulsion for the other, making them identify as bisexual without fulfilling the traditional requirements of being *attracted to* both sexes (Safron et al., 2017). Furthermore, supporting the notion that 'lack of repulsion' is partly a component of sexuality, Stief et al. (2014) suggest that, for bisexuals, personality factors play a role in sexual orientation. Their findings claim that some people maintain personalities which seek sexual sensations and excitability, prompting people to seek sex with both sexes despite only being sexually attracted to one sex.

Two key difficulties have led to an unreliable representation of information regarding the bisexual population: linguistic issues, and improper surveying methods (Anderson and McCormack, 2016a). Linguistically, organisations such as the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), the Associated Press, and the American Psychological

Association either restrict the use of the term 'homosexual', deeming it offensive, or recommend that the term should not be used as a noun. The term homosexual has been linked with clinical baggage stemming from its medical history. There is also concern that the use of the word 'sexual' at the end of words used for identity still connotes stigma for some. Troublingly, there is no colloquial word to describe the bisexual population with cultural relevance (Klein, 1993); whereas, people who identify as 'homosexual' are often called gay or lesbian, and people who identify as 'heterosexual' are labelled straight. Some might label a bisexual as 'flexible'; however, this implies the ability and willingness to change sexual desires, perpetuating the illegitimacy of the bisexual identity. Other terms that are closely related to bisexuality, such as pansexual and omnisexual, are less recognised and still end with 'sexual'. These linguistic issues have proven difficult for researchers to create surveys where the LGB population can accurately and reliably define their sexual identity without face-to-face data collection techniques.

Improper surveying methods have resulted in decades of research on the LGB population with a range of demographic results. For example, Kinsey found that 25% of the male population had rated themselves as a 2-6 on his scale, indicating more than an incidental homosexual experience between the ages of 16 and 55, with 15% of the male population being in the bisexual range, and 10% in the homosexual range. Laumann et al. (1994) used a population-based survey on a 5-point scale, finding that 3.9% of male participants were bisexual and 2.4% were gay men, drastically lower than that of Kinsey. Contrastingly, Epstein et al. (2012) conducted a population-based survey on an 18-point scale of sexuality, finding that only 6.2% of his population scored a perfect straight score, 1.2% of respondents scored a perfect gay score, leaving 92.6% of the population having past or present attractions to both same and opposite sex. These three studies have produced drastically different

statistics for the size of the LGB population, proving extreme unreliability with current surveying methods of sexuality.

Understanding Homophobia and Biphobia

For decades, academics have reported that prejudice against sexual minorities can have profound effects on their social and psychological well-being (Flowers and Buston, 2001).

Minority stress theory is one way of understanding the social and psychological consequences of being a sexual minority (Meyer, 2003). Minority stress theory outlines the ways that sexual minorities experience chronic stress from the effects of prejudice, discrimination, and social stigmatisation in the broader culture, including psychological burdens that are distinct from heterosexual populations (Hatzenbuehler, 2009).

Homophobia has largely been conceptualised as prejudice against sexual minorities (Weinberg, 1972). The term *homophobia* refers to both the attitudes and the behaviours towards sexual minorities (Plummer, 1999). This duality to homophobia is beneficial in fully understanding the weight of the phenomenon, since behavioural prejudices highlight verbal and physical discrimination against sexual minorities, whereas attitudinal prejudices can help academics understand how negative public attitudes towards sexual minorities have historically determined institutional discrimination against the LGB population through legislation and public policy (Burstein, 1998).

In order to understand homophobia, research on homophobia has focused on: (1) the institutional prevalence of homophobic attitudes and behaviours among individuals; (2) the negative impact homophobia on sexual minorities; (3) the mechanisms by which homophobia is reproduced; (4) the impact of homophobia on heterosexuals (Anderson and McCormack, 2016a). Furthermore, Herek (2004) argues that understanding *homophobia* has led to

understanding that the problem of homosexuality is not in homosexual people; rather, it is in heterosexual people that are intolerant of sexual minorities.

There is a range of other terms that are important in understanding the complexity of homophobia. *Anti-gay* refers to prejudice and discrimination that focuses on homosexuality and excludes other sexual minorities (Plummer, 1999). *Prejudice* and *stigma* refer to attitudinal components of homophobia, while *discrimination* refers to behavioural practices of homophobia (Rivers, 2011). *Heterosexism* describes an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatises nonheterosexuality, often used in understanding the institutional privileging of heterosexuality (Herek, 1990).

Homophobia is useful as a broad category to understand prejudices against all sexual minorities. Mohr and Rochlen (1999) claim that positive attitudes towards homosexuality are correlated with positive attitudes towards bisexuality—meaning it is likely that negative attitudes towards homosexuality correlate with negative attitudes towards bisexuality as well. Therefore, the term *homophobia* is efficiently used to describe discrimination against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals; however, Burleson (2005) argues that research in homophobia frequently erases, or does not adequately address, the experiences of bisexuals.

Bisexuals face prejudices and discrimination that are independent of the stigma faced by gays and lesbians; thus we use the term *biphobia* to understand this phenomenon (Eliason, 1997). Bisexual youth have been found to experience higher levels of harassment than their gay and lesbian counterparts, as well as reporting higher levels of suicide ideation (Pompili et al., 2014; Robinson and Espelage, 2011). This is significant because heterosexuals may have more negative attitudes towards bisexuals than towards homosexuals (Herek, 2002). McLean (2008) states that bisexuals suffer discrimination from heterosexuals as well as from other sexual minorities. Furthermore, biphobia is particularly focused on sexual behaviours rather

than identity. Therefore, *biphobia* is used to describe prejudices, discrimination, and general antipathy towards bisexuals.

Biphobia, while being linked with anti-gay animus, may be a product of the AIDS epidemic, where bisexual men were thought responsible for the spread of HIV to the heterosexual population (Stokes et al., 1996). As an extension of biphobia, Anderson and McCormack (2016a) conceptualise the "bisexual burden" to represent the numerous problems that bisexual people face independent of the problems faced by gays and lesbians. Klein (1993) suggests that bisexuals are stigmatised as being neurotic and sex-crazed, less capable of love and monogamy than those attracted to a single sex.

One aspect of the bisexual burden is bisexual erasure, which refers to the ways that heterosexist norms and monosexist attitudes have erased any significant cultural relevancy of bisexuals. According to Anderson and McCormack (2016a), heterosexist and monosexist norms have created a society that categorizes people as being either 'straight' or 'not-straight', as well as being either 'men' or 'not-men', which has perpetuated a culture where your sexual identity is defined by if you are attracted to men or women, thus making you gay or straight, and conflating every other identity category in the middle (bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, etc) and being synonymous with gay (i.e. 'not-straight'). Furthermore, our predisposition to binary categories, exacerbated by heterosexism, leaves bisexuals feeling excluded from the straight community as well as the gay community. This social ostracisation leads to a form of bisexual self-erasure in which bisexual men are less likely to deeply associate with their bisexual identity and are also less likely to maintain social networks with other sexual minorities (Dimock, Doherty & Kiley, 2013).

A significant component of the bisexual burden lies in the widespread accusation that proclamations of the bisexual identity are inauthentic (see Weinberg, Williams and Pryor 1994). Many accuse bisexuals of using the sexual identity category as a transitional step

towards being gay, while others accuse bisexuals of identifying as such in order to maintain heterosexual privilege while they attempt to decide which sexual preference is for them (Bronn, 2001). Additionally, bisexuals are seen as indecisive, and since sexuality is traditionally viewed as a zero-sum game, some assume that their mixture of sexual attractions to both sexes will lead them to be constantly unsatisfied in a monogamous relationship (Anderson and McCormack, 2016a).

Anderson and McCormack (2016a) discuss that sexuality is experienced and perceived differently by men and women. It is common for others to perceive one's sexuality based on their gendered behaviour, whether a woman is acting 'butch', or a man is acting 'femm'. This gendering of sexuality for men will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Thinking About Masculinity

Since what constitutes as *masculinity* varies by time and place, it is more appropriate to discuss *masculinities*, rather than one single overarching conceptualisation (Connell, 1987). Masculinities, as a branch of study, has been defined as the study of gender relations that seeks to understand the social, cultural, and political patterns of practice by which people (both men and women, with an emphasis on men) engage with the position of men in society (Connell, 1995). Central to the study of men and masculinities was the contention that men *have* a gender, and that, in general, they gain from this gender (Connell, 1995). This was in contrast to earlier feminist scholarship that focused on women's position in society and neglected how gender, as a form of power, influenced men's lives (Carrigan et al., 1985).

The problematic nature of masculinities was originally cued by Women's Liberation at the end of the 1960s, as well as the growth of the feminist movement and further research in feminism and "sex roles", while Gay Liberation also played a role in the development of the unique social problem (Connell, 1992). Research in feminism and the history of gender

(with a focus on women) became a prominent field of research; however, before women's history was examined, there was little research about the roles men had in the family, or in the household in general, leaving a void in knowledge and understanding about the male experience outside of working environments (Tosh, 1999).

In 1986, Joan Scott laid the foundation for masculinities as a field of research by calling for gender studies to further analyse and explore concepts of power and discourse in society. In her paper, Scott (1986) provides a two-part definition of gender, claiming that gender is based on perceived differences between men and women, and also an important way of signifying power differentials. Scott's work stimulated discussion and research aimed at using gender to critically analyse the history of "male institutions". This included seeing sport not just as a social institution but even a "male preserve" (Dunning, 1986) which structurally excluded women to protect men from the changes in gender relations in the wider culture (Dunning and Sheard, 1979).

Further solidifying and grounding masculinities as a field of research was Connell's (1995) work, which drew extensively on empirical research of men and gender that had built up in the 1980s and 1990s including: masculinities in the workplace and in schools (Cockburn 1983, 1987), studies of masculinities and sexualities in organised sport and athletic arenas (Messner and Sabo, 1990), and accounts of the changing ideas of masculinities throughout history (Phillips, 1987). The concept of hegemony, first introduced to the field of masculinities in the 1980s, is formalised by Connell (1995) as a theory of 'hegemonic masculinity' which was proposed to explain the ways men maintain dominant social roles over women and other men. It is through further investigation of Connell's theory, as well as critiques of the theory, that the field of masculinities has grown into the prominent field of research that it is today.

Theorising Orthodox Masculinity: Homophobia and Homophobia

Masculinities in Western cultures are closely related with personal and societal homophobia (Connell, 1995; Kimmel 1994; Plummer, 1999); however, homophobia within a culture is not static; thus, Anderson (2009) developed the concept of homophobia to explain the relationship between societal homophobia and the masculinities of heterosexual men.

Anderson's model of homophobia situates the changing social norms of homophobia with certain social and historical conditions in order to argue that homophobic ideals, such as heterosexual men distancing themselves from effeminate attributes and the suspicion of homosexuality, only effectively operate in homophobic settings.

Homophobia, more simply defined as the fear of being labelled as gay, requires three elements: (i) cultural awareness that homosexuality exists within the population; (ii) high levels of homophobia in that culture; and (iii) the association of homosexuality with femininity and effeminate characteristics (Anderson, 2011a). As each of these factors changes, the level of homophobia and the gender dynamics within a culture will change. Based on these three factors and the foundation of homophobia, Anderson and McCormack created a model of homophobia with three stages: (a) homoerasure; (b) homophobia; (c) inclusivity.

Historical, social and intellectual circumstances have resulted in new discourses of gender and sexuality in the Western cultures, leading to modern understandings of the gay identity (Anderson, 2009; Cancian, 1986; Giddens, 1991; Greenberg, 1988). The understanding and acceptance of the existence of a gay identity is pivotal to the concept of homophobia; without this understanding of sexual identities, homophobia does not exist, and the model does not apply to the ways homophobia function within the society. This period of time, before the cultural understanding of sexual identities, is known as homoerasure.

During periods of homoerasure, gendered behaviours were not policed by homophobia in the ways that we see today; rather, homosocial tactility is common between men during these times, such as seen through photos in the late 19th century (Deitcher, 2001; Ibson, 2002). In the homoerasure stage, the culture is homophobic, but not homohysteria (Anderson and McCormack, 2018).

In Anderson and McCormack's (2018) model of homohysteria, homoerasure persists through the sexual conservatism of the 1950s, and a political shift in western attitudes towards sexuality in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, a growing proportion of the heterosexual population became aware that homosexuality was a static identity; however, there was less overt oppression and legal discrimination against homosexuality because people did not suspect that their friends or family members could be homosexual (Greenberg, 1988). It wasn't until the 1980s that Western culture began to fully understand the prevalence of sexual minorities, thus ushering in an era of homohysteria (Anderson and McCormack, 2018).

Despite a shift towards more liberal social and political attitudes towards sexuality in the 1960s and 1970s, homophobia reached its apex in the 1980s for three reasons: HIV/AIDS, Fundamentalist Christianity, and the Republican Party (Anderson and McCormack, 2018; Loftus, 2001). The HIV/AIDS epidemic made the homosexual community more visible, giving cultural credibility to the Kinsey Report (1948) that 10% of the population was homosexual and that far more had engaged in same-sex sexual activity. Iconic figures dying of AIDS highlighted that homosexuality existed in men that embodied traditional notions of masculinity and heterosexuality. Homosexuality became synonymous with HIV/AIDS, which was pathologised as a danger to physical health, and effeminate homosexuality was associated with the emaciated image of AIDS patients (Weeks, 1991). Rumours that HIV/AIDS could be contracted through handshakes, sneezes, and coughs

further exacerbated the media panic and skyrocketed homophobia and AIDS-phobia (Anderson and McCormack, 2018).

As a cultural backlash to increase awareness of homosexuality, Fundamentalist Christianity grew increasingly concerned with opposing homosexuality and positioning homosexuals as a threat to the nuclear family. Fundamentalist Christianity used its platform of fear to increase financial support for the church, church attendance, and to further indoctrinate the Bible into school curricula (Chaves, 1989). Furthermore, the Republican Party adopted the religious right's anti-homosexual views in order to win elections by inspiring socially conservative Christians to vote by re/producing fears towards homosexuality and HIV/AIDS to foster a moral panic about sexuality and its danger towards traditional family values.

It was at this time that cultural awareness of homosexuality as a static identity had peaked, providing the perfect conditions for homophobia. At this time, femininity in males was associated with homosexuality, and by extension, HIV/AIDS; therefore, men had to distance themselves socially, politically, attitudinally, and physically from homosexuality, narrowing the definitions of acceptable masculinity and pushing hegemonic notions of masculinity onto men (Floyd, 2000; McCreary, 1994).

The cultural threat to masculinity pushed men towards stereotypically masculine behaviours in order to avoid homosexual suspicion. During this period, distancing oneself from feminine characteristics to avoid being perceived as gay was of the utmost importance to a man's masculinity; furthermore, the most effective way to prove 'straightness' and masculinity was to overtly express homophobia (Plummer 1999).

This threat to masculinity created an era that devalued femininity while fostering a macho form of masculinity, promoted by organised sport. This era, with academics using sex role theory as their main argument, saw boys as blank canvases in which a masculine, athletic

experience was the most efficient way to socialise the boys into a male role (Anderson, 2009). Additionally, men used sport participation, which gained cultural popularity after the second industrial revolution, to publicly demonstrate masculinity. Cultural homophobia coupled with a surge in sport participation led to a complicated relationship between the gender spheres of men and women, as well as monumental disparities between men and other men and how men understood the power relationship between masculinities.

The most prolific means of understanding and theorizing masculinity began with the application of hegemony to gender studies, leading to the theorizing of ‘male hegemony’ (Cockburn, 1991) and ‘hegemonic heterosexual masculinity’ (Frank, 1987); however, it is most thoroughly discussed by Connell’s (1995) hegemonic masculinity theory. Dismissing sex role theory because of its static notions of power, hegemonic masculinity theory adopts a social constructivist standpoint in order to understand the unequal distribution of male privilege.

Connell (1987) claimed that hegemonic masculinity is a social process that has been utilised as a strategy to subordinate women, and that all men benefit from a patriarchal society. Connell's more widely accepted claim related to hegemonic masculinity as a social process is that, alongside the subordination of women, multiple masculinities are stratified within a hierarchy, with orthodox masculinity situated at the top of the hierarchy (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995). Hegemonic masculinity theory sought to explain power relationships primarily between men and other men, as well as men and women. Connell (1995) explained that there are a variety of masculine identities that are all dependent upon the expectations that masculinity is presumed to be, leading to a hierarchy of masculine behaviours that marginalise and subordinate feminine men and sexual minorities. Hegemonic masculinity is the process by which this hierarchy is re/produced.

This dominant form of masculinity is associated with people that are strong, aggressive, successful, capable and reliable (Kimmel, 1994). In order to ascribe to the hegemonic form of masculinity, one must exhibit many attributes. Some of these hegemonic attributes are earned or attitudinal-such as success in a career, developing a competitive spirit, or displaying homophobia- while others are fixed traits, such as whiteness (Howson, 2006). Connell (1987) argues that competitive sport is the most efficient way to demonstrate hegemonic masculinity, thus solidifying one's status at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities.

Anderson (2002, 2005a, 2009a) developed an important critique of Connell's formulation. Recognising the value of the theory, particularly in relation to damaging forms of masculinity valued in the 1980s and 1990s, Anderson highlighted the confusion in Connell's writing where she referred to the dominant form of masculinity as "hegemonic" while simultaneously calling the processes of hierarchical and inter-gender stratification as hegemonic masculinity. Ambiguously, and critiqued by scholars (McCormack, 2012), hegemonic masculinity can also be seen as the normative masculinity that is currently the most prized way of presenting masculinity in a society or culture (Hall, 2015). Anderson proposed the name of "orthodox masculinity" instead to differentiate the form of masculinity that maintained power through hierarchical processes from the broader social process of hegemonic masculinity.

Remaining at the top of the intra-masculine hierarchy requires the policing of other men and their performed masculinities; maintaining hegemony, men must exhibit and regulate behaviours such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and violence (Magrath, 2017a). Connell (1995) identifies two key processes by which masculinities are policed: material domination of specific groups and discursive marginalisation (see McCormack 2011). Discursive forms of marginalisation reproduce hegemonic stratifications, ensuring that

subordinate masculine groups believe that the hegemonic group at the top of the hierarchy has the right to exist there, thus highlighting the process of hegemony. This process keeps marginalised men from challenging the hegemonic men; rather, marginalised men look up to hegemonic men, especially in male-dominated social spheres (Kian et al., 2013).

In social dynamics accurately described by hegemonic masculinity theory, men are required to position themselves on the hierarchy of masculinity in relation to the hegemonic form of masculinity, which holds the top spot of the hierarchy (Connell, 1995). Connell (1995) described three alternative forms of masculinity, in addition to the most prized form, that are a direct result from the hegemonic process of the intra-masculine hierarchy: complicit, subordinate, and marginalised. Complicit masculinities refer to men that gain male privilege from the patriarchal dividend but have little connection to hegemonic masculinities. Subordinate masculinities include men that actively suffer due to the stratification of masculinities. Marginalised masculinities describe men that are on the outskirts of the hierarchy. To make sense of these definitions using broad examples: a professional rugby player displays orthodox masculinity which is seen as the hegemonic form of masculinity, a rugby fan in the stands maintains complicit masculinity, gay men embody subordinate masculinity, and working-class black man displays a marginalised masculinity (Connell, 1995)

There is a plurality of masculinities in this theory; not all hegemonic men hold the same characteristics. For example, a professional athlete and a CEO of a major corporation both maintain differing elements of hegemony. The athlete holds hegemonic physical appearances of muscularity and social esteem, while the CEO maintains high levels of authority/prestige while putting his career and success first in his life. The hegemonic form of masculinity (traditionally orthodox) can be expressed in appearances (muscularity, strength and size), affects (emotional strength and work ethic), sexualities (heterosexuality, and being

highly sexually active), behaviors (violence and assertion), occupations (valuing career over family and household duties), and domination (subordinating effeminate men, homosexuals, women, and children) (Ricciardelli, 2010). Furthermore, Connell (1995) recognises that the hegemonic form can differ between geographical locations and within different contexts; however, in any given context, there will exist only one type of masculinity that is the most dominant, and thus the hegemonic form of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity has been the most widely accepted theory of masculinities over the past three decades; however, several social changes in western culture have begun to challenge the rigid boundaries and the dominance of the hegemony.

Jock Culture and Lad Culture

The American structure of competitive sport is centred around educational institutions, starting at Junior Varsity levels as adolescents and leading to Varsity levels at later ages in high school, while ultimately culminating at Elite levels at the NCAA level in University. The structure of embedding sport culture into the domain of education has traditionally led to the school environment of the 'jockocracy', first described by Jackson Katz in his 1999 movie *Tough Guise*. The jockocracy, which describes a culture in which the boys that score the most goals or touchdowns- known as 'jocks'- symbolically occupy the top of the masculine hierarchy, and aides in stratifying male students in a king-of-the-hill style competition, further pushing down physically weaker boys (Anderson, 2005a).

In the US school/sport structure, the masculine capital gained in the jockocracy directly correlates to social capital. Messner (1992) argued that "Every elementary high school male knows that the more athletic you are, the more popular you are" (p. 52). However, this dominant jock culture extends past high school and into Elite levels of University sport in America. Schrack-Walters, O'Donnell and Wardlow (2009) argue that

elite NCAA athletes are officially titled 'All American' in their sport because they embody the ideal jock form of masculinity.

Jock culture specifically defines the culture of heterosexual male athletes which display physically and mentally unhealthy behaviours such as machoism, bullying, violence, and excessive risk-taking while traditionally maintaining the appearance of being tough, aggressive, and stoic (Coad, 2008). Lipsyte (2006) describes many attributes of jock culture that are damaging to the individual and society- hyper-masculine rituals, a win-at-all-costs attitude, and a sense of entitlement of being above the law. Anderson (2014) also highlights that jocks are often associated with being abusive of alcohol and drugs, and engaging in frequent casual sex.

While the 'jock' became representative of American masculinity at the time, British masculinity became associated with the 'lad' or 'laddishness' (Jackson, 2006). Being a lad in the UK usually involved participation in football, generally disruptive behaviour, objectifying women, maintaining a certain masculine fashion, and acting aggressive (Francis, 1999; Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002; Jackson, 2006). Professional football players were the most dominant ideal centrepiece of lad culture in the UK, representing the perfect masculine vessel while being a hero to adult men and a role model to young men (King, 1997; Roderick, 2000). Furthermore, lad culture is described as being founded upon a trinity of 'drinking, football and fucking' (Anderson, McCormack & Lee, 2012; Edwards, 1997; Mac and Ghail, 1994; Dempster, 2009, 2011).

Jock culture and lad culture are both representative of dominant males using homophobic and misogynistic discourse to naturalise their status by marginalising other males. Men who are softer, weaker, or more feminine are often regarded as being homosexual and are relegated to the bottom of the social and masculine stratification, whereas men at the top of the masculine hierarchy are continually expected to monitor their

own masculinity and the masculinities of others in order to maintain their social location (Anderson, 2005a). Kimmel (1994) describes this process of masculine monitoring by saying:

Masculinity must be proved, and no sooner is it proved than it is again questioned and must be proved again—constant, relentless, unachievable, and ultimately the quest for proof becomes so meaningless than it takes on the characteristics of a sport (p. 122).

The importance of homophobic language to the construction of masculinities has been documented across many studies (e.g. Nayak and Kehily, 1996; Plummer, 1999).

This hegemonic form of hyper-masculinity was socially esteemed throughout the 1980s, with sports teams exemplifying the homophobic zeitgeist of the broader culture, especially in contact team sports. Due to this homophobic culture, gay men in sport were forced to remain in the closet, drastically diminishing the amount of conclusive research that could be obtained about LGBT experiences in team sport during this time (Anderson, 2005a). Messner (1992) wrote that being raised in the hegemonic world of organised sport "boys learn early that to be gay, to be suspected of being gay, or even to be unable to prove one's heterosexual status is not acceptable" (p. 34). This early age of studying sexuality and masculinity in sport demonstrates that team sports cultivate a hegemonic form of masculinity that forces men to value, display, and reproduce orthodox notions of masculinity by establishing masculine dominance in their identities and their bodies (Anderson, 2014).

The femphobic nature of jock culture and lad culture is not only problematic for feminine/homosexual men, but it is also extremely burdensome for women. Often viewed as a backlash against feminism and gains in women's rights (Beynon, 2002), jock/lad culture often consists of objectifying women for sport and espousing politically incorrect views (Francis, 1999; Knowles, 2004). There is a large body of research suggesting that jock/lad culture, and their emphasis on sexism and sexual harassment, function to enable men to

reclaim power and space as a defensive response to women's perceived political success (McLaughlin et al., 2012; Phipps & Young, 2015; Welsh, 1999).

Taken to the extreme limit, men that endorse and embody jock culture often partake in dangerous and/or illegal activities in order to satisfy the constant necessity to prove their heterosexuality and masculinity; the most effective way for jocks to prove their masculine prowess is to have sexual intercourse with women (Coad, 2008). Therefore, heterosexual conquests are strongly associated with manhood, even conquests that do not involve clear consent of women. Pronger (1990) argues that:

It is in [rape] that the mythic power difference between men and women is most clearly realised. It is the debasement of a woman, wherein she is not only made subordinate and brutalised, but is also reduced to a mere object...in his pursuit of the erotic incarnation of his mythic, masculine power" (p. 65).

At its most extreme, jock culture promotes orthodox notions of masculinity and encourages men to objectify women and condones non-consensual heterosexual practices, while glorifying male aggression in many forms.

While orthodox masculinity was held at the top of the social hierarchy in previous generations, Anderson (2009a) reports that men today are behaving in ways that are not characteristic of orthodox masculinity. In the next section, I introduce Anderson's inclusive masculinity theory, which will be fundamental to the remaining chapters of this research.

Inclusive Masculinity Theory

Inclusivity is representative of a culture that recognizes homosexuality as a static sexual identity and where people with positive attitudes towards homosexuality are in the majority of the population; however, this does not mean that the culture is without some homophobia or discrimination towards other minorities, and within a culture of inclusivity,

heteronormativity may persist (Anderson and McCormack, 2018). The end of the homohysteria stage in Western culture began in 1992 when US President Bill Clinton advocated for gays to serve in the military, leading to improving attitudes towards homosexuality (Anderson, 2014; Kangasvu, 2011). This trend led to an accelerated decrease in homophobia in the 21st century (Clement and Field, 2014).

These early days of inclusivity have shown that men started to shed the hyper-masculine ideologies of the 1980s in many ways (Coad, 2008). The cultural increase in inclusivity towards sexual minorities allows men to disassociate from orthodox masculinities, requiring a more modern understanding of masculinities among men. Anderson (2009a) proposes *Inclusive Masculinity Theory*, which argues that as cultural homophobia declines, the conservative version of hegemonic masculinity loses dominance, allowing softer masculinities to exist without the policing of social stigma. This softer form of inclusive masculinity co-exists alongside an orthodox masculinity; however, the orthodox masculinity does not retain its hegemonic position because there is a critical mass of men that refute it. While orthodox masculinities are traditionally used to separate gendered spheres by making men homophobic, misogynistic, femphobic, and emotionally/physically distant from one another, inclusive masculinities use opposite ideologies to blur the lines between masculinity and femininity.

With a mass increase in social inclusion, the popularisation of the form of masculinities that were subordinate to the hegemonic masculinity have begun to eradicate previously held attitudes esteemed by orthodox masculinity: homophobia, misogyny, aggression, violence, stoicism and excessive risk-taking (Anderson, 2011b; Anderson, 2011c; Anderson, 2014). Furthermore, sexual minorities have been more accepted and included in a range of contexts, proving a general cultural increase in inclusivity towards sexual minorities in Western cultures (Jones and Clarke, 2007; Savin-Williams, 2005). Anderson and

McCormack (2018) have provided an update to the theory, and how we might understand the effects of inclusivity, which I discuss in the following section.

Critiques of Inclusive Masculinity Theory

Inclusive masculinity theory has become an increasingly popular way to understand the social dynamics of men and the embodiment of their masculinities. Since being initially developed in Anderson's (2009) monograph about sporting masculinities, a wealth of scholarship has used the theory across disciplines and social institutions. At the same time, critiques of the theory have sought to enhance the understanding of issues around class and women's perspectives (e.g. Ingram and Waller 2014; Parent, Batura & Crooks 2014; Worthen, 2014); while others have sought a more critical analysis of gender politics or other aspects of the social world (Plummer 2014; O'Neill 2015); and yet others have disagreed with the notion that homophobia has decreased at all (de Boise 2015; Simpson 2014). Anderson and McCormack have engaged with these critiques across several publications (Anderson 2018; Anderson and McCormack 2018; McCormack and Anderson 2014a, 2014b), as have others who use the theory (e.g. Magrath 2017; Roberts 2018), and it is the reformulation of the theory on which I base my work (e.g. Anderson and McCormack 2018).

Perhaps the earliest critique of inclusive masculinity theory was that it was located within a group of middle-class, elite young men who were not representative of the lives of men more broadly (e.g. Ingram and Waller, 2014). This was a criticism that was worthy of further study; indeed, Anderson and McCormack (2014b) both acknowledge it as a serious issue and one that they have also addressed. For example, McCormack (2014) has developed an important analysis of how class intersects with decreasing homophobia and the dynamics of masculinity, arguing that being working-class can act as a dampening but not a prohibitive factor on the development of inclusive attitudes. McCormack highlights that rather than this

being the result of “class” as a static or all-encompassing variable, it is instead that class serves as a proxy variable for the extent to which teenage boys can engage with a more “global” youth culture which esteems notions of inclusivity regarding sexuality. McCormack (2014) used Bourdieu’s symbolic economy of class to theorise this perspective. Roberts (2015, 2018) has enhanced this theorisation, using longitudinal data with working-class men in service professions who did not attend university. He focused on the ‘missing middle’ of men who are disengaged from school yet in employment while not attaining the status of ‘high flyers’. Roberts (2018) documents the ordinariness and normalisation of service work for these men, in the context of deindustrialisation, and shows that these men’s practices are also encapsulated by a more inclusive and egalitarian approach to dealing with the social world. His research, alongside McCormack’s (2014; see also Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson 2017), demonstrates that the critique that IMT is limited to middle-class young men is dated and no longer applicable.

Another critique that has circulated since early on the formulation of IMT is that homophobia has not actually decreased but has rather changed in its formulation and that it persists in equally pernicious forms—and even that the new forms of covert homophobia may be more dangerous (see de Boise 2015; Ingram and Waller 2014; Kehler 2014). Yet such arguments tend to be extremely limited, contradicted by empirical evidence or impeded by emotion (see Kehler’s use of exclamation marks throughout his critical review, and even use of the grammatical phraseology “!?” – p. 73). Anderson and McCormack (2018) have powerfully identified the weaknesses of this critique, showing that quantitative data has overwhelmingly shown that homophobia has decreased across a range of measures (see Clements and Field 2014; Gallup 2015; Keleher and Smith 2012; PEW 2013; Smith 2011; Twenge, Sherman & Wells 2017; Twenge, Sherman & Wells 2016). They also emphasize that it is not just attitudinal change that is documented, but profound shifts in laws (Weeks

2007) and the experiences of sexual minorities (Anderson and McCormack 2016; Ghaziani 2014; Savin-Williams 2005, 2016). Anderson and McCormack (2018: 551) put it best when they write:

The contention that homophobia has decreased in the US and UK is strongly supported by a wide range of empirical evidence, and...this has profoundly affected the expression of gender among males. Still, decreasing homophobia is neither homogenous nor universal, and heterosexism and heteronormativity remain significant social issues. There is important scholarship to be undertaken that examines the damaging consequences of them, but it will best do this when it recognizes the changing social context. It is our contention that this enhances our understanding of the broader trend of decreasing homophobia – recognizing both the improvement related to decreasing homophobia and the continued problems associated with heterosexism and heteronormativity.

Indeed, Anderson and McCormack's (2018) reformulation of inclusive masculinity theory is helpful in dealing with concerns that discussions of social change has to be restricted to binaries that either nothing has changed or that homophobia has vanished (as more polemical critics, such as de Boise (2015), have argued). Anderson and McCormack highlight that it is essential to consider how IMT is generalizable to different contexts – be it geographic, demographic or temporal – and also call for closer attention to issues of heteronormativity and sexism in the ways in which the dynamics of men are to be understood in the present context.

The call for further research on sexism by Anderson and McCormack (2018) has also been mirrored by O'Neill's call for a closer consideration of how IMT deals with patriarchy and the production of sexism. This is not an uncontested area – for example, Borkowska (2016, 2018) argues that men's attitudes to women should not discount the broader changes

among men – yet the relational nature of masculinity and femininity has a long history within masculinities research (e.g. Connell 1995). Important within this context is the critique that Deutsch (2007) makes of feminist scholarship that it often fails to account for the ways in which men and women's experiences are dynamic, fluid and have the potential for positive change. The absence of women from the discussion of inclusive masculinity theory is one that I am concerned with addressing in this thesis, particularly regarding how women experience men's homosocial experiences (see Anderson and McCormack 2015).

Thus, it is my consideration that while inclusive masculinity theory has been the subject of critique, it is also the best theoretical framework by which to approach my data. The critiques have mostly been addressed by scholars using the theory already and my research is well-placed to address other components which have not been discussed in as much detail in the academic literature.

The Effects of Cultural Inclusivity

Inclusive Masculinities and the Changing Nature of Sports

The cultural push towards inclusive masculinities has had a significant effect on sport culture, which is traditionally a bastion of hypermasculinity. These cultural changes affect all sport, ranging from youth sport to elite level sport. Gottzén and Kremer-Sadlik (2012) conducted ethnographic research on middle-class fathers in the United States who have children in youth sports and found that many fathers are in a balancing act between orthodox notions of masculinity- which prioritise sport performance, and inclusive notions of masculinity- which are associated with caring and nurturing their child. This is important because it shows that one effect of inclusivity is that youth sports might be more focused on participation and support child athletic development, instead of just results.

Youth sports in the UK, according to Adams and Kavanagh (2018), highlight the presence of progressive and pro-gay attitudes among youth academy level football players. These youth athletes also expressed that they contest homophobia and other forms of social marginalisation of their peers in sporting settings.

These pro-gay attitudes are not exclusive to youth sports. In 2002, Eric Anderson conducted the first research on openly gay athletes at the college and high school level. He found that no athletes had reported physical or verbal aggression due to their sexuality, and that their teammates had increasingly inclusive attitudes towards homosexuality (Anderson, 2002). Since 2002, Anderson reports that a decrease in homophobia has been empirically declining and that claiming that athletes are more homophobic than non-athletes is an act of prejudice (Anderson, 2014). However, Anderson, Magrath and Bullingham (2016) state that while positive attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual athletes are increasing, the most effective way to further improve sport culture is for more gay men to join sporting team, or for closeted gay athletes to come out, as contact theory yields the best results as a catalyst for inclusivity. Gaston, Magrath and Anderson (2018) also document an important generational shift in English professional football by contrasting how the coming out story of Anton Hysen, the openly gay footballer, was received inclusively compared to the homophobia Justin Fashanu experienced in 1992.

One sport that offers an unusually tolerant environment for gay athletes is equestrian sport, where Dashper (2012) states that gay men are becoming more visible in the sport and that the heterosexual athletes of all ages demonstrate extremely low levels of homophobia. Her ethnographic study highlights that a decrease in cultural levels of homophobia, and changing structures of masculinity away from orthodox notions of masculinity and towards inclusive views, is the main factor that has changed the landscape of equestrian sport; however, women are still subordinated within the sport (Dashper, 2012).

Another sport that uses inclusive masculinity theory to explain a shift in athletes' attitudes towards homosexuality is mixed martial arts (MMA). According to a case-study by Channon and Matthews (2015), male MMA fighter Dakota Cochrane has gained acceptance and support from fans and athletes, despite his history of having participated in gay pornography. Defending Cochrane, fans and competitors highlight his impressive fighting skills and his *true* sexual identity as a heterosexual, despite his pornographic past. This research supports the erasure of the one-time rule of homosexuality, which I will address later in this chapter.

Metrosexuality

The steady decline of the homohysteric culture in the 1990s led to the counter-cultural trend for young men that began to separate themselves from orthodox notions of masculinity because they cared about their physical appearance, thus sexualising themselves; this trend is known as metrosexuality (Coad, 2008). To some degree, men have always been concerned with their appearances- wearing expensive suits, having coiffed hair, and maintaining a civilised appearance; however, until very recently, men that were concerned with their appearance were of high social class (Hall, 2015). It was also important that men were not seen to care about their appearance.

However, men's grooming practices have extended to men of all socioeconomic backgrounds, and in an overt manner, and have been described as metrosexuality (Simpson, 1994, 2002). In 2002, McNair (p. 57) described metrosexuality as "a homosexualised vision of masculinity, in the sense that this studied narcissism and attention to self-grooming are traditionally associated with gayness." Hall (2015) defines the metrosexual as a heterosexual man that holds interests that are traditionally associated with women or homosexual men such as fashion, grooming, tanning, body hair removal, shopping, and the use of cosmetics.

Flocker (2003) describes the characteristics of the metrosexual in detail as being a: (i) 21st century male trendsetter, (ii) straight, urban man with heightened aesthetic sense, (iii) man who spends time and money on appearance and shopping, (iv) man willing to embrace his feminine side.

The emergence of metrosexuality has changed the way that the western world views men and their masculinities. According to Simpson (2004), metrosexuality has “queered all codes of official masculinity of the last hundred years or so: It’s passive where it should be active, desired where it should be desiring, looked at where it should be always looking” (p 2). Men during the 1990s seemed to be softer and more liberal than men of previous generations, but more narcissistic, media-saturated, and self-conscious of their own masculinity (Hall, 2015).

Metrosexuality is deeply rooted in male body image. Grogan (2008) describes the body as a medium of culture, being both ‘made’ by daily rituals (exercise, diets, manners), and as ‘texts’ as a surface value for representing the dominant appearances of a culture (cosmetics, jewellery, hairstyle, dress style). Furthermore, Inoue (2006) conceptualised the body as a ‘schema’, which describes the body as a sensory system which includes the five senses we use to interact with the world (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste), as well as other physical stimuli with the stimulants we engage with, emotional responses to feelings of happiness or sadness, and the ways in which we interpret and sense our own inner body movements. The ‘made’, ‘texts’, and ‘schema’ aspects of our body act produce our embodied experiences which guide our interactions in everyday life, and these interactions are interpreted within the strict confines of gender (Hall, 2015).

Western culture has clearly defined body normativity to maintaining specific characteristics of maleness/femaleness, functionality, height, thickness, shape/curvature, muscularity, body hair, complexion and so on (Garfinkel, 1967; Grogan, 2010); where

deviations from these body norms are considered undesired, or even dangerous (Hall, 2015). Western cultures obsession with the 'made', 'texts', and 'schema' attributes of the body, described above, highlight the social discomfort associated with different body types. Physical body types, mental attributes and the bodily practices we endure to correct unique psychological conditions, and the many different bodily forms of expressing emotions are all highly regulated a point in which, through the eyes of popular culture, everybody is only 'temporarily able-bodied' until the point in which a body becomes something other than you might wish, such as ugly, injured, fat or old (Shildrick, 2007). Metrosexuality is an extension of the social fear associated with maintaining not only an able body, but a desirable body.

Maintaining the ideal body type has become central to dominant representations of men and masculinity (Nikkelen et al., 2012). Contemporary research has shown, repeatedly, that at least two-thirds of men report being concerned about their body image with their top concerns being centred around muscularity, penis size, body fat, and hair (Jankowski et al., 2013; Tiggemann et al., 2008; Veale et al., 2014). Men's current interest appearance-related practices has been incited by the increased visibility of men's bodies in media representations of men such as *Men's Health* Magazine, or in underwear ads by popular brands such as *Calvin Klein*, leading to the commodification and eroticisation of the male body (Hall, 2015). Osgerby (2003) suggests that men, since the 1990s, manage their stylistic consumption as a form of 'robust heterosexuality' (p. 60) which is meant to skew their culturally-established feminised consumption as a form of heterosexual prowess.

This concept is mirrored by Hall (2015) in his discussion of the 'homoerotic gaze', defined as men visually enjoying other men's bodies, which is even more pronounced when men are semi-naked or the body is more visible such as in sport, advertising, and men's magazines. The homoerotic gaze invites the attention of any watchful eye, male or female, thus disrupting the conventional notion that 'men look at women and women watch

themselves being looked at' (Berger, 1972, p. 47). The increase in acceptability of the 'homoerotic gaze' unsettles typical masculinities and raises questions of gender and sexual identity of men.

According to Edwards (2003), the 'homoerotic gaze' leads to a heightened importance of denying femininity and promoting gender differences in order to deem this act acceptable among men; however, research on the ways men talk about their bodies does not completely reflect those findings (Bennett and Gough, 2012; Gill, 2005; Robertson, 2006). For example, Gill (2005) found, through interviews and focus groups with 140 men, that men describe themselves as 'the individual managers of their own bodies' (p. 55), viewing their bodies as projects in which they have agency to construct their own identities in a variety of ways. Robertson (2006) found that men use words such as pragmatic (task completion), experiential (feeling good), visceral (lowering cholesterol) and normative (looking good) when discussing their bodies and the ways they manage their health and lifestyle; while Robertson also found that men often discussed their emotions when providing accounts of their exercise regimens and their lifestyle. Furthermore, Bennett and Gough (2012) found that men are happy to discuss their health-related concerns with other men, often discussing their feelings about their bodies and ways to improve their bodily appearances with their male friends; however, many downplayed their body-related concerns.

To focus on one body-image related characteristic in-depth, it is clear that men are discussing the role their body hair plays in shaping their masculinity. Although body hair removal is traditionally associated with femininity, data shows that men are now actively engaging with the removal of body hair from certain areas (Hall, 2015). Hall documents an increasing trend in 'manscaping' since the 1980s, in which men trim or remove hair from their chest, back, shoulders, legs, buttocks, and pubic region. Hall reports that manscaping, a product of the rise of mainstream culture's obsession with mimicking popular celebrities daily

routines and fashion choices, occurs for any of the following reasons: vanity, pleasure, cleanliness, self-respect and individuality. Using men for advertising and marketing, and introducing the 'homoerotic gaze' to the western world, has greatly changed the way men interact with each other and stratify masculine power.

Breaking Gender Boundaries

The erosion of homophobia and hegemonic masculinities has blurred the lines between masculinity and femininity, and has led to an expansion of acceptable gendered behaviours for heterosexual males; this is evident in research on adolescents that shows a departure from orthodox notions of masculinity, and an altering of the once-strong social norms of gender and sexuality (McCormack, 2012). The significant decline in homophobia has permitted heterosexual men to establish and maintain friendships with openly gay and bisexual male peers while also allowing heterosexual men to engage with social artefacts that were once deemed 'too feminine' for men (Adams, 2011; Adams and Anderson, 2012; Hall, 2015; Stotzer, 2009).

Modern research documents that heterosexual men have begun to openly display emotional intimacy with each other, esteem love and solidarity in their friendships, and provide emotional support to their male friends in caring and intimate ways (Anderson, 2009; Baker and Hotek, 2011; Luttrell, 2012; Magrath 2017a; McCormack, 2011a). Anderson (2014) notes an increase in homosocial intimacy among heterosexual men, including hugging and soft touching within friendships; furthermore, research shows that there are significant levels of homosocial touching between heterosexual men and their gay friends as well (Barrett, 2013). This increase in homosocial tactility extends to the bedroom as well where, according to Anderson and McCormack (2015), young straight men express love with their male friends by cuddling and spooning them regularly.

These displays of emotional and physical intimacy would not have been acceptable behaviour for young men that adhere to orthodox notions of masculinity; however, inclusive masculinities are increasingly prevalent among Western youth, and the homophobic, misogynistic, and gender separate spheres traditionally associated with orthodox masculinity has become increasingly stigmatized (McCormack and Anderson, 2014; Roberts, Anderson and Magrath, 2017). Many of the behaviours that once separated masculine men from feminine men are blurring, making it problematic to decipher between masculinity and femininity, and by extension making it difficult to accurately describe behaviours as being inherently gay or straight.

Bromances

The concept of romance indicates both an emotional and sexual attraction; however, Diamond (2003) argues that sexual attraction functions independently from emotional attachment. Klein's scale of sexuality, discussed previously, recognises this distinction by providing a measure of 'emotional preference' alongside 'sexual preference', further conceptualising what we have previously defined as *emotional orientation*. The association of one's sexual orientation with one's emotional orientation holds cultural value in a society where one's sexual partner is also deemed to be one's "best friend" and primary emotional attachment. This association was vital to men in the latter half of the 20th century, when the homohysterical culture prohibited men from having open and honest emotional relationships with one another out of fear as being deemed feminine or homosexual (Morin and Garfinkle, 1978; Pleck, 1981).

A decrease in homophobia and homophobia in the US and UK in the 21st century has resulted in new types of friendships between men where there is room for emotional attachment and other friendship characteristics that are more traditionally associated with

femininity (Clements and Field, 2014; McCormack and Anderson, 2014). This has provided men with the intellectual space to develop profound emotional bonds with other men, and a means to express a multitude of feelings with each other, such as personal values, morals, secrets, passions, relationships, and the complexity of male sexuality (Anderson and Adams, 2011). The increasing importance of heterosexual men's preference for same-sex socialising and friendship—known as *homosociality*—is explored socially, psychologically, and physically to develop deep emotional relationships that are often self-labelled as a *bromance*.

The concept of the bromance has recently been used to describe male homosociality that is based in intimacy. DeAngelis (2014, p. 1) describes the bromance as "a term denoting an emotionally intense bond between straight men". Additionally, other research on bromances claims that the intricacies of a bromance can often surpass the romantic closeness that straight men share with their wives and girlfriends (Davies, 2014). To further understand the complexity of the bromance, Robinson et al. (2018) has outlined the main characteristics of a bromance: shared interests, emotional intimacy and physical intimacy.

Homosocial bonds formed organically when men had similar interests, normally focused around doing 'stuff' together, such as video games, drinking, exercising or eating out. The most notable space of male interest leading to emotional bonds and bromances is team sports (Anderson, 2014; Baker and Hotek, 2011). Shared interests are often viewed as the starting point for male friendships, which through time can eventually lead to a bromance (Robinson et al., 2018).

According to Robinson et al. (2018), bromances differ from other male friendships based on the level of emotional disclosure that is permissible to one another, including sharing secrets exclusively with bromantic friends, and being emotionally vulnerable by offering a deep sense of unburdened disclosure and emotionality based on trust and love. Previous research on men shows that they avoid using words such as 'like' out of fear of it

seeming to affectionate (Lewis, 1978); however, 21st-century men openly disclose their 'love' for their bromances. Furthermore, men in bromances often discuss topics that would normally be deemed uncomfortable or even taboo, such as sexual desires with their girlfriends or even the desire to experiment with anal penetration with their opposite-sex sexual partners (Branfman et al., 2017). The deep emotional intimacy of a bromance allows for men to be vulnerable and open without fear of judgement from one another (Robinson et al., 2018).

Although participants in Robinson et al.'s (2018) research clearly distinguish that their homosocial attraction does not equate to homosexual desire, increased nonsexual physical intimacy is a routine characteristic of a bromance, but it is not essential. As previously stated, Anderson and McCormack (2014) found increased physical tactility among university students in the UK, documenting an increase in cuddling, spooning, and even kissing of the cohort; research on bromances highlights this physical intimacy, confirming that homosocial physical intimacy is desired between young men in bromances, and is disassociated with homosexuality. Furthermore, male nudity is common in a bromance, and the homoerotic gaze is routine. Robinson et al. (2018) states that with men in a bromance "there did seem to be an implication that nudity around each other was a step, and perhaps served as a form of symbolic proof, of heterosexuality, social comfort, and bromantic interest" (p. 8). Participants of their research were described as also using nudity as a step towards openly discussing sexual experiences, and possibly leading to the comfortability needed to have a male-male-female threesome with their bromance, which is more likely to happen among heterosexual men that are in a bromance (Scoats et al., 2017).

The bromance, while providing evidence of changing homosocial relationships between straight men, requires further dissection of its intersectionality with gender and sexuality studies; however, the ability for men to engage in deep emotional and tactile

relationships both publicly and privately further demonstrates the breaking of gendered boundaries that were once placed on men in more homohysterical times.

The Erasure of the One Time Rule of Homosexuality

The one-time rule of sexuality refers to the phenomenon imposed onto heterosexual men where any same-sex sexual act or desire is perceived to make a person gay, regardless of any previous or future sexual acts, desires, or proclamation of sexual identity; however, the inverse of the rule is not imposed on gay men. If a gay man has sex with a woman, he is not perceived to be heterosexual or bisexual; rather, he remains gay (Anderson, 2008b). The one-time rule of homosexuality helped to maintain hegemonic dominance during times of homophobia; however, in the inclusive culture of the 21st century, the rule has been losing power.

In the 2000s, Anderson (2008b) found that 40% of the heterosexual male athletes in one of his studies had engaged in some form of sexual practice with another male, yet they maintained their heterosexual identity. Additionally, in the second decade of the millennium, Anderson (2014) found that a significant amount of self-identified heterosexual men at universities in the US, UK and Australia have kissed another male friend on the lips. Inclusivity has also permitted men in the 21st century to identify as 'mostly straight', because they engage in, or desire to engage in, same-sex sex only on occasions, demonstrating that the idea of heterosexual 'purity' is no longer necessary to be perceived as a heterosexual (Savin-Williams and Vrangalova, 2013).

The Expansion of Sexual Identities

In the zeitgeist of inclusivity, attitudes towards sexual identity have shifted among both heterosexual and LGBT youth to such a point that sexual minority youth have entered a

'post-identity' phase in which they are less likely to definitively engage with static sexual-identity categories (Savin-Williams, 2005). In the homohysterical 1980s and 1990s, there were two ways for men to determine their sexuality—one for gay men and one for straight men; where gay men were self-identified and accepted as gay without social interrogation. Straight men, however, were policed by their actions rather than their identity, actions that were scrutinised by the constant reproduction of their own orthodox masculinity and the one-time rule of homosexuality. Scholars now argue that this is changing, and that there has been an expansion of labels for sexuality to account for the greater complexity of sexual identities, attractions, and behaviours in contemporary culture (Epstein et al., 2012; Kuper et al., 2012). McCormack, Wignall and Anderson (2015) also show generational differences in how bisexual men identify—men who had their teenage years in the homophobic 1980s displayed a much greater attachment to their bisexual identities than those whose adolescence was in the mid-2000s. This younger generation still used the label, but viewed it more as a pragmatic response to confusion about bisexuality in a heterosexist culture rather than because of deep emotional attachment to it.

There has been a growing trend in people disassociating with traditional sexual identity labels in favour of terms that they feel more accurately describe their sexual identity. One focus is on people that identify as 'Kinsey 1s'—meaning they are "predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual" (Kinsey et al., 1948). Savin-Williams and Vrangalova (2013) define this group as being "mostly heterosexual" and claim that the group form a sexual orientation that is distinct from heterosexuality and bisexuality. The formation of the mostly heterosexual identity, which is attributable to the decrease in homophobia and the erosion of the one-time rule of homosexuality, allows men to recognise their own desires with fear of stigmatisation (Anderson and McCormack, 2016a). Furthermore, research shows that measuring sexuality as three discrete categories (heterosexual, bisexual, and

homosexual) is no longer useful due to growing complexity of sexual identity categories, further emphasizing the necessity of a categories between heterosexual and bisexual as well as between bisexual and homosexual to account for slight variations in sexual preferences (Diamond, 2009; Savin-Williams, 2014).

Hypermasculinification

Although a decrease in cultural homophobia and a move towards a more inclusive masculinity has been documented, and cultural inclusivity has had a great deal of effects on modern men, male athletes are still plagued by stereotypes of hypermasculinity, and when they espouse inclusive attitudes they are made to feel like they are an exceptional athlete and that other athletes do not hold the same views as them (Cashmore & Cleland, 2012; Magrath, 2017). I claimed that there is a general cultural hypermasculinification of male athletes, especially at the elite level (Ogilvie & McCormack, 2019). Hypermasculinification is defined as having hypermasculine, or orthodox, traits projected upon a subgroup, resulting in a misperception of the subgroups general attitudes, and a misrepresentation of the way that they might respond to any given social situation.

The concept of hypermasculinification is closely related to pluralistic ignorance, whereby some groups of a population misperceive the attitudes of their own population. For example, in the case of elite male athletes and hypermasculinification, since members of the broader culture perceive elite male athletes to be traditionally hypermasculine and more homophobic than themselves, individuals (including elite male athletes) also believe that athletes (their peers and friends) are more homophobic than the general population, perpetuating the issue (Ogilvie & McCormack, 2019). This cyclical phenomenon makes it difficult for athletes to prove their pro-gay attitudes since the broader culture does not believe that they are capable of pro-gay attitudes.

Ongoing Social Issues

The changing zeitgeist of society towards a more inclusive form of masculinities, which is more accepting of a plurality of sexualities, has revolutionised the ways straight men engage with women, non-straight men, and each other. The cultural push towards inclusivity has seen a general decrease in toxic masculinity, homophobia, and misogyny; however, contemporary society is far from perfect. Many aspects of lad culture still persist among young straight men. Lad culture is prominent at many university settings, with researchers still reporting that lad culture is the underlying problem for university rape culture and everyday sexism and harassment of university-age women (Phipps et al., 2017). One large proponent of toxic masculinity that is persistent and troubling is young men's reliance on excessive drinking. Excessive drinking had been correlated with unnecessary risk-taking, violence, and misogynistic discourse. For example, Phipps and Young (2015) describe a situation in which excessive drinking and lad culture combine to urge men to compete with each other with how many young women they can sleep with, using women as a quantifier for contests for 'notches on a bedpost' or 'fuck a fresher week'.

Although research shows that men are more inclusive towards other men and the plurality of masculinities among men, studies of women's experiences and their understanding of men and masculinities raises concerns. Women have reported that, although laddism is only one expression of masculinities, it dominated social and sexual discourse at universities, and their experiences with men that embrace lad culture has led to misogynistic banter, frequent sexual harassment, and the objectification of women for sexual pleasure (Phipps and Young, 2015). This correlation of lad culture, alcohol abuse, and misogyny is still deeply embedded in sport culture among university-age men (Clayton and Harris, 2008; Dempster, 2009, 2011).

Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of key issues when thinking about gender and sexuality in society. Alongside providing standard definitions related to gender and sexuality, it has also advanced a theoretical framework by which to understand gender in contemporary sport settings. Using homophobia as an orienting concept, it then recognises the importance of hegemonic masculinity theory to understand the homophobic 1980s and 1990s before discussing inclusive masculinity theory and the effects of decreasing homophobia on the behaviours and attitudes of heterosexual men. Despite a number of persisting social issues, the modern man is behaving in ways that are uncharacteristic of his orthodox predecessors. Men today are increasingly more accepting of homosexuality and bisexuality, and have adopted a softer form of masculinity which allows them to be emotionally expressive and physically tactile (Anderson, 2014).

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of my methodological approach and the methods I use in this thesis. First defending the qualitative and ethnographic approach that I adopt, and then discussing the key methods of ethnography that I use, I contextualise the research study in the existing methodological literature. This includes discussing the critical issues of academic rigour, validity and reliability, as well as reflexivity. I then discuss the methods that I employ for the PhD, discussing the procedures and ethics, the participants, the setting, and how I practised reflexivity as an insider.

A Qualitative Approach

In this thesis, I adopt a qualitative approach to understanding the dynamics of gender and sexuality in elite team sport. Quantitative research exists in this area, particularly regarding rates of participation and inequalities of gender (see Molnar and Purdy, 2016), but I am interested in understanding the *meanings* and the *dynamics* which is best supported by a qualitative approach. Max Weber argued powerfully for a qualitative approach, arguing that while a focus on external conditions is essential, internal beliefs are also vital in understanding society. Focusing on individuals' agency, Weber (1922) used the term “*verstehen*” to focus on the meaning of social interaction from the actor’s point of view. Interested in the qualities of people’s interactions, these notions have developed into a paradigm of qualitative research.

Perhaps the core distinction between qualitative and quantitative data is that while quantitative data and its analysis is concerned with numbers, qualitative data and analysis views data as text (Silverman, 2006). Thus, people’s words are transcribed and used as

textual data, events are described in field notes and used as text, and even images and music can be transformed into qualitative data. Debates exist about the competing utility of qualitative and quantitative methods, but notwithstanding this, qualitative research has made a vital contribution to sociology as a discipline, and not least in the areas of gender, sexuality and sport (see Hargreaves and Anderson, 2014). Rather than provide an extended discussion of a qualitative approach, I now focus on the methodological issues of the methods that I use in this dissertation; namely, ethnography.

Ethnography

Ethnography has an important place in sociology. The influential Chicago School produced many ethnographic studies, which they simply referred to as 'participant observation', that transformed sociology at the time. The city itself had undergone a huge transformation at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and so provided a perfect opportunity for ethnographic research to understand meaningful explanations of the city at the time (Ritzer, 1994).

Landmark studies focused particularly on urban sociology and racial integration, but had significantly diverse interests including sex in society (Heap, 2003). Across the 20th century, qualitative research became increasingly institutionalised within sociology, including with important journals like *Qualitative Sociology* and *Qualitative Research*, as well as beyond the discipline, including gaining traction in psychology.

Ethnography developed as a tool to understand the social dynamics of social interactions within a particular cultural context to help describe the ideologies, behaviours, relationships, and contextual factors that define a culture (Lofland, 2002; Wolcott, 1999). The underlying assumption that drives ethnographic research is that "knowledge of all cultures is valuable" (Spradley, 1979, p. 9). Ethnography, then, aims to access the knowledge of an unfamiliar or understudied culture by engaging in a social setting to understand the

complexities of its social dynamics, nuances, and stratifications in order to obtain rich, detailed cultural data (Denzin, 1997; Davies, 2008; Holt and Sparkes, 2001; Willis and Trondman, 2002; Wolcott, 1999). The modern understanding of ethnography was originally developed by Bronislaw Malinowski within the field of anthropology to describe the method of living within another culture; whilst participant observation was a term developed within the field of sociology to refer to field-based research methods; however, sociology adopted the term ethnography to refer to a method of field observation that aims to obtain rich, detailed understanding of another culture.

Ethnography is particularly useful for studying and dissecting the social worlds of small groups of people, or subcultures, to understand the intricacies of activities, interests, behaviours, and rules of engagement through various degrees of active participation and immersion of a researcher into the world of their participants (Griffin, 2000; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Wolcott, 1999). As such, the researcher describes the details of the subculture as they see it, oftentimes having become a member of the culture themselves, leading to a more detailed description than that of an outside viewer. While each ethnographic subculture is unique, they are also socio-culturally and socio-historically situated, and socially constructed. Holt and Sparkes (2001) summarised ethnography as a method of research that investigates a group of people and their culture over a substantial period of time with the purpose of understanding the group by examining their behaviours.

There are many ongoing debates concerning the aims and the status of ethnography, including various epistemological and methodological critiques (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 1999; Hammersley, 1992; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, despite these debates, I will instead focus the next section of this chapter on the distinguishing characteristics of ethnography, according to Willis and Trondman (2002), which are facets of ethnographic research that are found throughout its many disciplines. In the context of these

debates about ethnography as a method, Willis and Trondman set out a manifesto for what ethnography should be.

Willis and Trondman's (2002) first characteristic of ethnographic research is "the recognition of the role of theory as a precursor, medium, and outcome of ethnographic study and writing" (p. 396). Although a key benefit of ethnography is to understand a local culture by immersion, the fundamental aim of ethnographic research is to generate theory from the knowledge gained throughout the ethnography. As such, a focus in any ethnography ought to be on the production of concepts and theory to understand society. Despite the importance of rich data and thick description, an ethnography that is merely descriptive without offering theoretical developments fails as a sociological method.

Yet, Willis and Trondman (2002) also contend that the theory development needs to be carefully contained within the limits of the method. They argue that ethnographers ought to avoid generating theory that can be described as 'grand theory' or 'pure' scholastic reason, instead, ethnography is concerned with building conceptual and analytic tools that enrich the understandings of cultures or social institutions. Ethnographers who heed Willis and Trondman's advice ascribe to an emergent approach to data analysis where the generation of theory co-occurs with the research process, called grounded theory. An essential aspect of grounded theory is that the theory must be adapted to fit the data, in this approach empirical data is the most crucial aspect of social research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It is also important to note that grounded theory is neither entirely inductive or fully deductive, rather it is a bit of both; its original basis is inductive, but as the researcher builds a theory to be tested it becomes a deductive process of reformulation and testing until the point of saturation. I discuss grounded theory further in my section on data analysis.

The second characteristic Willis and Trondman (2002) identify is "the centrality of 'culture'" (p. 369). They argue that studying a culture not only involves studying the cultural

practices, language and social symbols of a group of people, but also the spatial, political, historical and temporal context that the participants find themselves in within broader society. This means that the ethnography needs to be located within the culture. While debates exist about how close participants and ethnographer should be (see McCormack, 2012), an ethnographer has to be engaged and involved in the community in which they are collecting data.

The third defining feature of ethnography is “a critical focus in research and writing” (Willis and Trondman, 2002, p. 398). This means that in order for ethnographers to record and understand a lived social dynamic, they must critically analyse the power structures within the culture. Furthermore, one must understand how every social interaction is a conditioned response of being, unjustly secured by institutionalised power dynamics that oppose dominant interests. As an emphasis of this characteristic, a genre of ethnography called *critical ethnography* emerged in which critical ethnographers focus on understanding a particular culture while critiquing damaging power structures within and around the field (Carspecken, 2001). This is particularly important when undertaking an ethnography where social inequalities exist, or are thought may exist, as merely representing the dynamics without examining for issues of power and harm could potentially serve to re-enforce those inequalities.

The final characteristic, according to Willis and Trondman (2002), is that an ethnography maintains “an interest in cultural policy and cultural politics”. This characteristic expands on the need for social research to be socially relevant and to generate a social impact on more than just the academic community.

While the characteristics for ethnography are generally consistent throughout various fields, the methods utilised may vary between fields. According to Jones & Gratton (2004), sports-related ethnographies often have very flexible methodologies, with more fluid

ethnographic frameworks, and with data collection often being unstructured and even unexpected.

Ethnographic Methods

While ethnography is a research method, it is also an umbrella term to describe a set of other methods. That is, alongside a way of approaching qualitative research as highlighted by Willis and Trondman (2002), ethnographic research is also comprised of other existing methods. The fundamental method of ethnographic research, which is nearly synonymous with the term ethnography, is participant observation (Fontana and Frey, 2000). Participant observation involves the interconnected activities of participating in the daily routines of a culture and developing ongoing relationships with participants in their natural setting, while systematically accumulating a written record of observations and experiences (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). It is essential for an ethnographer to immerse themselves in the data in such a way that they are able to engage with participants on their own terms in order to fully understand the contexts of the setting.

There are several different kinds of participant observation and complexity within this concept. O'Reilly (2009) highlights the oxymoronic nature of the term – participant, as active and engaged in the context, contrasted with the observer, passive and detached. Of course, it is the constructive tension that comes from negotiating this contradiction that yields rich and important data. O'Reilly highlights that some ethnographers will have an emphasis on observation while others emphasise participation—a distinction that relates to the insider/outsider debate I discuss later. Key, here, though is O'Reilly's point about balance: "Ethnographers need to both empathise and sympathise, to balance destraction and estrangement. Participating enables the strange to become familiar, observing enables the familiar to appear strange." Sometimes the ethnographer may be fully participating, with

their observational abilities constrained, while other times they may be fully observing a situation, but quite detached from what is occurring.

Another central method of ethnography is the in-depth interview, which is exceptionally useful in obtaining rich data directly from participants in order for the researcher to further their understanding of the meanings and experiences of research participants from the perspective of the participants themselves (Johnson, 2002). In-depth interviews are the best way for an ethnographer to clarify their interpretation of data and to further probe particular issues. In ethnographic research, the researcher has established relationships and rapport with participants throughout the research process, which allows the interview to be more genuine and accurate than an interview in which the researcher was not embedded in the field; furthermore, because an ethnographic researcher has an understanding of the field, they are more able to judge the answers of the interviewees to ensure honesty, and combat inaccuracy and embellishments (Heyl, 2001).

According to Heyl (2001), there are four aspects of in-depth interviewing that ethnographers must incorporate into their research. She argues that in order to carry out ethnographic interviews, researchers should:

- i. "Listen well and respectfully, developing an ethical engagement with the participants at all stages of the project;
- ii. Acquire a self-awareness of our role in the co-construction of meaning during the interview process;
- iii. Be cognizant of the ways in which both the ongoing relationship and the broader social context affect the participants, the interview process, and the project outcomes; and
- iv. Recognise that dialogue is discovery and only partial knowledge will ever be attained" (p. 360)

Ethnographic researchers must be aware that the researcher and the participant both play a vital, active role in the interview process. As such, qualitative researchers ought to avoid structured interviews, and instead opt for semi-structured interviews that permit a conversational gathering of rich data in which the interviewer can guide the interview in relevant ways and act as a catalyst to the emergence of prominent themes, and the details around those emerging themes (Seidman, 2005; Kvale, 1996).

In-depth interviews are an important component of ethnographic research for the reasons mentioned above. However, other forms of interview are also necessary. Roulston (2012) discusses conversational interviewing as a necessary part of ethnography. This is much more informal than interviews which occur privately, at a pre-arranged time and place. While these conversations are sometimes conflated with interviews, the distinction is important: As Roulston (2012, 128) states:

In making use of conversational interviews in prolonged fieldwork, ethnographic interviewers are better able to emulate the spontaneity of conversation in their interviewing practice when they pose casual questions to participants about what is going on as part of their participant observations.

The skill of the ethnographer in using everyday conversations as a form of interview is to ensure that questions asked are strategic, used to clarify interpretations of events in fieldwork, or to get an opinion relatively quickly, alongside other reasons. They also give more agency to participants during fieldwork, as neither the questions nor the setting is structured, and there is much more scope for the participant to talk about the issues that matter to them.

Ensuring Rigour

One of the central hallmarks of sociological method is that it is a *systematic* approach to understanding society (David and Sutton, 2011). Regardless of the method or theoretical

framework used, the point of a sociological method is that it provides data and findings that stand up to scrutiny. Traditional terms for scrutinising methods include reliability (whether the same study rerun will find the same results) and validity (whether the findings are accurate). These terms have their history in quantitative research, and there is debate as to whether and how qualitative research can meet similar tests. A key question here is whether quantitative and qualitative methods are objective or whether they are subjective, and influenced to a palpable extent by researcher bias and other issues. Rather than focus on objectivity, Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) suggest that qualitative research should strive for *rigour* by attempting to achieve reliability and validity. Thus, it is still important to discuss issues of reliability and validity, but recognise that there are limits to this and think about reflexivity and positionality and how this might influence the results.

Validity

Validity, generally, is the extent to which research examines what it purports to examine.

Validity can be broken down into *internal validity* and *external validity*. Internal validity, according to LeCompte and Goetz (1982) refers to “the extent to which scientific observations and measurement are authentic representations of some reality” (p. 32).

Research is considered valid if researchers are actually measuring what they think they are measuring. External validity, in short, pertains to the generalisability of the research findings, being formally defined by LeCompte and Goetz (1982) as “the degree to which such representations may be compared legitimately across groups” (p. 32). They claim that the issues of external validity are often ignored by ethnographic researchers because ethnography focusses on analysing detailed aspects of a single phenomenon or small group of humans in a limited social setting.

Internal validity is a strength of qualitative research, in comparison to quantitative research (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982); however, the key issues that are a threat to the internal validity of research are time, 'validity-as-reflexive-accounting' and sporadic events. The threat of time refers to how ethnographic settings change and develop throughout ethnographic research. This requires an ethnographer to accurately choose the appropriate amount of time in their methodological framework to understand the culture and address their research aims. Having too short of a timeframe will not allow the researcher to obtain a rich understanding of the culture or accurately assess their ethnographic question; but, too long of a timeframe might see the culture change drastically, making earlier observations in the culture obsolete. This requires the researcher to determine which parts of the culture are stable, and which are variable. This problem is combatted by collecting data until the point of data saturation, which refers to a point in the research where no further data is needed to understand the culture, or to develop additionally theory pertaining to the main ethnographic research question (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It is important to note that not all ethnographers believe that data saturation is inevitable in ethnographic research.

Another threat to internal validity is called "validity-as-reflexive-accounting" (Altheide and Johnson, 1994, p. 489), which refers to the way researchers assure validity by understanding the effect that their presence has on the field of study through examining their own relationship with that of the setting and the research topic. Lastly, ethnographic researchers must be careful not to place too much importance on an unusual event during the research, instead they ought to contextualise the event to determine how important the event truly is to the research topic.

Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the replicability of one's findings (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982).

This model of research is exemplified by the natural sciences and the scientific experiment – where all conditions are kept the same with just one variable changed. Clearly, this is harder to achieve with research that is not in a laboratory and where there is less ability to control external conditions. The facts that people have agency and that groups change over time mean that qualitative researchers try and make their studies as reliable as possible while recognising it would be impossible to guarantee the same results if the study was run multiple times.

Reliability can be separated into two forms, *external reliability* and *internal reliability*. External reliability measures whether a different researcher would reach the same conclusions through replicating the research, while internal reliability pertains to whether a different researcher would code the data in the same way as the initial researcher (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). External reliability is particularly difficult to achieve through ethnography, particularly because ethnographies are unique and study complex socio-cultural phenomena (Pelto and Pelto, 1978). In order to address external reliability, ethnographers recognise five significant problems: the status position of the researcher, informant choices, social conditions and situations, analytic premises and constructs, and methods of data collection and analysis (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982).

The first problem, the status position of the researcher, affects the reliability of the ethnography because in order to replicate the research, an independent researcher would have to maintain the same type of insider status as the original researcher. This is, of course, difficult because social status within a culture can be affected by the researcher's sexuality, race, gender, or any other particular skill set of the researcher (Davies, 2008; LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). It is something discussed in more detail below.

The next problem to external reliability, according to LeCompte and Goetz (1982), discussing the informant choices, which refers to research choices made by the researcher, one vital choice being the selection of the participants that the researcher chooses to focus more time and energy on within the culture. For example, when studying high school students, if a researcher easily gains social access to a group of jocks, the research will be different than if the researcher had easily gained social access to a group of the academic elite of the school. This type of informant bias poses a threat to the external reliability.

The third problem threatening the reliability of ethnography focuses on the social situations and conditions of the ethnography (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). The social setting often affects what participants will reveal, based on what is contextually appropriate for the social situation, therefore it is important for the researcher to understand the effect the setting will have on the data. For example, a participant might be more willing to reveal personal details during a conversation had at home, in comparison to a conversation that happens at their place of employment. In order to combat this problem of reliability, it is crucial for ethnographers to note the setting that the data collection takes place for crucial data.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) also note that the analytic constructs and premises pose a challenge to the external reliability of ethnographic research. The theoretical framework initially adopted by the researcher can affect the reliability of research, because the initial theoretical framework frames the perception of each social event and how the researcher manages emerging themes during the research process (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). In order to combat this and make the data more reliable, researchers ought to make clear their initial theoretical frameworks as well as the definitions they use for analysing the data.

The final problem facing external reliability is the method of data collection and analysis (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). More specifically, it is vital for researchers to present their methods so clearly and precisely that researchers can use the original methods report as

an operating manual for replicating the research. Failure to do this clearly will lead to unreliable research.

Internal reliability, which focuses on the accuracy of coding, can be achieved in two main ways. Firstly, including large quantities of data is an effective way to substantiate one's claims and ensure coding mechanisms are reliable. Secondly, and most importantly, LeCompte and Goetz (1982) claim that inter-rater reliability is the best method of ensuring internal reliability. They describe inter-rater reliability as "The extent to which the sets of meaning held by multiple observers are sufficiently congruent so that they describe phenomena in the same way and arrive at the same conclusions about them" (p. 41). In summary, inter-rater reliability is ensuring coding accuracy by having an independent researcher assess the same data to see if their findings are consistent with the original findings.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity, broadly, is the process of examining one's own feelings, motives, and situational context to understand the reasons for acting in a given situation. In social research, reflexivity refers to the ways in which the data and findings are affected by the researcher's process, whether the effects occur at the initial stages of research, or the final stages of reporting (Davies, 2008). According to Denzin (1997), the problem of reflexivity arises when a researcher's subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of the participants, impacting on the social setting and the data collection during an ethnography. These types of subjectivity can come in many forms, such as a researcher's gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, age or class. The strength of ongoing reflexive analysis during ethnographic research is that researchers can analyse the intersection of their own social paradigms with that of the culture and people that they are studying, allowing researchers to contextualise events and recognise their own

biases, achieving more valid data (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Willis, 1978). However, Robertson (2002) warns that an over-emphasis on reflexivity can be harmful to ethnographic research, potentially causing the ethnography to become egocentric.

The job of reflexivity is to provide a systematic way to deal with the issues raised by the subjective position of a researcher. Rather than dismissing the threat of the researcher's beliefs, experiences and position in the field, reflexivity enables the researcher to accept that there are issues and set up a way of dealing with them (Dean, 2017). Thus, it is necessary to consider the benefits and disadvantages of one's own position in the research and how they might affect – both negatively and positively – the research findings. This is something I discuss in detail below.

The Methods of Study

Procedures

Data from this research comes from an ethnographic study of elite athletes competing in BUCS (British University College Sport), the educational based sporting programs, in conjunction with national level sporting leagues, at Northern University. Each year, Team Northern recruits postgraduate students from the US, who have already completed four years of competing in the NCAA in their given sport, in order to strengthen the athletic performance of Team Northern. This research year saw over 100 incoming American recruits for postgraduate education at Northern University that entered into elite team sports with British undergraduate and postgraduate athletes. My ethnography began at the start of the academic year, as the first athletes joined the team for pre-season training in September, through the end of the season in April, and for some through the summer until the next year of recruited athletes began to arrive.

My research took the form of a year-long ethnography with the players of the elite Volleyball team, of which I was a core member. At one level, the project could have become the intimate story of this small group of men and been a "year in the life" form of storytelling. Yet such a framing is too narrow because the reality of being an elite Team Northern athlete is that while you do exist in a highly unusual social milieu, it is one of a *Team Northern* athlete, not a volleyball player per se. Thus, the friendships, romances, nights out – our social and emotional lives – were bounded not by volleyball but by elite athlete status. The Team Northern athlete closeness, felt by all recruits, can be attributed to the set-up of the system- where each year a group of athletes come in for only one season, making the year feel like a study/sport abroad year for the US recruits, giving them a unified group mentality. My focus in this research, then, quickly shifted – from collecting data on my volleyball team to examining the gendered and sexual lives of the volleyball team and collecting data with them and their friends – men and women from a range of elite sports across Team Northern.

I adopted an insider ethnographic approach in this research. As a member of the Northern volleyball team for my Master's research, prior to my PhD research and this study, I was a trusted and liked member of the team. I was involved in recruiting players for the team, and I was a starting player on the team – regularly starting in the Libero or Setter position, depending on the positional talent of each recruiting class. As a former volleyball player at Michigan State University, a Division one university in the US, I already had a complete understanding of the intricacies of elite men's volleyball culture. Thus, I was already an insider for this research. I was also openly bisexual as well, and had been warmly included in the Team Northern community with very few problems related to my sexuality.

Data Analysis

I adopted an inductive approach to my analysis and adopted a modified form of grounded theory that has been developed by McCormack over several publications (Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015; McCormack and Wignall, 2017; McCormack, Wignall and Morris, 2016). This approach sees two components of analysis for ethnographic research – first, a process of reflection and analysis of ethnographic data followed by a more systematic analysis of interviews and field notes where concepts and theories are more carefully developed into an overarching set of research findings.

The initial analysis occurred throughout the data collection process. As highlighted when discussing reflexivity, I made initial interpretations of my data while writing my field notes, and making annotations to these notes. This included conversations with my supervisors about the data during fieldwork. Some early categories for coding my observations were: Banter (pro-gay and pro-feminism), Physical Tactility, Emotional Expressiveness, Locker Room Talk, Team Bonding, and Interactions with Female Athletes. It was from numerous ethnographic entries around these topics that I structured my semi-structured interviews.

The second component of analysis developed during and after I had collected, and transcribed, interviews (given that interviews occurred over a period of several months). Here, I drew upon the detailed analytical methods of Charmaz (2014), where a constant comparative method of analysing interviews is used to identify early codes in the interviews that may not be present in the participant observations. After these codes were developed, I compared them with my research diary and knowledge of the existing literature to develop more focussed codes, which is referred to as middle-range coding. Codes that emerged at this stage of my process were: Male Language, Decreasing Homophobia, Engaging with Bisexuality, Homoerotic Gaze, Physical Tactility, Bromances, Competing Against Women,

and Training with Women. As my analysis and writing continued, I combined these themes with “existing frameworks to develop a theory grounded in the data and engaged with existing debates” (McCormack and Wignall, 2017, p. 981). I then checked these themes with my original data to ensure for accuracy with this data.

Ethics

There are a number of important ethical questions, which were thoroughly considered as I gained ethical approval from my department for the study. Some key questions here were about participants being able to give informed consent *and* for them to have the ability to opt out of the study. In terms of opting out, it was agreed that if an athlete decided they didn’t wish to participate in the study, notes would not be taken on the athlete during ethnographic observations. All players were informed about the study, assured that their participation would not affect their standing on the team, and any questions they had were answered. No players from any team had refused participation; however, one participant had been removed from the team halfway through the season; as such, all notes on the participant were destroyed, and he has no presence in this research. Consent for this study was also received from the Head of Sport of Team Northern.

For participants who consented to be researched, there are key strategies in use to protect their participation. First, pseudonyms are used, and details are changed so that participants cannot be identified. This means that some details are omitted or facts changed to protect participants – the guiding rule here in my analysis is that I have changed details as little as possible and I have changed them in such a way that does not affect the overall dynamics of the findings. For example, if a player expressed a homophobic viewpoint in idiosyncratic language, I would change the language that identified them—the notion of homophobia is still kept in the finding, but the individual player is not identified.

The pseudonyms are also changed from passage to passage to protect anonymity further. For example, a player might recognise their teammate from the ethnographic story used in which I referred to the player with the pseudonym 'Tim', but during the interview 'Tim' divulged some very intimate details about his private life; so, in order to protect his anonymity, when quoting his interview, I might change the pseudonym to 'Jerry' so that a participant's interview responses cannot be linked to an ethnographic story. Furthermore, I am not releasing the exact year of the ethnography, because team rosters from previous years are accessible to the public. Additionally, to protect participants, I have changed the name of the participating university to 'Northern University', as well as the sport organisation associated with the university to 'Team Northern' throughout this thesis.

Participants were also informed that they could talk to me about the study at any point and also that we could discuss particular issues that bothered them. They also knew that they could speak to me either as a researcher or as a friend. That is, participants could say to me that they wanted a conversation with me that wouldn't be recorded into this study. This rarely happened, and I do not think anything I was told in these instances alter the findings I present in this thesis. All ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association were followed.

Participants

The participants in my study are elite athletes based in the UK. They offer a unique perspective because as well as British athletes, many of them are recruited directly from top NCAA programs in America. This intercultural domain leads to an interesting mix of men from the UK participating in sport with talented and accomplished American athletes from all over the United States, coming from a wide range of political and socio-cultural backgrounds. These participants, who were aged 18-28, compete in the top league of sport in the UK for one of the following sports: Volleyball, Water Polo, Lacrosse, American Football, or

Basketball. My ethnographic research primarily focused on ten men's volleyball players that constituted the Volleyball team, but also engaged with the full teams of the other four sports. Furthermore, 35 men and 18 women, who were integral to their wider network, participated in in-depth interviews.

Volleyball: As a member of the Men's Volleyball team, I had insider access to this group of participants, making it the primary focus of the ethnography. The roster, not including myself, consists of ten athletes. Five of which are white British, three are white American, one Asian-American, and one Mexican-American. All members of the volleyball team participated in interviews.

Lacrosse: The Men's Lacrosse team maintains a roster of fifteen athletes. Ten of which are white American, four are white British, and one is Turkish-British. Five members of the lacrosse team participated in interviews at the culmination of the athletic season.

American football: The Men's American Football team has a roster of thirty. Eight of which were white American, two were African-American, and the other twenty were white British. Of the thirty athletes, five participated in interviews.

Water polo: The Men's Water Polo team has a roster of eleven. Two of the athletes were white American, eight were white British, and one was Asian-British. Eight of these athletes participated in interviews.

Basketball: The Men's Basketball roster consisted of ten athletes. Four of these athletes were African-American, one was white American, and five were white British. Seven of these basketball athletes participated in interviews.

All of the American participants are previous NCAA athletes. Many British players have trained and competed at the youth national level in the UK, while some of the British athletes are 'walk ons', meaning that they came to try-outs and displayed immense potential for talent despite a lack of experience, so coaches allowed them to join the team with aspirations of quickly preparing them to play at the elite level. While each of these teams competed in the student league (BUCS), they also competed in the national league; and while all of the interviewed participants were students at the university, not all of their teammates are students because the national league is open to all adults that are able to compete at an elite level. Therefore, for this research, I define these athletes as 'elite athletes' rather than 'student athletes' because they compete in an education based league as well as a national based league, to the extent that some athletes are recruited on student visas, and others on work visas.

It is important to recognise how elite these athletes are. According to ncaa.org, in 2018 the number of high school participants in comparison to the number of NCAA participants (along with the percentage of high school athletes that go out to play at the NCAA level) in each of the sports of this research are as follows:

Sport	Number of High School Participants	Number of NCAA Participants	Percentage of High School Participants that Compete in the NCAA	Number of the NCAA Athletes that are Predicted to Play Elite/Professional After NCAA

Men's Basketball	551,373	18,816	3.4%	376
Women's Basketball	412,407	16,614	4.0%	332
Men's Lacrosse	113,313	14,310	12.6%	286
Women's Lacrosse	96,904	12,061	12.4%	241
Men's Volleyball	60,976	2,163	3.5%	43
Women's Volleyball	446,583	17,471	3.9%	349
Men's Water Polo	22,501	1,047	4.7%	21
Women's Water Polo	21,054	1,216	3.9%	24
Men's American Football	1,036,842	73,557	7.1%	1,471

Furthermore, ncaa.org estimates that less than 2% of NCAA athletes go on to compete in professional sport, or elite sport, after their NCAA career.

All of the male athletes participating in this research are certainly worthy of the title of 'elite', and the vast majority has been playing their speciality sport for the majority of their lifetime, being subjected to rigorous training regiments, the pain of sport injuries and a highly competitive environment from a young age; that is, they have all be subjected to military-style masculinity training under the guise of organised team sport (Anderson and White, 2017). While the historical differences in 'male domination' and hyper masculinity may differ between each sport, such as American Football and Basketball's long history of race and masculinity relations in the United States, the chart above shows that male participation

and female participation at each sport has become more equal, with the sole exception of American Football which is still denied to female participants.

American football is currently considered the most violent and masculine team sport in American culture, and has been since the early part of the Twentieth Century (Rader, 2008); and due to an emphasis on male physique, and make our male athletes bigger, stronger and faster, the violence and sport injuries in American football has escalated over recent years (Sanderson, 2002). American football sits at the top of the masculine hierarchy in American sport culture, generating unfathomable amounts of money in revenue per year, and producing countless professional and college football players for young American boys to idolise as role models (Messner, 1992). Due to its extreme gender segregation, not having women's American football teams at most levels, it is the most male dominated popular sport in the US.

Each of the five sports have different histories and have different gender associations, particularly related to masculinities. In Anderson (2005), he discusses how particular sports are more associated with forms of orthodox masculinity than others. Importantly, the key component that Anderson highlights is that team sports is more associated with orthodox masculinity than individual sports; hence, sports such as diving, golf and running are framed as feminine, whereas other sports that have team elements are more masculinised. Thus, while there are differences in the five sports in this research, all five sports maintain a close association with orthodox masculinity due to their team sport nature and their history of gender segregation.

Furthermore, American football and lacrosse are both full contact sports, that include checking or tackling, that rely on fast, big and strong bodies to compete at an elite level. Volleyball, basketball and water polo, while ranging from zero contact to partial contact sports, all emphasise a male physique different than that of American football and lacrosse:

these three sports require tall, muscular, toned and explosive boy types that are able to jump high or effectively wrestle underwater. Each of these sports upholds ideals associated with orthodox masculinities, and while there isn't a detailed academic literature on each of these sports, it is clear that the differences are marginal in these areas.

Participation for the in-depth interviews, in comparison to many ethnographic excerpts you'll read from conversational interviews, were selected on a volunteer basis; that is, I had asked all participants to participate in the interviews, and of the 76 male participants, 35 agreed to participate. Interviews took place in the months after sporting seasons ended, due to availability: as all five teams were either in the semi-finals or finals for BUCS competition, as well as some in the finals for National League competition, the participants were not willing to commit to an hour and a half long (minimum) interview process during their season. Although interviewing every athlete would have been ideal, I was able to commit at least five athletes from each team, leading to a rich understanding of how the sport culture from each sport are similar and different from each other, and what factors might be responsible for the differences.

In addition to the 35 male participants, 18 elite female athletes also participated in interviews. Of these 18 women, nine were on the women's volleyball team, five on the women's basketball team, two on the women's lacrosse team, and two on the women's water polo team. Demographically, twelve of the women were white American, two were white British, three were African-American, and one was Native Hawaiian-American.

Settings for Data Collection

The first location for data collection is at volleyball practices and games. During these times, the focus of observations revolved around conflict during competition, and how these athletes express their masculinity during intense moments on the court. I kept careful notice of the

types of phrases and comments were said during these interactions, as well as who had authority in these settings. As a member of the team, and a starting player on the court, I was present for all events on the court; however, I was not privy to conversations occurring on the bench during gameplay, which could have been vastly different from the team conversations occurring on the court.

The second location for data collection was during commute time. An average week of volleyball consists of training Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and some Fridays, with matches on Wednesday and either Saturday or Sunday, giving us the other day of the weekend off for rest. As such, there was a lot of commuting time, either walking to and from training (a 30-minute walk to training), or transportation to and from match locations (anywhere between 1 to 5 hours of driving to a location, and the same amount of time to return home). Data collected during commute time was often casual, discussing a variety of topics ranging from something as simple as pop culture, TV, and movies, to something as complex as relationship problems, family issues, and general anxieties. These long time-spans were rife with team bonding moments that led to rich ethnographic data collection as well as a thorough, genuine understanding of my teammates.

The locker room is the third location for rich data collection. With two games per week, on average, a significant amount of time was spent as a team in the locker rooms for team strategy meetings, getting changed, showering and just relaxing. Data collection in this setting was more intimate, due to social interactions that occur during nude settings, making some interact in anxious or timid ways, while others interact more boisterously, while all participants were a bit more vulnerable than in any other setting. Conversations, behaviours and pre/post-game rituals made up a majority of the rich data collected in this setting.

The next location where much of the data was collected was at the gym, either working out or in the lounge where many athletes congregate throughout the day to relax or

do schoolwork. The lounge is a vital area for intersport cooperation in a professional setting, compared to that of other social domains. At the lounge, athletes from all sports eat together, study together, or just socialise between practices and team workouts. Although each team was required to work out exclusively as a team at least twice a week with our team weightlifting trainers, numerous athletes from a variety of sports worked out together during hours specified where no specific team was scheduled for team lifting. Although the weight room was a fascinating place to observe men and masculinity at play, the gym is not a male-only space. The men would work out alongside or in conjunction with female athletes. This particular gym was for Team Northern athletes only, making it an exclusive place for male and female athletes to have social interactions with each other without the presence of the general student population.

Data collection with the primary focus of multi-gender social interaction mostly occurred on nights out at local bars and clubs. It was commonplace for all athletes to frequent bars and clubs on Wednesday nights to celebrate victories or drown the sorrows of defeat, because every sport held their matches on Wednesdays. In this setting, I was able to engage in bonding with more than just my own volleyball teammates. In these settings, as well as smaller social settings, I collected data on all of the other athletes participating in the ethnography.

The final place for data collection occurred at home. Team Northern athletes are all housed together, with a mixture of sports in each household, some with mixed gender. For part of the year, I lived with two lacrosse players, an American football player, and three other volleyball players, all men. For the remainder of that year, I lived with two water polo players, and one volleyball player, also all men. During this time, I was able to have countless interactions with not only my roommates, but also their teammates, whether that be watching television, eating meals, or just lounging around.

Insider Ethnography and Practices of Reflexivity

Although there are contested epistemological assumptions about the best ways to generate theoretical knowledge through ethnographic research, there has been growing interest in embracing the reflexivity of insider ethnography to understand how the ethnographer unavoidably influences the events and relationships within a culture of which they are already a member (Collins and Gallinat, 2010; Sparkes, 2002; Young and Atkinson, 2012). It is impossible for an ethnographer to be a neutral device to a culture, because to do so would require the researcher to be a transcendental subject or invisible to the participants, as well as being intellectually detached during analysis of data (DeGaris, 1999); therefore, by acknowledging my own subjectivity to elite sporting culture, which I have been a member of for over a decade, I was able to establish a system of checks and balances to ensure that I maintained a social distance from the data and that I could critically understand the events of the ethnography through various informed perspectives.

Firstly, although most aspects of my life during the ethnography were completely immersed in the culture, I was regularly able to withdrawal from the field for doctoral responsibilities. As a doctoral student at Northern University, I spent a good portion of my week focused on my teaching within the sociology department at Northern University. Preparing the seminars, teaching the seminars, meeting with students to discuss readings and assignments, and completing guest lectures in other departments, I was able to temporarily step out of the elite athlete setting, and into a critical doctoral setting.

Secondly, I was also able to escape from the elite athlete culture every night, where I set aside time to write in my diary. Ethnographic research is an intimate process. As an insider participant researcher, I could not walk around with a notebook continually writing down what I saw – not least because my notebook would get wet in the showers as we

discussed intimate moments in our lives. All participants were aware of my research (as I discussed in the Ethics section), yet visibly writing down my notes would be problematic. Instead, I would write notes up each evening as I got home. This means that there is a chance some events are not entirely accurately remembered, as sometimes there were many hours before I could write it down. Yet following other ethnographic researchers (Anderson, 2009a; McCormack, 2012; Spradley, 1979), I decided that what is lost inaccuracy is more than compensated for by the closeness and richness of data received. The ethnographic notes you will see throughout the chapters of this thesis are notes from my diary; these notes were taken every night to record the events of the day, conversations with teammates or other athletes, and my immediate feelings and interpretation of the events. This diary acted as my first method of stepping away from the immersion of my athletic status, and being able to think critically about each interaction and relationship within my research.

Additionally, I had the help of one key informant, Whitney, who reflected my status as a member of elite athlete culture, a member of elite volleyball culture, and a member of the academic community. Whitney, the captain of the women's volleyball team at Northern University, was also a successful NCAA athlete from the American Midwest. She was my roommate my first year at Northern University, during our Master's degrees, and together we began our doctoral research, hers in educational psychology at Northern University. Whitney acted as a second mode of criticality, the first being my diary. As an elite heterosexual female athlete who had a similar sport schedule as mine but without access to much of the masculine homosocial cultural spaces, she had an understanding of the intensity of sport culture, but a different perspective of the masculine relationships and ethnographic events than that of myself. Weekly discussions with Whitney were essential for keeping me from 'going native'. For example, through my extensive knowledge of sexuality research I was able to understand whether an interaction or not ought to be coded as 'homophobic'; however, discussing events

with Whitney allowed me to ensure that I wasn't witnessing covert homophobia on my team and simply not coding it because my teammates are my friends.

With the help of Whitney, I also considered, not just my own criticality in relation to my participants, but also how my presence as an openly bisexual American affected their behaviours. I carefully analysed my participants' own language, and the ways they interacted with me, and through rich, detailed assurance from Whitney (who often occupied the same space as male athletes without my presence), found that there were not any significant problems or covert prejudices that my participants were hiding from me. Conversationally, I also spoke with key participants to confirm whether they perceived other people to be changing their behaviours. These conversations, triangulated with my own participant observations and interview data, lead me to confidently claim that all accounts in this thesis are a genuine portrayal of the participants.

Lastly, while Whitney served as a critical confidant and tool for understanding ethnographic events, she also maintains all the same elite athlete biases that I do; therefore, it was imperative for me to have frequent meetings and discussions with my doctoral supervisors and a broader network of scholars to discuss ethnographic events and data analysis. This broader network of scholars included sociologists and critical scholars of gender and sexuality who were more critical of the sporting components than that of Whitney or me. Through note taking, discussions with Whitney, and my broader network of scholars, I was ultimately able to avoid 'going native' through over immersion, ensure the analysis of my data remained unbiased, reliable, and valid.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the methods of my study and situated this study within the methodological literature. In the next three chapters, I present the results of my

study before presenting a final discussion where I draw together the findings with the existing research and discuss the implications of my research.

Chapter 5: Decreasing Homophobia in Elite Male Athlete Subcultures

November 29th

Since day one, I had always assumed that Michael was going to be a problem for me this season. How could I not, he was the physical embodiment of everything I was subconsciously supposed to fear in the locker room. Physically, you can tell he's an elite athlete from a mile away- he's tall and good looking, with a body that looks as if someone has sculpted it out of clay to achieve solid perfection. He walks with an air of All-American superiority, undoubtedly fuelled by his conservative, upper-middle-class upbringing. He's the type of man that walks by, and you can't help but be a tiny bit angry because he looks like he has never failed at a single thing in his entire life; he's a mortal embodiment of Superman, albeit a bit less altruistic and a bit more of a homophobe.

As I'm getting dressed for Michael's birthday party, a night out on the town, I can't help but dread the night and replay the situations in my head that make me nervous to be around Michael. It wasn't just his looks – I know lots of athletes who look like that but are inclusive – it was things he had said, both casually and in serious conversation. Like the time he told me that he thinks gay marriage isn't a basic human right, and that it should really be a state-by-state legal issue instead of a federal one. Or the time that he told me he hates the Macklemore song 'same love' and the Hozier song 'take me to church' because he feels like popular music artists shouldn't take political sides to fuel activism. Every one-on-one conversation I've had with Michael, barring volleyball conversations, has left me feeling inferior and infuriated, so for his birthday celebration, I was mostly planning on completely avoiding him.

At this point, in late November, we had only been a team for a couple of months, and Michael was our first birthday of the season, our first big event, and although I was anxious about it being a night devoted to Michael, I was also excited for a night out after a long preseason practice and workout schedule, and a beginning of season that was packed with big games. In my straightest outfit (less tight than clothes I would normally wear), I walked to the train station with my teammates to meet Michael and the new beautiful girl that was his flavour of the week at a popular and overpriced bar in town. It was everything you'd expect from a popular straight bar- a huge line, big cover charge at the door to get in, expensive drinks and three floors of people dancing to the exact same top 40 playlist. I did my birthday due diligence of buying a shot for the birthday boy and his lady friend, and then stood at the bar with the rest of my team in a circle while we made small talk over the loud music and pretended to be having fun.

After about an hour I said to my teammates, "I can't believe I've been at a bar for over an hour and haven't heard a single Whitney Houston song, straight bars really are the worst." This comment was well received. Eventually, the group of teammates I was with decided that we should go to a gay bar for the rest of the night because they trusted my expertise that the drinks would be cheaper, the music would be better and that they could dance around like idiots without feeling insecure. The only mission now was to inform Michael, who was dancing with his girlfriend, that we had planned on leaving this bar to go to gay bars; a discussion that I was not looking forward to having, yet that I was unanimously informed that it was my duty.

I walked up to Michael and interrupted his poor excuse of sexual dancing to say "Hey Mike, me and the team are looking to change it up a bit and go somewhere else, do you want to come with? Or do you want to stay here for the rest of the night?", to which his response was "No, we can go somewhere else, where does everyone want to go?" I mustered up a ton

of courage and said, with as much conviction as I could summon, “We want to head over to the gay bars for the rest of the night, is that a problem?” I had probably said it a bit too pointedly, but the tone was indicative that I was already pre-emptively being defensive. With a casual smile on his face, he locked eyes with his girlfriend for a second, then back with me and said “Frog, I want to go anywhere that you and the team want to go.” At the time I took that as a political response, he didn’t declare interest or disinterest in the fact that it was a gay bar, so I was sceptical of his true feelings. I wondered if he would go to the gay bar, just to secretly make fun of the people in my community, or if he would go there and latch on to his girlfriend to prove his heterosexuality; but in hindsight, I couldn’t have been more wrong about those concerns.

The gay bar we went to was the most popular one in the city, similar to the straight bar we were just at, but a definite upgrade- small line, cheaper entrance fee, and three floors of completely different atmospheres varying from bar, to club, to outdoor terrace. Once we arrived I said, “let’s just go grab a few drinks in the quieter part, ease you guys into the gayness”, to which Michael, of all people, responded, “No way, I thought we came here to dance” with a cheeky smile on his face. And so we did.

The rest of the night was spent on the dance floor, our group at this point consisting of only the people that managed to stay out past 1 am- 8 men and 3 women. Dancing and drinking and loving each other. This was real extracurricular team bonding. I look over while I am dancing with one of the volleyball girls still with our group and see Michael and two of my teammates with their shirts off, dancing in a circle to a modern techno version of a popular Cher song, and that sparked the first shirts off gay bar dance party of the year, on Michael’s birthday of all days.

Reflecting on this the following day, I was ecstatic that Michael embraced his visit to the gay club, and that our first team birthday was such an inclusive success. I wonder, for a

few minutes, if these jock-athletes were taking their tops off to show their strength and masculinity, and dancing in the centre of a queer venue as a display of heterosexual dominance. But I dismiss this idea as it clashes with the embodied feel of the evening. The club was known to be open to heterosexual partygoers, and these men – with their glistening muscles dancing to the beat of Britney Spears and Lady Gaga – were being welcomed and enjoyed by other gay and bisexual men in the club, some of whom they befriended for the night. And the way these men danced, and how they interacted with me across the night, showed that my teammates were not just at ease in the venue, but loving the experience.

Two days later, at the first volleyball practice after Michael's birthday party, everyone was still elated from the birthday party hype, reminiscing the stories from the night, and declaring it an amazing time. Michael, as well as a few other guys, had admitted that that was their first time at a gay bar, and that they plan on going back, as a team, as often as we can.

From that moment on, I decided that Michael was not exactly homophobic, at least not in the sense that I normally think of homophobes. He was undoubtedly conservative, and his ideals didn't lend themselves to liberal notions of LGBT equality, but he held no ill will against the LGBT community. In fact, he was more than open to understanding LGBT people and their stories. To this day, Michael and I are extremely close friends. We have been to Gay Pride events together, taken holidays together, had numerous non-aggressive political discussions, and have cultivated a healthy respect for our different political viewpoints because I know that he loves me and ultimately would never stand in the way of my happiness or rights. Throughout my decade of being an elite male athlete, Michael is the most homophobic teammate that I have ever had. In retrospect, maybe the biggest hurdle in being a non-heterosexual elite male athlete is the notion, or possibility, of homophobic teammates,

rather than the actual teammates themselves, who seem to never be as bad as we might have imagined.

The above excerpt is from my ethnographic diary, and is just one of many that I could have used to illustrate the points that will be made in this chapter: The elite male athletes in this study, who hail from across the UK and the USA, foster a more inclusive masculinity, demonstrate less homophobia than previous eras of sport, and because of a cultural shift away from homophobia, heterosexual elite male athletes are interacting with non-heterosexual teammates in interesting, positive ways. The story of Michael, a conservative and heterosexual volleyball player from America, highlights that he is not only accepting of non-heterosexual teammates, he also grows to be extremely close with one; proving his acceptance through respect on and off the court, and through a genuine interest in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) culture and understanding the differences between being a heterosexual elite male athlete and a non-heterosexual elite male athlete.

In previous chapters, it has been established that high levels of homophobia were an ordinary aspect of sporting institutions in the US and UK, especially team sports (Anderson, 2005a, Messner, 2002, Pronger, 1990). Together these works have identified homophobia as the central mechanism that mandates hetero-masculinity among male athletes, utilised to discursively marginalise peers while simultaneously elevating one's social status (Connell, 1995). Team sports, a terrain of hyper-masculinity, has previously been known to be a culture with high homophobia; however, the data that this chapter will examine suggests that levels of homophobia in elite team sports has drastically declined.

The decreasing significance of homophobia is evidenced by two main factors in data presented in this chapter. First, participants do not socially or intellectually distance themselves from same-sex desire, things coded as gay or bisexual or their sexual minority

peers; instead, they are very inclusive of their gay and bisexual peers and show a keen interest in understanding LGBT culture and the nuances of same-sex sexuality. Additionally, this intellectual acceptance of gay and bisexual peers has led to an acceptance of athletes with same-sex sexual desires in the sporting arena. Second, the majority of athletes in this study had not used homophobic language during the year-long ethnography and condemn it more generally. Rather, these athletes intellectualise pro-gay attitudes, and engage in pro-gay banter with their gay and bisexual peers. Furthermore, while I am mostly talking about pro-gay acceptance, there were also sustained discussions around the acceptance of bisexual people, partly through discussions of my own sexuality, and also in nuanced ethnographic observations which implies their acceptance of bisexuality as a result of their openness to intellectualise male sexual fluidity. Each of these areas will be examined in turn, but first there is a need to summarise pre-existing literary discussions of these topics.

Revisiting Masculinities and Homophobia

Previous chapters have addressed that although recent literature reports a sustained and profound decrease in homophobia, traditionally high levels of homophobia have been commonplace in team sports because sport is a social institution that is organised around policing masculinity in young men, sculpting bodies and minds to align with hegemonic perspectives of masculinity (Anderson & White, 2017; Crossett, 1990; Messner, 2002). Men's homophobia in sport has been paramount in the intramasculine stratification among male athletes (Anderson, 2011d). As Messner (1992, 34) wrote, "Boys [in sports] learn early that to be gay, to be suspected of being gay, or even to be unable to prove one's heterosexual status is not acceptable." This means, that being homophobic is an effective way to demonstrate one's heterosexuality to peers.

While homophobia is an important concept in understanding the social dynamics of sporting teams, Anderson (2009) argued that it lacked power in explaining when and how homophobia regulated gender performance. Instead, he introduced homohysteria – the cultural fear of being socially perceived as gay. Two key prerequisites to Anderson's (2009) concept of homohysteria are that there must be high levels of homophobia in the culture and that there must be an association of gender atypicality with homosexuality. As such, in debating whether a culture is homohysterical or not, it is essential to understand the ways in which homophobia polices gendered behaviour in homohysterical cultures. McCormack (2012) describes three ways in which the influence of homophobia on men's gendered behaviour is evident in homohysterical cultures. Specifically, he argues men must:

1. maintain social and intellectual distance from homosexuality,
2. employ homophobic discourse, and
3. disengage from homosocial tactility.

Expanding on these, McCormack argues that male athletes in homohysterical cultures must maintain social and intellectual distance from homosexuality to avoid being homosexualised by their teammates. Socially, male athletes that support or befriend gay men have traditionally had their heterosexuality questioned, and have been ostracised within the team for their association with homosexuality (Anderson, 2002). Intellectually, men who support gay rights are often homosexualised, and it is common for men to overtly intellectualise their 'disgust' of homosexuality, suggesting it to be immoral, unnatural or sacrilegious (McCormack, 2012). Accordingly, men in homohysterical cultures distance themselves from gay men, pro-gay political stances and any behaviour or statement that could be socially perceived as effeminate or gay (Plummer, 1999).

McCormack (2012) defines homophobic discourse as the use of any anti-gay language with the intent to wound another person. Homophobic discourse serves the purpose

of distancing a young man from being perceived as gay, while also policing orthodox sexual and gender norms in order to promote one's own heteromasculine capital and ostracising men who deviate from the permissible range of heteromasculine behaviour (Mac and Ghail, 1994; McGuffey and Rich, 1999). To not overtly engage in homophobic discourse would be to deviate out of said permissible range of heteromascularity; therefore, engaging in homophobic discourse is an important component of being a heterosexual man in a homohysterical culture.

Lastly, in homohysterical settings, male athletes must disengage from any homosocial tactility that is not deemed appropriate by the subculture of their sport (Anderson & McCormack, 2015). Physical touching between heterosexual men is socially coded as gay, with the exceptions of physical violence or ritualised sporting activities (Ferguson, 2000). Anderson (2009) explains that high levels of homophobia mean that male athletes are 'prohibited from holding hands, softly hugging, caressing, or kissing' (p. 8). Any violation of any of McCormack's (2012) three rules would result in the necessity to publicly defend one's heterosexuality through heterosexualising behaviours. These ideas were used to critique the experienced environment in the present ethnography.

Although in a traditional homohysterical culture, with high levels of homophobia, masculine men attempt to prove their heterosexuality by socially avoiding gay men and feminine behaviours, as well as intellectually rejecting homosexuality by claiming it to be 'disgusting' or 'immoral', the elite male athletes in this ethnography do not share those characteristics. Rather, they demonstrate a massive shift away from homophobia, claiming to be pro-gay, both socially and intellectually.

Yet recent literature has found that men are moving away from these damaging behaviours. In their revision and development of inclusive masculinity theory, Anderson and McCormack (2018) review the expanding literature that shows men are increasingly rejecting

homophobia in terms of attitudes, behaviours and use of language. There is evidence of this occurring in a range of settings, including sport. For example, Magrath (2017) documents a softening of masculinity among young athletes among Premier League academies. He shows that banter has been stripped of its homophobic connotations and that friendships develop within the competitive world of academy sport where not all players will go on to become professional footballers. In this chapter I show how the participants in my study continue this trend of softening masculinity and inclusivity of sexual minorities.

Social and Intellectual Acceptance of Homosexuality

Team Northern sports programs have a reputation for sporting success, recruiting high-level elite athletes from all around the world. The intercultural hub, albeit mostly consisting of American and British athletes, of Team Northern sport has bred more than just sporting success, male athletes at Team Northern report that their experiences have been very inclusive of sexuality. Of the 35 men I interviewed, 33 of them said that Team Northern fosters an inclusive environment for the LGBT community and for LGBT athletes; furthermore, 29 of those men claimed that they had not witnessed any discrimination towards LGBT people during their time as a Team Northern Athlete. The six participants that claim to have witnessed discrimination either witnessed it outside of the sporting context, such as by city locals towards students, or view the phrase “that’s so gay” as inherently homophobic, which will be elaborated upon later in this chapter.

Throughout the interview process, participants discussed a variety of topics centred around their levels of acceptance of gay and bisexual male athletes and homosexuality more generally. In order to definitively gauge their acceptance, I asked each participant to rank themselves on how they perceive their personal level of ‘gay friendliness’ on a scale from 1-7, 1 being labelled as ‘not gay friendly’, 4 being a neutral marker, and 7 being ‘extremely gay

friendly'; the term 'gay friendly' allowed for personal interpretation of its meaning. Of the 35 male participants, 18 self-classified as a 7 labelling themselves as 'extremely gay friendly', 12 ranked themselves as a 6, 4 participants ranked themselves as 5, and one male athlete selected a 4 labelling himself as neutral. After discussing their ranking with them, they were also asked to use the same scale to rank the level of 'gay friendliness' of their teammates. Of the 35 male participants, 11 selected 7 labelling their teammates as 'extremely gay friendly', 8 selected a 6, 11 ranked their teammates a 5, 3 selected the neutral position of 4 for their teammates, and 2 male participants ranked their teammates as a 3 indicating that their teammates are slightly not gay friendly. These rankings facilitated rich conversation about social and intellectual acceptance of homosexuality and bisexuality, as well as delving into topics of team dynamics with gay teammates.

These rankings are corroborated by numerous ethnographic observations, and no participant self-selected a ranking that was not supported by the sustained ethnographic observations of their behaviours. This is important because a legitimate critique of many attitudinal studies of acceptance of sexuality is that there is a desirability bias occurring – in a context of decreased homophobia, people might falsely state pro-gay (and bisexual) attitudes without genuinely believing them (Marsiglio 2010; McCormack 2012)—known as social desirability bias. This is an issue that ethnography is particularly suited to address, and other ethnographic studies have tested for this by comparing attitudes with behaviours; comparing participants' behaviours in public and private; and asking other friends and colleagues about their attitudes (see Anderson 2009; McCormack 2012; Roberts 2013). I did all of these checks at various times – and the first regularly throughout my ethnography – and so I am confident that self-rated inclusivity is not an effect of social desirability bias. I closely interacted and socialised with these athletes, and my investigation shows that their inclusivity

towards gay and bisexual male athletes is an active part of their covert and overt identities. Emergent views of these athletes are presented below clustered by their self-ratings.

Extremely Gay Friendly Athletes

As previously stated, 18 of the 35 elite male athletes self-labelled as ‘extremely gay friendly’. These 18 individuals come from a variety of different backgrounds and sporting environments. The Volleyball team, Lacrosse team, and Water Polo team each had four ‘extremely gay friendly’ players. Whereas the Basketball team and the American Football team both had three ‘extremely gay friendly players’. Of these 18 elite male athletes, 10 are American and 8 are British.

In an interview with Patrick, a British volleyball player, he said “There are no circumstances in which I could ever see myself discriminating based on sexual orientation. I have really close friends that are gay and someone’s sexual preference has never affected how I view them.” Patrick’s inclusive attitude was demonstrated on multiple occasions throughout the ethnography. Patrick often had his gay friend from home come and visit him, during those times it was likely that he would invite the team to join him and his friends from home at gay bars for the night.

Nick, an American Lacrosse player, detailed why he labelled himself as ‘extremely gay friendly’ during his interview, saying “It’s just common sense. I believe that every person should have the ability to consensually be with whoever they would like to be with, in whatever fashion they would like to. We should accept everyone, really.” Nick embraces many aspects of gay culture, when Nick and I would eat dinner together after both getting home late from games or practices we would often watch *Rupaul’s Drag Race* and have very intricate conversations about themes and fashion presented in that show.

Marcel, another British volleyball player, also frequently watches *Rupaul's Drag Race*, claiming it to be one of his favourite shows. His favourite pillow has a picture of Adore Delano, his favourite drag queen, on it, and he often brings that pillows for long bus rides to away games. During Marcel's interview about his level of 'gay friendliness' he said "Someone's sexual identity wouldn't ever change my opinion of them. I like to believe that I am friendly and accepting of all people. Gay, straight, or unicorn."

The 18 athletes that categorised themselves as extremely gay friendly demonstrated, during their interview and throughout the ethnography, that they are very open about their inclusivity of the LGBT community and that they are willing to engage with gay culture regularly. At times they downplayed their inclusivity, claiming that their level of gay friendliness is simply 'common sense' and that everyone deserves to be accepted.

Gay Friendly Athletes

Many of the participants were reluctant to categorise themselves as 'extremely gay friendly' and instead opted to choose position 6 on the seven-point scale. Six of these athletes were volleyball players, and three were water polo players, while lacrosse, basketball, and American football each had one player to self-identify as a 6 on the scale. Of these 12 athletes, six were British and six were American. Many of these participants had demonstrated extreme levels of inclusivity throughout the ethnography, such as attending gay pride events, and embracing many aspects of gay culture (Television shows, supporting famous gay icons, etc.).

Importantly, many of these participants did not label themselves as extremely gay friendly not because of any concerns about same-sex desire or gay and bisexual people, but because they felt they could do more to show their support. For example, Billy, a volleyball player from the northeast of America, had frequently attended gay bars, and had participated

in gay pride parades. He has, on multiple occasions, inquired about the nuances of gay culture and how these nuances intersect with his heterosexual identity, and has many gay friends, one of which he would consider to be one of his best friends. When discussing his ranking of gay friendliness, he said “I would have chosen the seven, but I’m leaving room for improvement as I continue to learn more about and understand gay culture”. Billy also proclaimed during the interview that he wishes he had had more gay teammates earlier on during his volleyball career, highlighting that having gay teammates later in his career has exposed him to ‘cool elements of gay culture’. He elaborated “My gay teammate brings me and my straight teammates to gay bars all the time, and we love it. Had we not had a gay guy on the team, we probably never would have done this, and that would be a shame.”

Steven, another volleyball player from the northeast of America, was resistant to the label of ‘extremely gay friendly’, instead he labelled himself as ‘very gay friendly’. Steven, a self-proclaimed ally of the LGBT community, often competes in NAGVA (North American Gay Volleyball Association), a volleyball league consisting of LGBT volleyball players and straight allies. He has attended gay pride parades in the US and the UK, and is a strong advocate for LGBT rights. He has demonstrated throughout the ethnography to be one of the most inclusive participants; however, in an interview he said “I didn’t choose the seven because I believe there will always be a way in which I can be more gay friendly, you can never ‘max out’ on being friendly and accepting.”

Brandon, a water polo player from the UK also labelled himself as a 6 on the 7-point scale. He explained that being London born and raised, it wasn't until he got to the northeast of the UK that he realised that being fully accepting of gay culture was not the norm. He claimed that he had made it a goal of his during his University experience to learn how to be even more gay friendly and inclusive than he has been in the past, and how to inspire others to do the same. In regards to his self-ranking of gay friendliness, he said

“I would like to choose seven, but I feel that, aside from those who are campaigning for rights or actively striving to make the world a better place for gay people, it would be counter-productively arrogant to say that you are a seven out of seven for personal gay friendliness.”

Similar to other athletes in this category, Brandon is hesitant to label himself as extremely gay friendly, not because he is actually less gay friendly than many of the athletes that labelled themselves as a 7 on the scale, but because he is leaving room for improvement and knows that there is always something more he could be doing to advocate for gay rights. This group of athletes has shown a tendency to be extremely self-reflective about their role as an ally to the gay community, leading to a trend of avoiding the extreme values of this scale.

Less Gay Friendly Athletes

Not all the athletes classed themselves as 6's and 7's on the scale; 5 participants of the 35 ranked their level of gay-friendliness below the level of a 6. Kyle, a British water polo player says, rated himself a 5 saying “I am very comfortable with my friends that are gay, because I know them really well and I am fully aware of their intentions and the ways they define their sexuality. But, I have been less accepting of gay strangers on nights out.” While discussing his apprehension towards gay strangers, he added, “There have been a few times where gay guys at bars have really crossed a line and intruded on my privacy, but I guess that just sometimes happens when you're at a bar meeting new people.”

Highlighting acceptance of sexuality, but less inclusivity of gender non-normativity, Andy, a basketball player from the UK says “I'd say I'm a five. I accept gay people and think they should have equal rights. I even enjoy attention from gay men, but I can't stand the theatrical dramatic types that are generally associated with being gay.”

Joe, an African American basketball player, was the only participant to rank himself as a 4 on the 7-point scale. His response to the question was more neutral, than aggressive, he said “This is a strange question, it’s like asking people if they are ‘black friendly’, which isn’t the way I think of it. I’m friendly to good people, and not friendly to bad people, you don’t get a free pass with me because you are part of a certain minority group.” He elaborated by explaining that he is not discriminatory, he just doesn’t believe that being gay is a good enough reason to be mean to someone, or, equally, immediately friendly. As such, Joe’s response was more a comment on prejudice, as an African American person, rather than any negative attitude about same-sex sexuality.

This group of ‘less gay friendly’ athletes did not show any pattern of discriminatory behaviour or overtly homophobic attitudes throughout the ethnography or interviews, rather, their response to the gay friendly scale seems to stem from either a complete indifference to the topic, or from negative experiences with members of the LGBT community in public domains, such as bars, leading these athletes to be less enthusiastic about initially embracing gay strangers.

While understanding these elite male athletes’ personal attitudes towards gay and bisexual men in general is important, it is crucial to situated the individual attitudes within the team ethos, which would be different for each team. It is also important to question whether or not their attitudes differ in regards to gay and bisexual teammates, in comparison to their previously discussed inclusive attitudes towards homosexual men in general. From a team perspective, it is also important to understand how these athletes perceive their teammates' attitudes towards gay and bisexual men, and how the inclusion of a gay or bisexual teammate might affect a team's dynamic or chemistry with each other.

Team Dynamics and Acceptance of Non-Straight Teammates

After much discussion about each participant's individual level of 'gay friendliness', participants were asked to rank the gay friendliness of their teammates, as a whole, on the same scale, yielding varying results. The average self-rating of gay friendliness for individual participants was 6.3, whereas the average for how players ranked their teammates was only 5.6. Furthermore, the data showed that 19 of the 35 participants ranked their teammates as being less gay friendly than they are, with only 4 participants saying the opposite is true, and the 12 remaining participants ranked themselves and their teammates equally.

Although this average for each individual athlete's perceptions of their team's gay friendliness is lower, participants still argued that the norm of the team is one of inclusion. Furthermore, some athletes reported that having gay or bisexual teammates coupled with a generally inclusive team culture can be associated with positively affecting the team's dynamic. Alternatively, athletes pointed out that if there are teammates with covert homophobic attitudes within the team, their implicit homophobia coupled with the presence of a gay or bisexual teammate might negatively affect team chemistry, with the homophobic teammate at fault.

Daniel, an American volleyball player, discussed how being gay friendly seemed to intrinsically be a part of the team ethos from the start, he said "A team is likely able to just nonverbally agree on a set of values and the members of the team are likely to act in that manner, even if it is different from their personal beliefs or individual behaviours. My team at Northern accepted all of our teammates and friends for who they were, regardless of sexuality. We even actively participated, as a team, in events that support gay culture." Daniel's response hints at the idea that if a teammate was harbouring homophobic beliefs, he would be expected to adopt inclusive team norms and keep his homophobia concealed.

Ronald, a teammate of Daniel's agrees, "I honestly could not imagine my team being any more accepting of all sexualities". In regards to having gay teammates, Ronald noted that "having a gay teammate would never affect the team dynamic or team chemistry on the court. There is no difference, we all have the same goal, we are all focused on winning one hundred percent of the time, and that's what builds team chemistry, not sexual preferences." Ronald's response mirrors the team norm of inclusion presented by Daniel, and he also goes on to explain that teammates working towards the same goal far outweighs any teammates sexual preferences, which suggests that he too understands that maintaining a unified team ethos is more important than any one teammates specific personal beliefs.

The statements of inclusion of gay and bisexual athletes is perhaps to be expected among the volleyball players who played alongside me, an openly bisexual athlete. Indeed, my ethnographic and embodied experiences of inclusion are evidence that what they state about acceptance is genuine. Importantly, participants responded similarly across other team sports. While these men also knew of my sexuality, I am also confident that they would be able to voice concerns about a non-heterosexual player if they had them. Instead, they were enthusiastically supportive. For example, Scotty, an American water polo player, believed that he and his teammates are gay friendly, he said "Within the locker room, it was extremely uncommon for anyone to use a gay slur or put down the gay community in any way, I'm not even sure that it happened at all now that I think about it." When discussing team dynamic and gay athletes, Scotty commented "I don't think having a gay or bisexual or any other kind of teammate would effect on the team's chemistry in the pool in any way. Sport is sport, you create team chemistry with your teammates through training hard together, not by who you choose to sleep with." Scotty's teammate Brandon disagreed. He said:

I have never noticed any active homophobia in my team, but there has been some passive homophobia. I have heard some of the guys call something 'gay' before, but

they meant it as ‘bad’, not as anything to do with sexuality. I think that a confident gay person would be very welcomed onto this team, but I feel like it might be hard for someone who is less sure about their sexuality to talk about the subject on this team. Here, Brandon suggests that it would be up to an individual to manage their own interpretations of the language used on his team, and although he rated his teammates as being gay friendly, he understands the nuances of implicit homophobia. This type of language will be further discussed later in this chapter, however, the differentiation between Scotty and Brandon’s responses merits discussion of how these sorts of nuanced homophobia, or perceptions of these nuances, can affect team chemistry and give alternative perceptions of the team’s values and norms.

An American football player, Marty from America, discussed how male athletes in his sport, and their close ties with hyper-masculinity, typically cultivates an anti-gay culture; yet, he explained that his current teammates don’t adhere to this stereotype, “My teammates seem to be very accepting to the gay community. I would say that on my previous teams in American they have probably been less accepting, but that is probably attributed to American football culture in America. If I were to answer this question based on what I think it is like in the NFL then I would probably say it’s a two or a three [on the scale] at best. But my team here is a six.”

Marty’s teammate Sheldon agrees, “I believe that my teammates are infinitely more gay friendly than I expected them to be” yet Sheldon did rate his teammates as less gay friendly than himself, supporting his claim by explaining that they are less gay friendly “because of the unfortunate manly man stigma of our sport.” Fellow teammate Drew, an American football player from the UK, said that the majority of his team is extremely gay friendly, however, “There are a small minority of very conservative members of the team

who are seemingly less friendly in their outlook of gay people for what they believe are religious or political reasons.”

However, basketball players had different views about the acceptance of homosexuality among their teammates, being the two athletes previously mentioned that had rated their teammates as a 3 on the scale, meaning ‘less gay friendly’. Edward, an American basketball player rated himself as extremely gay friendly on the scale, while ranking his teammates much lower, he explained “Unfortunately, the basketball community can be a tad backwards as far as acceptance of homosexuality is concerned.” Adrian, a British basketball player agreed with Edward, he said “There are too many cultural and political differences on this team to describe them as ‘gay friendly’, mostly due to either their upbringing, or maybe even ethnicity.”

Other athletes thought that having an openly homosexual or bisexual teammate could possibly alter the team dynamic. Marcel, a volleyball player from the UK, said “A team with bigoted players may view the player as a liability, but on my team we are all very gay friendly and used that as a means of bonding with each other, increasing our connection as a group.” Marcel’s teammate Steven agreed saying, “I think that it could affect chemistry depending on the people playing. The effect that having a LGBT teammate can have on an overall team dynamic or chemistry relates to others’ personal opinions about the LGBT teammate, and doesn’t really have anything to do with that athlete’s sexual orientation.”

Keenan, a lacrosse player from the US said “In my opinion, the only way it would decrease team chemistry would be if the gay teammate was outcasted, thereby limiting the cohesiveness of the team.” Similarly, British water polo athlete Colton said “It could, if even one player on the team has slightly homophobic tendencies, then it may affect the team chemistry.” Here, both Keenan and Colton believe that if even one teammate breaks the

inclusive ethos of the team, then it would have drastically negative effects on the team dynamic.

In summary, although individual athletes tend to see their teammates as less gay friendly than they are, their teams still cultivate an inclusive team norm towards gay athletes. The balance of their team dynamic lays in the hands of each individual teammate to maintain the norm of inclusion, otherwise risk damaging team chemistry with opposing socio-political views towards gay athletes.

Female Athletes' Interpretation of Men's Inclusive Attitudes

While it has been shown that the elite male athletes at Northern University self-report inclusive attitudes, in varying degrees, it is also important to understand male inclusivity from a female perspective. Of the 18 elite female athletes that participated in interviews, all reported that the culture of Team Northern is generally inclusive to the gay and bisexual athletes, and all claim that they have never witnessed any discrimination towards gay or bisexual people from male athletes during their time at Northern University. Importantly, supporting these statements, four reported homophobic instances from local citizens in which heterosexual male athletes defended their gay and bisexual friends. Jess discussed one of these occasions:

“These guys aren’t homophobic all, they’re anti-homophobic. Remember the time you were using that support beam at the bar like a stripper pole and that old local guy called you a ‘faggot ass cunt’? Not that you cared at all, but Finn [water polo] and Sheldon [American football] made him come back over and apologise to your face. Homophobic straight dudes don’t do things like that.”

In interviews, female athletes were asked to discuss how they perceive the attitudes towards gay and bisexual athletes of the men from their same sport; meaning, the women’s

volleyball team discussed the men's volleyball team, and the women's basketball team discussed the men's basketball team, and so forth. Due to similar practice times, the tendency for the men and women of the same sport to socially interact with each other more often than other sports and the fact that the men's and women's team of the same sport often travelled to games on the same bus, led me to believe that the most accurate representation of the men's attitudes on a team would be best reported by their female counter-team.

The entire women's volleyball team participated in interviews to discuss male athletes, homophobia and masculinity from their perspective as elite female athletes; these nine women corroborated the claim that the men's volleyball team demonstrated inclusive attitudes towards gay and bisexual men. When asked, these female athletes' ranking of the men's volleyball team's 'gay friendliness' averaged a 5.9 on the scale from 1 to 7.

When discussing the men's volleyball team, Shelley, a volleyball player from the US said "I can't really speculate on the inner team dynamics, but from everything I've seen, the men's team seems super open and accepting of everyone on their team, no matter their sexuality. They're a pretty affectionate team, and I know they have team bonding nights at gay bars sometimes". Here, Shelley defends her view that the men are inclusive by listing examples that subjectively prove pro-gay attitudes, such as attending gay bars as a team and being homosocially affectionate. Agreeing with Shelley's comments, Kim said "Most of the men's volleyball team are extremely gay friendly, probably more than most of the other Team Northern athletes, which is kind of hard to do, they all seem pretty cool when it comes to sexuality". From this statement, Kim describes the volleyball team as being the most inclusive team of all, while alluding to the idea that all Team Northern men's teams are generally inclusive.

The two female leaders of the women's water polo team also believe that their male counterparts are inclusive, giving the men's water polo team an average of 6 on the 7-point

scale. Regina defends her position, “Those boys [the men’s water polo team] are really gay friendly, they have gay friends and I see the way they act around them, they really embrace their gay friends and even their culture”, and Jacklyn agrees, she said “The men’s team are all super close with each other, really affectionate, other’s might even construe them as gay. I’ve never heard any of them show any prejudice against gay people, they are an accepting group of people”.

However, not every women’s team is confident that their men’s team is inclusive of gay and bisexual men. The two elite female lacrosse players that participated in interviews had mixed views on the men’s lacrosse team’s attitudes towards gay and bisexual peers, giving the men an average of 5 on the scale of ‘gay friendliness’. Peggy discussed her opinion:

“I know the men’s team says they are super cool with gay men, but I feel like they still get a little uncomfortable around gay men. I just don’t think they have had a lot of experiences hanging out with gay men, or playing lacrosse with gay men, but I know their intentions are good and that they generally support gay rights.”

Here, Peggy made the point that the political and social intention of inclusivity exists on the team, but the lack of openly gay lacrosse players has hindered some of these men from truly demonstrating their inclusivity.

The men’s basketball team is the least inclusive according to their female counterparts. The five female basketball athletes gave their male counterparts an average ‘gay friendliness’ score of a 4.4 on the 7-point scale. While some of the women claimed that many of the men are gay friendly and willing to attend gay bars, others highlight cultural differences as the major catalyst for the low score. Sandra, a basketball player from America, said:

The men's team isn't anti-gay but I don't think they are really able to be super outwardly 'gay friendly' either. Black men dominate collegiate and professional basketball, and the ultra-masculine stereotype of the black man, largely created during slavery, is still alive and well today. Anything that challenges a black man's masculinity is a huge 'no'.

Sandra's views are informed by her experiences as an African-American woman; however, she also reported that the men's basketball team at Team Northern is more inclusive than most of the teams she has encountered in the NCAA, and she has never heard any explicit homophobia from any of the Team Northern men's basketball players. Furthermore, it is possible that Sandra is unfairly generalising from her experience given recent research that suggests black communities may have also grown more inclusive of homosexuality (e.g. Anderson and McCormack, 2014; Magrath, 2017b).

From this process, the elite female athletes verify the findings of general inclusivity with the same trends that were reported by the men: volleyball and water polo being very inclusive, lacrosse being generally inclusive, while basketball was the least inclusive team. These findings are, however, missing key details about the men's American football team. This is due to the fact that there is no women's American football team at Northern University, therefore there was no female counter-team to accurately report on the American football boys, leaving all accounts of this team strictly anecdotal and informed only by a single encounter or an overgeneralization of the sport in general.

Gay Talk and a Near-Total Absence of Homophobic Language

December 6th

I had gotten to the basketball party early and I was upstairs in Kate's room, waiting for her as she got dressed and did her make up. I could hear people start to arrive, mostly basketball

people, but I knew that other teams would arrive after they had their own team pre-party drinking gatherings. I was excited that this weekend was a basketball party because I knew all the basketball players would attend out of social obligation, instead of just the few basketball players that attend the parties for all other teams, every weekend. It's nice to get to hang out with the basketball players that are a bit less extroverted, or more focused on schoolwork, so I skipped my volleyball team pre-gathering in order to get some quality time with my basketball friends.

I could hear Connor right at the bottom of the stairs telling a story about a recent night out to bars in his home town, somewhere in the Midlands of England. I could hear him loud and clear from upstairs in Kate's room, Connor really was a loud speaker and had already had a few drinks, which only escalated the volume of his voice.

Connor said, "and then this old American guy looked right at us, then turned to his mate and said 'This country is full of Faggots'." The word caught me off guard. It's not a word I hear very often, especially in the UK where most homophobic people opt for the word 'poof', which I can't help find at least slightly comical. Then, as Kate starts badgering me with questions about the outfit she's trying on, I hear the word 'Faggot' said twice more, without hearing the full sentence of it, mostly because I was paying more attention to Kate than to Connor's distant conversation at this point.

I know Connor, very well. In the past 3 years he has demonstrated that he is a true ally to the LGBT community. I know he's just retelling a story about a homophobic American that he encountered, and I know that his intention isn't to use offensive language. What I also know is that he would not be telling this story if he knew I was in earshot, he would never risk accidentally hurting my feelings.

I open Kate's door and peek my head down the staircase and say "what's that word I keep hearing come out of your mouth Connor?". He looks up and sees me at the top of the

stairs and turns bright red, with a look in his eye light he just accidentally stepped on my puppy. “Frog, no, I was just telling I story, I wasn’t saying it, I would never say it. You know that, right?”, Connor says. I respond “Do I know that?”. I walk down the stairs as I continue to I put this charade of being offended on for a bit longer, even though I am in no way offended. Connor says “c’mon, you know I’m not homophobic. I’ll prove it. I’ll kiss you in front of everyone”. I’m shocked by this, and it’s certainly an unnecessary gesture, yet I respond “okay, I’m waiting”. And Connor kisses me. I admit that I was never offended and we laugh it off.

The gesture meant a lot, not because of the kiss necessarily, but because of the fact that he was so heartbroken that I believed he would ever use homophobic language. As a straight elite male athlete, he prioritised my feelings over his heterosexual image; or he decided that being labelled homophobic is worse than being publicly seen kissing a man. At the time I didn’t know which one was more true, or if both were true, but it doesn’t matter, both made me happy to have Connor as a friend.

As I wrote this excerpt from my ethnographic diary, homophobic words like ‘faggot’ or ‘poof’ were not words that I heard very often during my ethnography, and definitely not from any of the athletes. The inclusive culture of Team Northern, demonstrated by the significant amount of male athletes that consider themselves ‘gay-friendly’, had an unspoken way of policing homophobic language. Of the 35 participants interviewed, only 5 had said that they have used or use language that they interpreted as homophobic. My own records show that I have never encountered homophobic language from this group of elite male athletes; however, the nuances of how each individual defines and interprets homophobic language can help to explain the discrepancy in data, and my claim that the use of homophobic language is nearly absent throughout the ethnography.

One of the ways that studies have documented a decline or absence of homophobia has been through examining the levels of homophobic language (e.g. Anderson, 2005a; McCormack, 2012, 2014; Rivers, 1995; Sexton, 2017; White, Magrath, & Thomas, 2018). For example, Anderson (2002) showed that homophobic language stopped gay athletes from disclosing their sexuality. However, determining the prevalence of homophobic language is not necessarily a simple task, and scholars have used a range of ways to determine homophobia in language. Sometimes this was done through a combination of the intent of the speakers and the way they said particular language (e.g. Nayak and Kehily, 1996). Nayak and Kehily (1996) showed, for example, that the ways boys enacted disgusts of same-sex sexual desire – forming a cross with their fingers and shouting to get away, as if homosexuality was similar to vampirism – meant that the words such as “gay”, “bender” and other words were unambiguously homophobic. Another way of determining intent was through the words that were used alongside the terms related to sexuality. Thurlow (2001) powerfully documented this by discussing the use of “intensifiers” – words such as “fucking” – that signified particular mal-intent in the use of the language associated with them (see also Poteat, Kimmel & Wilchins, 2011; Poteat & Rivers, 2010; Woodford et al., 2013).

Participants had similar perspectives on definitions of homophobic language. During the interview, I asked each participant to define homophobic language as they understand it. Some athletes chose to define homophobic language broadly and simplistically, such as Archie, a Lacrosse player from the northeast of America, who said that homophobic language was “language used to make fun of someone who isn’t straight for not being straight, it’s pretty simple”. Similarly, American football player Sheldon said that homophobic language is “any language that could be deemed as offensive or insensitive to people who identify as gay or bisexual”. These definitions are broad, but helpful in understanding that these men

prefer an umbrella-like definition when it comes to harmful language; however, other participants were willing to get more specific about how they define homophobic language.

Of the 35 participants, 10 men defined whether some language was homophobic or not based on the intention of the speaker. These responses were coded as ‘intention’ if the word was specifically stated in their definition of homophobic language, or if their definition used intention-adjacent phrases such as ‘meant to harm’. For example, Chris, a volleyball player from America said, “homophobic language is used with a desire to be excluded from any aspect of gay culture, like language that is meant to harm or might offend a gay person”. He elaborated on some words that one might use to distance themselves from gay culture in a homophobic way, he said “I think this also encompasses inappropriate uses of the words ‘gay’, ‘fag’, ‘homo’, or ‘fudge packer’ and stuff like that, but not always, its contextual”. In his definition, Chris pointed out that the purpose of homophobic language is to distance oneself from being gay; however, he also touched on the nuances of words that are traditionally deemed homophobic by stating that those words are homophobic in some instances, but not others, and the differentiation between the two is dependent on the context of the situation.

British water polo players Colton and Benedict also put an emphasis on the intention, rather than just the words. Colton said “Anything that would offend that specific gay individual. It doesn’t really matter if it’s that explicit, but if it is direct and its intended use is for malice than that would be inappropriate”. Additionally, Benedict said “Language spoken about or towards a gay person in a hateful or harmful way. So I would define it as the intent, not the actual words spoken”.

Another ten participants provided definitions of homophobic language based on the ultimate effect of whatever phrase or word was said. Definitions coded as ‘effect’ did not mention intent, rather they used buzzwords like ‘dehumanise’, ‘demean’, ‘discriminate

against', or anything similar to 'makes being gay seem negative'. These responses care little about the intention, and instead put emphasis on the general outcome of the use of homophobic language, often drawing on social and political interpretations of homophobic language.

Keenan, a Lacrosse player, said that homophobic language is "using negative connotations to refer to a person who is gay, or has same-sex sexual attractions. It has become acceptable language by some people in order to challenge another person's masculinity". In this definition, Keenan points out that the purpose of homophobic language is to police men's masculinity by creating an association between same-sex sexual attractions and certain negative connotations. Keenan skips over the micro-level analysis of an individual's feelings, and is instead concerned with the macro-level social effects that this language has on men, more generally. Similarly, British volleyball player Nick defines homophobic language as "anything that degrades or dehumanises another person based on their sexual orientation". He goes on to discuss how similar dehumanisation has been used throughout history to hinder certain minority groups from obtaining rights.

While some participants based their understandings of homophobic language on the intent and the social context of the words used, and others defined it by the effect that the words had, more generally, it is clear that homophobic language is best understood by recognising the interdependency of intent, context and effect. McCormack, Wignall and Morris (2016) call this inter-relationship the intent-context-effect matrix. These men are capable of interpreting each individual situation uniquely and skilfully to determine whether the language used in an interaction is homophobic or not.

The Changing Nature of Homophobic Language

McCormack (2011b, p.665) theorised three core components of homophobic language in sporting settings. He demonstrated that there were two ‘requisite features’ in the literature: “1) it is said with pernicious intent; and 2) it has a negative social effect”. However, McCormack argues that a third component is also assumed through most of the literature—that it is also said in a homophobic environment. While it is clearly possible that homophobic language can be said by someone in a context where everyone else is pro-gay, the important point is that the way homophobic language is traditionally theorised and understood is in a homophobic social context. In settings where homophobia has decreased, the use of such language is distinct.

McCormack (2011b) has discussed how decreasing homophobia in a culture has led to different interpretations of homosexually-themed language. Lalor and Rendle-Short (2007) have demonstrated that the word ‘gay’ has become polysemous, with each interpretation of the word correlated generationally. The word ‘gay’ and phrases such as ‘that’s so gay’ can be used in three different ways, as:

- (i) homophobic language, with pernicious intent and the effect of creating a negative connotation,
- (ii) gay discourse, with no positive or negative intent, yet with the effect of privileging heterosexuality, and
- (iii) pro-gay language, with either no intent or a positive intent, while generating a positive social effect.

These interpretations are informed by the level of homophobia within a culture or subculture, and by the intent-context-effect matrix (McCormack, Wignall & Morris, 2016).

When participants here were asked about the phrase ‘that’s so gay’, 13 stated that they believed that the phrase was homophobic, at least passively. Also noteworthy, of the

previously mentioned 5 participants that said they had used, or still use, homophobic language in the past, all 5 of those athletes stated that they believe the phrase ‘that’s so gay’ qualifies as homophobic language. I had previously stated that 6 of the 35 men had claimed to have witnessed discrimination towards LGBT people while at Northern University; however, all 6 of those participants cited the instances of homophobia being around language such as ‘that’s so gay’, and other forms of gay discourse that they are uncomfortable using themselves.

Steven, an American Volleyball player, said that the phrase is definitely homophobic, he elaborated “it’s a phrase that has been watered down, and people use the phrase without fully understanding what they’re saying, but it puts a negative connotation on what it means to be gay”. Adrian, a basketball player from the UK said:

It’s often homophobic, but it is beginning to phase out as people understand more about homophobia. I grew up in a culture where it was common to call people gay as an offensive term, but due to more understanding of homophobia I look to avoid using these terms now. Even though they are sometimes used out of habit and have taken on more of a meaning of describing something as ‘bad’, it is still homophobic whether it is intended to or not.

Here, both Steven and Adrian interpret the phrase ‘that’s so gay’ to be inherently homophobic, even today, regardless of the context, because they correlate the new meaning of ‘bad’ to still associate gayness with a negative connotation.

Contrastingly, 16 participants believed that the phrase ‘that’s so gay’ could be used as homophobic language, depending on the context; however, they claimed that the phrase has taken on a new meaning that is not associated with sexual orientation at all, falling more in line with McCormack and Anderson’s (2010) model of gay discourse.

Finn, a water polo player from America said “I believe that it’s not appropriate, however it’s not usually intended to offend anyone. It’s such a casual phrase now and I don’t think that people actually think of the sexual orientation facet of the phrase anymore”. In Finn’s view, the phrase holds no malicious homophobic intent, and is completely disjointed from its origins of sexual orientation.

Lastly, of the 35 participants, 6 responded that the phrase usually does not hold a negative meaning, and that they have used it as a way of showing inclusivity with gay friends. British Volleyball player, Glenn, said “It depends on the context. But I think it can be used as a way of pointing out similarities between certain aspects of gay culture and things that straight people do, which kind of makes it fun and inclusive”. Marcel, a British volleyball player agreed with Glenn’s analysis, and said:

“I think that there is an emergence of gay culture into mainstream culture at the moment, which is seeing the use of ‘gay expressions’ in a wider cultural context, even for straight men. This is shifting the context behind the use of this phrase, and other similar phrases”.

The male participants of this ethnography have provided further proof that team sport culture is no longer synonymous with a homophobic culture. Rather, they have demonstrated that they maintain pro-gay attitudes and welcome gay and bisexual teammates onto the team. They also reveal that homophobic language, with intent to harm, is uncommon amongst elite male athlete; however, the understanding of what qualifies as homophobic language is still contested amongst these athletes.

From “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” to “Please Tell Me”

While McCormack (2011b) focussed on homophobic language and how it shifts, an under-reported change in language among athletes is how sexuality is discussed with gay and

bisexual players. Anderson (2002, 2005a) wrote about a “don’t ask, don’t tell” culture in which athletes who had come out would be accepted, but only in a limited context—where their same-sex desires were essentially silenced. This ranged from being expected to not talk about their desires to even being asked about which women they found sexually attractive, and expected to respond. What was notable in my ethnographic fieldwork was the extent to which this had changed.

This change was easy to document because as a bisexual player, who more regularly "hooked up" with men rather than women, I was public about my sexual desires. This is evident from attending gay clubs with my team, but extended much beyond this. In the next chapter I discuss how I was asked about which men I found attractive, and even to rate my teammates' bodies. Here, I focus on the ways in which teammates, and the broader Team Northern community, were happy and interested to discuss sex with me, as well as to discuss the nuances of my bisexuality and the complexity of their own heterosexual fluidity.

A common point of conversation among this group of adult male athletes was sex. While Anderson (2002, 2005a) wrote that gay athletes were expected to still discuss the sexual attractiveness of women with their teammates, the heterosexual athletes in this research were also willing to discuss the sexual attractiveness of men. The elite male athletes in this research demonstrated pro-gay attitudes and adopted conversational language that was pro-gay and even pro-bisexual. Pro-gay language had the intent of engaging in gay pop culture and discussing homosexual sex in order to bond with non-heterosexual friends and teammates. Pro-bisexual language had the intent to discuss both men and women with bisexual friends and teammates, in order to further validate their bisexual identity. In the following ethnographic excerpt, I recall an experience in which pro-gay and pro-bi language was used.

November 7th

On a long bus ride to a National Volleyball League game, my teammates and I were playing our favourite game to pass the time: Kill one, Fuck one, Marry one. Or, as some of the British players called it: Snog, Marry, Avoid. Which was, as I had learned from them, a British TV show on the BBC that aired from 2008-2013 for a total of six series. The title is indicative to the gameplay, one of my teammates would list three people (celebrities, television/movie characters, or normal people that we know), and each teammate would decide to metaphorically fuck one of those people, kill one of them, and marry the final one. We play this game all the time, sometimes even with each other's names, but on this occasion Jake chose three celebrities: Justin Bieber, Channing Tatum, and Chris Hemsworth. I answered first with my choice being quick and decisive, "Fuck Chris Hemsworth, marry the Chan Man, and Kill Beibs. I love him, but he's just got to go in this situation". My teammate Reese was quick to debate with me, "I don't know, I think Chris is for sure the hottest, but if I would want to fuck Justin Beiber because he's a twink, I kind of like that. Then I would marry Chris because his Australian accent is sexy and I'd kill Channing Tatum, he's past his prime anyways". Every teammate, in turn, played the game and listed the reasons for their choices. Some had particular body types that they preferred in their metaphorical ideal man, while some discussed the personality characteristics that they preferred, but each teammate had an informed opinion for every scenario of that the game threw their way, so another player decided to raise the game to the next level.

Derek to came up with the next situation, he chose a threesome category, declaring it "Frog's favourite round", using three Northern University male athletes that we know, and three Northern university female athletes that we know, all non-volleyball players. This led to a more emotionally charged deliberation round of the game, where players were forced to metaphorically kill friends, testing their loyalty to certain friends over others, as well as

calculating for the attractiveness of their friends. Reese, talking about his roommate said “I just can’t kill Archie, I love him too much, but he’s matched up with Tina who really gets on my nerves, so I can’t marry them. I’ll have to fuck Archie and Tina, but I’m only going to fuck Archie, Tina can just watch, is that even allowed?”

As I sat, contemplating my own answers, I couldn’t help but laugh at how much these men really cared about who they metaphorically killed, fucked, or married in this game. But each decision was thoroughly thought out, and thoroughly defended, no matter what gender of situation arose next.

The game played in this ethnographic passage was a game that this group of athletes played on every long trip to games, sometimes with three female candidates, sometimes with three men, and sometimes with a mix. Yet, each man was always willing to give a thoughtful answer, and to engage in a conversation, sometimes a very heated debate, to discuss their choices. However, while this game is a metaphorical representation of behaviours, it is important to note that the judgemental nature of the game, which is meant to objectify men and women. The game, especially the American language of ‘Fuck, Marry, Kill’, compared to the British language of “Snog, Marry, Avoid”, could be analysed as having the ability to incite violence against men and women and also to reproduce problematic gendered and classed perspectives (Gerrard and Ball 2013). These behaviours are clearly a part of a more problematic form of male camaraderie (see McCormack 2012 for a discussion of the “snog, marry, avoid” among teenage boys) and one cannot entirely disentangle the game from the objectification of women and sexist language.

However, the inclusion of men in potential picks is notable for its subversion of a more general male dominance over women, and the discussions that occurred in these games also avoided overtly misogynistic language—distancing them from the more misogynistic

forms of this game that can be considered a form of discursive violence. This issues speaks to the complexity of how these men's actions and attitudes relate, which I discuss further in Chapter 7, and in this section I focus on the implications for homosocial bonding.

Although the game previously described highlights a way that these elite male athletes demonstrate pro-gay and pro-bisexual language, and are willing to discuss their metaphorical attractiveness to other men, this group of men also divulged interesting views towards their own sexuality fluidity. During the interview, each participant rated their sexuality on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 being 'exclusively homosexual' and 7 being 'exclusively heterosexual'. Interestingly, as a group of men whom all identify as heterosexual in their daily life, only 15 of the 35 men identified themselves as 'exclusively heterosexual' during the interview. The largest group of men, 19 of 35, labelled themselves as a 6 on the 7-point scale, which aligned with 'mostly heterosexual', and 1 participant defined himself as a 5, meaning 'bisexual, leaning heterosexual'.

This group of men, who on average self-identify as slightly less than straight, were very open to discussing bisexuality and sexual fluidity during the ethnography. My sexuality was a common topic on the team, as was the various aspects of human sexuality in general. When discussing their own rating, the men had illuminating responses to male sexuality. Colton, a water polo player from the UK who described himself as mostly heterosexual, said "I believe sexuality is on a spectrum, and I'm sure there are some people at the extreme ends of the spectrum, but I feel like most people fall somewhere within the spectrum". Similarly, Sheldon, an American football player who identified as mostly heterosexual said:

"everyone can find certain qualities in both genders attractive, whether those are emotional qualities or physical qualities. I just think people differ on the amount of attraction that is required to act on it. Like, I know some guys are hot, but not hot enough for me to sleep with, so I just admire those attractive qualities."

Here, Sheldon acknowledges that he has some attraction to men, but not enough to act on said attraction.

Furthermore, when discussing sexual fluidity, the topic of sexual behaviour was prevalent. Many of the participants proudly stated that they had kissed men before, with one participant even said that he had one sexual encounter with another man, but has never had another, and still identifies as a heterosexual man, albeit as mostly heterosexual for the purpose of this interview.

These elite male athletes demonstrated progressive views towards the sexual fluidity of same-sex sexual acts. During the interviews, 21 of the 35 elite male athletes said that a man should not be considered gay if he has one sexual encounter with another man. As a response to a follow-up question, 19 of the 35 men said that a man should not be considered gay even if he has two or more sexual encounters with another man.

Steven, a volleyball player from America responded to these interview questions and said “I don’t think that someone’s sexual history should be used to label their sexuality. There is so much more to someone’s identity than just where you put your dick”. Similarly, Scotty, a water polo player from America said “I’m not just straight because I have sex with women, it’s an identity. If you think of yourself as straight, then you are. If you think of yourself as gay, then you’re gay. It’s how you define yourself”. These two men believe that your identity is different from your behaviours, and that no amount of sexual encounters can change your sexual identity until you decide to identify differently.

Brandon, a water polo player from the UK, further discusses the relationship between identity and behaviours:

“judging someone’s sexuality based on who they’ve had sex with seems stupid. Is a virgin asexual, then when they finally have sex it’s like declaring a sexual identity as either straight or gay? Of course not, you can identify with a sexuality without ever

engaging in it. And you can also identify with a sexuality while acting in a completely contradictory way. I know plenty of gay guys who have had sex with women, but they are still gay.”

Brandon’s commentary discusses the nuances of human sexuality; however, the majority of these men do not adhere to rigid structures of sexuality. Their views of male sexuality demonstrate a decrease in the prevalence of the one-time rule of homosexuality (Anderson, 2008b).

These boys illuminate the ideas expressed by over half of the participants. That male sexuality is complex, and involves emotional and physical aspects that shape sexuality, and although these men spend their time dating and sleeping with women, they are aware that they do have some type of attraction to men. Participants’ complex and inclusive views of human sexuality, sexual fluidity and bisexuality is also confirmed throughout many ethnographic moments during data collection; furthermore, the complexity of male sexuality and an openness to male sexual fluidity will play a role in Chapter 6 of this research.

Conclusion

In previous chapters, I discussed that male team sport culture fostered a zeitgeist of hypermasculinity and homophobia for male athletes during homohysterical times (Anderson 2005a), with homophobia functioning as the central mechanism for policing heterosexuality among male athletes (Connell, 1995). Although more current research has shifted away from orthodox notions of masculinity in team sports, advocating that modern male athletes are displaying less homophobia than their predecessors (Anderson, 2009a, 2014).

This chapter has documented the ways in which the heterosexual male participants demonstrate inclusive masculinities, and have positive attitudes towards gay and bisexual people, by self-rating their level of gay friendliness and by also confirming their acceptance

of homosexuality and bisexuality upon numerous occasions throughout the data collection process, both in sporting situations and in personal environments. While it is possible that these athletes were affected by social desirability bias and were falsely reporting positive attitudes towards homosexuality and bisexuality to me because I am bisexual, and their friend, it is unlikely that they were dishonest in their interviews. All interviews were corroborated by ethnographic research throughout the year in a number of settings, and to this day, years later, these men continue to demonstrate inclusive attitudes.

Furthermore, this chapter also discussed the use of homophobic language of these elite male athletes. While these participants actively discourage the use of aggressive homophobic language, such as calling a homosexual a 'fag', there were nuanced understanding of language such as 'that's so gay'. While some participants claimed that the phrase was implicitly homophobic and should not be used, others argued that if the intent is not homophobic than it should not be considered homophobic language. This group also demonstrated unique ways of incorporating pro-gay and pro-bisexual language into their everyday interactions, even highlighting their own sexual fluidity in the process and openly discussing the complexity of male sexuality.

Chapter 6: Straight Men's Homosocial Bonding: The Tripartite

Model of Homoeroticism

June 9th

I wake up in the morning to the smell of breakfast and the sound of my three housemates chatting in the living room. The spot in the bed next to me is still warm from where Sebastian slept last night; he has his own bed upstairs, but his single bed is not as comfortable as my double bed with a soft mattress topper, so he chooses to share my bed most nights.

Leaving my bedroom, I see a room of shirtless men: Liam cooking, Lucas drinking coffee, and Sebastian blow-drying his hair in the mirror. All of these acts are true to their nature. Liam is always helpful and kind, so of course he is cooking us all breakfast, he likes it when we all eat together. Lucas is more introverted, a quirky loner, he would be drinking coffee in his room alone, except he knows that we would simply move our breakfast to his room to spend time with him, and that's his worst nightmare. Sebastian is our pretty boy, too many abs to count, the kind of man that looks like he fell right out of a men's fitness magazine.

Liam shouts over the sound of the kitchen fan with a smile "Damn Froggy, yesterday's arm day is really paying off for you, you're starting to rival Sebastian's biceps". Sebastian turns to me and flexes, shooting a wink my way then turning back to the mirror to finish perfecting his hair. His muscles are bigger than mine will ever be, but the compliment was nice, and I really have been working hard in the gym this summer. Once Sebastian's hair is coiffed to his satisfaction, he wraps me in a hug and thanks me for letting him share my bed again; truthfully, I like it when he sleeps in my bed, it gives me someone to hang out with and talk to until the moment I fall asleep. Sebastian's aggressive sleeping nature sometimes

means that I wake up due to an elbow in the face, but it's a small price to pay for his companionship, and I've always hated sleeping in my bed alone.

Liam serves us breakfast, while Lucas gets us each a cup of coffee. We complete our morning routine together of watching left-wing late night talk show clips on YouTube while sitting on the couches that are far too small to fit the four of us, so we end up a bit too intertwined for comfort and often just on each other's laps, or close to it. Then we all head to the gym for our summer workout programs, it is summer after all, and these straight boys already confessed to me that they want to look super ripped for when they escort me to Gay Pride events all summer.

Above is an excerpt from my ethnographic diary, which gives a glimpse of the topics of this chapter: that men are engaging in homosocial bonding activities that do not resonate with the norms enacted by male athletes in previous generations. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss heterosexual homosocial activities that were present throughout my ethnography. I will use this data to propose a three-part model of homosocial male behaviour, which will be used to discuss the changing nature of masculinities evidenced by these male athletes.

I call this model of homosocial male behaviour the Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism, consisting of three parts: The Homoerotic Gaze, Performative Homoeroticism, and Homosocial Intimacy. Each part of this model describes a unique way that straight men bond with each other, by looking, touching, and loving in ways that are inclusive of characteristics traditionally associated with femininity and homosexuality, clearly demonstrating that straight male masculinity has markedly changed from its homophobic and homohysterical ways of the past. This model is situated in the inclusive masculinities literature that frames the rest of this thesis, and directly contributes to the growing literature on 'bromances' and men's deep emotional friendships (DeAngelis, 2014;

Hall, 2015; Robinson, White and Anderson 2017; Robinson, Anderson and White 2018). It extends this literature by drawing on rich ethnographic data from an insider perspective and draws much closer attention to the complexities of homosocial interactions and the role homoeroticism plays within this, developing a conceptual model for future research to investigate homosocial male intimacy.

The Homoerotic Gaze

Traditionally, adopting traditional characteristic associated with the archetype of a ‘jock’, as athletes often do, meant avoiding and condemning any behaviours or characteristics that can be associated with homosexuality (Anderson, 2005a; Woog, 1998), while at the same time *actively* viewing women (Kimmel, 1996). The viewing of women – part of the male gaze – held that women were objects to be viewed (Mulvey, 1975). However, the jocks participating in my research openly and actively participate in viewing each other and being viewed by each other. This phenomenon has been called *the homoerotic gaze* (Coad, 2008), and observed in the increasingly metrosexual environment of professional sport and their advertisers. Hall (2015) defines the homoerotic gaze as men visually enjoying other men’s bodies, disrupting typical notions of heterosexual masculinity. According to Hall, the queering of the male gaze challenges norms of gender-discrete behaviours, leading some men to re-evaluate their appearances and to reposition themselves through this new lens of homoerotic viewing, prompting some men to re-evaluate their consumerism attitudes towards fashion and style, altering their ideas of what it means to ‘be a man’ (see also Haywood et al., 2017; Karios, 2018).

In this research, I expand on this definition of the homoerotic gaze, developing the concept into the first branch of my tripartite model of homoeroticism. Finding Hall’s definition somewhat limited, I define the homoerotic gaze as an act of looking *and talking*

that enables men to discuss their image (bodies, clothes, facial hair, etc.) and gain approval from other men. Grounding that definition in the data from my research, the Homoerotic Gaze refers to ways elite male athletes are open to various types of same-sex body viewing in a number of situations, ranging from fully clothed to fully nude, and how discussing and complimenting each other's physical appearances is commonplace, accepted and valued. Throughout the research process, I witnessed numerous events of homoerotic gazing, which I will document throughout this chapter with ethnographic excerpts and data from the interview process. Of the 35 male athletes that participated in interviews, all recognised the homoerotic gaze as a part of their sporting experience and 34 proudly claimed that they actively engage in this part of elite sporting culture; whereas, one basketball player from America simply stated "I have friends that do all of that, but I personally don't", noting that although it is absolutely present on his team, it is just not something that he chooses to engage with.

The following ethnographic note was taken from my diary, towards the beginning of the ethnographic process. The beginning of this story demonstrates the casual aspect of the homoerotic gaze, and the end of the story touches on some of the more intense aspects of the homoerotic gaze:

October 3rd

Preseason had just ended, and our first game was finally here. Our whole team was in the locker room, changing into our uniforms. I'm sitting, shirtless, next to Wyatt, a new recruit from America. As Wyatt and I chat about how excited we are for our first game, one of our British teammates, Carter, walks by us shirtless. Carter, who has been my teammate for the past two years, is not your typical elite volleyball player. In comparison to all of the other players, he is shorter, quieter, more modest and extremely focused on his studies; he easily flies under the radar from the rest of the team. So, you can imagine that Wyatt was quite

shocked to see that underneath Carter's plain baggy shirts, and his nearly silent demeanour, he is extremely muscular.

Immediately, Wyatt lets out a complimentary catcall in the form of a whistle and says "Looking good Carter!", he then turns to me and says "holy shit, Carter is stacked!!". I agreed, enthusiastically, however, internally, I was even more excited than I was showing. My hidden joy was because I knew a fact that most of my teammates, including Wyatt, had no idea of; but they would find out this fact after the game.

Our first game was a huge success, easily defeating our competition which meant the team remained in a great mood. As we gathered our belongings off the bench, Jackson, our team captain announced "showers are mandatory before we get back on the bus to go home, we don't want to stink the bus up", he then said in a hushed voice to just the 3 or 4 of us teammates that were directly near him "it's time to separate the growers from the showers", with a wink. This being a nod at penis size, and how some people have much larger flaccid penis's than others. As we walk into the locker room to take our team shower, I remember thinking to myself 'this is it, the moment they can never take back, they have no idea what's coming', then I turn my attention to Wyatt, who I know will give me the most entertaining of all the reactions.

I distinctly remember the looks on their faces as they watch quiet, unassuming Carter walk past them nude and into the showers. As I sit there, with the biggest grin on my face, I lean over to Wyatt and say "Carter—like you said earlier, pretty stacked, huh?". From that moment on, Carter's penis was a constant topic of conversation. New nicknames were formed, people mockingly ran from it in the showers, and stories were told of its monstrous size and how it had its own sinister agenda and free will that was completely separate from Carter's.

Carter, of course, was unphased. This exact thing happens every year with each new team at Team Northern, and will happen for every single year of Carter's playing career, most likely even beyond his career, into any private male space for the rest of his life. Men look at and comment on each other's penis's, that's why we have convenient names for them: The growers, a penis that looks small but grows in size once erect, and the showers, a penis that looks big flaccid but mostly stays around that same size when fully erect, without growing much more. With this classification system, our team captain Jackson will forever have Carter in a third category of penis that is both a grower and a shower, and that category is far less occupied than the two formers.

This diary passage served as a framing point of this section: for the remainder of the section, I will identify the ways the homoerotic gaze functions within different settings. I will begin by discussing some of the more casual and public aspects of the homoerotic gaze, then finish with penis gazing and its prominence in private male-only spheres.

Public gazing

Since the early 1980s, articles and photo spreads of popular, high-profile athletes have been featured in magazines and other fashion mediums, such as GQ, Ralph Lauren and Armani (Coad, 2008). This trend of man's interest in their own appearance was famously deemed 'metrosexuality' by Mark Simpson in his "Mirror Men" article for the *Independent* in 1994, after witnessing a men's fashion exhibition in London. This trend in metrosexual athletes, once utilised for advertising and sponsors, is now an integral part of male sporting culture, and men in the 2010s have been permitted to a wider range of acceptable male cosmetics, including hair products, beard maintenance, and even male make up (Hall, 2015; Peterkin, 2001).

The participants in this research take sporting fashion very seriously, with each of the five sports studied having slight variations on acceptable fashion choices (see Adams, 2011; Harris and Clayton, 2007). For example, with the basketball players, it is common for athletes to purchase name brand sporting attire, with the shorts being a bit baggy, and tops being mostly sleeveless, and shoes almost always being high-top basketball shoes endorsed by their favourite NBA player. Whereas, the general elite volleyball population around the world tends to make sport fashion choices which emphasise shorts that are smaller and tighter, shoes that are brighter and cut off at the lower ankle, compression leggings that are often worn under the shorts, the shirts that often have full sleeves, and most importantly 'real' volleyball players will always have socks that go to the middle of their calf. While some of these choices are directly related to the functionality of the sport, others are simply fashion trends that have been popularised by Olympic level athletes.

Conforming to these fashion rules is vital. On the first day of preseason, a young British player was trying out to 'walk on' to the men's volleyball team, which means he was not a recruited athlete but still wanted his opportunity to be on the team; however, he was wearing socks that cut off at his low ankle, and the first thing said by an American recruit was "There's no way this kid is good, he's wearing ankle socks, just cut him now".

Outside of sport fashion, athletes are also expected to maintain a stylish appearance; good looks, perfect hair and trendy streetwear are the modern expectation for Team Northern athletes, thanks in large part to the lasting effects of athletes such as David Beckham and Ian Thorpe (Coad, 2008).

When looking for an honest opinion about their appearances, the elite male athletes in my research often turned to their teammates for advice. For example, Joshua, a volleyball player from America, said he enjoys how openly he and his teammates are about male appearances, he commented: "We give each other compliments and advice, like how to dress

and fix our hair, it's almost always really positive and helpful". Joshua's teammate, Noah, also likes his team's openness to these types of discussions, he said "We talk about appearances all the time, like 100% of the time, with everybody, everywhere. I'm very well aware that other people, like the girls, might judge us for how much we talk about it and care, but I just don't care". Here, Noah touches on the fact that parts of him still might implicitly believe that the homoerotic gaze isn't a widely acceptable masculine behaviour, but that doesn't seem to bother him.

These men even point out that the women might judge the men for their metrosexual tendencies, but there is enough comfort and encouragement amongst male athletes that he feels secure enough to continue his beauty regimens, which for some athletes are extensive. Two volleyball players, Elijah and Grayson, meet up once a week to soak their hair in coconut oil for a few hours while watching TV, because they read that it was good for hair health and helped hair grow faster, which was a goal of theirs. It became a constant weekly ritual, which was mocked by a few women at first, but by the end of the year, one female athlete regularly participated in the beauty routine alongside them.

Perhaps as an extension of the male camaraderie discussed by the men, they seem to believe that asking their teammates and other male friends will provide more honest, genuine feedback than that of female opinions. Jaxon, a Lacrosse player from America said "We'll talk about what we wear, what looks good on us, what doesn't look good on us. I think it's the fact that we can truly be honest with each other and not worry about anyone's feelings". He elaborates on the importance of the male opinion later when he said "There is also a feeling of gratification whenever guys complement each other on each other's appearances, instead of with girls. I wouldn't call it approval, but it is definitely a good feeling when your male friends like what you're wearing". Here, the emphasis is on the male opinion, rather than the female opinion.

Anthony, an American water polo player commented on the matter, “It’s a more trustworthy opinion than that of a girl...I wouldn’t say that we *crave* male attention, but I would say that there isn’t a lack of want for it, there’s something there that feels a bit different than female attention, and I like it”. As a possible explanation of this phenomena, Logan, an American football player from the UK said “It’s great when women compliment me, I love it, but you have to take it with a grain of salt because they might just be saying something nice just to sleep with you. I know my teammates don’t want to sleep with me, so the compliment feels more real”. For heterosexual men, it seems as if the option of a sexual advance negates the credibility of a female-delivered complement.

The question remained if I, an openly bisexual athlete, still held the power to deliver a genuine compliment to these men, or if I was seen as having a different set of motives compared to that of their heterosexual teammates. Here, I put the question forward to all of my teammates, the ten volleyball players, where all ten said that my compliments were the highest level of compliment. Grayson elaborated:

I don’t even ask my girlfriend; I’d rather ask you. You’re like the best of both worlds. You know what it’s like to be a guy *and* you’re attracted to men. You’re basically the expert. If you think I look hot, then I know I look hot, and I know you’re being honest because I know that you respect my straightness and aren’t trying to hit on me.

Many players echoed this sentiment: that our mutual respect for each other’s different sexualities, coupled with our male-ness, made me the most qualified party to dole out honest compliments.

The homoerotic gaze can only be fully accessed by women in this public sphere; however, even in the mixed-gender domain, men would prefer genuine compliments to come from other men, especially their teammates. This suggests that male-ness holds a high value to other men when discussing fashion and grooming.

Semi-public gazing

The homoerotic gaze in the public sphere is fully accepted, and focuses on choices in fashion and grooming techniques, and ranges from on the court fashion choices to casual streetwear on nights out; however, the semi-nude premise of the semi-public sphere is held in varying regard between different participants. While commenting on grooming and clothing choices is commonplace within this group of elite athletes, commenting in the semi-public sphere, which mostly focuses on physique-oriented compliments and criticism, can create some uncomfortable situations. While no participants ever expressed being uncomfortable with body-related commentary in the semi-public sphere, there was undoubtedly a spectrum of comfortability amongst the athletes, with some athletes being boisterously comfortable discussing musculature, and others being accepting of compliments yet less willing to engage in this activity on a regular basis; rather, their time for doling out physique related complements only occurred when an impressive bodily transformation, or noticeable effort, was made by a teammate.

The semi-public sphere of the homoerotic gaze takes place in settings that are more athletically oriented than that of the public sphere, such as at team workouts or individual training sessions. I refer to these areas as semi-public because the setting is open to all people, but the populace of the setting consists mostly of athletes, trainers and Team Northern faculty. The semi-nude aspect of the sphere exists because of the nature of sporting attire worn during workouts and trainings: often tighter, more revealing clothes that one would wear in public settings such as a restaurant or bar. During trainings and workouts, clothes are sometimes worn that purposely reveal certain muscles groups that are the focus of the training session, or clothing is more minimalistic to avoid overheating during a workout.

Mason, a water polo player from the UK, spoke about how discussing each other's bodies at the gym was commonplace for his team, who are all very comfortable with their bodies since they train and compete in Speedo swimsuits, "We complement each other all the time, and definitely at the gym. I mean, we go to the gym to be healthy and be good at sports, but also to look good naked, everyone wants to look good naked". From Mason's perspective, the water polo team is very welcoming to complements about physique, and with minimal clothing being worn on most sporting occasions, it is easy to spot who has been putting in the work, and who has been skipping individual work out days.

Similarly, Jaxon discussed the men's lacrosse team and how they use the semi-public sphere of the homoerotic gaze to police each other's commitment to effort. He said "We are all very open about commenting on each other's bodies, if guys have a dad bod, then we talk about that. We comment on each other's eating habits and how that affects their body types too". Here, Jaxon points out that the homoerotic gaze can fit into the near-total institution of sport (Anderson & White, 2017), using work out time to celebrate teammates bodies who are improving while condemning teammates who aren't working hard enough. Jaxon's comments also provide insight into the correlation of body shape and attractiveness within the elite athlete community, implying that not all body types are equally valued as elite athletes, and that the homoerotic gaze sometimes functions to police certain body types, depending on the demands of each sport.

Joshua, a member of the men's volleyball team also talked about how they use this semi-public sphere to police team health issues, but in a more positive way, he said "If I notice that a teammate has lost some weight, I will let him know I notice so they are encouraged to keep up with their diet or their workout routine, especially if I've noticed him going extra hard during team workouts". The homoerotic gaze was very common on the volleyball team during workouts, especially because a subgroup of volleyball players did

extra workouts together and called themselves 'the gain train' because they were putting in extra time in the gym to *gain* muscle. Passengers of the gain train would often loudly complement each other during mandatory team workouts to try to persuade their other teammates to join the gain train.

Although Jaxon previously discusses how the homoerotic gaze can be utilised in a serious manner, he also commented on more light-hearted homoerotic conversations that happen in this sphere, he said "one time in the gym, we were doing deadlifts, my teammate told me that if he had to have sex with one guy, it would be me. Some of the guys talk about my butt and my legs, saying stuff like 'oh, if you were a girl you'd have such nice legs', stuff like that. It's funny, I like the complement of it". This joke is heavily homoerotic, and highlights that the lacrosse team is very comfortable discussing each other's bodies, even in highly sexualising manners.

The homoerotic gaze, while being more casual and complementary in the public sphere, serves a specific purpose in the semi-public sphere: to police healthy habits by complementing hard work towards a better physique, and ridiculing teammates who have not been meeting elite standards of diet and exercise in comparison to their teammates. It is important to note that although this research frames an open discussion of the male body and healthy, team-oriented eating habits that shape the body as a positive social process, an argument could be made that the homoerotic gaze is not a positive experience for all individuals and could lead to the development of certain eating disorders among elite male athletes. Research shows that eating disorders are a risk for elite male athletes (Baum, 2006), and that a common form of eating disorder for male athletes is 'muscle dysmorphia', which is described as an athlete becoming pathologically obsessed with their muscularity (Pope et al., 1997). While this possibility is troubling, Baum (2006) finds that eating disorders, such as muscle dysmorphia, are most common among elite male athletes that compete in sports in

which low body fat is advantageous, or sports that require you to ‘make weight’; none of the five sports studied in this research are identified as ‘high risk’ sports. It is also important to note that in the heartfelt discussions between friends where fears were expressed and emotional disclosures occurred, these did not include body image issues so I do not think it is a particular issue here.

Within the context of this research, the male gaze is a positive sporting *technique* that combines masculine homosociality with a team process, highlighting connections between sport and masculinity that persist in these new forms.

Private gazing: Penises, butts and ...

As illustrated in my diary passage, male penis gazing is commonplace amongst elite male athletes. Penis gazing is the most private and intimate aspect of the homoerotic gaze, and it mainly occurs during team locker room time. Teams changing together before games, and showering together after games are common events on game days for most elite teams. The men's volleyball team maintained a rule that showers are mandatory for all away games because we did not want the long bus ride back home to smell like sweat. In the private setting of the locker room, there was an abundance of male nudity, and comments on the male physique, including genitalia.

While Carter's penis was a constant topic, we also discussed other intimate parts of the male anatomy. For example, Grayson, a volleyball player from America, had a strange fascination with his anal cleanliness, and would spend many minutes chatting with his teammates while rinsing his anus until he was satisfied with its cleanliness. This unique characteristic of Grayson's led to many discussions of male butt's, more generally (see Allan, 2015 for a cultural analysis of the anus). This team often gave compliments to Joshua, Ethan

and myself about how perky our nude butts are. This often led to more sexual jokes about our butts more generally, or about which roles we might be best suited for during gay sex.

Jokes of extreme sexual nature were welcomed by many on the team, especially given the context and our general understanding of the intent behind the comments and their positionality into the team's banter. However, some of the athletes were less comfortable with these jokes. Isaac, a British volleyball player, held more conservative views and was not comfortable with jokes, and slightly uncomfortable with the type of boastful and proud nudity that many of the men portrayed in the private setting. His perspective was well-received; none of his teammates ever asked him why he wore a towel, and they could tell right away that sexual jokes made him uncomfortable, so they did not make those jokes to him. Rather, when you were next to Isaac in the locker room, you just talked about the game, or school, or any number of other topics that we would normally discuss as teammates.

While other teams had similar situations, with the majority of the team very comfortable with the homoerotic gaze in the private setting and a few outliers who were less comfortable but never tormented, participants mostly wanted to discuss the positive team talk in the locker room during interviews for this research. Nathan, a lacrosse player from America, said "Oh yeah, we shower together, and we'll talk about each other's testicles or penis's, especially if they are big", in which he elaborated on a story of how one of his teammates has abnormally large testicles, which led to a great deal of banter on their team (see also Karioris & Allan, 217). Similarly, Henry, an American Football player from America, said "I will say, we are open to acknowledging if a teammate whips out their dick and its absolutely massive. That happens, especially in football, guys tend to be pretty big". According to Henry, every team he has ever been on has had guys with exceptionally large genitalia, which has always been a topic of conversation in the locker room.

Anthony, a water polo player from America, said “team shower time is essential to developing team-ness. Nudity makes you vulnerable, and being able to grow to be comfortable with your team while you’re completely vulnerable makes your team closer”. He elaborates, admitting that he isn’t sure if that is scientifically true, but it at least feels like it’s true, and that locker room time has always been a part of male sport that feels ‘sacred’. This was also found in McCormack’s (2012) school ethnographies where some participants argued that nudity was an important demonstration of close friendship.

Ethan, a volleyball player from America, agrees with Anthony's point, that team nudity and the homoerotic gaze, or specifically penis gazing, makes the team stronger. Ethan said, "Its just another way of getting to know and bond with your teammates, if you gave me pictures of all of my teammates' soft dicks, I could literally tell you who is who, that's how well I know my teammates and their junk". To Ethan’s point, as well as Anthony’s, the homoerotic gaze in the private sphere can be used as a tool to break teams out of their comfort zone by making them vulnerable, and using that vulnerability to bond as a team.

This form of private gazing, named not only for its focus on genitalia but also because it occurs in private settings such as locker room time which is exclusive to that of the team, also occurs at home, another private setting. My house, for example, had seven elite male athletes and only two bathrooms, with all the housemates on similar schedules. This meant that we had an ‘open door policy’ for bathroom usage, permitting a great deal of male nudity and ample opportunities for the homoerotic gaze. It was commonplace for one roommate to be brushing his teeth while the other was in the shower, with no curtain and only a clear semi-circle panel separating the two from each other. At home, we would often comment on each other’s bulge’s, a term used to describe the prominence of one’s flaccid penis displayed through clothing, letting a roommate know if that particular pair of pants made their bulge look larger than normal.

The homoerotic gaze, while generally functioning as a tool for men to discuss various aspects of their image and gain approval from other men, also has different functions depending on the setting. For elite male athletes, the homoerotic gaze in public is about enabling reciprocal objective approval from their peers, the semi-public setting is about complementing physique to promote a teammate's healthy efforts or to ridicule a teammate for recent unhealthy diet and exercise choices, and the private sphere is for developing shared bonds as a team by becoming comfortable in vulnerable settings. The homoerotic gaze has made a far transformation from homohysterical cultures of other generations, it has gone from hidden to public, and from stigmatised to valued. The idea that men desire attention and approval from other men is not a concept that must be hidden any more; that is to say, the homoerotic gaze has officially come out of the closet.

Performative Homoeroticism

Male straight masculinity in homohysterical times limited the ways that men could physically interact with each other to either extreme violence, sport-related celebrations, or casually tactile greetings such as handshakes; however, there has been an evolution of acceptable male physical tactility in recent years (Anderson, 2009). With masculinity theory shifting from the hegemonic ways of previous generations, towards a more inclusive framework, men (including male athletes) are more able to engage in physical activities with one another that would have been traditionally associated with homosexuality.

The Performative Homoeroticism part of The Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism refers to the phenomenon of heterosexual men engaging in physical and semi-sexual activities with other men, such as hugging, kissing, cuddling and spooning. These acts, which would have been traditionally associated with homosexuality in times of high homohysteria, yet are more acceptable acts today, serve unique purposes depending on the setting, whether

that be a public setting or a private setting. The following diary passage from my ethnographic diary discusses a night out with Lincoln, a teammate of mine that engaged in performative homoeroticism with me often, both privately and publicly:

February 17th

Glasses clink together as the Men's Volleyball Team and Women's Volleyball Team collectively celebrate another successful game day with both of our teams winning. We seldom lose, but we still celebrate after every victory. The night is late, but someone just bought another round of shots, so I'm obligated to partake.

I look around and see all of my teammates except Lincoln. I silently hope to myself that he didn't get too drunk and wander off somewhere; he does have an early class in the morning that he really ought to go to. Knowing him, he probably found a girl to go home with. He's a 6 foot 6 blond hair, blue-eyed, dream of a man; it's never difficult for him to catch a woman's attention. I'm not jealous from my assumption that he has already left with a woman, but I do wish he would have at least told me he was leaving so I wouldn't worry about him.

As I stand on the back patio of the bar, zoning out in deep thought, I feel a squeeze on my shoulder. It's Lincoln, and he's brought a woman with him over to me. He leans down to be closer to my face and says "I'm going to get us some drinks, do you want one?", "Tequila", I respond. He rushes off to the bar and leaves me standing alone with his female companion.

She certainly is his type of woman: short, big breasted, and slim with dark, piercing features. She's beautiful. She seems to be eyeing me up and down, just as I am to her. She says "are you his boyfriend?". I'm shocked by the question, so I respond with the only thing that comes to mind, "Why?". She squints her eyes at me a bit, as if trying to read my mind,

then says "because he invited me back to his place with him, but said he wanted to check on his boyfriend first before we left together".

I smile, perhaps a bit too hard, at her statement. I explain to her that I'm his gay best friend, and that we have a deep emotional connection that we are very open about, but he is unfortunately only sexually attracted to women. She seems slightly confused, but just started to wrap her mind around it. She says "so, you're gay, and he's straight, but he calls you his boyfriend". I wasn't sure if she was asking or if she was stating, but I remained silent for a while because it looked like the wheels were turning really hard in her head. Finally, I said "he's straight, it's just one of those things where we both know that if he was gay then he'd be dating me, you have nothing to worry about".

Lincoln returned right at that moment with drinks for us. After she interrogated Lincoln about his sexuality for a bit, she decided that she still wanted to go home with him, but not before having concrete proof that we weren't just lying about our close relationship. She asked for a demonstration of our closeness, and Lincoln obliged: with one hand he grabbed me by the small of my back and beckoned me closer to him. He placed his other hand on my jawline and pulled my face towards him. We kissed, passionately, as we have on numerous occasions.

With our lips barely parting and his hand still on my face he said: "I love you, but I'm going to take her home now." I responded "I love you too, and be safe, I'm not trying to raise any accidental children with you while we're both still in school". We both laughed, then he turned around, grabbed her by the hand, and left the bar.

This passage illustrates a very public performance of homoeroticism between Lincoln and me: intimate kissing at a bar, with a specific female audience who requested the kiss. This public type of performative homoeroticism is common among men, while not always going

as far as kissing, but normally including physical tactility and expressions of semi-sexual desire. An aspect that is not illustrated in the previous passage, but was prominent in the close friendship I shared with Lincoln, is the private side of performative homoeroticism which included many nights of us cuddling during movie nights or bed sharing.

In the next section I will discuss the many public types of performative homoeroticism that occur during my ethnography, and I will explain the specific social function of these actions. I will then dive deeper into the private setting of performative homoeroticism and certain social changes that have led to men behaving in these ways in private.

Public Performances

It has become increasingly more common for men to be physical tactile with other men in recent years, due to the changing nature of masculinities (Anderson, 2009). The elite male athletes in my ethnography emulate this trend in masculinity; in public places you can often find them cuddling on a small couch or rubbing each other's shoulders. Of my 35 interviewed participants, all but one said that they actively engage in physical contact with their male friends, and would never avoid friendly amounts of male physical tactility, while the one outlier simply claimed that he avoids physical contact with everyone and "likes his personal space to just be my own personal space", regardless of gender.

Performative Homoeroticism in public can serve many purposes. Many physical encounters between these male athletes were performed as a type of banter. These athletes would often hold hands as a joke, or touch each other sexually in public to get a laugh out of their friends who were nearby. McCormack (2012) describes this phenomenon as *ironic heterosexual recuperation*, defining it as when heterosexual boys verbally or physically proclaim same-sex desires in order to consolidate their own heterosexuality.

Ironic heterosexual recuperation was very evident in the locker room for the men's volleyball team at Northern University. Julian, a volleyball player from America, describes some homoerotic activities that occur in the locker room:

Our team did a thing called 'Gorillas in the Mist'. Gorilla Misting is a shower time activity that's guaranteed to get a smile out of everyone. It's this thing when a player takes a mouthful of water from the shower sneaking up behind another player, as a gorilla would, and spraying that water into the other player's butt hole in a misting fashion. The other players then proceed to bang on their chest, again, as we believe a gorilla would. Some guys also did naked handstands so that their hanging penis and balls would resemble coconuts, and their legs would relax downwards like the giant leaves of a palm tree. This act of comedy was known as 'palm tree Wednesday' though it often took place any day of the week.'

These locker room activities fall in line with heterosexual consolidation, as well as with a way of team bonding, since these acts took place in a team only place. Although, it was a joke that also occurred with the women's volleyball team because they thought these behaviours bonded the men's team in a unique way.

While ironic heterosexual recuperation is evident on all five teams that I studied, in various degrees, Volleyball, Water polo, and Lacrosse engaged in these types of performative homoerotic behaviours much more frequently than that of the Basketball and American Football teams, from my observations; however, when all teams were present at parties or bars, the athletes from Basketball and American Football were much more likely to be physical tactile in this bantering manner.

While holding hands with each other at bars, and cuddling each other on couches in coffee shops can be seen as a way of consolidating their heterosexuality, my presence within these acts of physical tactility questions the function of their behaviours. Often times, if I had

fallen asleep on the couch in the café of the sporting complex, I would wake up to a teammate cuddling me or rubbing my back, whispering in my ear that it is almost time for practice so it would be wise for me to wake up. Cuddling with an openly bisexual man is not an effective way of consolidating one's heterosexuality.

When asking athletes about these types of public homoerotic behaviours, my teammate Johnny said "I like that our team is kind of touchy-feely, we are like brothers, we all really love each other, why wouldn't we hug on each other all the time". Johnny then discussed the ways he is tactile with me, "I touch you the same way I touch everyone, I'm not worried about other people thinking I'm gay, it's not a bad thing to be assumed gay. What would upset me, though, is if someone on the team was treating you different by not touching you in the same ways as they touch the straight guys, that wouldn't be right". In this sense, performative homoeroticism in public doesn't serve as a way to prove their heterosexuality; rather, it is a way of demonstrating close bonds, and also as a way of publicly showing pro-gay attitudes.

This group of athletes also greet each other in ways that demonstrate their close emotional bonds, by hugging, rather than by shaking a hand or a simple verbal greeting. 33 of the 35 athletes said that they prefer to greet their male friends with a hug rather than a handshake. When discussing hugging, Logan, an American volleyball player said, "I would rather hug all of my friends. A handshake doesn't really show how much I care for somebody, it's more intimate than that, it's an emotional thing". Here, Logan discussed how handshakes are more of a way to greet strangers or acquaintances, but he would prefer to hug all of his friends, especially his close friends, to physically demonstrate his emotional bond with them.

Joss, a basketball player from the UK, echoes Logan's opinion, he said "I don't think there's anything cool about people doing handshakes and half hugs just for image. If I'm close with someone then I hug them, and thankfully I can't think of a single person I'm close with

who would be uncomfortable hugging”. Joss said that greeting his friends isn't about the image, or public perception, it's about his close bond with his friends. Aaron, a water polo player from the UK said that his greeting also depends on the person, and elaborated when he said “Almost always a full hug, maybe a kiss on the cheek if it's a guy I'm really close with”. These boys, as well as their peers, all state that the main reason for this physical tactility is for emotional bonding, they even fully dismiss any worry of public perception during these moments.

Furthermore, this group of elite male athletes are not afraid to kiss their teammates, whether that be during the excitement of a victory during a game or during a night out with their friends. Of the 35 interviewed participants, 23 said that they had kissed another man on the lips in a public setting, while 10 of those said that they have made out with another man in public. Many of whom stated that it is completely acceptable for a friend to simply grab their face and give them a small kiss on the lips at the bar. They said that this is just a quick way of showing that they care about a friend, and that it isn't weird, though it isn't common. It is important to state that none of my participants said that they have *only* kissed a man on the lips at the request of women. Many said that they had kissed a man as a request from a woman, but that was never their only encounter with same-sex kissing.

When I asked Mason, a water polo player from the UK, why he has made out with a man before, he said “Mostly just because I wanted to, we were dancing at the bar and he's a really close friend of mine and I love him, so I made out with him”. Mason, who said he has never had a sexual encounter with a man more than kissing, said “It wasn't sexual, it was emotional”, he then elaborated that they have only made out twice, once for emotional reasons and then one other time because it was brought up in conversation at a party and the girls wanted them to prove it.

According to my ethnographic research, performative homoeroticism in public can serve three main functions: Irony heterosexual recuperation to prove that they are comfortable with their heterosexuality, a way of physically expressing deep emotional bonds with other men, and as a way of demonstrating pro-gay attitudes.

Performing in Private

Performative Homoeroticism takes on a different function in private spheres, away from the perception of a judgmental eye of the public. These private performances occur at home, which made gathering ethnographic data on this topic difficult. I was only able to get field notes on things that occurred in my house, as well as instances that were brought up during interviews. My house during the year, consisted of four volleyball players, two lacrosse players, and an American football player; while my house for the summer consisted of two volleyball players and two water polo players.

In my house, there was a great deal of male cuddling during television time, where my roommates and I habitually watched *Game of Thrones*, *the Geordie Shore*, and *Rupaul's Drag Race*. It was common for one roommate to fall asleep with his head resting on another roommate's leg or chest, depending on the seating arrangement. This type of interaction, while being encouraged by lack of seating space, was also a demonstration of closeness and comfort amongst male roommates, with no underlying motives of public perception.

Furthermore, it was common for teammates to come over and spend the night in our beds with us, if we were watching a movie or if they were too tired to walk home after a night of socialising. In fact, 34 out of the 35 participants said that they had shared a bed with another man, for reasons outside of sporting engagements (which often is mandatory due to hotel arrangements). Also, 21 participants said that they have spooned with another man in bed.

This fits in with Anderson's (2014) findings that the majority of his research participants from a British University have cuddled or spooned their friends.

Joss, a basketball player from the UK, discussed how much he enjoys cuddling with his close male friends, but he wouldn't just cuddle anyone that he had to share a bed with, he said "I love being the little spoon. Me and my friends cuddle when we share a bed, but I wouldn't with a friend that I'm not particularly close with, so it depends on the guy". Joss expresses that spooning is saved for men that he is very comfortable emotionally, never mentioning any sexual or physical motive for male spooning.

Thomas, a volleyball player from the UK who was discussed earlier in the ethnographic story, spoke about the difference between cuddling with me and cuddling with his other best friend, who is straight, he said "There is no difference, I love spooning you and I love spooning him. I like it when either of you stays over because 'pillow talk' is the best time for us to be alone and really talk about what's going on in our lives". In this private sphere, Thomas said that there is no difference between cuddling an openly bisexual man versus cuddling a heterosexual man. Alone in his bed, there is no pressure to consolidate his heterosexuality or to prove his pro-gay attitudes, because when we spoon in bed we are emotionally bonded enough that those perceptions don't need to be acknowledged.

Concluding, the performative homoeroticism part of the tripartite model of homoeroticism is a crucial aspect to public identity consolidation and a physical expression of close personal bonds amongst men. While identity consolidation sometimes takes the form of ironic heterosexual recuperation, performative homoeroticism can also help men promote and display their inclusive and pro-gay attitudes, firmly consolidating their identity as an LGBT ally. Heterosexual men who consider themselves LGBT allies, might be more physically tactile with other men, gay and straight, in order to prove that they are not homophobic, rather than using the tactility to prove heterosexuality. Furthermore, another

explanation for increased physical homoerotic activity among men is that they simply enjoy it, and their sexualities are less policed by heteronormativity in times of lessening homophobia.

Homosocial Intimacy

Heterosexual men today, unlike heterosexual men from previous generations, engage in public and private expressions of love between their friends, often talking about their best friends in similar ways that they might talk about their female partners (Anderson, 2014; Robinson et al., 2018). While I have already discussed the ways that men bond over complimenting each other and by being physically tactile, this chapter explores a much richer private and emotional side of male bonding.

This third part of the Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism is called Homosocial Intimacy, and it analyses the ways that male bonding is infused with a level of intensity and emotionality that moves beyond friendship and towards more intimate male bonds, mirroring modern romantic-sexual relationships. The following ethnographic excerpt highlights an example of emotional and private male bonding that fits within Homosocial Intimacy among elite male athletes.

November 1st

I was moderately offended when fantasy football season came around and none of my teammates asked me about my fantasy league. Sure, I don't really watch football, or care about winning my fantasy league, but they shouldn't assume that I don't have a team, because I do. I started to wonder if this was a sign of covert homophobia, or at least prejudice among my teammates, or if they simply remember me saying in the past that I don't really watch sports that often.

Instead, right in the middle of the fantasy football conversation, Dylan, the team captain, looks directly at me and says “Frog, do you watch The Bachelor?”. “First of all”, I say, a bit too loudly “I do have a fantasy football team. But, yes Dylan, I also do watch the bachelor.” Dylan looks excited, “Good, we can watch it every week together then, it starts back up this week”.

And that was the beginning of it, the start to a weekly tradition that Dylan and I would have for the rest of the year: Feelings Day. We called it Feelings day because I would go over to his house and he would make me dinner, and we would drink a glass of wine, eat candy, watch the Bachelor, or the Bachelorette as the year progressed, and talk about our feelings. We would make predictions about each date and each elimination, we even created a bachelor themed draft that we participated in, along with his fiancé when she wasn’t at class during watch time, which never revolved around her schedule, only ours. Dylan and I would discuss how awful a break up was on the show, and how it relates to a break up that we might have had that was similar. We would talk about the Bachelor, the man himself, and how much of an honour it probably was to date a man that wonderful, and how it would probably feel to cuddle him, or marry him.

Feelings Day was our emotional escape every week. Sometimes, Dylan’s fiancé would watch with us, but she would mostly just snack and laugh at Dylan and me for being so invested in a show that rarely even produces love. We didn’t care. The Bachelor provided an emotional outlet and access to male intimacy that we both wanted, and was the foundation that we built a long lasting bromance on which has lasted through the years. Feelings day gave us one day a week to open up emotionally with each other, and to vulnerably discuss life’s stresses without judgment. Feelings Day served its purpose well, a much better purpose than fantasy football ever could.

This ethnographic excerpt describes the early events that led to an intense emotional bond between two elite male athletes, a part of the bromance that is not often discussed. The foundation of the emotional bond described above began with a television show with a premise of finding true love. Through watching the show weekly, Dylan and I divulged intimate personal details to each other and established deep emotional bonds.

Emotional bonds between men can happen publicly and privately, with varying degrees of occurrence and emphasis on intimacy. Public homosocial intimacy, for male athletes, often revolves around team-wide bonding and support; whereas private homosocial intimacy, such as that described in the story above, leads to a very deep homosocial relationship between two men, in which emotional vulnerability and physical tactility coincide to form a Bromance.

Public Homosocial Intimacy

The duties of being a Team Northern athlete can be gruelling at times, with many hours of sporting commitment coupled with educational commitment and attempting to maintain a social life. As a team, we have ways of helping each other through the hard times (see also McCormack, 2011a). Isaiah, the team captain of the volleyball team elaborated on this:

We have policies that keep us close together as a team. We have policies about going out, being responsible, making sure we take care of ourselves, not drinking one or two days before important matches... We have cheers on the court and off the court that bond us together... We hold each other accountable for things, playing wise... we are not afraid to express our feelings, we all depend on each other, for example when Joshua was having a hard time with his papers and was on the verge of tears he felt comfortable crying in front of us if he needed to, and talking about it with us so we

could help him through it. Whenever anyone is having a hard time with anything we are there as a support system, we are very much a family.

Here, Isaiah described how as a team we act as a family unit to help each other through tough times. Joshua was not the only volleyball player to come to the whole team for help, guidance and support through academic problems and personal problems. Every team I have ever been on has always had an open door policy for personal problems.

Other forms of public homosocial intimacy can also be categorised as ironic heterosexual recuperation, such as when young men publicly describe a male friend as their boyfriend (McCormack, 2010). Thomas, for example, often described himself as my boyfriend to friends and strangers. Another example of this, across teams, was how Mason, a water polo player from the UK, and Ethan, a volleyball player from America, would often jokingly describe each other as boyfriends to anyone who asked. This not only consolidated their heterosexuality, but it also allowed them to justify the reason that they spent so much time together by describing the level of commitment in their friendship in relationship terms that are easily understood.

Mason elaborated about this “I often just tell acquaintances that Ethan is my boyfriend, just because they are probably already thinking it anyways with the amount of time we spend together, and I don’t care that they think we are gay” -he then laughed and said “who knows, we might be”. He also said that his teammates and other close friends don’t ever ask if they are gay together, because they have all had close male friends in this way and they know that he is heterosexual, leaving no reason to inquire about his relationship.

Bromances

Homosocial intimacy, in the private sphere, has been affectionately labelled as bromances. Contrary to a standard friendship, men in bromances are more inclusive, physically tactile,

and emotionally expressive with their bromantic partners, and they describe the bromance as being based on unrivalled trust and cohesion, using their experiences in other close relationships to situate the status and conditions of the bromance (Robinson, Anderson, and White, 2018). In my research, 33 of the 35 interviewed participants have considered themselves 'in a bromance' at some point in their adult life. While these bromances are often with their teammates, it is also common for the men in my research to have bromances with close friends from home, or other athletes.

The two main factors of a bromance, according to the elite athletes of my research, are trust and emotional openness. All 33 of the participants that discussed their bromances with me mentioned these two factors. Joshua, a volleyball player from America, said "It's a level of emotional intimacy and trust, similar to a relationship with a girl, but without the sexual attraction. I tell him everything and he's a part of my daily life". Joshua goes on to discuss how much he truly relies on his bromance, "anytime I need any help, he is always there for me. It really is love". Joshua is completely comfortable discussing his sincere love for his bromance, he would never be embarrassed to admit his love.

Jaxon, a lacrosse player from America, also talked about emotions and trust with his bromance, he said "We have a closer emotional connection, a closer bond, we trust each other's privacy and keep each other's secrets". He then elaborates about his struggles with his more emotional side in life, but how that is not the case with his bromantic partner, "I have a hard time with my feelings sometimes, and I purposely reserve the word 'love'. I don't want to throw that word around lightly. But with him, I tell him that I love him, I'm not afraid to be vulnerable with him, I trust him". Jaxon has had the same bromantic partner for longer than he has had his current girlfriend. He confided in me that there are things he tells his bromantic partner that he doesn't tell his girlfriend, not because he has a lack of trust in his

girlfriend, simply because he and his bromance are bonded in such a way that he could never keep a secret from him.

Ethan, a volleyball player from America, not only discusses trust and emotional openness, but harkens on the fact that bromances, like any relationship, take a great deal of time to develop, and that he is polyamorous in his bromantic lifestyle:

I definitely have guy friends that I love very much, I'd do practically anything for them. I have quite a few Bromances, but they need to develop, you need to spend a significant amount of time with someone before it becomes a Bromance, it takes time to build that full trust. But when I am in a Bromance with someone, I feel 100% comfortable with them and I don't feel like they are going to judge me for whatever I say or I feel, and if I pour my heart out there to them I know they won't step all over it.

Men in bromances often highlight how easy it is to be vulnerable with their bromantic partners, and as Ethan stated, that emotional trust takes a great deal of time to develop, similar to building trust with their sexual partners.

While research highlights that bromances do mirror romances in many ways (declarations of love, emotional intimacy and trust), it is also important to note that the fundamental difference between bromances and romances is sex (Robinson, White and Anderson, 2017). Baumeister and Twenge (2002) discuss the Female Control Theory, in which women are able to regulate their men's behaviour by either giving or restricting access to sex; however, bromances operate as sexually nonprofitable, and strictly function on mutual compatibility (Hammarén and Johansson, 2014).

Bromances are the heart of homoerotic intimacy among men. Men who have experienced bromances describe how a bromantic relationship offers more to be gained than that of a standard friendship (Robinson, Anderson, and White, 2018). The acceptance of

bromances has been made possible through the broadening of acceptable heterosexual male behaviour, a positive consequence of a decrease in homophobia and homophobia, and a move towards more inclusive masculinities (Anderson, 2009).

Conclusions

The tripartite model of homoeroticism developed in this chapter assists understanding of the manners in which heterosexual men establish and maintain homosocial bonds and relationships. The three parts, the homoerotic gaze, performative homoeroticism and homosocial intimacy are separated in order to provide rich details into the ways that men look at, touch, and love one another respectively. The homoerotic gaze, describes the way that men have gone from only *looking* to also *being looked at*, and how open complements are now an acceptable form of male behaviour, demonstrating a shift in acceptable masculine practices. Performative homoeroticism explains the phenomenon of an increase in appropriate ways for men to touch each other, both publicly and privately, and how these various forms of same-sex touching are used to demonstrate emotional bonds. Homosocial intimacy refers to the ways that intense emotionality and vulnerability lead to bromances among men, and how those relationships are instrumental in their lives, acting as their most prized form of male bonding and male friendships.

The Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism, which details the intimate daily interactions of elite male athletes, adds its evidentiary support to Eric Anderson's Inclusive Masculinity Theory (2009a) by highlighting an increase in physical tactility among elite male athletes, similar to observations made by Anderson and McCormack (2015) which found an increase in spooning and cuddling among male university students. Additionally, the Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism outlines many ways that elite male athletes are engaging in behaviours that are highly compassionate, emotional, and homosocial; suggesting that the culture of these

team sport athletes are more inclusive, since their behaviour is a stark contrast to the ways male athletes would have behaved during times of high homophobia with a prevalence of orthodox masculinities. Furthermore, this model expands on the definition of the homoerotic gaze, which Matthew Hall (2015) previously researched within the context of metrosexuality, and this research divides the function of the homoerotic gaze into private spheres, semi-public spheres, and public spheres.

All in all, these three parts are connected by their ability to promote male bonding, and by their nuanced effect on heterosexual masculinity. These acceptable, and in most cases encouraged, bonding techniques are indicators that modern male athletes truly exist in a more inclusive era than that of previous generations, where gender boundaries of appropriate behaviours and relationships are blurred from their traditional notions, and men are finally able to be more openly physical and emotional with each other without fear of social repercussions.

Chapter 7: Perspectives on Women Athletes and Gender

Collaborative Training

Competitive male team sports promote an orthodox form of masculinity that promotes sexist and misogynistic attitudes towards women (Anderson, 2005b, 2008a; Bryson, 1987; Hughes and Coakley, 1991; Messner, 1992; Pronger, 1990). As discussed in Chapter 2, sport has a long history of excluding women (Hargreaves 1994; Williams 2014). Sport is still predominantly a system which continues to segregate according to gender in a way that would be unacceptable in most other social institutions (Pfister 2010). As discussed in Chapter 2, the political struggle for gender equality in sport was profound, complex and sustained and almost always resisted (Polley 2014).

Although institutional sexism has been decreasing (Bryant, 2003; Reskin and Roos, 1990), including improving media coverage of women's sport in at least some areas (Petty and Pope, 2018), socionegative attitudes towards women remain in sport settings, even though it is difficult to document the nature and prevalence of these attitudes. One reason for men's poor view of women in sport is because the majority of sports remain segregated by sex, limiting male and female athletes' interactions (Anderson 2008a) and reifying notions of inherent difference that necessitates segregation, even in sports where physical differences matter little.

Indeed, sport has been theorised as a "male preserve" (Sheard & Dunning, 1973), where men are shielded from social changes, such as feminism and gay rights, that question the taken-for-granted status of men as superior to women. It has also been argued that as gender differences are increasingly challenged as minimal or socially constructed, some men turn to sport to continue to view themselves as naturally physically superior (Dunning, 1986;

Matthews, 2016). Feminist sociologists of sport have shown how women's sport is often described as more technical and skilful, not because it is more valued or women are seen as better in these regards, but to exclude women from the sports that are more culturally valued (Fink, LaVoi and Newhall, 2016; Kane, 1995). As Burton Nelson (1994) titled her book – the stronger women get, the more men love football. Yet sport has changed since the late 1980s, both among athletes and in its supporter base (Pope, 2017), and notions that sport simply reproduces old styles of orthodox gender norms are simplistic.

Anderson (2008a) conducted ethnographic research on collegiate male cheerleaders who played in a gender-integrated cheerleading league, finding that despite years of socialisation into orthodox masculinity during their high school American football careers, this group of male collegiate cheerleaders' attitudes towards women's athleticism, leadership abilities and friendship changed after competing with women athletes. His findings suggested that gender-integrating sports might potentially decrease male athlete's socionegative attitudes (sexism, misogyny, etc.) towards women (McDonagh & Poppo, 2008). The ethnographic nature of his study meant that he could not prove a causal relationship, but the difference between the two leagues was so evident that Anderson makes a strong case that gender-integrated sport is a powerful way of combatting gender stereotypes in sport.

There remains a relative lack of research on gender integration in sport, and an unwillingness to consider integrating sport by gender more generally. Yet the existing work in this area provokes important questions for my research. Specifically, how do the men in my study perceive women, both as athletes and fully realised human beings? Do they believe that there is any benefit in training alongside, or competing against elite female athletes? In order to address this, during my ethnography, I undertook interviews and participant observations with consideration of how the men perceived and interacted with women, and also on how some women athletes viewed the men.

It is important to frame this results chapter and recognize the limitations that come from ethnographic observations rather than a systematic evaluation of different training regimes: this chapter does not conclude that integrating sport is the correct solution for solving all of the deep-rooted gendered social issues in sport nor can it demonstrate conclusively that the different experiences and attitudes of different teams are a result of the training. Rather, this chapter addresses a relationship in the number of contact hours between male and female athletes of various sports and the differences in gender inclusive language and behaviour towards female athletes from elite male athletes. Highlighting limitations to the extent to which these men hold feminist perspectives, even the most inclusive of these male teams did not show an indication that they would embrace full gender integration at the elite level. However, this chapter demonstrates that through finding strategic ways of increasing contact hours between male and female athletes in competitive and athletic settings, male athletes exhibited more inclusive attitudes towards their female counterparts.

In this chapter, I first highlight the differences in rules between the men's game and the women's game in each sport. I then discuss the attitudes that men and women have towards gender relations in sport; I address the nuanced relationship between male athletes self-reported positive attitudes towards women, as well as the limitations in their beliefs. I then demonstrate this point using an ethnographic excerpt from my own volleyball team. Finally, I introduce the concept of Gender Collaborative Training and discuss the positive effect that having increased sport related contact hours with female athletes can have on male athletes.

The Rules of the Games

In volleyball, there are no rule differences between the men's game and the women's game. There is also no difference in the ball size or the size of the court; however, the height of the

net has a difference of 19 cm. A women's volleyball net is 2.24 meters, while the men's volleyball net is 2.43 meters. The height of the net is justified by the average height of men being higher than that of women, as well as the average vertical jump being higher for men as well.

When men's and women's volleyball teams mix for practices, they can use a co-ed net height or choose between men's net height or women's net height, depending on the focus of the training. Frequently, in my study, when the teams mixed, we would have one court with a men's net and one with a women's net so we could switch courts as we change focus. In doing so, if we were on a women's net, we would have women attacking versus a women's block, while the men only played defence. Likewise, on a men's net, we would have men attacking against a men's block, while the women played defence against the attack.

The men and women's volleyball teams also work out together once a week at Northern University, and workout separately during the other team sessions during the week. The entire preseason, a two-week high-intensity portion of the season at the beginning of the year, is gender integrated, both workouts and practices.

For water polo, men's and women's teams play according to the same Olympic rule book. They also play in the same pool size; however, the ball size is slightly different. Men use a ball between 0.68 meters and 0.71 meters in circumference, whereas the women use a ball between 0.65 meters and 0.67 meters in circumference.

Both men's and women's water polo are physical and aggressive games, especially considering the activity below the surface of the water, where the referees have little to no jurisdiction due to their vantage point on the poolside. In my study, it was common for the men to invite two or three of the best women to join their practices on days where they require more athletes in the pool. The women also invite some men's players to their

practices for similar reasons. The men and women's water polo teams have gender integrated workout sessions in the gym, as well as swimming conditioning sessions.

NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Basketball has a few differences in the rules between men's basketball and women's basketball for American collegiate athletes; however, FIBA (International Basketball Federation) rules for men and women are the exact same with the exception of ball size. Men's basketball can have a maximum circumference of 30 inches, whereas a women's basketball can have a maximum circumference of 29 inches.

At Northern University, it is common to see the main men's and women's basketball teams working out together, and doing preseason drills together; however, the women do not normally practice with the main players on the men's basketball team during the regular season. Rather, when the women play against the men, the men are from the development team (also known as the 2nd team).

When discussing lacrosse, there are many differences between the men's rules and the women's rules. The first major difference is physical contact. For men's lacrosse, checking is allowed, meaning that men must wear protective gear such as helmets, mouth guards, shoulder pads, knee pads and gloves. In women's lacrosse, any form of body checks or stick checks that hit an opposing player will result in a penalty. Without the threat of violent body contact, women's gear requirement is significantly smaller than that of the men's. Most women simply wear a mouthguard and perhaps goggles.

Furthermore, the equipment is also drastically different. Women lacrosse players all have the same size stick for all positions, except goalie. The pockets on the sticks are tied much tighter than that of the men's, making ball handling much more difficult in the women's game. In the men's game, the stick size varies drastically based on position, with longer sticks belonging to defenders and goalies.

Other variations between men's lacrosse and women's lacrosse are in the playing field and roster size. The playing field for the women can be up to thirty yards longer than that of a standard men's field, and ten yards wider. Men's lacrosse has 10 players on the field per team, whereas women have 12 players per team on the field. There are also numerous rule differences leading to the games being drastically different.

These numerous differences do not easily permit gender integration at the elite level of the sport. As such, at Northern University, the men's lacrosse team and the women's lacrosse team do not practice together at any time, nor do they work out together. When asked why they do not even work out together, Caleb, a men's lacrosse player, said "Because we [the men] have to be more powerful for checking, so we do a lot of power lifts. But the women have to be in a lot better cardio shape because their field is bigger and they run a lot more, so they do more conditioning than us. It doesn't really make much sense for us to lift together, our workouts have different goals for our sports". His explanation was echoed by the men and women lacrosse players participating in this research, the general consensus is that the sports are just too different for any real benefit to come from increased integration; however, they are fans of each other's sports and often support each other and travel together when they play the same opponents.

Lastly, American football was a large part of my ethnography; however, there is no American football female team at Northern University. Therefore, there was no opportunity for gender collaboration within their sport during the season, for practices or team workouts. For the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the men's and women's attitudes about gender relations in sport, specifically the ways they view competition against each other, and training with each other.

The differences in rules between men's teams and women's teams of the same sport, such as having men's lacrosse be full contact and women's not being so, promotes a form of

gendered othering that devalues women's sport, and relegates the women's game to a lesser version than the more physical and more authentic men's game (Fink et al., 2016). This discursive strategy is prevalent throughout this ethnography at varying degrees, depending on the differences in rules, strategy and gameplay between the men's and women's game of the same sport.

Attitudes on Gender Relations in Sport

In this section, I first highlight the men's espoused attitudes toward women players and what, through extensive ethnography and an insider's perspective, I deem to be sincerely held beliefs. However, I also highlight the limitations of their thinking and ways in which they continue to perpetuate gender inequality in some of their rationales (Fink, LaVoi and Newhall 2016; Kane 1995). The men's espoused views about gender participation were generally very supportive of women players. All 35 of the elite male athletes claimed to uphold the ideals and beliefs of gender equality, Ashton, a volleyball player from the US, said that the women's team is not only equal, they might even be greater: he said "The women are a much more successful team in their league, they've won a ton of national championships, and our men's team always chokes in the finals or semi-finals. We should aspire to be as successful as the women's program". According to Ashton, not only does he respect the female volleyball players, he wishes his team could be as successful as their team.

During the interviews, every male participant agreed that they respect the women athletes at Team Northern as athletic equals; however, these responses are also contextualised within their gender segregated spheres and some participants espoused views that highlighted gendered attitudes similar to earlier feminist literature (e.g. Krane 1995). Adopting one of the more supportive positions, Hunter, a water polo player from America, said:

We aren't athletic equals in terms of playing against each other, but we are equal in the amount of sporting respect that we deserve. I think we all recognise the talent and ability that women must possess to be an elite athlete in their sport, their talent to be successful in their league is comparatively equal to the talent and ability that I need to be successful in my league.

During this discussion, Hunter pointed out that respecting the women as athletic equals is all about recognising and respecting the natural athletic capabilities and the hard work that it took for the women to become the elite athletes that they are, but his respect does not go so far as to believe that the women could beat the men in head to head competition. This is an issue I address later in this section, because it involves a complex negotiation of different sporting rules and practices alongside potentially problematic gender discourses.

Adopting a position that more explicitly presumes male dominance in sport (c.f. Kane 1995), Joseph, another water polo player, views the term 'equal athletes' from a different perspective, he said "Of course the women are equal to us, we get equal funding, we have an equal amount of training time, in the pool and in the gym, and we both play at the top division of our leagues. We're all elite athletes. But we would smoke them in a match if we played one". Problematically, Joseph implies that the two teams are equal because they are institutionally structured as equal sporting entities, based on funding and time spent training, but contends that men would maintain sporting dominance.

Supporting the notion that these men's attitudes are sincerely held, even if they are problematic in several ways, I interviewed 18 women from four sports (volleyball, water polo, basketball and lacrosse) to discuss times of gender integration throughout the season and the men's perspectives. Sixteen of the 18 women agreed with the claim of the male athletes that they respect the Team Northern female athletes as athletic equals. For example, Bailey, a female basketball player from the US, said "I always felt respected by the men, they

see how hard we train and the number of hours we spend in the gym. At the end of the day, we are all top-notch athletes”. While this was the majority view, there were some differences. For example, Janet, a water polo player, claimed that the men did not view her as an athletic equal because the women’s water polo team had not won a national championship (at the time). Likewise, Lily, a volleyball player, said that respect for female athletes was dependent on the sport they played, claiming that male athletes do not respect netball players.

Noteworthy, above I stated that 16 of the 18 women agreed that that believe these male athletes respect them as athletic equals; however, only 14 of the 18 women stated that they believed these men do truly believe in gender equality in all of its facets. Janet and Lily both reiterated their previous sentiments, while Katie, a basketball player, and Karen, a lacrosse player, both said that most of the male athletes do, but not all, specifically some of the American football players who came from successful Division 1 American programs. Their stance is that they believe they have proven themselves as athletes enough to earn that respect, but when it comes to broader, more feminist philosophies, they are less confident in all of the male athletes. Neither of these women could name a specific instance that has led them to this belief, but both women maintained that some members of the American Football team strike them as being less feminist than the rest of the elite male athletes.

Some of these women’s scepticism about men’s views were supported by the more ambivalent perspective the men had when it came to direct competition. So, while these elite male athletes consistently reported respecting female athletes as ‘athletic equals’, this respect does not extend itself to head-to-head gender segregated competition. These attitudes differ, based on sport, as such this section will be grouped by sport, starting with our most positive attitudes towards women, and ending with our least positive.

The men’s volleyball team maintains the most positive views about competing head to head against the women’s team in their sport. When asked if men’s volleyball teams

should always expect to beat women's volleyball teams in head to head competition, 6 of the men said yes, while 4 said no. The men that said yes argued that when two teams were at similar levels, such as a Division 1 men's team versus a Division 1 women's team, the men should win based on size and power. Landon, a volleyball player from America, said:

I don't know if men *would* always win, but they certainly should. In volleyball, the net is higher in the men's game, and so to play the game on the higher [men's] net is a tough adjustment for the women, but to make the net lower and for the men to play on the women's net is a really big advantage since we are used to training at a higher point of contact.

Although nearly all of the rules in volleyball are equal between men's volleyball and women's volleyball, here Landon cites the one difference as the main reason that men would expect to beat women in competition. Here, Landon is also citing the rules of the game and differences that relate to this rather than natural differences—he argues men would win because the change for men would be a benefit whereas the women would have to adapt to a harder context.

While Charlie, a volleyball player from the UK, had ostensibly similar views to Landon, his perspective relied on a view of gender differences in a manner more similar to the feminist sport literature (e.g. Fink, LaFoir and Newhall, 2016). Charlie said:

I think that if the teams are of a similar skill level, then the height and physical advantage for men makes it so that they should win, but if the tactical awareness of the women's team players is greater than the men, then this can sometimes defeat the physical advantage that the men have.

Here, Charlie's perspective is still more nuanced than some literature suggests elite male athletes are, by recognizing the equal levels of skill, yet the reliance on a discussion of tactics and strategy echoes earlier work (Kane 1995). Alternatively, Cameron, a volleyball player

from the UK, disagrees with his teammates Charlie and Landon. Cameron recounts the time that the women's team beat his team in head to head competition, and said "I never *expect* to beat the women's team. Not that I'm not confident against them, but they always put up a good fight, they're super talented". Cameron's open discussion of the 'super talented' women's team is different from the male-superiority discourse that we have previously noted, and hints at the open acknowledgement of sport as a gender continuum (Kane, 1995).

During the interview, to contrast the previous question that was specific to the sport that they participate in, the men were also asked if they believed that men should always beat women at *every* sport. Of the ten men's volleyball players, 8 of the men said no, that men should not expect to defeat women in every sport, whereas two of the men disagreed with their teammates, responding 'yes' to the prompt. Both men who said yes claimed that if the two teams are of a similar level in their respected leagues, then the men would triumph based on biological advantages. However, elite male athletes like Bryson, a volleyball player from the US thought; otherwise, he said:

Many sports are structured so that things like size and strength are huge advantages, like volleyball and basketball, but not all sports are like this. Other sports that are maybe more technique and skill-oriented would provide a more even playing field, to be fair the men would still have some biological advantage, but the advantage will be less severe, like in tennis.

Other members of the men's volleyball team had similar responses to Bryson, claiming that certain sports favour the more powerful athletes, in which men would have a substantial advantage, yet the sports that are more technical would have less of an advantage for men, leaving plenty of room for women to be successful against men.

The men's water polo team and the men's basketball team both had similar views towards female athletes, which were slightly less positive than those of the men's volleyball

team. When asked about competing against the women within their own sport, six of the eight water polo men thought that men's water polo teams should always defeat women's water polo teams, while only two said otherwise.

Xavier, a water polo player from the US, reported that a men's water polo team should always defeat a women's water polo team, and that there is not a significant benefit to competing against the women.

In water polo, the popular consensus is that the men should always beat the women if they were to play head to head. This is just because of some differences in play. First of all, the women have much more bathing suit that they grab onto when playing each other, this is kind of how they gain a lot of leverage on each other when they go for the ball, but men have smaller swimsuits, so they can't grab onto us like that.

Strength, swimming speed, and throwing velocity are the three biggest intangibles in water polo, and the men win in all three. But, I would say that the best player on the [Team Northern] women's team could probably replace one of the lower level players on my team.

Xavier is quick to point out that power is the most important part of water polo, and most teams of men would beat most teams of women. But, he makes it clear that there are individual women that would beat individual men, but given that water polo is a team sport, he argues that most men's teams should expect to beat most women's teams. Xavier provides evidence that he is cognisant of the sport continuum when he says that the best players on the women's team could replace some of the players on his men's team. Xavier also claimed that the stylistic differences between the men's game and the women's game would ensure that his team fully competing against the women's team would not hold any significant advantage for his team.

Similar to the men's water polo team, six of the seven male basketball athletes claimed that men's basketball teams would always beat female basketball teams, while only one of their teammates claimed otherwise. Carson, a basketball player from America, supported his claim that men should always defeat women in basketball when he said: "Its pretty simple, basketball is a sport based on size and speed, and male basketball players are bigger and faster than female basketball players, so they should always win". Carson's comments are problematic, and based solely on opinion and common-sense arguments of biology and male dominance, rather than by experience. In reality, Carson's basketball team does not ever compete directly against the women's basketball team, they only occasionally mix in for workouts and shooting sessions; therefore, his confidence in his superiority is only supported by his privilege as the assumed superior gender in sport. Kane (1995) discusses that since gender segregation never allows men to compete against women, it is easy to reproduce the idea of male superiority based on biological arguments.

Both teams, men's water polo and men's basketball, were also asked if they believe men's sports teams should beat women's sports teams in every sport, to which only two male basketball players and two water polo players said 'yes', that men should always defeat women at every sport. However, five basketball players and six water polo players disagreed with that minority of their teammates, claiming that there are some sports where they wouldn't expect men to always defeat women. Hunter, a water polo player from the US said "there is a certain amount of skill that is required for every sport, and while water polo will give a lot of physical advantage to the men, not every sport is defined by such a strong bias. Plenty of sports prioritise skill and strategy over strength, and in those sports I'd bet women beat men all the time". Again, while these perspectives are ostensibly supportive of women's actions, they can be seen as a form of gendered othering where women more generally are positioned as less strong than men (Burton 1994; Fink, LaVoi and Newhall 2016).

When interviewing the men's lacrosse players, a sport where the rules between the men's game and the women's game are very different, all five of the male players said that a men's lacrosse team should beat a women's lacrosse team if they ever were to play. Dominic, a lacrosse player from America said:

It's hard to say for lacrosse because there are major differences between the girl's game and the guy's game, but if the women jumped on the field with us and played by our rules, they'd definitely lose, and even if we played by theirs, my money would be on us winning, we are bigger and faster as a team.

Dominic is confident that no matter which rule book was followed, the men would have the advantage and win. However, three of the five lacrosse players said that they do not believe that male athletes would defeat female athletes at every sport, similarly citing that in some sports skill and technique would trump size and strength, nullifying men's biological advantages.

While there is no women's American football team at Northern University, or in the NCAA in America, I asked the American football players the same questions as the other athletes. All five American football players said that competing against a women's American football team should always result in victory for a men's team. Robert, an American football player from the US, believed that a rule change might alter the outcome, however. He said, "I have known some women who are really good at football. I wouldn't say that I necessarily expect a men's team to beat a women's team in flag football or some other similar variation of American football". He later said that the pure physical size of male football players should deter women from even wanted to attempt to play against them in tackle football. In total, 28 of the 35 male participants claimed that within the sport that they play, a men's team should always defeat a women's team in competition, while only 7 disagreed with that claim.

16 of the 18 female participants also agreed with that claim, while only two of the participating female athletes said that the men would not always expect to defeat the women. Katie, a basketball player from the US, said “Those men know how hard we’ve worked to get where we are and how talented we are, and there’s definitely a level of respect there, so I don’t think they would just automatically expect to beat us, and they shouldn’t because we are a really strong team”. Kate, a volleyball player from the US, also answered similarly to Katie, she said “I think the men’s volleyball team loves playing against our team, and they don’t expect to win, they know we can ‘ball out’ [read: play at a high level], we’ve even beaten them before”. Here, both athletes imply that they have earned enough respect from the male athletes at Team Northern, therefore in competition the men wouldn’t and shouldn’t expect a victory.

The reasons were about size and strength, rather than any inherent ability or gender difference in terms of skill or strategy. While this is a marked improvement on previous attitudes (Bryant, 2003; Reskin and Roos, 1990), the gendered nature of these men’s claims and how they connect with the feminist literature that highlights the problems of these arguments must be recognized (Fink, LaVoi and Newhall 2016; Kane 1995). I now turn to an episode during my ethnographic fieldwork that crystallises some of the flaws in this way of thinking and helps develop a critical perspective on these men’s attitudes related to gender.

An Ethnographic Moment

This passage from my ethnographic diary details a time, approximately six weeks into our season, when my men’s volleyball team played against the women’s volleyball team at the end of a practice, and lost.

October 23rd

With just a half-hour of practice remaining before our team workout, we have planned to play a friendly match against the women's team, who was just practising on the court next to us at the time. We play against each other every once in a while, so this isn't a big deal, and this time we decide to play on the men's court with the higher net. We had always beat the women's team in the past, which we often tease them about. Our goal, in these games to 15, is normally to keep them under 10 point; however, they are an impressive team of high-level volleyball players and they sometimes give us a run for our money, which just fuels our friendly competitive rivalry.

Right away I could see we were in trouble. One of our players was having a really bad day and was getting aced repeatedly by the women's team. Another play continuously made offensive errors, and we just couldn't get it together. I could see the women on a winning streak and I could feel the anxiety of losing in the air, so our captain Jose called a timeout.

In this first timeout, we discussed that we just need to relax and make less offensive errors, perhaps taking a bit of power off of our attacks. Jose said, "I know they are shorter than a typical team that we play, but that doesn't mean we have to try to hit straight down over their smaller blocks still swing high and hard and let's get some momentum back for our team". With that closing statement, and with the plan in mind we headed back onto the court. The plan did not work. We barely made the adjustments we attempted to make, and when we did commit to hitting a safer shot, the defensively talented women's team just made a solid defensive play and regained control of the point. After a couple more errors, we called another timeout with an entirely different energy surging throughout the huddle- panic. Jose commanded the attention of the team again, albeit with a more frustrated expression: "What are we doing out there, we look awful. We can't pass well, we can't hit well, and we are

losing to women! They are all half a foot shorter than us, let's get our shit together right now or we are going to lose."

"We are losing to women!", the words rang in my head, as if on repeat. I looked around at my teammates, and all of us nodded our heads in agreement that losing to the women's team right now would be bad for us. First of all, it would ruin our perfect winning streak, and it would also certainly give the women bragging rights for a long time.

I went back out on the court with a fire to prove that in this specific battle of the sexes, the men would prevail. But I was wrong. The women's team continued to serve at a player that was having a bad passing day, leading to our team's offence being disorganised and out of system, meaning that we could not get the ball to our best hitters. Since the men's volleyball net is considerably taller than a women's volleyball net, the female block should not have posed a problem for our other hitters, yet they continued to make hitting errors, losing us points. The men did not prevail. The women were smart and knew exactly how to exploit our team's weaknesses and strategically took advantage of that knowledge to continue their lead into a victory.

Disappointed with our performance, we shook hands with the women, begrudgingly congratulated them on their victory, and split off for a team meeting. The discussion during the team meeting was all about strategy and how to fix the weak areas of our game, with subtle jabs at the fact that we got beat by a team that is considerably shorter than us. Lots of our team chat was complimentary towards the women, such as "Annie spread out their offence well", or "Bella was getting great touches on the block", or "The women's team is super talented, especially defensively, they really challenge our offence", further elaborating on the things their team did really well, and how we failed to adjust to their strategy.

While our entire team agreed that losing to the women's team should not have happened, there were a lot of sporting lessons to be learned from that loss that helped our

team grow strategically. Luckily, as we found out, the women are much humbler than our men's team, and their bragging was minimal, showing that while it is true that we wrongfully underestimated the women during that match, they had never underestimated themselves, they always knew that a win was inevitable.

Discussing this loss with Jose, the captain of the men's volleyball team, during an interview, he elaborated on his feelings about losing to the women's volleyball team:

I was never actually mad that we were losing to the women because of their gender, I just don't think our team should ever lose to a team that looks like them, physically, not in a gender way. Our team is huge, we should never lose to a team where the tallest person is 6 foot 1 and they all weigh at least 30 pounds less than our smallest teammate. Physically speaking, it was ridiculous, and it shouldn't have happened.

Jose claims that the main issue is not gender, it is the fact that volleyball is a sport that is designed to favour taller and stronger athletes in general, and he thinks that, if skill is comparable, then the taller and more powerful team should win. With this thought process, if a men's volleyball team plays an equally skilled women's volleyball team, then he claimed that the men should win based on their physical advantage. Brayden, another male volleyball player from America, also commented on the loss to the women's team during an interview: "I was mad when we lost. My team was so defeated. Don't get me wrong, those women are badass athletes, but we don't like losing to anyone, and losing to the women was a real knife in the belly." Brayden, however, alludes to problematic nuances in orthodox masculinity that are still present in his competitive mindset promoted by team sports; that losing to women is somehow a bigger deal than losing to men, even though Brayden implies that he respects those women, even openly proclaiming them to be 'badass athletes'. This is the framing – of

strength and physicality - that men across the teams generally espoused when asked about men playing against women.

Through my ethnographic fieldwork, Jose's view that physical differences explain why men's team should beat women's teams is to be the dominant view among the participants. Taking this as the dominant view, and drawing on interview data and fieldwork, I can confidently state that the great majority of the men in these teams openly and genuinely value their female counterparts as strong and serious athletes who have great skills they can learn from. This is important progress compared to earlier research (e.g. Hargreaves, 2002; Muir & Seitz, 2004; Schacht, 1996). Yet they also believe they should win because of physical differences between elite male and female athletes—an argument that has been rightly critiqued by the feminist sport literature (Fink, LaVoi and Newhall, 2016), which I have discussed in Chapter 2 and above.

There is some truth to these men's claims – across the teams, the men are taller than the women, they can lift more at the gym, and have bigger bodies. Yet, this physical reality also appears to be used as a convenient discourse to ignore more complex queries about sporting prowess and who can win (Krane, 1995). Mariah Burton Nelson (1994) famously highlighted how physical differences can mask gender inequality. She documented that in the 1980s and 1990s, it was the sports in which men's greater physical strength mattered most that gained popularity. The men in my study are not doing this precise action – volleyball and water polo remain fairly niche sports not culturally understood as masculine, despite the size and physicality of most of the athletes – yet they are still using physical differences as an easy, common sense way to legitimise men's victory over women, when a more self-reflexive position might question whether strategy and skill might overcome physicality in certain situations. With this view, our loss to the women's team in the ethnographic excerpt above

might be understood as a realistic result given an exceptional performance from some players on the women's team, rather than an event that should never happen or a "knife in the belly".

Despite the acknowledgement of the sport continuum from some of the male players, the majority of male participants still offered broad stroke comments that reinforce the 'biology is destiny' arguments about men being *naturally* superior to women, describing the male athletes as bigger, stronger, faster and simply more physical than their female counterparts (Fink et al., 2016); however, their discourse carried the undertone of positive intent, not attempting to devalue women's sport on its surface, but placing women's sport in a different category of the game which still requires a tremendous amount of skill and talent (Banet-Weiser, 1999). In this context, we might understand there to be progress from research in the 1980s and 1990s that documented explicit sexism and misogyny, but still recognize a lack of full embrace of gender integration that is more noticeable when compared to the active, engaged inclusion of sexual minority athletes.

In addition to who would win in a game of men's team versus women's team of the respective sport, I also asked participants if playing against the opposite gender's team would be beneficial to their team. A total of 10 participating male athletes agreed that it would be beneficial, while the other 25 said otherwise. Although Landon had previously stated that he thought that his men's volleyball team should always defeat a women's team, he also spoke about the benefits of competing against the women's volleyball team, saying that they provide a different type of challenge to the men, forcing the men's team to play differently than normal. He said "We have to make adjustments to play against a team that does not act and perform like many of the men's teams we face. Anything to shock us or make us adjust our mental focus is good for us". Landon also described playing against the women as a "great learning experience", citing their smaller size and physical strength as an interesting

challenge: “It is a good opportunity to see how this team which is seemingly smaller and less physical than ours can score a lot of points against us”.

Chase, a water polo player from the UK, was one of only two water polo players who had said that he would not expect to beat a women’s water polo team in head to head competition. He also believes that competing against the women’s water polo team would have many benefits, he said:

Even though our women's team hasn't won as many national championships as us, and as a whole they aren't as good as us, they still have some tremendous athletes on that team. Playing against them would definitely be beneficial for our team, any quality reps that are ‘game-like’ will always be beneficial, and those female athletes are certainly quality athletes.

Chase demonstrated extremely inclusive views towards elite female water polo players, always supporting them at their games and regarding them as top class athletes. In his opinion, any game-like scenario against quality water polo players, such as the women’s team, would help his team become better.

It is noteworthy, however, that 25 of the 35 male athletes said it would not be beneficial to the team. American Football players claimed it would not be beneficial because they do not have a women’s team to compete against; whereas, lacrosse players claimed that the differences in rules would not benefit either team in getting better at lacrosse. Many basketball players cited size differences being the main factor that make them believe that they would not benefit from competing with the women.

Ralph, a volleyball player from the US, said: “playing against the girls is a lot of fun, but I don’t think either team benefits from it as much as they would if they were playing a team in their own gender. When we mix we have to decide if we are going to play on a men’s net or a women’s net, and either way someone is getting screwed”. Jose, another male

volleyball player agreed with Ralph, he said: “It’s just a size and vertical issue. Some of these women can block at 10 feet in the air, but most of our guys can hit at 11 and a half or 12 feet in the air. We play the game at different heights. I don’t think its beneficial for us to go and hit over their block, and I don’t think its beneficial for them to try to block our attacks”.

These comments from the male volleyball players are interesting: their comments are problematic in the way that they undermine their claims of gender equality, and their comments are also surprising given the fact that the men’s volleyball team has lost a game to the women’s volleyball team in the past. It is clear that these men have reframed the victory of the women’s volleyball team as a fluke, and they are relying on ‘biology as destiny’ arguments to reinforce their perception of their own male superiority in sport (Fink et al., 2016).

When asked the same question, 16 of the 18 elite female athletes said that this type of game play would benefit their team as well as the men’s team, the two outliers being female lacrosse players. Several women participants believed that the men would gain from playing against them. Bella, a volleyball player from the US said "We can challenge them in ways that they aren't used to being challenged. For example, their blocks are big but undisciplined. We play them we just score by hitting off their blocks and out of bounds, so playing against us would teach them to be more disciplined with their skills". Similarly, Olivia, a basketball player from the US, said:

I like playing the boys because they’re so big, it makes it harder. For them though, I think the women’s game relies on tactics and quick passing a lot more than the men’s game. They just drive the ball straight to the hoop. They should actually take notes when they play us, it could teach them to play more like a team instead of a bunch of individuals.

Both women describe ways that their game-play differs from that of the men, claiming that the men could become better players by sometimes relying less on strength and more on tactics.

These differences in attitudes about whether playing against each other would be valuable versus broader questions of gender equality highlight a problem about equality attitudinally versus how it is lived and practiced. In other words, while the men in the study seem to have genuinely adopted intellectual engagement with women's participation in sport, this has not fully mapped onto their own sporting practice. As well as connecting with feminist sporting literature (Fink et al., 2006; Krane, 1995), this can also be understood as “performative progressiveness” (Brodyn and Ghaziani, 2018)—where people espouse positive attitudes without engaging in politics which sees further progressive change. An important component of this is that this presents two absences—the absence of misogyny and overt sexism has not been met with a new feminist progressive politics, but an absence of that as well. This is particularly notable because there is a cultural lag in contemporary sporting culture: the idea of athletic gender equality is tangible, but is unable to be seen or realised in practice due to a firm and popular purist stance on team sports.

Gender Collaborative Training

More significant than what may be gained from playing against each other is the question of more active training together, a first step in capitalising on increased attitudes for gender equality in sport by creating realistic opportunities for demonstrating gender equality in practice. This section addresses gender collaborate training, a term I use to describe gender mixed training sessions. Gender collaborative training could describe many situations: (1) asking one or more women to join a men's training when extra players are needed, or vice versa if extra players are needed at a women's training, (2) mixing genders together for

combined team drills or competition, or (3) mixed gender workouts. Gender collaborative training does not include full-on gender integration of a sport, such as competitive collegiate cheerleading, nor does it include times when a men's team competes against a women's team.

Gender collaborate training could, but does not necessarily, mean having all training sessions and workouts as gender integrated. At Team Northern, gender collaborative training only occurred occasionally. This is an important limitation in my research: while the gender collaborative training experiences were important and rich ethnographic moments that are worthy of discussion in this thesis, they were not systematically used over a sustained period of time, and they were not compared explicitly with gender-segregated training. Thus, in this section I am really drawing attention to the practice and highlighting the potential this form has to enhance men's attitudes toward women in contexts where full gender integration in sport is not likely to happen. An important distinction with Anderson's (2008) work on male cheerleaders is that the sporting context of full gender integration is not likely to occur soon, and so a more modest gender-collaborative training may be useful when gender segregation seems likely to continue at least in the short term.

Throughout this research, it was evident that the men's volleyball team maintained the most positive gender relations with the female athletes, both reported by their views competing against and training with women, as well as further supported by the women's perception of these men in general. This team also had the highest engagement with gender collaborative training; having 4 out of 5 of our practices occurring simultaneously, albeit on separate courts directly next to each other, as well mixing in for one workout per week, which normally focused on weighted circuit training in small groups. Our similar practice times led to instances where the men's team and women's team decided to fully compete against each other, and other times where one or more players would be borrowed for part of practice to make a drill run more efficiently. The head to head competitions only resulted in

one victory for the women's team throughout the year; However, with a high number of gender collaborate training sessions, on an individual level the men had numerous encounters with losing points as a direct result of a play made by a female athlete.

The water polo team also engaged in several gender collaborative training sessions, mostly revolving around one or two female players mixing in with the men's team on occasions throughout the year, as well as with every workout session being together. With many hours a week working alongside each other, either in the gym or in the pool, it is no surprise that water polo also had positive gender relations between the men's team and the women's team. While men's basketball, men's lacrosse, and men's American football engaged in little to no gender collaborative training, and these three teams had less positive attitudes towards elite female athletes in general.

During the interview process, the elite male athletes were asked if they believed that mixing with elite female athletes during training (what I now call gender collaborative training) could/would be beneficial for their team: 20 of the 35 participants said that this type of mixing would be beneficial for their team, while only 15 said that it would not be significantly beneficial. Of the 18 elite female athletes, all 18 said that mixing in this way would be beneficial for their team and for the men's team. Unsurprisingly, these attitudes closely match the teams that the men play on – all men in water polo and volleyball supported gender collaborative training, while those that were more resistant were on teams that did not practice it—although some men who did not have direct experience of it stated they thought it would be valuable, mostly because of either witnessing or hearing positive comments about it from men on the volleyball or water polo teams.

The ethnographic excerpt below highlights a positive moment during gender collaborative training with elite volleyball athletes during a mixed gender workout session with the team trainer:

September 14th

It's the first day back on the schedule, the time of year called 'preseason' where we have two weeks of Hell. Two practices every day, and four team workouts a week, but at least we have the weekends mostly off since we have no games, just a short session on Saturday that is mostly designed for fun, to help shake the rust off and keep our spirits high during the tough preseason schedule.

Not all of the players have arrived yet, mostly due to Visa problems coming from the US, but that's not a problem, the men's and women's team mix together for all team workouts this week and most of our practice sessions too, because it's a lot of ball control and drill work. Today, our workout is first, and our trainer told us to meet him on the track, which is basically everyone's biggest nightmare.

Me and Annie walk to the gym together, as always, but this time we are leading a mob of new players that are all new to the city and don't know their way around yet, each of them carries a nervous energy to them about their first day of preseason. Of course, Annie and I decide to scare them by telling them all of the horrible things our trainers have made us do in the past during preseason, little did we know that today's session would easily become one of those infamous nightmare preseason workout stories.

We arrive on the track and see two weighted sledges next to each other, and a variety of dumbbells near the sledges, and of course our chiselled trainer standing in the middle of it all with a huge grin on his face, if he wasn't so pretty, I'd hate him. He cheerfully explains that we will be in two lines doing a circuit of sledge pushes, and when you aren't pushing the sledge down the track and back, you will be doing bicep curls, shoulder press, burpees, and core. The way the numbers worked out meant that you were generally permitted about a 90-

120 second break between the free weight circuit and the next time you had to push the sledge.

We split up into two lines, naturally all the men went in one line and all of the women, went in the other, with the exception of me; I know that I work out best when I work out with Annie, because we have been training buddies for years at this point and she knows how to push me to be my best, so I joined the women's line. Our trainer said, "Frog has the right idea, mix together, the sledges both weigh the same", and so the teams mixed, more or less evenly.

Our trainer explained that we would do five rounds of the circuit, then take a long break, then do five more rounds. This circuit was excruciating. At times, players were barely able to push the sledge back to its origin, moving it inch by inch with encouragement from the rest of us, even though we all understood that the quicker that person returned with the sledge the sooner we would be next in line to push it.

When the first five rounds were done, everyone was exhausted, and a few players even left to be sick in the bathroom. Being sick from a workout is rare for volleyball, but less rare with new recruits at the beginning of preseason, perhaps they should have taken the summer trainings more seriously, I have no sympathy for their lack of cardiovascular conditioning.

We begin our second set of five rounds, and after the first time through of sledge pushes and free weights, Easton re-joins the team. Easton, a new recruit for the men's volleyball team, had been sick in the bathroom during that first set, but jumped right in and worked hard on the next four sets to finish the workout with the team.

Since Easton was last in line, he finished pushing the sledge back to its origin on the final set and fell to the ground, the workout was complete and we were all happy, accomplished, and exhausted. As we all lay on the track feeling relieved, I see Annie get off of the ground and walk over to Easton. Annie can barely talk because she is so out of breath,

but she says loudly “Get up, you have one more round to go”, as she stands above Easton who is still laying on the ground.

Easton is clearly caught off guard. He says “But I was in the bathroom throwing up”. I laugh to myself because he clearly doesn’t know Annie, she’s not exactly a merciful human. Annie says “We are ALL a team here, and until you finish, the team isn’t finished”. At this point, Easton gets off the ground and begins to push the sledge, the entire team, men and women, gather round to cheer him on until he finishes.

I’m beaming with pride when he’s done. If it wasn’t clear before, it certainly is clear now, Annie is the leader of our team. When I say ‘our team’, I don’t mean just the women’s team, I mean Annie is the leader of the entire volleyball program. This was a fact that all the returning athletes already knew, but now the new recruits are also aware of it, and nobody skipped a beat at all, everyone was willing to led by her. The rest of the year she led both squads, perhaps not on paper, but certainly in spirit, and by example.

This ethnographic passage demonstrates that elite male athletes are willing to view elite female athletes as leaders, and to take direction from female leaders in sporting environments during gender collaborate training. Throughout the year, there were numerous situations on the volleyball team where genders mixed and leaders emerged, both male and female, to help the entire group of athletes improve upon skills and strategy.

When discussing mixed practices during an interview, Landon, a volleyball player from America spoke highly of the women’s team, he claimed that he always encouraged his teammates to practice with the women’s team if the women needed an extra player, and he always volunteered when he had the time. He elaborated, saying “Their training was always challenging and it allowed me and my teammates to learn from some truly great players and practice some facets of their game that we don’t often see in the men’s game”. Ashton, a

volleyball player from America, also shares Landon's sentiments about learning from the women, saying: "There is a lot to learn from playing against and even just watching the women play. These women play the game differently than our team, and by learning their side of the game it can make us more well-rounded players". Here, Ashton commented that understanding the way that women play the game, in comparison to men, can only have positive effects on his understanding of the game, making him a better overall player in the long run.

Annie, the volleyball player from the US who was our informal leader, also thought that mixing with the men has many benefits for her team. She said, "If we know that one of our opponents has an all-star hitter that they utilise quite a lot, it's really beneficial to invite one of the men to our practice and have him 'be her', it really helps us with our strategy and learning how to shut down one key player in a game". Annie then joked that she tries to avoid allowing men's players to do anything besides attack, because in her words 'even the best men lack simple ball control'. Kate, another American volleyball player, confidently stated that gender collaborative training in volleyball benefits the men's team greatly because "It is good that we can show men how to be more technically sound in the game, instead of just relying on brute strength. We can show them how to actually use their brain to earn points instead of just their biceps". Kate also stated that gender collaborative training is mutually beneficial for volleyball players in numerous competitive settings, especially drill work, because the skills and techniques are the same for both genders.

Male water polo players, Joseph and Ayden, had mixed thoughts on gender collaborative training. Ayden said "Mixing in for drills can be really helpful, a few of the women are really talented so we like it when they jump in on our sessions when we are short-handed, but scrimmaging with them can be uncomfortable due to all of the physical aggression in water polo, but we make it work". Whereas Joseph said "If you're looking at

talent and experience, the girls can definitely mix in with us and its completely fine. But sometimes when we get into mixed gameplay I think the girls try to be extra violent to make up for the fact that they are playing with the boys, I don't like it". The men here are unsure of the appropriate amount of physicality they can engage in during the sporting session, which makes for an uncomfortable situation; however, they both make it clear that talent is not the issue at hand when it comes to gender mixed practice sessions and water polo, and all parties benefit from the training.

The men's perspectives here are somewhat challenged by the water polo women interviewed, Janet and Amelia, who had only positive experiences to report when discussing their times training with the men's team. During the interviews, Janet said "I think the guys learn a lot when me and Amelia jump in on a practice. A lot about technique and finesse, and how to work the whole pool to score without just overpowering each other". Amelia concurred, and elaborated "I think it benefits the men to play with us because we can teach them a lot about strategies, they could really use the help when it comes to executing a well thought out water polo strategy, it'd make them way better. But the size of the boys really helps me because I have to think of new ways to manoeuvre around them, it's a fun challenge".

The most problematic perspectives came from the men's basketball team (see also Fink, LaVoi and Newhall, 2016). When discussing gender collaborative training sessions with the male basketball players on the top team, many did not seem to think there was any benefit to playing against the women, even though the rules are so similar. Many cited differences in height to be too extreme. One American player, Carson, said: "We don't need to practice with the girls, we have enough players, it wouldn't help us at all to bench one of our guys so one of the women could jump in with us". Carson, a basketball player from America, said that training with women has no benefit for his team, he said "The women's

team wouldn't be able to push us as hard as we can push each other, so taking time out of our own practice to compete with the women wouldn't be beneficial at all, we only need to compete against each other to prepare for our games". Here, Carson says that if court time is available to the basketball team, that time should be spent playing with and against his own team, which he claims is a more productive use of time and resources than competing against the women's team. It is also noteworthy that their perspective only considered benefits to their own playing, rather than gender equality or benefits to the women's team. Their scepticism that they could learn from the women's team in practice also questions some of their broader arguments to gender equality (Fink et al., 2016).

However, the secondary men's basketball team often participated in gender collaborative training with the primary women's basketball team, and while I did not include the secondary basketball team in this research, due in large part to them not competing in the national level events that I used as a framework for defining 'elite athlete', they volunteered a substantial amount of their time to join in on the women's practice, in addition to their own practices. When discussing Gender Collaborative Training with the women's basketball team, the women discussed the benefits of playing with and against the men's development team. Bailey said, "I love it when we get to play against the men, it forces me to me to be stronger, quicker, smarter and work harder when a have a big guy as my opponent, and I get to show them what true ball control looks like". Bailey, confident that her quick and tricky hands, coupled with her speed and agility make her a formidable opponent to any man, thinks that gender collaborative training is mutually beneficial. Caroline, a female basketball player from America had strong feelings about integrated sport during the interview, she said "Women and men need to learn that basketball is just one sport, there's not a men's version and a women's version. People should just let their talent do the talking, and there will be no more need to divide us up". Caroline's view is that playing against the men is just as

beneficial as playing against really tall women, and that the opponent in front of her does not change her talent, of which she is highly confident with.

The primary men's basketball team (Carson's team), the men's lacrosse team and the American football team did not have any instances of gender collaborative training. It is not possible to attribute causality to these perspectives – perhaps gender collaborative training could occur with the men who already had more positive views on women's performance, or perhaps the collaborative training supported these more positive views and experiences (Anderson 2008). What is notable, however, is the real experiential benefits that players, both men and women, reported in gender collaborative training and that similarly positive narratives were not present among the teams that did not practice this.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated men's attitudes toward women athletes and then examined the potential benefits of gender collaborative training. It documented positive attitudes by a majority of men but mirrored feminist sociological research that showed these positive attitudes are not matched by experiences (Fink et al. 2006; Krane 1995). Contrasting with the positive views found in Anderson's (2008) research, where the entire sport was gender integrated in one cheerleading league, the structure of the sport seemed to influence the men's attitudes.

While there are real physical differences between elite male athletes and elite female athletes in terms of height, strength and size, the majority of these elite male athletes use these physical differences as a common-sense way of claiming sporting dominance over elite female athletes, rather than reflexively engaging in real discussions of skill and tactics and their importance in each sport. While progress has been made on this front, highlighting the male athletes' reluctance to embrace female athletes is particularly noteworthy given the

exuberant acceptance of gay and bisexual athletes displayed by these men throughout the ethnography.

This is one reason why I focussed on instances of gender collaborative training, in a context where full integration is not possible. The moments of gender collaborative training were valued by those that experienced them and showed more embodied ways that women's athleticism and leadership were valued. From my research it is evident that there is a relationship between the amount of contact hours a men's team has with a women's team of the same sport, including occasional instances of gender collaborative training, and increasingly positive gender relations between the teams, as well as an increased likelihood of the male athletes actually treating the female athletes as serious athletes. My own research does not provide conclusive proof that gender collaborative training is valuable for improving attitudes towards women, but it certainly shows there is a strong rationale for exploring the potential benefits of gender collaboration in training when the structure of sport continues to maintain gender segregation more broadly.

Chapter 8: Discussion

Previous research on masculinities in team sports, in Western cultures, has shown that stratifications of men were based on athletic capital, homophobic and misogynistic language, and the maintenance of characteristics associated with orthodox notions of masculinity; the more of these qualities that a man possessed, the closer the man placed to the top of the masculine hierarchy (Connell, 1995; Pronger, 1999). Almost as a physical representation of the hierarchical nature of masculine stratification, team sports served as a medium in which men could prove their masculinity by defeating other men on the sporting field; trading team and individual victories, calculated by the amount of points you scored or how you sacrificed your body so your team could win, as masculine currency to climb to the upper rungs of the metaphorical ladder (Anderson, 2005a; Burton Nelson, 1994; Woog, 1998).

In this system, boys who were softer, more feminine, or less athletic were marginalised, and pushed to the bottom of the hierarchy, oftentimes being ascribed the label of 'homosexual' (Kimmel, 1994). With gay people and feminine boys and men being accused of being homosexuals placed at the bottom of this masculine hierarchy, men at the top often used homophobic and anti-feminine discourse to maintain their position at the top, culminating in a homohysterical culture in which masculine power distribution was intertwined with notions of heterosexuality and biological essentialist views of gender (Connell, 1995; Mac and Ghail, 1994; Epstein, 1997).

In this culture, which dominated the 1980s and 1990s, it was considered common knowledge that elite team sports teams were the apex of masculinity, and that men striving to be elite athletes would undoubtedly be hypermasculine and certainly could never be homosexual (Anderson, 2005a). While this allowed for elite male athletes to touch and bond in manners that would usually be linked with homosexuality (team huddles, butt slapping,

etc.), their status at the top of the masculine hierarchy actually permitted these behaviours, operating under the belief that the culture of homophobia in team sport had eliminated all homosexual players and homosexual desire from sport (Anderson, 2005; McGuffey and Rich, 1999).

However, the modern jock would be significantly out of place within the previously described sport culture. Homophobia has been on a rapid decline since 1993, leading to a rise in inclusive attitudes towards homosexuality (Anderson, 2014; McCormack and Anderson 2014; Weeks 2007). This decline in homophobia in western cultures means that we are no longer living in a culture where masculinity is policed by homophobia and men have to competitively deploy homophobia and misogyny to secure their own sense of masculinity (Anderson, 2009a, 2014; McCormack 2012, 2014; Magrath, 2017a; Roberts et al., 2017. This shift in cultural attitudes towards homosexuality requires us to move away from Connell's (1995) model of hegemonic masculinities, towards Anderson's (2009) model of inclusive masculinities (see also Anderson and McCormack, 2018).

It was in this context that my doctoral research examined the dynamics of elite male team sports athletes at an elite British university. My research is novel in several respects, focussing on sports beyond rugby and football that have been the main focus of studies using inclusive masculinity (e.g. Adams, 2011; Adams and Anderson, 2012; Anderson, 2009a; Anderson and McGuire, 2009; McCormack and Anderson, 2010; Magrath, 2017a), having a broad mix of British and American athletes, and incorporating my own experiences and influences as a popular, extrovert bisexual elite volleyball player. This latter point is notable because the few ethnographic studies that have involved openly gay or bisexual players (e.g. Anderson and Adams, 2012) have tended to focus on coming out experiences and where the sexual minority player is concerned about how teammates will treat them after coming out. In this ethnography, my place in the team, both socially and professionally, was secure and I

was confident and assertive in my public identity as a bisexual athlete. Accordingly, the dynamics were shifted in a manner similar to how Anderson and McCormack (2018) argue attitudes toward homosexuality have shifted: In some senses, I mirrored the “post-gay” (Dean, 2014; Ghaziani, 2014) sensibility where I did not have to go through a coming out narrative, but my bisexual identity was common knowledge and fundamentally ordinary knowledge for the team (Savin-Williams, 2005).

This doctoral research provides further evidence of the transformation of the dynamics of masculinity in elite college team sports and the increasingly inclusive practices of sport in relation to sexuality. My research aimed to address the following questions:

1. To what extent is homophobia still prevalent in elite male sports, and what processes exist within the team culture that produce/reproduce homophobia in team settings?
2. In what ways do elite male athletes bond with each other, and what effects does that have towards the team culture, whether that be a homophobic culture, or an inclusive one?
3. Does a correlation exist between different sports teams and their attitudes towards female athletes, and what social processes affect these attitudes?

Addressing the first research question, my results show that broader cultural attitudes toward gay and bisexual people are fully endorsed in these elite teams – with gay and bisexual players supported and celebrated. Where a “don’t ask, don’t tell” context existed for gay athletes in Anderson’s (2002) early research, the straight men in my research actively sought discussions about sexuality that extended beyond their own experiences and desires. These men also feel comfortable presenting as heterosexual, but identifying as mostly heterosexual instead of as exclusively heterosexual when this better categorises their sexual desires and intellectual perspectives (McCormack and Savin-Williams, 2018; Savin-Williams, 2017).

Their understanding of human sexuality has evolved as well, with many claiming that even if their heterosexual friends were to have sexual encounters with another man, they would not assume that he is suddenly non-heterosexual; rather, they would allow their friend to identify however their friend wants to identify, and they would not question his heterosexuality. Important in my results is the combination of attitudes and behaviours that corroborate my argument that these are not the attitudes that these men believe they ought to be saying but are what they believe and act out in their lives.

This freedom to be openly affectionate and tactile with other men has permitted the men in my research to look at, touch and love each other in ways that would not have been acceptable only decades ago (Anderson, 2009a), shedding light on my second research question. This corresponds with the growing body of research on bromances and the intense emotional relationships that heterosexual men develop with each other (Robinson, Anderson & White, 2018; Robinson, White & Anderson, 2017). My research found similar experiences, with men developing relationships that they believe will last their lifetimes and which some considered more important than their current different-sex relationship. The prevalence of homosocial affection prompted me to develop the Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism, consisting of three parts: The Homoerotic Gaze, Performative Homoeroticism and Homosocial Intimacy. The culmination of these three parts demonstrated that men are willing to actively look at each other and complement each other's physical appearances, they are extremely physically tactile with each other in private and in public, and they are capable of developing deep emotional relationships with each other.

The Homoerotic Gaze describes the way that these elite male athletes openly view and complement each other's appearances, and also the phenomenon that these men actively seek to be viewed by their male friends. Gazing occurs in numerous settings. First, in the public setting, where these men discuss fashion and grooming choices, and value each other's

opinions more than opinions of women. Second, in a semi-public setting, where these men are often shirtless, and working out. Here they discuss body shape, and health choices. Lastly, homoerotic gazing occurs in private settings, of team showers or at home, where these men comment on each other's nude bodies, penis and testicle size and penis shape in jeans and sweatpants. The Homoerotic Gaze demonstrates that these men privately and publicly desire homosocial attention. Whereas men were once scared of the gaze and regulation of other men (Kimmel, 1994, 2008), now they embrace this gaze because its meanings and effects have fundamentally changed.

Performative Homoeroticism describes the numerous ways that this group of elite male athletes touched each other, publicly and privately, in manners that would traditionally be associated with homosexuality. Publicly, homosocial tactility functioned as either humorous or genuine. Humorously, these boys would sit on each other's laps or hold hands, as a form of what McCormack (2012) calls ironic heterosexual recuperation. However, it was common for these athletes to give a teammate a shoulder massage to relieve stress, or hug for extended periods of time, or even kiss each other at the bar. These acts were done publicly, but functioned as a genuine form of bonding. In private, at home mostly, these athletes would cuddle or spoon each other, either on the couch while watching a movie, or sometimes in bed. McCormack (2012) highlighted that heterosexual recuperation was less frequent than the tactile behaviours that occurred without any regulation, and the important shift with my research is that what seems to have shifted is the recuperative nature of it. That is, whereas the men in McCormack's (2012) study were doing boundary work to shore up their heterosexual identities (Steinberg, Epstein and Johnson, 1997), the boundary maintenance work related to heterosexuality was absent from these behaviours. They certainly helped establish hierarchies of popularity and dynamics of friendship (e.g. McCormack, 2011), but did not have the same regulation of sexuality.

Homosocial Intimacy describes the ways that, in addition to affectionate physical tactility, these men develop strong emotional relationships with each other. These relationships, called bromances, were based on deep feelings of love, trust, and emotional vulnerability with one another. While the majority of the bromance was a private affair, these bromances were often publicly announced with pride, and were noticeable by the amount of time bromantic men spent with each other.

Previous literature has discussed the homoerotic gaze (Hall, 2015), and the idea of bromances (Robinson, White and Anderson, 2018). However, there was a lack of interconnectivity between these ideas in the literature. The Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism was created to explain the nuanced ways that modern men bond with each other, blurring gendered boundaries and traditional notions of masculinity in order to be more emotionally and physically affectionate with their male peers without fear of social repercussions. Haywood et al. (2017) make important contributions to thinking about these issues in a poststructuralist framework, yet their focus on heteronormativity, queerness and post-masculinity, obscure for me the value in thinking about homosociality, gazing and touch in an embodied and ethnographic context.

The lessening distinction of gendered boundaries and behaviours has meant that feminine qualities in men are no longer seen as weak; rather they are often celebrated by men, meaning that elite male athletes are able to engage in effeminate behaviour and still retain value within sport culture. Furthermore, as an answer to my third research question, the elite male athletes in this research did demonstrate a variety of attitudes towards female athletes. I found a positive correlation between the amount of hours spent in a sport setting with female athletes, and increased attitudes towards female athletes, some even claiming that there is immense value in occasionally training alongside women. However, the

language used to talk about female athletes and women's sport is problematic, often devaluing the women's game to a lesser version of the men's.

While physical size and strength have traditionally been argued to be the most logical and undeniable reasons to keep elite sport gender segregated (Burton Nelson, 1994; McDonagh and Pappano, 2008), and the 1980s and 1990s documented explicit sexism and misogyny within sport culture, with women's sport being less watched and less covered by the media, compared to men's sport (Petty and Pope, 2018), the men in my research did not display these views. Rather, the elite male athletes in this study all reportedly respected elite female athletes and believed in gender equality in sport. Substantiating their claim, the elite female athletes that were interviewed reported that they felt that the men treated them as athletic equals.

Anderson (2008a) claims that one reason for men's poor views of female athletes is because of their limited interactions competing against or with women in sport. He found that although the men on the team were socialised into orthodox masculinity, many of them playing varsity football during their high school years, their attitudes towards female athletes had changed since they had joined the cheerleading team, and that these collegiate male cheerleaders had developed positive attitudes towards women's athleticism, leadership and friendships; he attributed this attitudinal shift to a sociopositive result of the gender integrated sporting environment. My research found that having a gender integrated sporting environment, occasional mixed gender training sessions or workouts, resulted in the male athletes having more positive attitudes towards female athletes. These Gender Collaborative Training sessions were positively reported by both the elite male athletes and female athletes from my study, both claiming that their teams benefitted from training alongside each other, and some men and women showed evidence of understanding sport as a continuum of talent (Kane, 1995), rather than a gendered hierarchy.

However, head to head competition between genders had mixed reviews, based mostly on the similarity in rules, and the importance of size in the sport. Furthermore, while the attitudes towards female athletes are positive at first glance, there is evidence that elite male athletes are not yet ready for full gender integration in sport. First, it was clear that many of the male participants still held onto gender binary logic and ‘biology as destiny’ arguments when discussing the differences between male and female sports, such as references to their observation that male athletes are physically larger and faster than female athletes. They expanded on this by regendering women’s teams from men’s team of the same sport by claiming that the women’s game is more skilled, or reliant on strong fundamentals, while the men’s game is powerful and exciting (Fink et al., 2016).

Theoretical Implications

Hegemonic masculinity theory had been widely accepted as the most accurate explanation of masculine interaction through the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, in times of high homophobia and homophobia; however, my research, which does not find its gay or bisexual participants at the bottom of any hierarchy, is best explained by Anderson's (2009a) inclusive masculinity theory. My research acts as a further study that inclusive masculinities exist within modern sport culture. My research also contributes to inclusive masculinity theory by adding a long term ethnography, that studied not only the culture of a single team, but the holistic culture of a successful education based and national level sport franchise, as well as the individual subcultures of five of the teams within the broader sport culture developed there.

The length of the ethnography, as well as my unique positionality as one of the elite male athletes, provided me with the opportunity to witness these men in a number of public and private spheres, 24 hours a day, that would be difficult for a different researcher to access. This access gave me rich data about the extent of inclusivity that exists among this

group of elite male athletes, in a way to Ripley's (2018) covert study of masculinity and intimacy among undergraduate students at a British university. My study sits between Ripley's fully-insider style of ethnography and the broader set of studies where there is greater research distance. As such, my study is an important methodological addition by providing evidence against the contention that the men are only saying what they believe researchers want to hear (see Anderson and McCormack, 2018).

Similarly, my research offers new understandings of how bisexuality is connected with the development of inclusive masculinities. While Anderson and McCormack have examined bisexuality in contemporary Western cultures (most notably Anderson and McCormack, 2016), bisexuality has been the *subject* of the study, rather than consideration of how heterosexual and bisexual men might interact in inclusive settings. Anderson and Adams, (2011) demonstrated an intellectual willingness to engage with bisexual men and bisexuality as *abstract ideas*, and my research enhances this research agenda by documenting how participants are inclusive of bisexuality in *embodied* and *everyday* ways.

Alongside the empirical contributions to the literature, I provide several conceptual contributions to inclusive masculinity theory. I developed the Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism, which details the intimate day to day interactions of this group of men. This model supports Anderson's observations of increased physical tactility among male athletes, and provides a surplus of rich detailed interactions further proving that men are engaging in behaviours that are highly compassionate and homosocial, and unlike the ways that men would have acted during periods of homophobia and homophobia.

The Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism, specifically The Homoerotic Gaze, expands on previous research about homoerotic gaze and male gazing, especially with links to metrosexuality (Hall, 2015). I expand on the definition of the homoerotic gaze, and divide its function into three spheres: public, semi-public, and private. While the public sphere is

similar to the way Hall (2015) describes in his book on metrosexual men, the semi-public and private spheres highlight the ways that men positively talk about each other's bodies in appreciative and supportive ways, ranging from general body shape and tone all the way to penis appreciation.

Furthermore, one critique of inclusive masculinity theory is that it lacked female perspectives of men and masculinities (O'Neill, 2015). My research contributes to inclusive masculinity theory by interviewing elite female athletes to discuss their understanding of elite male athlete masculinity, and if they perceive the men to be inclusive, less homophobic, and in full support of gender equality. While the elite female athletes did not have access to all of the intimate private spheres of the male athlete's day to day interactions, they did report that they felt respected by the men, and that the elite male athletes seem very inclusive of homosexuality and very open to being physically and emotionally affectionate with each other. Indeed, an additional component of this research alongside the finding that these athletes are far more inclusive of women and reject misogyny and sexism, they are less concerned with public displays of supporting women. Whereas the men were passionate about discussing their inclusivity regarding sexuality, they were less overt or public in their (still inclusive) engagement with women.

One potential explanation for this could be my positionality as a bisexual man. If I were a heterosexual woman athlete, it is possible that they would have been more pro-active in voicing issues related to gender equality. While it is possible this is at play to an extent, there are several reasons to expect that this is not the main reason for the finding. First, the male athletes all knew lots of elite female athletes and, in my discussion with the women, there was no evidence that they were more vocal in conversations with these women. Secondly, many of the male athletes showed solidarity with me by attending gay pride

events, socialising in gay clubs, and otherwise demonstrating inclusivity (as discussed in the first results chapter). There were not the same public displays for the women.

There are also important considerations for sport and gender studies in my thesis. While there remains a lack of research on gender integration in sport, especially at the elite level, my research contributes to research on gender and sport by introducing the concept of Gender Collaborative Training as a method of promoting ideals of gender equality by increasing the contact hours of male athletes with female athletes in a cooperative and competitive sport oriented setting. Most team sports have different rules or equipment required, when comparing the men's game to the women's game, that would make gender integration of sport an unlikely outcome in our immediate future. However, many skills are transferrable across gender boundaries for any particular sport, meaning that training sessions that focus on these skills are able to mix genders without compromising on any rules of gameplay. My findings highlighted the correlation that teams that engaged in more gender collaborative training held more positive attitudes towards women's athleticism and leadership capabilities. My research shows that there is also scope for men to become more engaged in supporting women athletes, including through more extensive playing together.

Gender-integrated training and growing support for women athletes help to further undermine the idea that sport remains a male preserve. Matthews and Channon (2019) focus on the notion of sport as a male preserve. Based on the original theorising of Sheard and Dunning (1973), who discussed a rugby club as a male preserve, it highlights that the rugby club (for Sheard and Dunning) or sport more generally (for Matthews and Channon) serves as a space to "insulate men from wider social changes threatening to undermine their traditional, taken-for-granted, superior social status" (p. 2). Given progressive feminist change that has seen women have social gains in various settings, sport has traditionally taken on additional importance as a mechanism to demonstrate symbolically the continuation of male supremacy

(see also Burton Nelson, 1994). Matthews and Channon (2019) contend that the preserve is now “in pieces”, with patriarchy residing only in particular places and at particular times. Matthews and Channon (2019) emphasise that one of the roles of gender segregation is to preserve the myth of male dominance, and so moves to challenge this through gender-integrated training are important steps to further erode gender inequality. By implementing Gender Collaborative Training, or other forms of gender-integrated sports training at any level, the myth of male dominance might be replaced by the sport continuum, where men and women overlap on the sport continuum based on their respective skill levels in competition (Kane, 1995).

A related issue is that of the coaches in these teams. Anderson (2005b) has found that the coaches on teams are often more orthodox than the players (see also McCormack and Anderson, 2010). While I have not focussed on the coaches in this thesis, and did not undertake in-depth interviews with them, an important subsidiary finding is the absence of homophobia or misogyny among the coaches. The coaches, staff and trainers did not use homophobic or misogynistic language to motivate players during intensive exercise or while playing games (c.f. Adams, Anderson and McCormack, 2010; McCormack and Anderson, 2010), neither did they show hostility for sexual minority players. Indeed, throughout the period of data collection, and my longer period of a player at the university over five years, coaches or staff never displayed homophobic or biphobic sentiment.

Limitations

In any research study it is important to consider the limitations that are present. First, a fundamental understanding of qualitative research is the partial and contextually situated nature of the project. Quite simply, the purpose of this project is not to generalise to other contexts and sporting environments, but to understand, through rich data and thick

description, how the dynamics of gender, sexuality, and sport play out in the particular context. It is not possible to repeat the data and there are many issues that will impact how the study played out. In other words, a different bisexual player in another sports team might find markedly different results, particularly if that person was in a different country, or if there were different values related to religion, morality or sexuality. I cannot claim that these results will be the same for all elite sports or in other contexts for the same sports. The first limitation is to recognise this and see the thesis as a contribution to a broad body of research in the field. The contribution is necessarily partial.

Limitations are also partial in terms of how I collected data. A different person may report on different issues, for several reasons. Researcher effect is a fundamental issue in ethnographic research, and I cannot predict how other people might have collected data differently. Yet, it is important to recognize that this limitation is precisely what also provides real strength to the data – my subjective experiences and personality is what developed the strong relationships and trust in the research process that meant participants felt able to disclose their thoughts, feelings and desires to me in a way that a more distanced researcher would be unlikely to experience (see also Anderson, 2009a; Ripley, 2018; Spradley, 1979).

There are also intersections in this research that have not been considered in detail, and would require further study. First, as the majority of participants were white American and white British, I did not get to dissect the intersectionality of race and ethnicity with masculinities. While some of the participants did claim that race and ethnicity were important in masculinities studies, and did have a presence shaping the culture of masculinities at Team Northern, I was unable to collect a sufficient amount of data to make any substantial claims regarding race, ethnicity and masculinities.

Second, the majority of my participants described themselves as middle class, with a handful considering their family to be upper class, and a few classifying their family as lower

or working class. While no participant cited class relations as a factor in the masculine culture of elite male sport at Northern University, it would be difficult to imagine that the two topics are mutually exclusive.

Additionally, all participants in my research identified as cis-gender; and while college sport at Northern University had transgender athletes, no transgender athletes competed in BUCS league or any other affiliated national leagues for Northern during this ethnographic year. It is unclear as to what the attitudes of a transgender athlete would be from elite male athletes, and no participant discussed any transgender topics during interviews, although conversations about transgender athletes, such as American triathlete Chris Mosier, were received positively when discussed with my teammates.

There are also other issues that I would have liked to have covered if I had the capacity in terms of time and space. It would have been fascinating to understand in more detail how the women viewed the men's behaviours, or talk with women more expansively about the bonding of men and women. Similarly, I could have investigated in more details the issues of race, class and gender I mention above. These all stand as areas for future research and to interrogate how they shape and form the dynamics of men and masculinities in the current moment.

Suggestions for Further Research

Masculinity, homosocial intimacy, and fluidity in male sexual attraction and behaviours are becoming more inclusive at time goes by. I would suggest that universities fund projects that use the Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism as a framework to understand male homosocial interactions in a variety of contexts in order to fully understand the rigidity, or lack thereof, of modern masculinity.

While this research suggests that team sport culture is accepting of a variety of sexualities, certain sport cultures are still resistant to female athletes. I believe that sporting organisations, such as NCAA and BUCS, ought to fund research that seeks to incorporate Gender Collaborative Training into their framework, starting with gender integrated strength and conditioning, and extending to skills practices for sports that maintain a similar level of technical mastery to be successful at the elite level for both genders in their current structure; however, I believe that Gender Collaborative Training can have its greatest impact in youth sports.

Incorporating Gender Collaborative Training into youth sports, starting at the earliest level of sport and extending through the age of 18, would allow for a gender integrated introduction to fundamental sporting techniques as well as provide a diversity of leadership roles. Starting Gender Collaborative Training at the earliest level of youth sports could change sporting culture from the ground up, developing athletes to work together across gendered spheres and to acknowledge and appreciate sport as a continuum.

I urge researchers to implement Gender Collaborate Training through a variety of age groups, at various levels of sporting excellence, in order to collect more data on the attitudinal shifts over an extended period of time. I believe that an examination of gendered language would be beneficial for understanding nuances in attitudes towards gender equality, and to educate young children on the harmfulness of gendered language, and what responses would be appropriate to counter gendered language in sport.

Conclusion

In summary, this thesis adds support to Eric Anderson's (2009a) inclusive masculinity theory, and expands on certain characteristics associated with inclusive masculinities. The findings suggest that homophobia was a driving factor that reproduced orthodox

masculinities, and as homophobia decreases men are able to interact in ways that would have traditionally been coded as homosexual or feminine. This thesis claims that the decrease in homophobia has enabled men to engage in sexually fluid identities and behaviours, without being permanently labelled as a homosexual. Also, this loosening of gender and sexuality policing among men has permitted them to actively view (and desire to be viewed), be physically tactile and extremely emotionally affectionate with each other, outlined by my Tripartite Model of Homoeroticism. While not fully embracing gender segregation for elite athletes, this thesis does promote Gender Collaborate Training for sports with similar rules at all levels of play in order to foster true equality between all people and all athletes, regardless of gender.

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