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Gender Negotiations of Female Collegiate Athletes in the Strength and Conditioning Environment: A Qualitative Analysis

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GENDER NEGOTIATIONS OF FEMALE COLLEGIATE ATHLETES IN THE
STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING ENVIRONMENT: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

by

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B.A., Oregon State University, 2011
M.S., Southern Illinois University, May 2015

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Masters of Science in Education

Department of Kinesiology
in the Graduate School
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THESIS APPROVAL

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
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in the field of Kinesiology

Approved by:

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

RACHEL I'LEENE ROTH, for the Masters of Science degree in Education in Kinesiology, presented on April 9th, 2015, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: GENDER NEGOTIATIONS OF FEMALE COLLEGIATE ATHLETES IN THE STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING ENVIRONMENT: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Bobbi Knapp

Research has shown that collegiate female athletes are oftentimes faced with negotiating meanings of their femininity and their athleticism. Athleticism has traditionally been equated with masculinity, and to be a collegiate athlete requires certain levels of skill, experience, and athletic ability. Therefore, female collegiate athletes are conflicted with managing their identities in order to avoid accusations of their sexuality, which often results in being labeled as deviant. A primary indicator of athleticism is muscularity, which is also considered a masculine trait. In order to stay within gender boundaries, female athletes may go above and beyond to emphasize their femininity, or they may hold back on performance and training to avoid a muscular physique. An area of collegiate athletics that has become increasingly important is the strength and conditioning coach and weight room. These coaches are responsible for training athletes in power and speed development to enhance sport performance and prevent injury. Research has shown, however, that the weight room and activity of lifting weights has not been deemed socially appropriate for women. The purpose of this study was to understand first, how do Division-I female athletes negotiate their femininity and muscularity within the strength and conditioning environment? Second, is there a difference in femininity and muscularity negotiations and management between underclassmen female collegiate athletes and upperclassmen female collegiate athletes? Finally, what aspects of the weight room influence the negotiations of

femininity and muscularity among female collegiate athletes? To gain a rich understanding of how female athletes negotiate their femininity with muscularity in the strength and conditioning environment, a qualitative methodology was used. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 athletes, from 7 different sports, at a Midwestern Division-I university. Using a critical feminist interactionist theoretical framework, this study found that female collegiate athletes negotiate their meanings of muscularity and femininity in the strength and conditioning environment. Athletes viewed it necessary to place boundaries on their muscularity in regards to size, preferring the 'toned' physique. All athletes acknowledged a positive impact on their sport performance, yet some athletes admitted to holding back during strength and conditioning sessions. Others believed that the weight lifting program was not threatening to their muscularity, but explained they would hold back if it did have a 'bulking' effect. Finally, some athletes performed additional cardiovascular training to reduce body size. Additional findings suggest that the weight room environment is influential for the female athletes. The public weight room was described as a gendered space that was intimidating. In contrast, the collegiate weight room was a place that was welcoming to the female athletes. The strength and conditioning coach played an important role to the environment and the female athletes. Concluding results show that inconsistent with previous research, there were no consistent findings in attitude or behavior differences between underclassmen and upperclassmen athletes.

DEDICATION

This thesis work is first and foremost dedicated to my loving husband and best friend, Chris, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of graduate school and this project.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my dearly beloved family and friends, who have also given me many words of encouragement throughout the duration of this project. Dad and mom, who taught me to work hard and always give my best. To my friends Karri-ann Benthin, Mallory Sellers, Liz Jordan, Terry Kessinger, Jenna Riccolo, and Mike and Laura Luczkiw. To my employers and friends Jooil and MJ Lee and the wonderful coffee at Common Grounds Coffeehouse.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my committee members Dr. Knapp, Dr. Partridge, and Dr. Porter, who have also been a constant source of encouragement and support throughout the duration of this project. Special dedication goes to Dr. Knapp who has been a mentor to me throughout my graduate experience; it has been through her knowledge, expertise, and insight that this project has been a success.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Western culture has been traditionally structured through binaries, and one of the most foundational binaries that exist is that of masculinity and femininity. Notions of masculinity and femininity have been contested and redefined again and again throughout history. These gender codes work to organize many, if not all, cultural spheres such as family, work, education and even sport. In Western culture masculinity has traditionally been organized as the dominant gender, while femininity has taken a more passive and supportive role. This femininity has been described as 'emphasized femininity' or 'ideal femininity' (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004). When examining the institution of organized sport, gender relations have not been exempt in impacting the formation of the meanings of 'sport' or 'athlete.' In fact, when one looks close at sport history there is evidence that meanings of masculinity and femininity played a prominent role in the construction of modern organized sport, and continues to shape the way sports are organized, played, presented, and consumed to this present day. It is also important to recognize that while notions of gender have influenced the evolution of organized sport, sport has also influenced cultural understandings and definitions of gender.

While negotiations of gender meanings are rooted back to the beginning of history, to understand modern sport in relation to gender it is best to first direct our gaze to the nineteenth century. At that time scientists and physicians believed humans were born with a finite amount of energy and that both mental and physical activity expended this energy. 'Vitalism theory' as it was termed, led to the concern that middle and upper

class young girls and women were spending too much of their predetermined energy on leisure activities, and insisted that all of their energy should be spent on their moral duty of childbearing. This concern did not necessarily extend to lower class girls and women. In addition, upon puberty women were viewed as 'eternally wounded' due to their menstrual cycle, which was thought to be a drain on their energy resources (Vertinsky, 1989). Vitalism theory led many to believe that women were inferior to men's physical and mental capabilities because they needed to save all of their energy for bearing children (Dowling, 2000; Vertinsky, 1989).

One of the consequences of this theory was that women were viewed as too weak to participate in any leisure physical activity, let alone able to compete in any sports. This has come to be termed the "female frailty myth," which according to Dowling (2000) is "the social domination of women's bodies by leading them to believe that weakness is their natural condition" (p. 3). While Vitalism theory has since been disproved, the idea that women are, or should be, inferior to men physically continues to manifest in cultural norms today.

Leading up until the fitness movement of the 1980s being slender, wearing feminine attire such as dresses or skirts, styling hair, and wearing makeup was generally recognized as the embodiment of emphasized femininity. However, when aerobics and the fitness movement became popular in the late twentieth century, emphasized femininity evolved and the new ideal figure was one that was slender and toned, yet still soft and curvy (Markula, 1995). This "aerobicized body" (Markula, 1995) strives to tighten and confine the body (Bordo, 1993), while avoiding too much musculature because muscles, symbolic of strength and power, are traditionally

attributed to males (Dworkin, 2001). The appearances of muscles on women are generally not accepted as a feminine trait and do not fall in line with the prescribed emphasized femininity (Brace-Govan, 2004).

Athleticism, alongside muscularity, is a trait that has been traditionally associated with masculinity and ever since the creation of sport the terms athletic and masculine have been synonymous. The role of sport in the (re)production of masculinity developed in response to social change. The Industrial Revolution undermined the value of physical strength, the suffrage movement was highlighting women's rights, and women were entering the work force and public education system all of which instilled widespread fears of social feminization, which resulted in a 'masculinity crisis' (Messner, 1988; Theberge, 2000). Sport was viewed as a way to create a space that was only intended for boys and men, a place to prove their masculinity (Messner, 1988). Sport has since been considered a male preserve because structurally and ideologically it has resisted women's participation (Rail, 1990).

At first women were excluded from sport primarily based on the frailty myth, it was believed that no woman should be playing a sport when her duty was to bear children. However, once the Vitalism theory was disproved women were able to push boundaries and through the decades have fought hard to gain opportunities in sport. One of the biggest successes was the passage of Title IX, the legislation that demands gender equity in federally funded educational programming. This allowed for a dramatic increase in opportunity for girls and women at every level of sport (Rail, 1990).

A level of sport that has benefited the most from the passage of Title IX has been collegiate athletics. However, it isn't just a matter of opportunity that has proven to be a

barrier for collegiate female athletes. To be a collegiate athlete requires certain levels of skill, experience, and athletic ability. Since athleticism is considered a masculine trait, female athletes that display athletic abilities are conflicted with managing their femininity and athleticism. Female athletes who do not conform to emphasized femininity are often questioned on their sexuality and are labeled deviant in both their gender performances and society (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004). Literature suggests that female athletes not wanting to be questioned may go above and beyond to emphasize their femininity, or they may hold back on performance and training to avoid musculature (Kauer & Krane, 2006).

Recent studies have examined the tension between femininity and muscularity for elite level athletes (Cox & Thompson, 2000; George 2005; Howells & Grogan, 2012; Mosewich, Vangool, Kowlalski, & McHugh, 2009; Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009); however, these studies only examine female athletes within their specific sport (e.g. soccer and track & field). An area of elite female athletics that has not been explored is that of the strength and conditioning environment for collegiate athletics. (Collegiate athletics being the most prominent arena for elite level female athletes due to the minimal opportunity at the professional level).

Strength and conditioning has developed quite rapidly in collegiate athletics. Founded in 1978, The National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA) quickly gained popularity among collegiate athletic programs and is currently viewed therein as a necessity (Powers, 2008). Before strength and conditioning weight lifting was directed by athletic trainers or the sport coaches in small, under-equipped weight rooms. Now, most Division-I schools have a full strength and conditioning staff as well as newly built

weight rooms (Powers, 2008). Strength and conditioning is an important addition to any athletic program since these coaches are trained professionals in the techniques and training styles of weight lifting and sport conditioning. Strength and conditioning responsibilities may include: develop athletes' physical qualities such as speed, strength, power, agility, cardio, muscular endurance, flexibility, provide nutritional information, create rehabilitation programs, and implement motivation training (Brooks, Ziatz, Johnson, & Hollander, 2000).

Most collegiate weight rooms are available and utilized by both men's and women's teams; however, the weight room in general has not always been a place welcoming to women. Weight rooms have traditionally been defined as a male space, while women are directed to the cardiovascular room (Dworkin, 2003). This notion ties back to the idea that only men are supposed to be strong and lift heavy weights, while women are supposed to continue on the quest for smallness and slenderness (Salvatore & Maracek, 2010). Additionally, an overwhelming majority of strength and conditioning coaches are male (Todd, Lovett, & Todd, 1991), which enhances the perception of the strength and conditioning environment as a male space, even within the specialized athletic environment.

To the best of my knowledge, no research exists on how female collegiate athletes manage their notions of femininity while also training for performance in the strength and conditioning environment. Since the area of strength and conditioning has become such a large aspect of the collegiate experience, and since female athletes continue to struggle with meanings of muscularity, it was necessary that research was conducted to better understand these issues.

Using a critical feminist interactionist framework, I was able to gain a rich understanding of how female collegiate athletes negotiate their meanings of femininity and muscularity within the strength and conditioning environment. Additionally, I explored the differences between underclassmen female athletes and upperclassman female athletes in these negotiations of said identities. Finally, I examined which aspects of the weight room environment influence the negotiations of femininity and muscularity among female collegiate athletes.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Construction of Western Femininity

When using a sociological approach to conducting research it is imperative to use a sociological imagination, which includes a historical, comparative, and critical sensitivities. The historical sensitivity of the sociological imagination underscores the importance of examining the past to better understand the current situation and give context to issues. It would be futile to look at an issue such as gender in sport without first looking at how gender itself has been formed, defined, re-defined and maintained through physical activity, bodies, and sport. In addition, understanding the context is also an important aspect of research when utilizing critical theory.

First, I will give a historical overview of the evolution of femininity being synonymous with weakness, while masculinity has been constructed as synonymous with athleticism and muscularity. Secondly, I will explain the rise of female collegiate athletics including structural and ideological barriers that exist. Then, I will examine recent research that has examined how female athletes manage their athletic identity. Finally, I will describe the rise of the role of the strength and conditioning coach and programming within collegiate athletics.

The Evolution of the Female Frailty Myth

Colette Dowling (2000) provides a thorough account of the history and formation of 'the female frailty myth,' which is the social domination of women's bodies by leading them to believe that weakness is their natural condition (p. 3). The female frailty myth cannot be traced back to one single source of origin. It was a mixture of forces that

contributed to this widespread belief, and evidence of the myth still lingers in today's culture. Built on the insecurities of social change, the emergence of the 'new woman,' and the strong beliefs of the medical community, the frailty myth cemented upper and middle-class women's definition of true femininity in frailty.

Dowling (2000) says that before the frailty myth began to take form in the nineteenth century, women were actually encouraged to be strong and competitive. For example, during the Paleolithic era women hunted alongside men, Minoan women participated in bull vaulting, and during the Greek and Roman era women hunted, rode horses, swam, ran and drove chariots. Additionally, Spartan women were expected to be independent while men were in training barracks for up to thirty years. Fast-forward a few centuries and in the 1700s and 1800s competitive endurance walking and running became popular for women. However, it was at this point that women began to be excluded from sport and by late 1800s endurance racing for women had completely died out (Dowling, 2000).

At the same time endurance walking was coming to a halt for women, concerns over women's bodies and childbearing became the focus. The medical community was convinced that people had a pre-determined amount of energy and that women lost energy with every menstrual cycle and through childbirth. "Vitalism," as it was termed, "held that energy for the human organism was derived from a vital force which was limited, non-renewable, and which should be expended only in the service of family, God, or the country" (Rail, 1990, p. 1). This meant that women needed to save all the energy they had left for childbearing for the fear of "race suicide" (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 171). Women were told maintaining the human race was their responsibility and any

energy they spent needed to be carefully calculated. Historian Patricia Vertinsky (1989) described Vitalism as a situation in which “medical practitioners became human engineers by conditioning middle-class females to view their normal menstrual function as pathological, thus distorting female perceptions of their own vigor and physical abilities” (p. 41). The beliefs by the medical community strongly influenced the development of the “female frailty” myth. Women were viewed as eternally wounded, their bodies pathological and weak (Dowling, 2000).

Starting when girls were young, they were forced to stay in the house and knit or sew while the little boys played outside. This was strongly suggested by the medical community who believed that protecting pubertal girls from too much mental and physical activity was very important (Vertinsky, 1989), though for practical reasons working class women were not usually part of this prescription. Young girls were instructed to rest during menstrual cycles, to avoid all exercise except household chores, and by no means were they to participate in any sports (Dowling, 2000). “Adolescence was the period of maximum growth when all energies were to be conserved. Puberty for boys marked the onset of strength and enhanced vigour; for girls it marked the onset of prolonged and periodic weaknesses of womanhood” (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 49). From very young ages this belief was instilled in young girls and adolescent women. Doctors warned parents that their daughters would be damaged if they did not conserve their energy for their moral responsibility of bearing children.

The medical doctors and practitioners of the time were a driving force in the formation of the frailty myth, but this was not the only developing factor. In times of economic crisis middle and upper class women are often relied on for strength and

dependability, strong women are celebrated and needed. However, in times of prosperity it suddenly becomes unfeminine to be a woman of strength, courage, or one to take risks; instead frailty becomes the feminine norm (Dowling, 2000). This phenomenon was very evident after the Industrial Revolution. The machines replaced the need for physical strength, making physical strength much less valued. Men's sense of dominance and control was fading and in order to maintain gender hierarchy women were encouraged to scale back physical efforts (Dowling, 2000).

Also at this time was the first wave feminist movement, which threatened men's dominance in the workplace and in education. The female frailty myth served as a backlash to this movement. In addition to physical energy conservation, doctors insisted that mental energy must be conserved as well. They discouraged girls and women from attending school and instead encouraged them to concentrate solely on preparing for motherhood (Vertinsky, 1989).

While the vast majority of middle and upper class women were living under the beliefs of the frailty myth, there were a few women that spoke out against the physicians. Catherine Beecher developed a calisthenics routine that encouraged women to exercise and later in the century Charlotte Perkins Gilman, an influential feminist writer and thinker, was very outspoken on the necessity for women to exercise (Dowling, 2000; Vertinsky, 1989). These early reformers, alongside of the first wave feminist movement, gave a foundation for change. These feminists strongly opposed the social control physicians had over women.

Advancement for the women's movement also came from the rising popularity of riding bicycles. Riding bicycles gave women an independence they had never

experienced before and they liked it. It got them out of the home, and they didn't have to rely on others. At first doctors were optimistic about it because they said the increased muscle strength in the legs, abs, and pelvic area was good for childbirth. However, they quickly changed their mind as it was felt that women were out of control and had too much freedom. They started saying instead that it would cause spinal deformity, strained hearts, uterine displacement, and "bicycle face" (Vertinsky, 1989). This time women did not pay as close of attention, and thrilled by the newfound freedom a "new woman" was born (Dowling, 2000). "At its peak of popularity in the late 1890s, cycling promised liberal-minded middle-class women, the emergent 'new woman', the potential benefits of healthy, active recreation as well as a new sense of liberty from restrictive dress and chaperonage" (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 77). This re-introduction to being physically active was an important starting point to regaining control over their bodies.

As the nineteenth century transitioned into the twentieth, progress for women could be seen on many different levels and was being driven by many different factors. The women's movement was working on suffrage and reforms in higher education and the workplace, physical educators were encouraging physical activity and women's sport, and with the onset of WWII women were needed in the workplace. As with any economic crisis, women stepped up and filled the job openings that men had held while they went overseas to fight the war, which continued to help dispel the belief that women were inferior physically and intellectually to men (Dowling, 2000).

Team sports started to become popular for women and opportunities for female intercollegiate, regional and national competitions started to appear (Rail, 1990, p. 3) Also, during this time, women's physical education programs were being incorporated

into women's colleges and the female educators encouraged many women to participate. However, by the 1930s the medical community once again stepped in and claimed that women were over doing it and needed to scale back. As a result, girls' rules were invented and scaled versions of the games were created to accommodate the perceived lack of physical capability and to preserve femininity. These programs were anti-competitive, and very largely anti-Olympics; the programs were designed to encourage physical activity for the sake of doing physical activity and nothing else. Consequently many schools abandoned their women's intercollegiate sport programs (Rail, 1990, p. 4). Two explanations for this mindset can be first linked to the deeply engrained belief of female frailty, and second, the female physical educators didn't want to lose their jobs to men and instead kept a tight grip on the physical education programs (Dowling, 2000).

In the 1940s women again rose to the economic crisis of war; with men fighting overseas in WWII many women filled the jobs that men were previously working to support their families. Sport for women also once again increased, especially in team sports (Rail, 1990, p. 5). Many physical educators, amateur athletics, and pop culture were starting to accept and support women in athletics. Women's competitions were no longer held only at the college level, high schools also started implementing female sports. Comparatively, this marked huge progress when looking at the role women played a century before, when physical activity for women was discouraged and looked down upon.

The 1950s and 1960s were an interesting time for women in athletics and physical activity. After the Vitalism theories diminished, women's interest in being

physically active and competing in sport continued to build. As sports became more and more popular among women, new questions began to emerge regarding women and their bodies, and even more importantly questions about their femininity. When the men returned from the war there was a push back into the kitchen by popular culture. Being overly feminine and embracing traditional notions of femininity returned and women were again discouraged from competing in sports, and instead were told by doctors to partake in exercises that would strengthen the pelvic area and help with “feminine problems” (Rail, 1990, p. 5). When some women rejected this and continued to pursue athletics their biological definition of being female came into question. Rail (1990) states “the 1960s are remembered for the rise of gynecologists, who joined psychiatrists in the search for causes to such diseases as “femininity rejection,” “lesbianism,” “incomplete feminization,” and the “housewife syndrome” (p. 6). For middle and upper class women being involved in sports was viewed as deviant, but as long as these women exercised under the careful limits of preserving femininity, physical activity was celebrated.

Toned as Ideal

The celebration of women being physically active increased in the 1970s, but there were still very specific forms of exercise that were encouraged, and as a result certain types of exercises were indirectly discouraged. Magazines promoted swimming, jogging, light calisthenics, aerobics, and light strengthening and stretching as beneficial forms of exercise for women. Exercise was promoted as a health benefit, but with caution, because there was a fear that with too much exercise would come a loss of femininity. To preserve this femininity, exercise was also promoted as a way to improve

bodily aesthetics. Kenneth Cooper, Aerobics inventor, said that the purpose of aerobics was to “improve appearance” (Markula, 1995, p. 431). Women were being encouraged to strive for health benefits of physical activity and also the ideal body, which Markula (1995) describes as “shapely, slender, and softly curvy” (p. 431.) Therefore, physical activity and exercise for women was deemed an avenue to the new ideal feminine body.

Since this time, when examining women and physical activity of any kind, it is often found that notions of attractiveness are closely linked with the activity. This was consistent for women who were advertised as having “aerobicized bodies” (Markula, 1995). They were very slender and trim and were equated with what it meant to be attractive. Acknowledging that most women naturally do not have that body type, this suddenly put the majority of women in the mindset that unless they too had a slender, thin body that they were not attractive. Instead of focusing on ability, women’s attention was now focused on the excess on their bodies and her imperfections (Markula, 1995), what Coakley (2006) refers to as “cosmetic fitness.” The cosmetic fitness mindset has had a lasting impact on women, particularly in the area of body politics and social control.

Bordo (1993) closely examines some of the complex issues of body politics and women in our current culture. Explaining that the body can be viewed as a metaphor for culture, Bordo says that it is a direct place of social control. The body is turned into a machine that is automatic and habitual, always striving for bodily discipline and control.

Through the pursuit of an ever-changing, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity – a pursuit without a terminus, requiring that women constantly attend to minute and often whimsical changes in fashion – female bodies become docile

bodies – bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, ‘improvement’. Through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, makeup, and dress – central to organizing principles of time and space in the day of many women – we are rendered less socially oriented and more centripetally focused on self-modification. Through these disciplines, we continue to memorize on our bodies the feel and conviction of lack, of insufficiency, or never being good enough. (Bordo, 1993, p. 166)

It is through this mechanical control of the body that power is inscribed in and on the body. If women are constantly focusing on regulating their bodies, their attention turns inward and their bodies’ perfections become their measure of success in Western society.

Bordo (1993) acknowledges that this type of social control is a backlash to the ‘New Woman’ of the feminist movement and with this self-gazing focus came the consequence of an epidemic of eating disorders. Society promotes a woman that embodies domestic femininity of being a physical nurturer, other-oriented, and denying the self; while at the same time this new woman is supposed to take on a masculine language of self-control, determination, and emotional discipline, therefore women need to be tough and cool, but also warm and alluring (Bordo, 1993). “In pursuit of slenderness and the denial of appetite the traditional construction of femininity intersects with the new requirement for women to embody the “masculine” values of the public arena” (Bordo, 1993, p. 173). It is interesting and important to note that hysteria of the Victorian era and eating disorders of the current era have both peaked during

periods of cultural backlash against the attempted reorganization and redefinition of male and female roles in society (Bordo, 1993).

The body becomes a place where the meanings and social constructions of masculinity and femininity are prescribed and displayed. The current image for women to strive to achieve femininity has become dangerous for many women. As Bordo (1993) explains, “Our contemporary aesthetic ideal for women, an ideal whose obsessive pursuit has become the central torment of many women’s lives” (p. 167). This obsessive pursuit continues because the ideal feminine image of the present day is out of reach for most women, and as women are continually encouraged to strive for this unrealistic ideal it becomes a tormenting task.

The slender body ideal strongly opposes excesses, either too much fat or too much muscle; often described as the enemy it must be attacked, destroyed, burned, or eliminated. “The ideal here is that of a body that is absolutely tight, contained, ‘bolted down,’ firm; in other words a body that is protected from eruption from within, whose internal processes are under control” (Bordo, 1993, p. 190). Fat has several different meanings associated with it. Being slender and void of excess became a sign of wealth and social status during aristocratic times and that continues through today. Fat is also viewed as a sign of the inner state of the self and if one has excess body weight it can be read as having a lack of will, and along that same line not controlling the body is viewed as lazy. This dominant ideology shows that “the size and shape of the body have come to operate as a market of personal, internal order (or disorder) as a symbol for the emotional, moral, or spiritual state of the individual” (Bordo, 1993, p. 193). The

size and shape of women's bodies have become an outward sign of the inner state of the individual. If a woman does not reach the aesthetic ideal, she is viewed as lazy.

However, if a woman takes this control to the extreme and is subject to an eating disorder or has surgery she is labeled as pathological, outside of the norm, or a freak. Bordo (1993) explains that this preoccupation with fat, diet and slenderness are not abnormal and this functions as one of the most controlling and normalizing mechanisms; insuring the production of self-monitoring and self-disciplining bodies.

One of the main avenues to achieve this tight and slender body has been aerobics. Aerobics has provided a solution for these perceived imperfections of excess bulge, known as "toning" these exercises are meant to target "problem areas." As Markula (1995) found, these problem areas were "abdomen, thighs, underarms, and the 'butt'" (p. 434). These appearance-motivated toning exercises were heavily promoted by women's magazines as they were functioning under the assumption that women need to have this shape in order to be attractive. This was made especially popular when Jane Fonda emerged in the 1980s publishing at-home workout videos for 'problem areas' and losing fat. Now not only were women encouraged to be small and slender, but they also needed to be firm and toned. And that wasn't the end of it.

The ideal woman was slender and toned, but by no means should she be too muscular. Toning was keeping muscles firm, while being built meant having muscular definition, which was not considered feminine. It was a very fine line, for many the fear of bulk was debilitating. Women's bodies were being oppressed in a new and passive way. By being consumed with bodily imperfections and appearance, women no longer needed to be controlled by physicians, they were controlling themselves. Keeping

themselves in check by striving after the ideal body which was “layered with long, sleek, unbulky muscles” (Markula, 1995, p. 436). This toned, slender body ideal has not vanished over the past twenty years. Instead it is a constant theme that can be seen in popular culture, media, and emerges from literature on female body image, body-surveillance, fitness practices, and in female athletics (Brace-Govan, 2004; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Dworkin, 2001; George, 2005; Howells & Grogan, 2012; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004; Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009).

Aerobics strives after the tight body ideal, thin and slender, but also tight and toned. Anything in excess to that, any bulge of muscle, starts to raise eyebrows; it starts to move out of the realm of idealized femininity and pushes the line on what it means to be masculine. Since the formation of the female frailty myth developed, muscles have been the separating characteristic between men and women; it continually keeps men in the higher position of the gender hierarchy. Muscles symbolize masculine power and strength, and create a “naturalness” of sexual difference (Bordo, 1993). By definition in our society, having muscles is masculine.

Muscles as Masculine

This new ideal of being toned (seen as feminine) yet not muscular (seen as masculine) is incredibly difficult for women to attain, and many researchers are recognizing this paradox and the affect it has on women. Just like Markula (1995) points out that body expectations and definitions of ideal femininity are changing but not necessarily improving in contrast to what general population would like to think, Dworkin acknowledges this trend as well. Through her ethnographic research in private fitness center facilities, Dworkin (2001) presents the concept of the “glass ceiling”:

That is, women in fitness – particularly those who seek muscular strength – may find their bodily agency and empowerment limited not by biology but by ideologies of emphasized femininity that structure the upper limit on women’s bodily strength and musculature. (Dworkin, 2001, p. 337)

Instead of only hitting a culturally imposed and self-monitored glass ceiling in professional advancement, she argues that women also come up against a glass ceiling of muscular strength.

The women in Dworkin’s (2001) study were classified into three different categories: non-lifters (25%), moderate lifters (65%), and heavy lifters (10%). The non-lifters and moderate lifters both shared a fear of muscularity. For these women being feminine was associated with the current ideal of being toned, but at the same time curvy, while having developed muscles was seen as masculine. Non-lifters focused primarily on cardiovascular work and rejected any sort of weight work. Moderate lifters were a little more complex in that they did a combination of cardiovascular work and weight work, but they carefully managed their weight work to limit muscular development. They wanted to be strong, but feared size. Dworkin (2001) explained “moderate lifters carefully negotiated this upper limit, watched their bodies for signs of “excess” musculature and consistently adjusted or stopped their weight workouts accordingly” (p. 341). Strategies such as keeping the weights the same for every set or lifting light, backing off, or simply holding back were common for these women.

Another example of fear of muscle can be found in Brace-Govan’s (2004) study examining female weightlifters. She found that most had experienced opposition from family members when initially beginning to weight lift. Parents were cited as having the

fear that their daughters would develop large muscles and feared that the young girls' physical safety would be in question due to lifting heavy weights.

Parents 'protected' their daughters from social disapproval by discouraging the activity or preventing them from attending. The epiphany, or elucidating moment, reveal that the social meaning of muscles is masculine, especially muscles dedicated to physical power, and inappropriate for women (Brace-Govan, 2004, p. 516).

This study shows that even those closely connected to women that desire to weight lift have a disapproving influence due to the ideology that being muscular is meant to be embodied by men not women.

These constructions of femininity and masculinity, muscles and slenderness, have put female athletes, just like female weightlifters, in a tough situation. Often female athletes perceive that they have to choose one or the other. They either embrace the opportunity to be more successful at their sport through lifting weights and gaining muscle, or they continue to adhere to the cultural ideal of remaining slender and being deemed as feminine. Society simply does not allow them to be both. In a time when female participation in sport is at the highest it has ever been, and continuing to grow, understanding how constructions of gender has affected the female athlete and her performance is crucial.

College Athletics and the Female Athlete

Sport as a Male Preserve

Many forms of modern sport were developed in Britain and North America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Seen as a way to celebrate

masculinity and teach young boys character, public schools embraced sport as an avenue to prove masculine identity (Theberge, 2000). During this time, many important cultural changes were taking place. The Industrial Revolution replaced many jobs that required physical strength and power. The increased urbanization associated with the Industrial Revolution also crushed many small farmers and small business owners, leaving men without ways to provide for their family. Finally, the feminist movement that was happening in England and America was pushing traditional definitions of masculinity and femininity. Women were entering the work force and boys and girls were being educated together in public schools.

Messner (1988) states, “These changes in work and family, along with the rise of female dominated public schools, urbanization, and the closing of the frontier all led to widespread fears of ‘social feminization’ and a turn-of-the-century crisis of masculinity” (p. 200). Among Boy Scouts of America and the YMCA, organized sports became a place for boys and men to prove their masculinity (Messner, 1988; Theberge, 2000). “Athletic fields were places where the development of physical presence, stoic courage in the endurance of pain, and the judgment under pressure was portrayed as simply part of the achievement of manhood” (Whitson, 1990, p. 21). Sport became viewed as a way to maximize the differences between men and women.

Since women were viewed as the weaker sex physically, and due to the physical nature of sport demanding physical ability and power, sport became the “natural” way to separate men and women. By women seeking out the opportunity to play sport, they were challenging this clear separation that had been established; they were seen as trying to be like men.

If women were determined to act like men, men would up the ante: a woman could never be a he-man. A man could always develop more muscle. And this muscle would serve as a veiled threat, a reminder to any who questioned male supremacy that might makes right. And men will always have more might.

(Dowling, 2000, p. 24)

This message that men are to develop muscle and women are not is communicated to society constantly through direct messages, subtle messages, and our everyday experiences. Whitson also (1990) says that:

In contending that our sense of who we are is firmly rooted in our experiences of embodiment, it is integral to the reproduction of gender relations that boys are encouraged to experience their bodies, and therefore themselves, in forceful, space-occupying, even dominating ways. It may be suggested that masculinizing and feminizing practices associated with the body are at the heart of the social construction of masculinity and femininity and that is precisely why sport matters in the total structure of gender relations (p. 23).

While sport was made to satisfy the male anxieties of the masculinity crisis at the turn of the century, women could not be kept out forever.

Breaking into the preserve has proved to be extremely difficult and has taken perseverance and dedication by many pioneering women to get to the point of where we are today in sport. Ideological barriers have always been present in regards to women competing in sport and early in the twentieth century structural barriers were also a major problem. It was not only that women were discouraged to participate, but it was also that there were simply few opportunities available to begin with. As physical

activity became more accepted for women as the twentieth century progressed colleges began incorporating athletics for women and the journey to varsity intercollegiate competition began for women.

History of Female Athletes in Collegiate Athletics

Welch Suggs (2005) documents the advances of women in sports and specifically collegiate athletics. Suggs (2005) says that, “Although colleges had cut back on most sports offerings for women in the years following World War II, by the middle to late 1960’s more colleges were experimenting with intercollegiate athletics for women” (p. 14). In 1941 the National Section on Women’s Athletics of the American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation sanctioned the first golf tournament for women at Ohio State (Suggs, 2005). By 1958 the Joint Committee on Extra-Mural Sports was created (designed to unite and streamline the multiple organizations that had jurisdiction over women’s sport at the time). The task of the joint committee was the help satisfy the fast-growing interest among college women in competitive sport in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

However, some women became dissatisfied in what was being offered in the college setting and started competing on corporate teams, private clubs, or for the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). Administrators with the Division of Girls’ and Women’s Sports (DGWS) realized that women were going to find opportunities to compete in elite, Olympic-style sports and decided that it would be better for those women to compete within the American educational system, under the supervision of qualified women, rather than allow the AAU or National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to take command. So in 1963, Sara Staff Jernigan of the DGWS asked the NCAA to not

allow women to compete on men's teams, which the NCAA did not object to and passed a rule to limit championship participation to men (Suggs, 2005).

In 1967 the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) formed "to give college women more opportunities for high level competition in athletics" (Suggs, 2005, p. 16). In 1971 administration officials decided on a more formal structure and changed the CIAW into the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) holding to the motto, "girl for every sport, and a sport for every girl" (Suggs, 2005, p. 16). Administrators were very protective from influence of men's athletics and structured competitions to promote a lot of participation, banning scholarships and restricting recruiting.

However, in 1966 the NCAA started hinting at taking over control of female championships. "They were dubious that a professional association of educators could manage a sports program, and they certainly did not think the women's organizations were up to the task of administering women's athletics" (Suggs, 2005, p. 22). The NCAA and the AIAW struggled back and forth, and while the passage of Title IX benefited female athletes, it proved to be threatening for the AIAW. With an introduction of equitable sports programs female athletic programs were moved from the physical education department to the athletic department.

There was a spike in women's competition with the passage of Title IX which states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Policy Interpretation, 1979, p. 67). Originally the bill was passed with the intention of

educational equity, but it quickly brought to question athletic programs since intercollegiate sports were funded by public universities. The NCAA estimated that between 1966-1967 there were approximately 15,182 female athletes on varsity teams and in 1976-1977 the number of women playing sports had dramatically increased to 62,886 (Suggs, 2005, p. 25).

In order to remain within the limits of the law the AIAW grudgingly revised its rules to permit scholarships and recruiting, but still encouraged that female athletics should remain different than how the men's athletic programs functioned. The NCAA continued to pressure the AIAW and eventually in 1981 all three divisions voted for women's positions and allowed a three-year transition from the AIAW rules to the NCAA rules (Suggs, 2005, p. 29).

The passage of Title IX proved to be one of the biggest legislative advancements for women's rights since women won the right to vote during the suffrage movement. However, there was a backlash during the 1980s that stalled women's advancement in sports. When President Reagan was voted into office his commitment to scale back the federal government had a profound impact on the backbone of Title IX. He substantially cut back the Office for Civil Rights budget, which was in charge of regulating Title IX, and it resulted in hundreds of complaints being dropped (Hogshead-Maker, 2007). The 1984 decision on the Supreme Court case *Grove City College v. Bell* also had a major impact on women's progress. The ruling on the case aligned with the Reagan administration and interpreted Title IX's stance on sex discrimination as only applying to educational programs that receive federal funding directly. This excluded any programs that were funded through student loan programs or Pell Grant programs because that

would be considered indirect funding. This ruling resulted in the Department of Education dropping almost all of the Title IX complaints and the rapid growth of women's sports came to a halt.

While the 1980s proved to be a bit of a backlash for the effects of Title IX and the growth of women's participation slowed down considerably, there was still some growth and interest and the 1990s was a time of rebounding. Many cases and legislative acts were passed that reversed the effects of the actions taken during the 1980s and women's participation in intercollegiate sport began growing at a rapid pace once again. Within the past decade opportunities for women athletes have continued to grow and Title IX has held strong, despite continuing efforts by some groups to reduce the enforcement of Title IX.

Title IX was an important piece of legislation that propelled the sporting interests of women to turn into legitimate opportunities. While complete equity between men and women's sporting opportunities and benefits has not been reached, the gap between the two has lessened considerably over the past forty years. While this has been a major stepping-stone for female athletes, there continue to be other factors that work against female athletes in Western culture. Since being athletic has been synonymous with being masculine, women who pursue sports have often found themselves in a situation where their traditional femininity comes into question. This often leads to questioning sexuality and the lesbian stigma in female athletics has confined and controlled women and the growth of female athletics.

Sexuality and Homophobia in Female Athletics

Gender in our society has a set of very specific gender norms. Through social construction we give meaning and value to these norms and when the norms are threatened or violated it has the potential to disrupt the whole system. Our culture functions with a patriarchal approach, which places men at the top of the gender hierarchy. In Western culture, men are privileged in the gender hierarchy and women have traditionally supported that role. When women violate the gender norms prescribed, the hierarchy may be questioned which often results in measures to control and balance the system. Stigmatization is a social control technique that preserves the traditional gender system by discrediting those who display characteristics outside the normative gender boundaries.

Since female athletes push the boundaries of femininity they often receive the stigmatized lesbian label to deflect their transgressive potential. Susan Cahn (1994) states:

The female athlete's entrance into a male-defined sphere made her not only a popular figure but an ambiguous, potentially disruptive character as well. Sport had developed as a male preserve, a domain in which men expressed and cultivated masculinity through athletic competition (p. 9).

The fear of women becoming too manly was one of the reasons behind the strong push of the early physical educators to promote women's sport separate from men's. The women-centered philosophy of moderation was that:

Moderation provided the critical point of difference between women's and men's sport, a preventative against the masculine effects of sport it was this philosophy,

with its calculated effort to resolve the issue of “mannishness,” which guided the early years of twentieth century women’s athletics (Cahn, 1994, p. 10).

Essentially “mannish” characteristics that were associated with sport were linked to sexual deviance, claiming that if a woman were to take on these characteristics of being athletic that would transfer to her sexuality and ultimately she would lose interest in men. “The Amazonian athlete might be not only unattractive but unattracted to men – she might prefer women. What began as a vague suggestion of lesbianism emerged as a full-blown stereotype of the ‘mannish lesbian athlete’ in the years after World War II” (Cahn, 1994, p. 11). The stereotypes that female athletes had to fight began to increase and intensify; society was now not only telling them that people will start to think differently of them, but also that their interest in sport was going to inform their sexual orientation.

After this stereotype was developed, all female athletes and physical educators operated with a cloud of suspicion hanging over their head. In response to this, women went out of their way to emphasize their femininity, which has come to be known as the “female apologetic.” Cahn (1994) describes the female apologetic as:

Even as they competed to win, they made sure to display outward signs of femininity in dress and demeanor. They took special care in dealing with media to reveal “feminine” hobbies like cooking and sewing, mention current boyfriends, and discuss future marriage plans (p. 11).

Physical educators and the media fed the fire with campaigns geared toward feminizing women. Dress codes were created for physical educators and major sports forums reported marriage statistics alongside of the athletic statistics. The message was clear,

women's interest to compete in sport could not be tamed, so in order to make up for invading the male preserve women athletes went out of their way to apologize by emphasizing their femininity and drawing a firm line between men and women. As a consequence of emphasizing femininity, sexualizing female athletes became a popular way of apologizing for athletic talent.

The efforts of over-emphasizing femininity and sexualizing female athletes did not remove the lesbian stigma associated with female athletics. The ever-present questions loom over female athletes and image is something that must be carefully constructed and contained in order to avoid social discrimination or being accused of being lesbian. This has not only affected heterosexual female athletes, but it has also created an extremely hostile environment for homosexual female athletes.

In order to explore how female athletes manage the lesbian stigma, Blinde and Taub (1992) conducted research at numerous universities. They identified three pre-conditions for a female athlete to receive the deviant label. First, the growth of women's sport has threatened the male sport structure; second, women athletes lack power and are unable to challenge or disprove the label; and third, the stereotypes of athleticism being associated with masculinity have been adopted (Blinde & Taub, 1992).

These pre-conditions allow four types of accusations to be made against female athletes. Accusations based off of unintended or accidental false labeling, when stereotypes override valid facts, and when the person receiving the label has activity or willingly sought to be labeled (Blinde & Taub, 1992).

From the interviews Blinde and Taub (1992) were able to identify stigma management techniques that fall under Irving Goffman's stigma management theory.

Goffman (1963) defines stigma as attributes that reflect a discrepancy between individuals assumed identities versus their real identities. This essentially discredits or spoils their social identity. Those people that possess the attribute that is stigmatized are falsely accused and have to manage or cope with that.

The first management technique is called 'concealment.' This is basically when the female athlete hides her athleticism; this is done through self-segregation, filtering information shared with others, or accentuating other aspects of their identity in order to downplay being an athlete (Blinde & Taub, 1992). A way that many female athletes have attempted to 'conceal' their identity is through emphasizing femininity by wearing make-up, dresses, and growing hair long, also known as the 'female apologetic' (Messner, 1988). Being seen in public with a boyfriend or males, and avoiding associating with other women extensively in public is another method oftentimes used by female athletes.

'Deflection' is the second management technique, and is a way in which the female athlete reduces the importance of being an athlete; this is done by trying to excel in other areas such as academics in order to not identify solely as an athlete. The third technique, which is not often used, is 'normalization'. This strategy looks to redefine the stigma or create a new normal. This is not often used because a majority of female athletes would prefer other techniques instead of directly confronting labels (Blinde & Taub, 1992).

While Blinde and Taub (1992) identified general techniques and strategies of managing the lesbian stigma, Kauer and Krane (2006) examine the common stereotypes that female athletes encounter and report how they manage those

stereotypes. Not surprisingly they found that among female athletes stereotypes the first and foremost they had to deal with was that all female athletes are lesbians.

Stereotypes of female athletes “foster inaccurate perceptions about female athletes, trivialize their accomplishments, and limit social acceptance” (p. 42). These inaccurate perceptions have varying effects on female athletes on their performance and health, whether they are heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. This fear of the lesbian stereotype has created fear in female athletes that has continued to keep heterosexual women in their place and lesbian women closeted. Consequently, it has also divides female athletes (heterosexual against homosexual) and as long as they are divided it is unlikely that female athletes as a whole will be able to challenge the current stereotype.

In their explorations of stereotypes the female athletes reported, “we’re known as the jock girls” (Kaur & Krane, 2006, p. 46). Many of them felt perceived as being manly or lesbian. In their descriptions they used terminology such as ‘normal girls’ when describing other college women that were non-athletes. Many of them also recounted experiences the stereotype that ‘if you’re an athlete you must be a lesbian.’ This was especially true if they turned down a male’s advances, or if they were on a traditionally masculine sport team such as basketball or softball. It was found that the “feminine” sports were gymnastics, volleyball, or swimming because of the tight uniforms and non-contact nature of the sport, while the “masculine” sports were basketball, softball, and even soccer because of the aggressive, contact nature of the sport and the more masculine uniforms (Kauer & Krane, 2006).

The common theme that seems to be causing the formation of these stereotypes, based on the athletes studied, is primarily their outward appearance and choice of

attire. If athletes often wear baggy clothes to class they are a lesbian, if they don't wear makeup they are a lesbian, if they have short hair they are a lesbian, if they associate with other identified lesbian teammates they are a lesbian, and if they are muscular, strong, or physical in their sport then they were assumed to be lesbian. All of the athletes described feeling angry, bothered, or annoyed with the stereotypes (Kauer & Krane, 2006).

Coping with the stereotypes involved different strategies and align closely with what Blinde and Taub (1992) discovered. Some would disassociate themselves by not wearing athletic attire to class, or emphasize their heterosexuality or femininity. Even though at first they were all angry, with maturity and self-acceptance many of the athletes were able to ignore the labels and stereotypes and were very proud of being an athlete. They described their opportunity in sport providing them with life skills, independence, confidence, experience extreme limits, and overall positive in nature (Kauer & Krane, 2006).

Homophobia has long worked as a major form of social control within women's athletics. Modern sport was founded on the idea that it was a space for men to prove their masculinity apart from women. As women began entering the male preserve, backlash was seemingly inevitable. "Female participation in team sports and other traditionally male activities are often subject to homophobic innuendos because they have overstepped some man-made boundaries between gender appropriate activities for men and those for women" (Lenskyi, 1994, p. 362). As a result of this homophobia female athletes have had to learn ways to navigate and manage their identity, oftentimes resulting in an emphasized femininity that values image over performance.

“The homophobic agenda is clear: sportswomen, already seen as non-conforming, should at least present themselves as unequivocally heterosexual, and this hyper femininity is seen as an effective marketing strategy for female sport” (Lenskyi, 1994, p. 359). The insecurities that are created because of the homophobic stereotypes directed towards female athletes cause them to be overly concerned with their physical appearance, and this then allows sport to continue to be a way in which men are able to prove their masculinity.

The contradiction between being successful in athletics while preserving femininity has been a major concern for many female athletes. Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, and Kauer (2004) explain that, “physically active women and girls face an intriguing paradox: western culture emphasizes a feminine ideal body and demeanor that contrasts with athletic body and demeanor” (p. 315). Muscles have been labeled masculine and female athletes are concerned with developing oversized muscles. “Ideally, sportswomen have toned bodies, yet they also must avoid excessive, masculine-perceived muscular bodies” (Krane et al., 2004, p. 317). This ideal has created a standard that is unattainable for most female athletes, and it takes away their opportunity to simply focus on doing what would best benefit their sport development.

In their study, Krane et al. (2004) research female athletes and how they negotiate this paradox. The female athletes identified themselves as abnormal or the “other” and defined normal girls as being feminine. Characterizing this femininity as being petite, dainty, soft, girly, and clean, they contrasted that to how they viewed themselves as being sweaty and bulky. Most lamented their size and musculature and expressed a desire to be more toned and less bulky. “Having or building muscle was

associated with being “unfeminine” or “like men” (Krane et al., 2004, p. 320). Through these interviews it is clear that the idea that muscles are masculine is still something that female athletes have been told and that they believe.

To make up for not being “normal” women, the athletes would enhance their femininity outside of the sport setting. They would date men to avoid the homosexual label and dress in ways that were traditionally feminine. Krane et al. (2004) states:

Through many different avenues, the athletes were reminded that they were different. They were larger, more assertive, more muscular, and they ate more than normal women. The athletes also were not considered feminine because of their body shape and their casual attire. To be considered socially acceptable, they sometimes created an alternate identity from athlete – that of a feminine woman (p. 324).

In order to still play sport but also meet cultural expectations, female athletes tend to create two separate identities or appearances.

While these female athletes complained of their size and musculature, they also identified how their increased physical ability empowered them. They said that having functional muscles and performing in sport created a sense of pride, of empowerment, it helped their self-esteem, they felt stronger, more independent, confident, and had more self-respect (Krane et al., 2004). “It appears that, in negotiating and reconciling the social expectations of femininity with athleticism, sportswomen develop two identities – athlete and woman” (Krane et al., 2004, p. 326). If the ideologies and stereotypes surrounding female athletes were to be removed, sport could simply function as a way to empower women. However, in the midst of pursuing something that increases their

self-esteem, they are bombarded with social expectations that tell them their self-esteem ought to be attained from something else.

Strength and Conditioning Environment

The Collegiate Female Athlete; Managing Muscularity and Femininity

Yet this resistance in the form of stereotypes and social expectations has not stopped females from pursuing the opportunity to play sports. As the female athlete has continued to gain access to more sporting opportunities, more and more people are interested in understanding the experiences of female athletes in regards to their bodies, self, and their sport. The tension between masculinity and femininity is not a new issue to our society. As it has been previously demonstrated these gender norms and beliefs have been contested again and again over time. As the female athlete continues to emerge on the elite level it is important to understand how the meanings of muscularity and femininity affect female athletes and their performance.

There has been a recent interest among sport sociologists to understand the complexities of being a female athlete in relation to the gender ideologies of Western culture. Barbara Cox and Shona Thompson (2000) were some of the first researchers to apply a “multiple bodies perspective” to women and sport. Drawing on work from Foucault (1975, 1978), Bordo (1989), Goffman (1959), Butler (1990), and Connell (1995) Cox and Thompson (2000) present a complex way of analyzing the female athlete. Multiple bodies perspective in sport looks at the context of the social setting in which the female athlete is in. Using Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical model, they examined different role expectations of the female athletes and how they altered those perceived roles according to the social situation they were in. In addition to looking at

role-play they also included a critical perspective on gender relations that looked at power differences and individual experience.

In their study of elite soccer players in New Zealand they found “the soccer body,” “the private body,” “the feminine body,” and “the heterosexual body.” Interviewees described their ideal soccer body as “relatively thin, muscled, athletic and strong” (Cox & Thompson, 2000, p. 11) and expressed confidence and joy in their athletic ability that carried over into other areas of their lives. However, most of the women reported that their sexual orientation was questioned because of the assumption that being athletic is to be masculine. While they were confident in their “soccer body,” there was distress over the “private body” in regards to fat. Cox and Thompson (2000) said, “one aspect of body shape remained a major concern for every player interviewed: fat. Body fat was perceived to be controllable, and antithetical to the sporting body of the ‘ideal’ female body” (p. 12). So although the athletes did exude a certain amount of confidence and pride in regards to their physical body, they still did not feel as if they were living up to either their own expectations or the expectations of others.

The locker room proved to be a place of comparison and performance on the field was evaluated through the lens of body composition. Even though Cox and Thompson (2000) explain that the majority of the players were slender, fit, and toned, most experienced grief over “problem areas” or felt “guilty for not having the ‘required’ body type” (p. 13). They explain that since the ideal soccer body aligns closely with the ideal feminine body that “being fat or overweight was seen to impact not only their ability to play soccer, but also on their self-perceptions as dedicated, disciplined players, as well as physically attractive women” (Cox & Thompson, 2000, p. 14). They began to

believe that their physical appearance informed others of their level of commitment to their sport. There were multiple layers of emotions tied to physical appearances for these athletes.

Also found in the study was the techniques of feminization that the players used in order to maintain the “feminine body” in effort to refute accusations against lesbianism. “Wearing make-up, perfume, dresses, or skirts, all formed part of what these players described as acting in a feminine way” (Cox & Thompson, 2000, p. 14). Showing interest in men or dissociating with lesbian players were strategies used to promote the “heterosexual body.” Cox and Thompson (2000) conclude their research by saying:

It is evident from the data that players experienced their bodies differently in different contexts and that sport was a situation where this multiplicity was clearly discernible. Because the body is central to the sporting experience, female players continually have to negotiate the overlapping and at times contradictory discourses of sport, gender, and heterosexuality. (p. 17)

The expectations placed on female athletes are so complex and contradictory that it is difficult for female athletes to play a sport that they love without feeling societal pressure no matter how hard they try to manage their body and identity.

To continue Cox and Thompson’s research, Molly George (2005) completed a two-year ethnographic study on the soccer team on which she participated. Using opportunistic qualitative research she observed her teammates and coaches and conducted informal interviews. During her time as a participant the soccer program transitioned from a Division II school, that was less competitive, to a Division I program

that attracted more elite players and had a much more competitive mindset. George (2005) explained that in order to play at the D-I level, players had to devote tremendous amounts of time and energy towards training, which is the case for most collegiate and professional level sports.

Also, as is the case for most collegiate teams, the team had a full time strength and conditioning coach that trained the players in Olympic weightlifting for the purpose of building strength, speed, and muscle. As the new players transitioned from playing soccer in high school to a Division I soccer program their bodies underwent significant transformations; creating a conflict in the players between their femininity and athleticism.

George used a multiple bodies approach as described in Cox and Thompson (2000). The multiple bodies found were the “performance body” and the “appearance body,” and these were viewed in conflicting ways. These socially constructed bodies created a conflict in that “muscular athletic women pose a challenge to white, middle-class notions of female frailty and male superiority” (George, 2005, p. 326). The players were confronted with the conflict of building muscle for their elite performance body and managing their femininity for their appearance body.

Specifically the “soccer body” was described as being one of “well-developed legs with an emphasis on the quadriceps and gluteus maximus, a trim torso, and toned arms” (George, 2005, p. 322), going against the new feminine ideal of a toned and athletic body; which is rid of all body fat, has “sexy” or “feminine” muscles, and considers having too much muscle equivalent to having too much fat. Players were confronted with this conflict as their bodies were increasingly exposed to the vigorous

training demands of the Division I level and weightlifting, resulting in more musculature and negative reactions. One player stated “I hate lifting, I do cardio over the summer and avoid weights” (George, 2005, p. 305). Although not directly stated, it appears as if this particular athlete dislikes the effects that weight lifting has on her physical body, and desires the body type that comes along with doing a lot of cardio.

The fear of musculature was a major theme in George’s research, as was a fear of size in general. Fearing both muscle and fat, the players used techniques to avoid building muscle such as only lifting when required, lifting lighter weights, and increasing cardio training. Out of concern for achieving and maintaining the slender, toned beauty ideal the majority of these athletes avoided activity that would enhance muscle mass.

Mosewich, Vangool, Kowlaski, and McHugh (2009) completed similar research in exploring female track and field athletes’ meanings of muscularity within their sport. A feminist approach was used in a qualitative study to find deeper meaning beyond what a questionnaire could offer. Mosewich et al. (2009) describe drive for muscularity (DFM), which has received much recent attention and is defined as the “desire of an individual to achieve an idealized, muscular body” (p. 99). Potential problems with DFM vs. Drive for Thinness (DFT) can include muscle dysmorphia, distress, anxiety, and compulsive and excessive exercise. The research has largely been focused on men, but it is starting to be found in women as well. Female athletes often find it difficult to gain the muscle necessary to be successful in their sport while still trying to meet societal expectations of being toned yet lean.

The body struggle was identified as the female track athletes revealed their thoughts on their performance and their bodies. It was first found that muscularity had

different meanings to different athletes and that the context was especially important. Women's responses included that muscles were seen as: intimidating, healthy, related to strength, beneficial and necessary for performance, and functional (Mosewich et al., 2009). However, it became more complicated when the issue of the appearance came into question. There was a fear of appearing "bulky" or "manly" in non-sport settings, but there was still a desire to have muscle or be strong. This is where another important distinction entered in to the conversation: the difference between muscle size and muscle tone.

In regard to appearance and performance, the two concepts seem to be very interconnected for women. In this study this complex relationship was constantly being negotiated. One athlete stated, "by societal standards you might have the perfect body, but it might not allow you to perform well in that event" (Mosewich et al., 2009, p. 105). Another aspect was the feeling of confidence that bodily appearance had on the athlete, "its like a loop. If you train hard, you will feel better about yourself...you become happy with your appearance, and then your confidence [in] racing might improve as well" (Mosewich et al., 2009, p. 105). As stated by the aforementioned athlete, where confidence and success in one's sport can be gained is a complex idea for female athletes to try and understand.

It was apparent that for the female athletes the meanings of appearance and performance were closely related and depended on each other, yet also fought against each other. Mosewich et al. (2009) described it as:

The women athletes in our research were developing muscular bodies to excel in their sport, yet they were challenged by societal and personal expectations of

femininity that would limit their muscular potential. Although the ideal feminine body has shifted to that of a more muscular and toned physique, there are still limitations on the muscle mass that is desired and deemed socially acceptable. (p. 112)

Congruent with other studies on female athletes, these athletes found themselves in a paradox between being athletic and being feminine.

Two other themes present in their findings were comparisons with others and journey towards acceptance of self. Within the sport of track and field the athletes identified ideal looks or images that they were expected to achieve due to their athletic status. The evaluation was inward as they compared their own bodies with those in similar events, and the evaluation was experienced outwardly as they were on display for coaches and spectators. The women identified self-acceptance and muscularity as an ongoing process as they matured in their sport (Mosewich et al., 2009).

Also in 2009 Mari Kristin Sisjord and Elsa Kristiansen completed a study on elite Norwegian wrestlers to determine how they managed their muscularity within the sport of wrestling. Wrestling has traditionally been deemed a masculine sport though female presence in the sport is slowly increasing. Based off of Cox and Thompson's (2000) study of multiple bodies, Sisjord and Kristiansen (2009) identified two bodies that emerged from their interviews the "wrestler body" and the "female body." They studied elite wrestlers that had competed and won national and international competitions while using a hegemonic masculinity theoretical perspective.

Sisjord and Kristiansen (2009) interviewed junior and senior national team wrestlers. They found that between the two groups there were many differences in

identity, goals, and perceptions. Among the junior female wrestlers it was found that they were very concerned with their appearance and hoped to avoid developing large muscles in the pursuit of getting stronger. In order to do this they “held back” in the weight room and performed different weightlifting programs than the male and senior female wrestlers. A male team member stated, “I know several junior wrestlers who won’t train with weights, they are holding back and don’t want big muscles” (Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009, p. 240). In essence the junior wrestlers had given priority to the female body over the wrestling body.

On the other hand the senior wrestlers embraced their muscularity and prided it as part of their identity and proof of their commitment. Muscles were seen as a necessity to success and they did not equate having muscles with a lack of femininity. “The seniors had realized that big muscles and broad shoulders inevitably were integral to skill enhancement...individuals with ambitions of success in wrestling had no choice” (Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009, p. 237). Even though they accepted and enjoyed their athletic bodies, they still negotiated their female bodies through feminizing strategies. When “off the mat” they wore make-up, had long hair, and dressed in feminine clothing.

So while the junior wrestlers prioritized their private body appearance over success in their sport, the senior wrestlers prioritized their wrestling body but managed the paradox through feminizing techniques. Sisjord and Kristiansen (2009) concluded that:

In terms of negotiating the glass ceiling on females’ muscular strength, the juniors were holding back or adjusted weight workouts, reflecting the priority given to the private body. The seniors, on the other hand, had apparently

crossed the glass ceiling admitting the necessity of gaining muscle strength – and consequently muscle mass – in order to succeed as elite wrestlers. (p. 243)

In this case it seemed as if success in sport being valued over giving into societal pressures increased with maturity and years of experience.

When looking at the sport of swimming, the results are similar. In their research Karen Howells and Sarah Grogan (2012) looked at how the sport of swimming specifically impacts female swimmers and their body image perceptions. Acknowledging that sport for women can have a negative or positive impact, the authors explain that sport may enhance experience of the body as functional verses simply appearance. However, they say the opposite could be true that sport participation may increase body dissatisfaction due to the social construction that masculine characteristics are associated with being athletic.

Howells and Grogan (2012) compared adolescent swimmers' view of their bodily appearance to adult swimmers, finding that younger women tend to prioritize appearance, while adult women prioritize accomplishments. Similar to the previous studies Howells and Grogan (2012) were able to identify the multiple body complex of “athlete” (or “swimmer”) and “woman.” They say that:

Western ideals about the female body are in contrast to the masculine ideal of a muscular, well-defined body, yet intensive swimming can enhance masculine aspects of the body with increased muscularity of arms, shoulder, back, stomach, and thighs. Desirable for optimum performance it does not conform to thin aesthetic ideal. (Howells & Grogan, 2012, p. 100)

For the adolescent swimmers some muscularity was seen as desirable since it identified them as being athletic, strong, and toned. Yet too much muscularity was seen as contrary to the thin ideal. The young swimmers spoke of frustration with their bodies using terms such as “big” “huge” or “enormous” when describing their muscles (Howells & Grogan, 2012). To them this meant being less attractive and had negative effect on their body image and self-esteem. These anxieties were experienced on a low level within the swimming environment because having this body type was expected and normal. However, feelings of discomfort and frustration were experienced outside of this safe environment when trying to prescribe to the feminine ideal. It was found that the adult swimmers did not experience the same anxiety. They determined that muscles were an indication of youth, vitality, and health; but did comment that having a bodybuilder’s physique was not a desirable look, indicating that managing muscularity was still important.

It is clear that the current research shows female athletes have to negotiate different bodies; the two bodies most commonly being “the athletic body” versus “the social body.” This negotiation takes a considerable amount of self-surveillance and management techniques. Oftentimes athletes are found to hold back when lifting weights or avoiding weights all together due to the fear of gaining muscle mass, which is considered masculine and undesirable for female athletes trying to ascribe to an emphasized femininity. Consequently, the athletes’ performance, or potential ability, suffers. This creates quite the dilemma for not only the female athletes, but for those trying to help them be as successful as possible within their sport. In particular, societal

pressures on female athletes create quite the complications for strength and conditioning coaches training female athletes.

Introduction of the Strength and Conditioning Coach

Every year since the formation of intercollegiate athletics, colleges and universities have gone to great lengths to improve their programs; recruiting better athletes, hiring elite coaches, raising funds through boosters, and improving athletic facilities such as locker rooms and competition spaces. Intercollegiate athletics quite often dominate sports media and public conversation, and fans are growing even more interested in collegiate athletics as it is seen as a training ground for future professional athletes. One area of intercollegiate athletics that has been a much more recent phenomena, and now in many ways a necessity, is the strength and conditioning coach and weight room environment.

Before the advent of the strength and conditioning coach, sport coaches or athletic trainers implemented weight lifting and conditioning activities for collegiate athletes (Martinez, 2004; Powers, 2008). As sport programs grew and the need for weight room overseers increased, the strength and conditioning coach as a profession slowly formed. The field of strength and conditioning was formalized when the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) formed in 1978 by 76 founding members (Haggerty, 2005). By the mid 1980s, strength and conditioning began to receive more notoriety and athletic department budgets were being directed to increase weight rooms and strength and conditioning staff (Powers, 2008; Martinez, 2004). By 1986 of the NCAA Division-I institutions surveyed by McClellan and Stone (1986) at least 96% had at least one full-time strength coach (Powers, 2008). Today most NCAA Division-I

programs have a full strength staff including a head strength coach, assistant strength coach, graduate assistants, interns, and volunteers (Martinez, 2004).

The job responsibilities of the strength and conditioning coach include two primary goals: enhance athletes' performance and prevent injury (Powers, 2008). In 1989 Kontor originally described the strength coach as "an individual who works directly with athletes to develop the physical quality of strength which improves athletic performances and prevents injuries related to specific qualities of strength" (p. 75). In May 2001, the NSCA published guidelines for strength and conditioning coaches who hold the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist:

Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialists are professionals who practically apply foundational knowledge to assess, motivate, educate, and train athletes for the primary goal of improving sport performance. They conduct sport-specific testing sessions, design and implement safe and effective strength training and conditioning programs, and provide guidance for athletes in nutrition and injury prevention. Recognizing their area of expertise is separate and distinct from the medical, dietetic, athletic training, and sport coaching fields, Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialists consult with and refer athletes to these professionals when appropriate. (NSCA, p. 24)

As the strength and conditioning field has increased in popularity, the responsibilities of the coaches have also increased. Now, it seems that the job requirements of the strength and conditioning coach have expanded to encompass responsibilities that influence the athletes in a number of ways.

In their study of leadership behavior and job responsibilities, Brooks, Ziatz, Johnson, and Hollander (2000) described specific coaching duties that include: develop athletes' physical qualities such as speed, strength, power, agility, cardio, muscular endurance, flexibility, provide nutritional information, create rehabilitation programs, and implement motivation training. It was found that administrative skills were needed such as budgeting, organizing, overseeing staff, and public relations. Massey, Vincent, and Maneval (2004) also reported that strength and conditioning coaches are expected to aid in the recruitment of athletes and provide information to professional sport team scouts.

Massey et al. (2004) found that strength and conditioning coaches report working an average 6-10 hours per day, and overall about 71 hours per week. In addition to this many strength and conditioning coaches are expected to work football games (if the school has a football team) by providing pre-game warm-up, stretching, and sideline management.

To be a strength and conditioning coach there is not a standard certification requirement, although most universities require some form of relevant certification, which can be obtained in a number of ways. The National Strength and Conditioning Association was the first to develop a certification known as the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS); this is the most common certification that strength coaches hold (Brooks et al., 2000; Martinez, 2004; Pullo, 1992). In 2000, a group of collegiate strength and conditioning coaches developed the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association (CSCCa) that produced its own certification, the Strength and Conditioning Coach Certified (SCCC) which is the second most common

certification held by strength coaches (Martinez, 2004). An alternative certification is the USA Weightlifting (USAW), which specializes in the Olympic style lifts. The final relevant certification option is the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) certification; however, this is not as common for strength and conditioning coaches as it is directed towards athletic trainers. To date there is no data on the numbers of coaches who hold each certification.

In terms of education, the minimum requirement for strength and conditioning coaches is a bachelor's degree, although a master's degree is becoming more highly suggested for this competitive field. Most strength coaches report undergraduate degrees in physical education or sport and/or exercise science (Martinez, 2004; Pullo, 1992).

While certification and education requirements vary from university to university, almost all universities require some form of practical experience. The strength and conditioning field rely very heavily on the internship model (Brooks et al., 2000). Most beginning professionals start at the volunteer or intern level and move into positions of graduate assistant, then assistant and head coach. It has proven beneficial to have a background with athletic experience, especially in football or track and field.

The demographics of strength and conditioning coaches appear to be very homogenous. A typical strength coach is on average middle aged, white, and male. In 1992 Frank M. Pullo surveyed strength and conditioning profiles, he found that on average the coaches were 33 years old. Not much diversity in ethnicity is found among the strength and conditioning coaches, Pullo found 94% of the coaches were white, and twelve years later Martinez' study found that 93% were white (Martinez, 2004; Pullo,

1992). Both studies showed that having past athletic experience is important; Pullo found that 69.4% had played football and 28.2% had competed in track and field, while Martinez discovered that 73.75% had played football (Martinez, 2004; Pullo, 1992). Finally, strength and conditioning coaches are predominately male. Martinez (2004) surveyed 326 NCAA Division-I programs, which at that time were broken into subdivisions of Division I-A, Division I-AA, and Division I-AAA. According to his study of the three subdivisions 98-100% of the strength and conditioning coaches were male (p. 8).

Todd, Lovett, and Todd (1991) specifically researched the issue of the status of women coaches in strength and conditioning. "While resistance training for female athletes appears to be widely accepted, traditional societal beliefs apparently still exist and have deterred the acceptance of women as strength and conditioning coaches" (Todd et. al, 1991, p. 35). In their study twenty-six Division-I athletic conferences were represented; the findings showed that 67% of the universities within these conferences had a full-time head strength coach and 99% of those coaches were male. Male coaches were responsible for training male and female athletes, while the few female coaches were limited to only supervising female athletes' conditioning and had limited interaction with the male athletes. Nineteen schools had a separate strength and conditioning coach for the female athletes and women held only two of these positions. "It appears that female coaches are involved primarily as assistants, primarily with female athletes, and with fewer athletes" (Todd et al., 1991, p. 37). These results were confirmed in 1992 when Pullo found only one female strength and conditioning coach among the universities surveyed, and Martinez (2004) found that between all Division-I

subdivisions 98-100% of all strength and conditioning coaches were male (Martinez, 2004; Pullo, 1992).

In summary, the strength and conditioning profession has grown rapidly over the past forty years. It is a multi-dimensional job that not only requires athletic experience and exercise science knowledge, but also includes administration duties, recruiting duties, and providing emotional support for athletes. The typical strength coach has either a bachelor or master's degree, holds some type of certification, has gained experience through an internship model, and is a middle aged white male.

The Gym as a Masculine Space

A large part of the strength and conditioning environment is the coaching staff, specifically the strength and conditioning coaches. Another aspect of the strength and conditioning environment that is important to explore is the space of the weight room, or gym. This space has traditionally been gendered as masculine and this could have significant effects on female athletes training.

In her ethnographic work, Shari L. Dworkin (2003) examined the use of the cardiovascular room versus the weight room at a local university gym. She found that women overwhelmingly prefer the cardiovascular room, which can be characterized as a room filled with cardio type machines such as treadmills, elliptical, and stationary bikes where the majority are women either listening to music, watching the televisions, or reading books or magazines. In contrast, the weight room is filled with clanging weights, laughter, talking, and grunting and the majority of its occupants are men (Dworkin, 2003).

She found that women thought of the weight room as being a space to avoid because, “it is an ‘intimidating’ space where they [women] do not feel comfortable. This lack of comfort may be related to the alienating feeling that several women describe that comes with being ‘practically the only woman there’” (Dworkin, 2003, p. 140). She found that in addition to the male-dominated space being an intimidating factor, the gendered knowledge gap was an issue as well. Women have to “catch up” and learn the exercises, how to use the equipment, and the informal rules and etiquette. The majority of women have not been taught these things due to the lack of opportunity during their younger years and receiving less encouragement to be physically active (Dworkin, 2003). Dworkin (2003) also discusses how the “bulky” stigma of weightlifting has deterred most women from using the weight room, thus perpetuating the male-dominated space of the weight room.

Salvatore and Marecek (2010) researched evaluation concerns felt by college aged gym users, specifically the use of weights versus the Stairmaster. Evaluation concern “refers to people’s interest in what others think of them. The need to belong, to be accepted, and not to be ostracized” has been argued to be a primary human motivation (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010, p. 557). In order to manage evaluation concerns people monitor themselves and avoid counter-normative behavior, which is a behavior that “violates, or might be seen to violate, social expectations” (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010, p. 557). It was found that women rated the bench press as a masculine exercise and the Stairmaster as a feminine exercise. It was also found that women reported using the Stairmaster more than the bench press since it was seen as more helpful for their fitness goals. When asked to visualize using the benchpress, most

women described feelings of discomfort. Salvatore and Marecek (2010) suggest a self-perpetuating cycle:

Evaluation concerns about gender-typing lead to infrequent use of the bench press, which in turn leads to low proficiency. Low proficiency produces additional evaluation concerns, which may lead to further decrease in use. Such decreased use by women strengthens the gender-typing of the exercise. (p. 561)

The problem of this self-perpetuating cycle is that it maintains gender stereotypes of different exercises, primarily that cardio-based exercise is meant for women and strength training is meant for men.

Wanting to gain a deeper understanding of evaluation concerns and the sources of discomfort related to gym use, the authors analyzed responses from the participants. Three sources of evaluation concern were found: concerns about evaluation by others (feeling scrutinized, and/or judged), concerns about comparison (judging oneself against others), and concerns about ineptitude (lack of experience) (Salvatore & Maracek, 2010). The women's evaluation concerns were related to discomfort found by males gazing upon them or hearing comments about other women's bodies in the gym.

Jan Brace-Govan (2004) looked beyond the general gym user to the experiences of female weightlifters. Weightlifters should not to be confused with bodybuilders who train their bodies for muscle size and definition to be evaluated. In contrast weightlifters are those who train their body for strength and power. The women studied by Brace-Govan (2004) were elite level weightlifters who compete at the state and national level, thus meaning that these women are highly experienced in weight training and weight room use. They experience gyms that are not gender neutral and this had varying

impacts. It was found that almost half of the women studied trained in male-only gyms, and the others trained in gyms where only a few other women trained; further demonstrating the weight room as a male space.

The way of conduct inside the gym also had gendered meanings. Brace-Govan (2004) reflected on comments made by the women and found:

The association of maximum effort and noise with the masculine; the association of contained effort and silence with the feminine; the association of free weights with the masculine and real and; the association of fixed weights with the feminine and socially frivolous. (p. 523)

These gendered associations added to the intimidation felt by the women and general feelings of discomfort.

These studies examine the weight room in university recreation centers and private gyms. There has been no research to date regarding the gym space of collegiate athletics. In private weight rooms individual people exercise and follow their own programs. In the strength and conditioning environment, entire sport teams lift together under the supervision of the strength and conditioning coach. Depending on the size of the weight room facility and the size of the team, multiple teams may be weight training or conditioning simultaneously.

Research Question

As shown, research has been completed with female athletes in specific sport areas regarding the negotiation of femininity and masculinity, however, to the best of my knowledge there has been no research conducted in the strength and conditioning environment to date. Due to the increase and importance of the strength and

conditioning coach and environment in Division-I athletics, it is necessary to understand how female athletes are negotiating their femininity and athleticism in the weight room. Therefore, the purpose of my research is threefold. First, how do Division-I female athletes negotiate their femininity and muscularity within the strength and conditioning environment? Secondly, is there a difference in femininity and muscularity negotiations and management between underclassmen female collegiate athletes and upperclassmen female collegiate athletes? Lastly, what aspects of the weight room influence the negotiations of femininity and muscularity among female collegiate athletes?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS OF RESEARCH

In line with the critical feminist interactionist framework I used an interview methods approach for this research project. The goal of my research is to develop a rich understanding of how female collegiate athletes negotiate their femininity and muscularity in the strength and conditioning environment. By utilizing a qualitative approach, I was able to focus on the 'lived experiences' of the athletes and how they create meaning on the events, processes, and structures in their lives (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By using in-depth, semi-structured interviews I was able to gain information regarding the perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, and presuppositions of the female athletes and how they connect these meanings to the social world around them (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The process of individuals connecting and interpreting meanings to the social world around them is a concept known as symbolic interactionism. Founded and established primarily by George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer, and Erving Goffman, this theory says that as people interact with each other and the world around them they create meanings and identities. Blumer (1969) has three basic premises on which this framework operates. First, people act toward the world around them based on the meaning the things in the world has for them. Second, the meanings of these things are created through interacting with others. Lastly, these meanings are interpreted and modified as people continue to have interactions (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism is therefore an ongoing process of meanings that are socially constructed

through human interaction. Goffman's (1959) approach to symbolic interactionism uses the analogy of theater and role-playing to describe social interactions.

Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model outlines how rules of social interaction govern our 'performances' throughout our life situations. In the model there are 'audiences' and 'actors,' and as we interact with each other we are either putting on a performance as an actor or we are taking in information as the audience. In applying the dramaturgical model to the scope of this research there are three role management techniques that were considered in analysis; role distance, role segregation, and multiplicity of selves.

Role Management Techniques

Based on information given in the literature review, it has been shown that being a female and being an athlete in Western culture has traditionally been considered an anomaly. However, there are many females who pursue athletics despite the seemingly contradictory role that being an athlete and being a woman in our culture represents. In order to reconcile this contradiction, women may tend to perform role management techniques. One way to manage seemingly conflicting roles is 'role distancing' which is when a person actively manipulates a situation in a way to apologize for or deny the role in which they are being perceived (Goffman, 1961). "Whether this skittish behavior is intentional or unintentional, sincere or affected, correctly appreciated by others present or not, it does constitute a wedge between the individual and his [sic] role, between doing and being" (Goffman, 1961, p. 103). Role distancing could be compared to the concept of the 'female apologetic' in sport, where the female athlete is compelled to 'apologize' for her athleticism by overemphasizing traditional expressions of femininity.

Another way to manage roles is through 'role segregation,' where a person may "segregate his [sic] audiences so that the individuals who witness him in one of his roles will not be the individuals who witness him in another of his roles" (Goffmann, 1959, p. 137). This technique may be seen in how women manage their role within their sport setting and within their social setting. However, while there may be some degree of success in segregating roles, it is impossible to completely separate these roles; this concept is known as 'multiplicity of selves' (Goffman, 1961). This may be seen in female athletes' physical bodies, where their musculature may be more evident than non-athletes and thus in non-athletic settings they may not be able to completely separate their role as an athlete.

In their research, Cox and Thompson (2000) and George (2005) use a 'multiple bodies perspective' in conducting research on how female athletes negotiate their femininity within the sport of soccer. They used a theoretical perspective that considered the multiple ways in which bodies are constituted, which is based on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective and is similar to his concept of 'multiplicity of selves'. They introduced the concept of gender to this perspective by looking at how the female athletes negotiated their meanings of athleticism, femininity, and sexuality and how those roles were played out in their everyday lives.

In similar fashion to Cox and Thompson (2000) and George (2005), I also drew on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective and concepts in social interactionism while focusing on gender. To accomplish this I incorporated a critical feminist perspective along with the interactionist perspective in order to better understand how notions of gender and power play a part in their identity negotiations. Birrell (2000)

describes feminist theory as a “dynamic, continually evolving complex of theories or theoretical traditions that take as their point of departure the analysis of gender as a category of experience in society” (p. 61). More specifically, and within the scope of this research “feminist theory within the sociology of sport has as its main purpose to theorize about gender relations within our patriarchal society as they are evidenced by, played out in, and reproduced through sport and other body practices” (Birrell, 2000, p. 61). Sport has been described as a ‘male terrain’ (Messner, 1988) and has been heavily influenced by notions of masculinity. As women contested this terrain and pursued competitive athletics notions of both masculinity and femininity have come into question. One of the primary goals of this research was to understand how notions of masculinity and femininity have influenced female athletes’ understandings of themselves.

Critical Theory

While the feminist perspective closely examines gender relations within society and its institutions, it is important to also incorporate critical theory. According to Coakley (2006) critical theory is based on the assumptions that groups and societies are characterized by shared values and conflicts of interest, social life involves a continuous process of change as these values and conflicts of interest are never permanent, and these changes occur due to shifts in the power balance between groups of people in society. The critical approach within the feminist framework examines how power explicitly reproduces, resists, and transforms gender relations through sport (Birrell, 2000; Coakley, 2006). Power can be understood as having two levels; structural and ideological.

Structurally, power in sport can be seen through the ways sport is organized and produced, and who has the ability to influence the organization and production.

Ideological power is less visible, however it is what is able to maintain the status quo in sport. Birrell (2000) describes ideology in this context as, “the set of ideas that serve the interests of dominant groups but are taken up as the society common sense even by those who are disempowered by them” (p. 67). Critical feminist theory therefore looks at ways that power, both structurally and ideologically, influence the everyday lived experiences of both men and women.

While understanding these phenomena is helpful, the critical feminist perspective seeks to go beyond simply analyzing by creating social change (Birrell, 2000; Coakley, 2006). My intent with this research was to first, identify patterns and phenomena as described by the women themselves; and then, to analyze this data through a critical feminist interactionist perspective in an attempt to bring social change through the dissemination of this information.

Study Participants

The participants of this study were all female collegiate student-athletes at a Division-I FCS Midwest college. In line with other qualitative research (Cox & Thompson, 2000; Kauer & Krane, 2006; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004; Mosewich, Vangool, Kowalski, & MuHugh, 2009; Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009) a purposive sampling technique was used, which is the process of selecting participants who represent a specific population (Berg, 1989); this is a common sampling technique used in qualitative research to ensure that the participants included are ones with the knowledge and experience that is relevant to the research focus. Two female athletes

were selected from each of seven of the university’s eight female sport teams – cross-country, gymnastics, soccer, softball, tennis, track and field, and volleyball. Basketball was not included in this research due to the head coach’s decision. I recruited one upper-classman athlete (junior or senior standing) and one lower-classman athlete (freshman or sophomore standing) from each team in order to have a participant pool that allowed me to understand any differences between older and younger athletes as described in the research questions. The total number of participants was 14. Kvale (1996) says that in current interview studies the number of interviews tend to be 15 ± 10 in order to reach saturation, where further interviews would not provide any new information.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	NCAA Eligibility year	Upperclassmen/ Underclassmen	Collegiate sport
Tammi	F	21	White/Caucasian	Senior	Upperclassman	Soccer
Taryn	F	n/a	White/Caucasian	Sophomore	Underclassman	Soccer
Tess	F	22	White/Caucasian	Senior (transfer student)	Upperclassman	Volleyball
Jen	F	18	White/Caucasian	True freshman	Underclassman	Volleyball
Jasmine	F	n/a	White/Caucasian	Senior	Upperclassman	Softball
Liz	F	19	White/Caucasian	True freshman	Underclassman	Softball
Megan	F	21	White/Caucasian	Senior	Upperclassman	Tennis
Amy	F	19	Asian	Sophomore	Underclassman	Tennis
Madison	F	22	White/Caucasian	Senior	Upperclassman	Cross-country Track – Mid-distance
Mae	F	19	White/Caucasian	Sophomore	Underclassman	Cross-country Track – Mid-distance
Sammi	F	22	Samoan	5 th Year Senior	Upperclassman	Track – throwing
Ava	F	19	White/Caucasian	Sophomore (transfer student)	Underclassman	Track – Pole vault
Natalie	F	20	White/Caucasian	Junior	Upperclassman	Gymnastics
Mallory	F	19	White/Caucasian	Sophomore	Underclassman	Gymnastics

Participants self-identified (see Table 1) as 85% White/Caucasian, 7% Asian (particularly Indonesian), and 7% Samoan, ranging in age from 18 years-old to 22

years-old, and all participants identified as being female. According to Division-I level NCAA eligibility standards, 92% of the athletes were still eligible, and 8% had exhausted their eligibility. Of the participants, 85% had completed all of their NCAA eligibility at the Division-I university being researched, while 15% had transferred from other Division-I universities.

Data Collection Procedures

After gaining approval from the Human Subjects Committee (HSC), I contacted the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) and sport coaches to aid in the recruitment of student athletes. I consulted with the SWA first on how she would prefer the coaches and student athletes to be contacted. She sent out an email to all the head coaches explaining my research interests and asked their permission to contact the student-athletes as possible participants. I then worked with each head coach individually in recruiting athletes from their respective teams. Due to the nature of the relationship between the SWA, coaches and athletes, care was taken to recruit in a manner that is consistent with HSC guidelines on participants not feeling coerced into participation. It was clearly communicated to the athletes that their participation would be completely voluntary and that their identity would remain confidential.

Once the student athletes were recruited, I provided them with an informed consent (see Appendix B) form and demographic survey (see Appendix C). The informed consent form was created and approved using guidelines from the university's Human Subjects Committee. The form gave the participants information regarding the purpose of the study and information on relevant parts of my identity as the researcher. It also stated that the student-athlete had the right to participate or not; explaining that

their participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw or ask for parts of the interview not to be used at any time. The participant was also assured confidentiality. Finally, the form explained how the information gained from the interview would be disseminated (Seidman, 1998). The demographic survey was distributed upon the signing of the informed consent; participants were informed that they could skip any questions they did not wish to answer. The demographic survey included questions regarding characteristics such as race, age, and gender (see Appendix C).

An interview schedule (see Appendix A) was used while interviewing the participants. The interview schedule was created using a critical feminist interactionist perspective, and the research questions as guides. The interview schedule was careful to include language that was easily understood by the participants to allow for complete and accurate communication between the interviewee and interviewer. I then completed pilot testing with volunteer female collegiate athletes at a different Division-I FCS Midwest university in order to practice the interview process, as well as, revise any confusing questions (Berg, 1989). The interview schedule was then revised and finalized; it included three sections of questions: general sport background information, experiences with weight training, and experiences with weight training through a gender lens. Examples of questions asked were: “How do you think being a woman in the weight room impacts your experiences with strength training?” “How do you think people perceive muscular female athletes?” “How do you think weight training has affected your muscularity?” “What impact, if any, do you see in your overall sport performance [from weight lifting]?” “What is the weight room like?” The questions were asked in a systematic and consistent order with each participant in order to increase

validity, however, there was freedom to explore answers beyond the interview schedule with follow up questions (Berg, 1989). Follow up questions included questions that asked the participants to explain their answer in greater detail, clarifying questions such as “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “how,” and probing questions such as “what does that mean for you?”

The interview was audio recorded using a tape-recording device in order to get the material in an accurate and retrievable form (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Rubin and Rubin (1995) also suggest taking notes during the interview process to force the interviewer to listen and hear main points as well as providing backup in case of technological failure. Another advantage of note taking is the ability to scribble future probing questions, as well as, having the ability to track the progress of the interview in regards to the interview schedule (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). With this in mind, I left space in the printed interview schedule to take notes. I also immediately typed up my notes after the interview was concluded (Kvale, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Keeping with a critical feminist interactionist framework, I used semi-structured, in-depth interviews for data collection. Berg (1989) describes the interview as:

Especially effective method of collecting information for certain types of research questions...and for addressing certain types of assumption. Particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants, or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events. (p. 19)

The goal of this research was to understand how female collegiate athletes negotiate their meanings and identities as female athletes, so using semi-structured, in-depth

interviews was the best method for collecting this data as it allowed the athletes' voices to take center stage.

Using Berg's (1989) dramaturgical model of interviewing aligns with the social performances that are an integral part of the interactionist perspective (Goffman, 1959). Berg (1989) describes that "Dramaturgy, as a theoretical perspective, involves the elements and language of theater, stagecraft, and stage management....[it is] derived in part from the symbolic interactionists' general assumption that humans perceive and interact in reality through the use of various symbols" (p. 15). With this in mind as an interviewer I took on the role of actor while the interviewee took on the role of the audience and the interview became a social performance (Berg, 1989; Goffman, 1959).

Other roles I took on according to the dramaturgical model were interviewer as director and interviewer as choreographer. Berg (1989) says that, "throughout their performances, interviewers must be conscious and reflective. Their interpretations must be based on the various cues, clues, and encoded messages offered by the interviewee" (p. 35). As director I was aware of how the performance was going and was able to observe the interview from an outside perspective. As choreographer I was self-aware and reflective and was able to use what I heard from the interviewee to control the interview process (Berg, 1989). By performing these roles as actor, director, and choreographer, the interview process was consistent and I was able to derive deeper meanings from the interview. While performing these interactionist roles, I also used a critical feminist perspective by being conscious and reflective of meanings associated with gender negotiations.

An important aspect of the role of the interviewer is being able to establish rapport with the interviewee. The interviewer needs to in a sense 'look the part' to live up to the expectations of the role. While there was no guarantee that looking the part would establish rapport, careful thought went into appearance and dress. I chose to wear a professional casual style of clothing in order to make the interviewee feel comfortable while simultaneously maintaining a professional demeanor.

In applying Berg's interviewing model, during the interviews I was conscious of the athletes' social cues via non-verbal and verbal communication. I was careful to observe body language that suggests the athlete was uncomfortable or confused, in order to either rephrase the question or proceed with caution. I recorded these verbal and nonverbal reactions in my interview notes and incorporated the information during the transcribing and analysis process. I was also conscious of tangents, understanding that while some good data may be derived from such conversations, it was important to keep the interview on topic. Many authors have suggested that interviewing is an art form and requires practice. For this reason I conducted pilot interviews (as noted above) in order to learn how to best act, direct, and choreograph the interview (Berg, 1989; Seidman, 1998).

Once the interviews were completed and recorded, I used a transcription machine to transcribe the interview recordings verbatim. Transcribing verbatim is important because in going from oral form to written form the non-verbal cues, such as tone of voice or facial expressions, and context of the conversation may be lost. By carefully transcribing the conversation verbatim, I was able to preserve the context of the situation for later analysis, which improves the trustworthiness of the transcripts, and

aids in the validity of findings (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998). In keeping with a critical feminist interactionist perspective, transcribing verbatim is important as it affects how the participant is understood and what conclusions are drawn from the data. Carefully transcribing the interviews verbatim aids in ensuring the voices of the women in the study are represented accurately.

I was able to draw on my experience from past transcribing in order to determine a clear and consistent method for transcribing the interviews. Kvale (1996) suggests that “rather than being a simple clerical task, transcription is itself an interpretive process” (p. 160). The interpretation of the recordings played a part in determining where sentences began and where they finished, as well as using analytical memos. Since I was the one both interviewing and transcribing, I was able to recall from memory and notes the context of the conversation in order to interpret the data and transcribe it correctly.

A large part of the critical feminist approach is giving a voice to those that usually do not have one (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In order to give a voice back to the study participants I sent a copy of the interview transcript back to each participant for review. Participants were allowed to clarify, amend, or omit any information from their transcribed interview.

Data Analysis Procedures

I utilized both an inductive and deductive approach to the data analysis portion of this research. I used a deductive approach at the beginning of the study to bring focus and direction, and then transitioned into an inductive method that allowed for concepts to emerge from the data.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) provide examples of how nontechnical data, such as lived experiences and literature reviews, can benefit the researcher in bringing knowledge to the data in a “systematic and aware way that we become sensitive to meanings without forcing our explanations on data” (p. 47). Therefore, I used my lived experiences of being a female collegiate athlete, as well as, the knowledge I had accrued from my study of gender relations in sport sociology literature and critical feminist interactionist theory to guide my research question and interview schedule. It was important that I had developed sensitivity to the meanings in the data while balancing an objective perspective (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While complete objectivity is impossible there are techniques that have been suggested to minimize subjectivity, such as, acknowledgement that bias exists, use of systematic comparison of two or more phenomena to examine data at a dimensional level, and periodically stepping back from the data and reflect on what is going on from a larger viewpoint (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While analyzing the data, I acknowledged and remained aware of my biases as a researcher, as well as, a former collegiate athlete and one who appreciates strength and conditioning. Along with carefully comparing the phenomena that emerged, I also periodically took a step back from the detailed findings to see the larger picture by considering my findings within the scope of the literature that has already been published on this subject. This deductive approach allowed me to explore how previously established concepts and theories relating to female athletes may be similar or different in a new set of conditions. Much research has been established on gender relations and female athletes, and it was my purpose to seek to extend the research to

specifically examine how this plays out in the strength and conditioning environment, a yet underdeveloped area of focus.

As the interviews with the female athletes were recorded and transcribed, I utilized an inductive approach by completing in-depth data analysis through open coding and in vivo coding. Miles and Huberman (1994) define codes as:

Tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to “chunks” of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting. (p. 56)

While there are many strategies for coding data within qualitative methodology, for the purpose of my study using an inductive coding approach was necessary for giving power to women’s voices.

The first step in the inductive analysis was open coding or “line by line analysis” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During this phase I went through the interview transcripts and broke down the data into discrete parts using ATLAS.ti, qualitative data analysis software. “The data are broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts and are given a name that represents or stands for these” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). These identified parts were then closely examined to find similarities and differences in order to group them into categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The codes were created to fit with the context of the study as well as using “in vivo codes”, which are phrases that were used by participants and can be found in the transcripts (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

A codebook was created, using the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti, to maintain consistency. The codebook contained the codes in two aspects: first, it listed the coding label; second, a definition was attributed to each code to ensure that the data was being coded accurately and consistently. As Seidman (1998) suggests I kept the labels tentative as I continued to read and analyze the transcripts in order to prevent a rigid methodology that did not allow for new meanings to emerge from the data. As In vivo codes and new meanings emerged from the data and were added to the codebook in later transcripts, I revisited earlier transcripts to ensure they had been coded correctly. Examples of codes that emerged from the data were: “effects of ideal femininity in sport,” “competitive in weights,” and “meaning of muscularity.” Examples of in vivo codes that emerged were: “bulky,” “toned,” and “sport specific.”

Once the line by line analysis was completed and the categories were established, they could be recognized as phenomena which are “important analytic ideas that emerge from our data...they depict the problems, issues, concerns, and matters that are important to those being studied” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 114). As these phenomenon were identified, I began the next phase of the data analysis, which was exploring the subcategories that existed within the phenomena. Subcategories answer questions such as when, where, who, how, and with what consequences; this is important because it allowed me to see patterns emerge. Subcategories were determined by properties and dimensions; properties are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, while dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum or range (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 117). Once the

subcategories were detected and patterns emerged axial coding began, which is the final step in the data analysis procedure.

Axial coding is the process of taking the broken down pieces of the categories, subcategories, and patterns and putting it back together with the intent of having a more completed understanding and explanation of the phenomena that has emerged from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Once the coding and analyzing process was complete, detailed results were written using the critical feminist interactionist framework and concepts from the literature review.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Due to the rise in popularity in female athletics, as well as an increased opportunity to compete at the collegiate and other elite levels, it is important to understand how social constructions of gender and muscles have impacted female athletes and their sport performance. As described in the literature review, female athletes often face a paradox of either being an athlete or being a woman, as society often does not approve of being both. Pressures of ideal femininity (Bordo, 1993; Markula, 1995), paired with pressures of sport performance at the elite level, have left female athletes in a position where they perceive that they need to manage their identities in order to adhere to cultural norms. This study examines how gender negotiations are managed at the Division-I level for female athletes in the strength and conditioning environment.

A critical feminist interactionist framework (Birrell, 2000; Coakley, 2006; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Goffman, 1961) was used in analyzing and explaining the responses gathered from semi-structured, in depth interviews completed with collegiate female athletes at a Midwestern Division-I FCS university. Guided by previous research, these interviews sought to answer the following questions: how do Division-I female athletes negotiate their femininity and muscularity within the strength and conditioning environment? Secondly, what aspects of the weight room influence the negotiations of femininity and muscularity among female collegiate athletes? Finally, is there a difference in femininity and muscularity negotiations and management between underclassmen female collegiate athletes and upperclassmen female collegiate athletes?

An important finding regarding gender role and muscularity negotiations was that female athletes are still faced with negotiating their femininity and their athleticism; the culturally normative female body was found to be at odds with the athletic body. In regards to weight lifting and sport performance, female athletes valued strength for their sport performance, but avoiding musculature in order to maintain their femininity was typically viewed as more important. The female athletes in this study wanted to be strong, yet without excess, because to them, muscle bulk represented masculinity, which would contradict their feminine identity.

In managing the paradox of bodies in the strength and conditioning environment, three major themes emerged. First, some athletes admitted to holding back on their prescribed weight lifting program. Second, athletes perceived the programming they were prescribed as being 'safe' in the sense that it would not bulk them up, yet indirectly expressed that if the program did create those results it would not be something they would like. Last, for some athletes, it was found that they completed the prescribed lifts, but would complete extra cardiovascular training in order to reduce size.

In seeking to understand which aspects of the weight room environment impact gender negotiations for female athletes, it was found that the weight room proved to considerably influence the experience of the female athletes. The major theme that emerged from the data was that the athletes viewed the public weight room as an intimidating, gendered space that was reserved for men, while the collegiate weight room was seen as a welcoming space, which encouraged the female athletes to push themselves in weight training. The strength and conditioning coach played a major role in this environment.

Finally, there were no consistent findings on the differences between upperclassmen and underclassmen in gender negotiations in the weight room environment; instead, it was found that the sport culture of each individual sport had a greater impact on the management techniques.

The Gendered Body

In their research, Cox and Thompson (2000) introduce the ‘multiple bodies perspective,’ which examines the multiple identities prescribed to and embodied by women, based on the context of the social setting. The combination of examining gender negotiations in social contexts aligns with the critical feminist interactionist framework of this study. This perspective has been used in subsequent studies in understanding the management between femininity and athleticism (George, 2005; Howells & Grogan, 2012; Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009). Paralleled with their findings, this study revealed that female athletes still face managing multiple bodies, those bodies being the “culturally normative female body” and the “athletic body.” With cultural definitions of ideal femininity changing and evolving due to fitness media, movements such as CrossFit, and the “strong is the new beautiful” campaign, these bodies are a little more difficult to separate. However, one thing is evident: there is still a very clear separating line between femininity and athleticism (which is essentially equivalent with masculinity), and that is size.

In examining the multiple bodies themes that emerged from the data, which is congruent with Goffman’s (1961) ‘multiplicity of selves’ concept, I will first begin with the culturally normative female body. The normative body theme encompasses notions of traditional and ideal femininity. I will then move to the themes of the athletic body, a

body that is crucial for elite-level athletes. This body is one that is muscular, flexible, agile, and has endurance. I will then explain using the critical feminist interactionist perspective how these multiple bodies were perceived and negotiated by the female collegiate athletes in this study.

Culturally Normative Female Body

Athletes in this study described their perception of the ideal feminine body by today's standards as being "skinny," "toned," "small," and "petite," while having the appearance of having "perfect hair," "perfect makeup," and "dressing girly." Mae, a sophomore cross-country athlete said, "I think the big thing, well like when it comes to aesthetics [society] probably think that girls should be more just like skinny and that petite, and you know fragile." Nothing in excess was viewed as acceptable according to her perception of societal expectations, whether that was fat or musculature. There was not a reason specifically stated for why fat was viewed as unacceptable; however, size in musculature was equated to being masculine. "When you do have a muscular woman some people do think of that as manly, or um, yeah. For the most part, it's a, it's a manly characteristic rather than a, a female characteristic" (Tammi, senior soccer athlete). Liz, a freshman softball player also commented, "there's so many people who wouldn't want to look like that [muscular] because you know, that's like, maybe that's how the guys are supposed to look." According to these athletes, society's ideal femininity was being feminine in dress and demeanor, and void of excess in fat and musculature in favor of being skinny. The athletes' understandings of society's ideal femininity are parallel with previous findings. According to research the slender body ideal is one that is under control, without excess of musculature or fat (Bordo, 1993).

Additionally, muscles are considered a masculine trait (Brace-Govan, 2004; Dworkin, 2001; George, 2005), and female athletes fear being labeled 'manly' due to the lesbian stigma surrounding muscular female athletes (Cahn, 1994).

When examining the athletes' personal perception of ideal femininity, many of them explained that the skinny body, which was society's ideal, was not desirable. Descriptions such as "skinny fat," "boney," or having the "thigh gap" were used, and none of these were looks that the athletes' desired to embody. Mae, a sophomore cross-country runner explained, "I don't want to look like I'm just like soft and like, just like skinny. You know there's like skinny fat." Sophomore gymnast, Mallory, said, "I don't know, 'thigh gap' like girls think that 'thigh gap' is cool and being a muscular girl, nobody has a 'thigh gap. I don't even think a normal person has a 'thigh gap.' Liz also commented on the 'thigh gap' by saying,

There are plenty of people who think that maybe girls should be the skinny, and not have any like, the 'thigh gaps' you know that kind of thing. But, I mean coming from an athlete, like strong, I think strong is pretty. Like I think that's the most attractive thing. (freshman softball athlete)

Sophomore pole-vaulter, Ava, said, "you know you don't want to be super skinny because then you look like boney, you want to look like you have something to you." Megan equated it with confidence; "I think it just shows, like I think it is a confident image. And just being toned and having definition is a lot nicer than just being like soft" (senior tennis player). While these athletes did not desire the skinny body that they perceived was projected by society as the ideal culturally normative female body, being slender was still viewed as being highly important.

Participants desired a small body that was layered with “sleek, unbulky muscles” (Markula, 1995). Ideally, their bodies were such that they were “toned,” “defined,” “slender,” and having some muscle definition such as a “six pack.” Athletes said that this body revealed good character; it showed that the athletes worked hard, and that they valued taking care of themselves. Additionally, having the ‘toned’ body ideal evoked feelings of confidence for the athletes in this study in both their sports and social settings. Being toned is something freshman volleyball player, Jen, strives after, “I want to be able to look like I have definition in my arms, in my legs, and I’ve always strived to do that.” Liz, freshman softball player describes her ideal as, “my ideal for me, like to look perfect would be like, you know, like flat stomach, the muscles, like toned and stuff. But then like, you don’t look bulky when you’re not flexing.” Madison simply stated, “Yeah, definitely more about being toned. I love being toned” (senior cross-country athlete). Many of the athletes in this study identified the toned, slender body as being their ideal.

The difference between the ideal femininity perceived by the athletes to be projected by society and the ideal femininity perceived by athletes had one difference, toned muscle definition. Many athletes explained that this subtlety in difference was because society’s definition of femininity is in the process of changing and moving towards both definitions being one and the same. In 1995, Markula noted that body expectations and ideal femininity were changing, and twenty years later this is still the case. While the athletes indicated that society still highly values being skinny, more people are becoming accepting of toned women and finding that this body is attractive and should be embraced by women.

However, one thing remains the same: just like society's concern over size, the athletes in this study indicated that having any musculature excess was completely undesirable. Excess was described as being "bulky," "huge," "big," "muscly," and was equated with being "manly," a "body builder," and even "Hulk Hogan." As Tess explained,

I can see like some girls, athletes I know when they go in [to the weight room] they're like 'I don't want to lift too much weight cause I don't want to get too big' {said in higher pitched voice}...but I think that most of my teammates have good intentions about it and have good ideas, they know what they're there to do, they're not going to get like Hulk Hogan or anything {chuckle} they're going to get in volleyball shape [toned]. (senior volleyball player)

Ava, sophomore pole-vaulter, said, "you know you see pictures of like body builders and stuff, I never wanted to be like big." She followed by saying, "I wanted to be toned and very defined, so people could tell I was in shape, but I never wanted to be like super buff or anything like that." Sophomore soccer player Taryn explained, "I am friends of some people that do CrossFit, and they are big {laugh}, very bulky. And its kind of just like, you know we [women] have that like 'I don't want to be that big cause it's manly looking,' I don't want that." All of these athletes indicate that muscles represented masculinity, something that was not desirable for them or their teammates.

The idea that muscles are masculine (Bordo, 1993; Brace-Govan, 2004; Dworkin, 2001; Markula, 1995) is not a new concept; this ideology has created a barrier for women in sport, and as this study will show, it continues to affect how women perceive their bodies and manage their athleticism.

In regards to dress and appearance, female athletes identified their perception of society's ideal femininity as dressing perfectly, having perfect hair, and looking pretty all the time. In contrast to this, athletes in this study did not value this definition of ideal femininity and instead rejected it altogether. Similar to Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, and Kauer's (2004) findings, having the "athletic look" was abnormal, and they felt like dress and appearance were what separated them from the "normal girls" or the "girly-girls" on campus. However, unlike Krane et al.'s (2004) study, the abnormal identity was what athletes in the current study took pride in. They felt that it set them apart on campus: "Um, just because girl athletes here don't really dress up much and if there's a girl dressing up for class then it's probably not an athlete" (Tammi, senior soccer athlete). They described wearing sweats to class, mostly for practical reasons.

However, it is interesting to note that when the athletes discussed appearance issues, it was communicated in a comedic way. Athletes laughed at themselves about it. Tess, a senior volleyball player explained,

Um, the running joke with us is our team the, like we're just a bunch of men. Like you know, like we, we dress like guys, we lift like guys, we have body builds like guys, like um, like I don't know, that's just the running joke for all female athletes I guess around [this university]. But, like we're just "one of the guys" out there. Because everyone else, all the other girls are just so little and skinny, and like we're just like these big girls that walk everywhere like I don't know, so. Just like the "manly" comments I guess [chuckle].

While there was pride in looking like an athlete, there was still an acknowledgement that it went against the societal norm and it was reconciled through comedic relief. This

could be explained by 'normalization,' a stigma management technique described by Blinde and Taub (1992) that looks to redefine the stigma or create a new normal. Additionally, when examining this using a critical feminist interactionist perspective, traditional gender ideologies are being resisted in the area of dress and appearance. Yet, in a complex way, they are still being reproduced because the athletes view themselves as being abnormal, and they manage this abnormal behavior differently in varying social contexts.

When put in a social situation in which the athletes were required to "dress up" there was an apprehension towards wearing clothes that were revealing in the arm or shoulder areas. Instead, athletes chose to wear attire that covered their muscular arms. This 'role-distancing' technique (Goffman, 1961) used by the athletes is a way to apologize or deny the role of being an athlete in a social setting, where the feminine role is what is expected.

Krane et al. (2004) writes, "in negotiating and reconciling the social expectations of femininity with athleticism, sportswomen develop two identities – athlete and woman," and it is clear that women in sport today are still faced with this negotiation. While the culturally normative body between ideal femininity and athletes' perception of this body are becoming blended, negotiating the 'glass-ceiling' (Dworkin, 2001) of musculature on the athletic body is still something female athletes see as something to be managed. According to Goffman's (1961) concept on 'multiplicity of selves,' it is impossible to completely separate roles, or in this case, bodies. However, by managing musculature, female athletes are able to maintain a body that more closely aligns with the culturally normative female body as being "tight," "toned," and "slender," while being void of

“bulk,” or size. Closely monitoring the athletic body, one that is muscular and essential for elite-level athletes, is a manifestation of the ideological barrier that female athletes face that affects how they perceive their bodies and negotiate their athleticism.

Athletic Body

To the athletes in this study, being a female athlete was a concept that was celebrated. Some commented that it was an honor to be able to represent their school at the Division-I level, understanding that it was a unique opportunity that made them feel special, and it gave them a sense of pride, belonging and purpose. Others felt a sense of empowerment, that being a female athlete shows progress for women and defies cultural beliefs and expectations. And others felt as if it didn't mean anything at all; to them an athlete was an athlete, and gender was not taken into account. One may argue that this line of thinking shows progress in and of itself. It was apparent that athletes in this study felt passionately about their sports and identity as athletes.

To be an athlete requires an athletic body; that body being one that is strong, having endurance, flexibility, and agility. The athletic body also has muscularity, which has been contested for female athletes throughout modern sport history, and has been viewed as the 'natural' separating factor between men and women (Bordo, 1993). When discussing this with the female athletes in this study, there were predominantly two beliefs when it came to the meaning of muscularity. In one sense, muscularity was viewed as positive in that the athletes believed it showed hard work, determination, and discipline. Liz, a freshman softball player, said, “I think having muscles and like, knowing that somebody you know works out and stuff, I think it kind of shows dedication. You know like I think that it means strength, it means dedication, I think it

means heart.” Senior tennis player, Megan, said, “it shows that like just that you take care more of yourself, and that stuff.” Amy, an international sophomore tennis player, said,

It means, for me a female athlete will um, is the one who like um, brave, who um, do the different thing...and then the training and then, well, I, well I just think the female athlete like is the one who like is brave to uh challenge, challenge themselves.

While the athletes described these feelings for themselves, it was also acknowledged that the athletic community held similar beliefs: “Um, I think in the athletic world, I think people respect it and they like, that’s your whole goal is to be fit and stuff like that for your sport” (Tess, senior volleyball player). To many of the athletes, muscularity was something they took pride in because it was a physical representation of how they had challenged and pushed themselves.

However, this muscularity had a “glass ceiling” (Dworkin, 2001). There was a point where muscularity transitioned from being a point of pride to something to avoid. Too much muscle was to be avoided entirely. Too much muscle was seen as a contradiction to their femininity. While each athlete had varying degrees of where this muscular “glass ceiling” was located, every athlete interviewed indicated that there was a point at which being too muscular was going too far. “There’s a point where, I don’t know I think there’s a point where it’s enough, then going overboard” (Sammi, senior track thrower). Too much muscle represented masculinity, and female athletes viewed it necessary to have boundaries on their muscularity. Sophomore gymnast, Mallory, explained this by saying, “I think most of them [teammates] have the same mindset as me. Um, they don’t

want to do the whole weight because they don't want to get more muscles than we already have... it's just making me look more manly." The soccer team had similar beliefs, "Um, it, like we don't, uh I know I hear it from some girls [on the team] that they don't want lift because they don't want to be bulky. They don't want to be big" (Taryn, sophomore soccer athlete).

This was congruent with how the athletic community views female athletes. The athletes explained that there was a big difference between perceptions of the "average Joe" and someone in the athletic community on female muscularity. It was found that the athletic community respects female athletes, yet again within the acceptable boundaries. As Tess, a senior volleyball player, explained,

Um, I think in the athletic world, I think people respect it and they like, that's your whole goal is to be fit and stuff like that for your sport. I think people, some people make comments. Like if you're too ripped, or as a female like [clears throat] I don't know like, like people both guys and girls make comments about it, but. When you're outside of the athletic community, even more people make comments on it cause they're just not used to seeing something like that, like a girl that actually has muscle definition and like in shape. And like, has a lot of muscle definition.

The athletes themselves, and those in their athletic communities, were all in consensus that muscularity for female athletes needed to be restrained so as not to transgress beyond the boundary acceptable for women. This is important to note, because in line with symbolic interactionist thinking, meanings are created through the interaction with others. How female athletes perceive and manage their bodies is influenced by the athletic world around them, and it was found that the beliefs of the athletic community

mirrored the beliefs of most of the individual female athletes in this study. Further using a critical feminist perspective acknowledges the power hierarchy that is maintained through the repression of female muscularity.

Similar to previous studies (Cox & Thompson, 2000; George, 2005; Mosewich, Vango, Kowlaski, & McHugh, 2009), athletes were expected to avoid muscularity, and in addition, they were expected to conform to their respective ideal sport body. Many of the female athletes in this study felt pressure to have the body composition that matched the expectations for their respective sports. For example, for the cross-country runners, being thin and small was viewed as ideal, and if they lined up behind the starting line feeling large, it negatively affected their confidence. Gymnasts also felt the same way, particularly due to the nature of their uniforms being small and tight, which is an idea that has been supported by other academic scholarship (Howells & Grogan, 2012; Krane et al., 2004; Mosewich et al., 2009)

So I think like most girls [in gymnastics] are like “well the smaller you are the easier it is” and so obviously they want to, some girls want to try to be smaller. And yeah I think it affects their confidence like if you feel overweight or whatever putting on leotard and going in front of 1,000 people, like it doesn’t cover much. (Natalie, junior gymnast)

It was also found that if the athletes didn’t have the prescribed sport body, their athletic skills were questioned. Mae explained this by saying,

I think that when a girl’s more bulked up though during cross-country, she’s not viewed as that good a cross-country runner...at the starting line if you see a girl that has big muscles, and like is a little bit bigger in the legs and stuff, people

don't think that she's a good runner. (sophomore cross-country athlete)

When asked how the prescribed sport body was managed by male teammates, Mae explained that through her perception there was not a pressure to adhere to a specific sport body for the male athletes. She said that from her experience male cross-country runners feel no anxieties over the appearance of their bodies or the food they eat.

In order to strive to achieve the ideal sport body, athletes described doing extra cardiovascular training, avoiding weightlifting that would produce bulky muscles, and carefully managing their dietary intake. In regard to appearance and performance, the concepts seem to be very interconnected for female athletes, just as previous research has found (Markula, 1995). Body appearance and sport performance is a complex relationship that is continually negotiated and carefully managed for female athletes.

Managing the Paradox of Bodies in the Strength and Conditioning Environment

Most of the athletes in this study had little experience with strength and conditioning before college. A few had experience with basic weight lifting classes through high school PE programs, one trained with a personal trainer, one trained in a CrossFit gym, and a few had exposure through their fathers. It was found that many of the athletes had pre-conceived notions about weightlifting before they started; from what they remembered before having experience, they were mostly hesitant to lift weights. Paralleled with Dworkin's (2003) findings, the fears associated with weight lifting were that it was "intimidating" and "scary," that there was a high risk of injury, fear of doing it wrong, and a fear of getting bulky. One athlete explained she was concerned about weight lifting because she had seen pictures of body builders and thought it was only for women who wanted to be body builders. Also similar to Dworkin's (2003) study, there

was a fear that stemmed from the stereotype “oh I’m a girl, I’m going to suck at this” (Jen, freshman volleyball athlete), as well as the general belief that women were not supposed to lift weights. However, for most of the athletes, once they learned the proper technique and gained experience, weight lifting was something they enjoyed in the collegiate environment.

Since training philosophies vary from one strength and conditioning program to the next, to help provide context for the type of training for the females in this study, they were asked to describe their lifting programs. It was found that in line with the primary goals of strength and conditioning coaches (Powers 2008), the philosophy at this university was 1) injury prevention, and 2) improvement of athletic performance.

Injury prevention and modification for injured athletes was viewed as highly valued by the female athletes. When freshmen or transfer athletes arrive for training, they are taken through each lift for weeks with no weight on the bar to learn proper technique. Even if athletes had previous lifting experience, they were progressed slowly, and watched carefully by the coaches to ensure correct lifting form. For athletes who suffered sport injuries, modifications were made to accommodate their condition. Other injury prevention strategies included dynamic stretching prior to lifting, static stretching, and rolling out on foam rollers after lifting. Additionally, the strength coaches tailored the programs for each sport and their needs with preventing injury. For example, softball players frequently have shoulder problems, so exercises to strengthen the shoulders were incorporated.

Strength coaches communicated regularly with the team and the coaches on how the athletes were feeling, and how the programming connected to practices and games.

Teams had different training schedules for in-season and out of season. Out of season was viewed as a preparation period, with at most three lifts per week and two conditioning sessions. In season, weightlifting was reduced to one or two lifts per week with no conditioning. Additionally, coaches checked in with athletes to ensure the training was not overly fatiguing them.

In terms of sport enhancement, strength coaches tailored the programs based on the sport, but there were some consistencies in the types of lifts performed among the different sports. Main lifts such as deadlift, back squat, front squat, and trap bar were paired with auxiliary lifts or body weight exercises such as pull-ups, chin-ups, or abdominal training. The reps ranged from 3-8 for 3-5 sets at a moderate weight. Maxing out was not a common practice, nor was high rep training. Amy, a tennis sophomore explained, "I will say our program is balanced. So, we don't really like focus, focus on one thing. But like we trying to um, yeah we try to balance for the upper body and the lower body." In addition to this, circuit training and plyometric training was used for conditioning, such as prowler pushes, lunges, wall sits, abdominal training, and sprints.

Generally speaking, the type of weight training and conditioning at the university would not fall in line with a training that would "bulk up" the body. Megan, a senior tennis player, acknowledged this,

I know more, I'm a lot more educated on it. So I know what I have to do, like if you want to become bulky you gotta be like extreme. Like you're not going to get bulky from lifting like, like three times a week, it's not going to happen.

This was echoed by Jasmine: “Like I, the reasons I lift is so I can be stronger for softball. So I mean I’ll never be like extremely muscular with what we’re doing” (senior softball athlete). An exception to this was the senior track thrower, Sammi, who said that weight lifting for track is viewed as essential, and the training is a style of training that adds muscle bulk. For Sammi, it was viewed as necessary for her sport performance, and bulk was less concerning for her than for most of the other athletes.

For the athletes at this university, most believed that weightlifting was helpful for their sport, as long as it was sport-specific and did not create bodily excess, such as “bulk,” and “bigness.” Weightlifting was viewed as acceptable, and even enjoyable, as long as “bulking up” was not happening. While athletes displayed a hesitancy towards lifting in regards to “bulking up,” they all experienced positive effects from weightlifting for their sport performance. Most described their improvements in the areas of being stronger and faster. In soccer, the athletes were able to hold other players off the ball better. Gymnasts were able to have endurance in their arms for the bar routine and were able to jump higher and flip better. Mid-distance cross-country explained that they felt more explosive in finishing their race; additionally, they were able to stay tight when fatigued. Volleyball players said they were able to jump higher and more consistently. Softball players explained that they had greater body awareness, and their hitting improvement was a direct result from strength training. The pole-vaulter in track explained that strength was necessary in being able to get onto a higher pole and flip your body around. Finally, the track thrower could not imagine the sport of throwing without strength training. Clearly, strength and conditioning is a crucial factor for the

performance of athletes at the elite level. Yet, even with the results in, there is still a paradox for female athletes: managing bulk and strength with notions of femininity.

Athletes believe that weight lifting is important for their sport; they have physically experienced the benefits, yet a paradox still exists. They want to be strong, but not bulky; toned and defined, but not big. “It just like there’s like a thin line between being too muscular, and being like too skinny. Like there’s a really fine line between it” (Madison, senior cross country athlete). Taryn said, “Like I, you know, I don’t want to be too bulky to the point where I get huge [laughter], but I want to be strong enough to be able to um, maintain a girl that’s, or, hold a girl off that’s fifty pounds heavier than me” (sophomore soccer athlete). Freshman volleyball player Jen commented,

I always think that it is a very attractive thing that [female athletes] are strong, they are in the weight room, they, they’re being, they’re working hard to be in shape. Um, and so I’ve always wanted to be that like, I mean don’t get me wrong I don’t want to be like huge [exaggerated voice], especially for my body type, I don’t need to be that.

For the female athletes, finding the “balance” between muscularity and femininity required monitoring behaviors. They wanted to be strong, but they feared size.

Monitoring the body is a self-focusing, self-controlling mechanism of social control (Bordo, 1993). In female athletics, the ‘mannish lesbian’ stigma (Cahn, 1994) associated with muscularity has been the single most effective way of maintaining this social control by creating a ‘naturalness’ of sexual difference (Bordo, 1993). In regards to the female athletes in this study, there were three major findings on how they

managed and perceived their different bodies in the strength and conditioning environment.

The first management technique was holding back on weightlifting. Every athlete studied either identified that they themselves held back in weight lifting to avoid bulk, or knew a teammate who did. Mallory, a sophomore gymnast, explained,

Um, there's definitely days where I'm like "well I don't really want a big butt, so I don't want to squat 120lbs" like my coach wants me to. So that's where it kind of affects me is I don't want to do the whole weight that he's pushing us to do...But I think mainly just squats, like, like oh guys look at girls and are like "man she's got a big butt" and I'm like "I don't want to be looked at like that!" so, I don't really want to squat 130 lbs.

Junior gymnast Natalie recounted a time when she encouraged a teammate to lift heavier, "I'll be like "hey you need to lift heavier" and they're like "no my arms are going to get bigger." Many others expressed concerns they or their teammates had about lifting heavy weights due to the possibility of bulking up and appearing 'manly.' Senior softball player Jasmine flat out stated, "Oh yeah I definitely held back from lifting." Even though these athletes recognize the benefits in sport performance from weight lifting, the concern still remained about appearing 'manly' and bulking up, and they managed this by not lifting as much weight as they could.

While a few athletes identified that they specifically held back on lifting weights, for other athletes, their beliefs about the training program prescribed by the strength coaches satisfied anxieties about appearing masculine through having bulky muscles. To understand this better, it is important to again look at symbolic interactionism. One

of the premises of this theory is that people behave and react towards things in the world around them based on the beliefs they have about those things. For many of the athletes at this university, they believed that the weight lifting program prescribed for them would help them achieve their goal of maintaining the balance of strength without bulk. Taryn said, “I, the way that I think [the strength coach] has strength trained us, we, we’re muscular but we’re not bulky...the way that [the strength coach] has run our program, she’s done it in a way that we are strong, but yet we’re not bulky” (sophomore soccer player). Jen, the freshman volleyball athlete, loved the weight training that was prescribed by the strength coach. She explained that she loved being pushed and challenging herself, yet she qualified it by saying, “I mean you stay lean, you stay healthy, but you’re not putting on the bulk.” Tammi, senior soccer player, also explained that she didn’t believe the weight lifting exercises in the strength and conditioning program affected how large she was; instead, she viewed it as a way to tone her body. When asking Tammi if she thought lifting heavier would bulk her up, she responded, “Yes, and I would probably stop.” While holding back in the weight room was not directly stated by these athletes, they indicated a fear of appearing bulky and did not view the training program at this university as threatening the boundaries of their muscularity, so they did not alter their behaviors.

The third management technique was an overemphasis on cardio training and body-weight training. Ava, a sophomore pole-vaulter, explained that she primarily did body weight exercises and core exercises at the gym to avoid getting big. Taryn explained that she did extra plyometric training and body weight exercises (sophomore soccer player). Natalie explained that this was prevalent in gymnastic culture,

I think a lot of female athletes, like they'll do extra cardio or something just to like make sure that they're staying in shape, looking their best...they're trying to stay skinny by, you know, they'll come here and they'll walk on the treadmill for an hour every day, or the elliptical, or erg trainer. (senior gymnast)

There were two athletes who did not fall into these results. Sammi, the senior track thrower, viewed weight lifting as absolutely essential to sport performance, and would often lift with male athletes because they were lifting similar amounts. Sammi explained that within the sport of throwing, athletes are encouraged to lift from very young ages, and very few athletes come to the collegiate level with no lifting experience. Liz, the freshman softball player, viewed weightlifting as exciting and something to strive after; she had less concern about the size of her musculature than most of the other athletes. Like Sammi, her experience with weight lifting began at a younger age than most of the other athletes, as she started CrossFit while in high school. Based on findings from Knapp (in press) CrossFit often has a progressive perspective on musculature and strength for women, which could explain her difference in mindset. Both athletes began weight lifting from younger ages, in social contexts that celebrate strength and muscularity for both male and female athletes. Examining this through a critical feminist interactionist perspective, it is clear that their experiences in these environments shaped their attitudes and beliefs regarding weight lifting and their meanings of muscularity, setting them apart from the other female athletes in this study.

Looking at these results from a critical feminist interactionist perspective, it is clear that an ideological barrier still exists for many female athletes at the elite level today. The notion of gender in relation to muscularity for female athletes has proven to

have behavior-altering effects. The female athletes in this study acknowledge that being a female athlete is something to be celebrated; to them, their sport gives them a sense of pride, honor, and purpose. They also understand that to be successful in their sport requires a body that goes against generally accepted social norms, and while the ideas of female muscularity are progressing, there is still a heavy resistance to breaking the 'glass ceiling' on muscularity. Athletes were willing to train in the strength and conditioning environment as long as it did not produce too much muscularity; if it did, they modified their behavior to hold back in the weight room, and/or added extra cardio and body weight exercises to reduce their size to one that was closer to the norm. Sophomore gymnast Mallory summed it up perfectly by saying, "I don't want to say we don't care, because we do care and we want to get stronger, but we don't want to like look manly I guess, I don't know." While it is clear that an ideological barrier still exists in how power is reproduced in sport the structural power dynamic appears to provide equal opportunity for both male and female athletes at the collegiate level as seen in this collegiate weight room environment.

The Weight Room Environment

While in the previous section, there were certain aspects of the weight room in regards to gender negotiations that were only lightly discussed, this section seeks to examine more closely the weight room environment and its impact on female athletes. Using a critical feminist interactionist perspective, the focus was on the ideological power dynamics in this environment, and how they influenced the experience of the female athletes. The second research question I seek to address is: what aspects of the weight room influence the negotiations of femininity and muscularity among female

collegiate athletes? In examining the weight room, there are two prominent factors that influence the environment: the strength and conditioning coach and the gendered stereotype of the gym being a masculine space. When discussing the weight room environment with the study participants, an unexpected and interesting phenomenon emerged. The major theme that was revealed was that a “public weight room,” one that is typically open to the general public, was seen as a place that perpetuated the gender stereotype of the weight room being a male space, while the collegiate weight room was found to be a space that felt safe to the female athletes. Additionally, it was found that the presence and role of the strength and conditioning coach was imperative to the athletes’ feelings of comfort and shaped their view of weight lifting.

The Public Weight Room

As it has been shown in previous literature, the weight room has typically been stereotyped as a male space, while the cardiovascular room has been a place generally utilized by mostly women, and some men (Dworkin, 2001). Women have expressed that the weight room is an “intimidating space” where the knowledge gap on how to use the equipment and how to complete the exercises correctly, and a lack of understanding of unspoken social etiquette, has created a barrier for women (Dworkin, 2001; Salvatore & Marecek, 2010). In addition, evaluation concerns, such as evaluation by others, concerns of comparison, and concerns of ineptitude, create self-monitoring and avoidance behaviors, thus creating a self-perpetuating cycle that maintains the gender stereotypes of the weight room and cardiovascular room (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010).

The participants in this study voiced similar concerns when commenting on the weight room. Collegiate athletes are oftentimes assigned summer workouts to be

completed during the break. Unless the athletes stay and train in their collegiate weight room, they are forced to utilize a public gym to complete these workouts. When talking about using a public fitness center, the athletes voiced many of the same concerns parallel with previous studies: that it was an intimidating space, that they felt uncomfortable, and that they were afraid of looking like they didn't know what they were doing.

These concerns were all rooted in the weight room being a gendered space.

Tess said,

Like, I guess the only time I feel uncomfortable is, I never feel uncomfortable in the weight room here [collegiate weight room], but when I do go to like the YMCA and stuff like that I do, I sometimes feel uncomfortable just because like you can tell that the guys are like "oh this is, the one girl is in here" and I'm just like "oh this is just so weird." Cause I'm not doing as much weight, or, waiting behind a guy to do a certain lift and they're just like, I don't know you just feel like you're being judged, I guess. (senior volleyball player)

This athlete in particular felt uncomfortable based on the evaluation concerns by others. Later in the interview, when asked what type of exercise she would participate in upon exhausting her NCAA eligibility, she explained that she would most likely just use the elliptical or treadmill and possibly lift occasionally, but would generally avoid the weight room. This avoidance was found in another athlete; she said,

Yeah, I feel really uncomfortable there...Cause like, I was the only girl there and I didn't really, I felt weird. Like I would stay over in like running or ride the bike or doing the stair step cause my dad would always do that. And like the little light-

weight things. I never wanted to go to the other side, where there's like all the um the bench, um. They have like an assisted squat, it's kind of like, I don't, I don't like it. (Jasmine, senior softball player)

Many of the other athletes voiced similar avoidance strategies while working out at a public gym; they would prefer the cardio fitness area, or dumbbells.

Another concern that was loudly voiced was the appearance of not knowing what to do or how to use the equipment. Athletes using a public weight room avoided the weight room due to evaluation concerns, and only completed exercises that they felt competent in. Out of all the participants, there was one athlete who preferred the public weight room to the collegiate weight room. However, she explained that she had a personal trainer who taught her how to use all the equipment and was with her during her training sessions.

The Collegiate Weight Room

Based on the literature of the gym being a masculine space, it was anticipated that the collegiate weight room would reflect many of the same concerns and barriers as described for public fitness centers. However, an interesting phenomenon emerged from the responses. It was found that contrary to it being an "intimidating" space to avoid, the collegiate weight room was a gender-neutral space, with an upbeat atmosphere that was welcoming and felt safe to many of the athletes. Three aspects of the collegiate weight room that appeared to be most important to the athletes were the role of the strength and conditioning coach, the role of teammates, and the impact of other teams being in that space.

In previous literature, it has been shown that the two primary roles of the strength and conditioning coach are enhancing athletes' performance and preventing injuries (Powers, 2008). Auxiliary responsibilities may include: motivating, educating, creating sport-specific sessions, providing guidance on nutrition, and utilizing administrative skills (NSCA, 2001). These traits were also found in the strength and conditioning coaches at this university. Through the athletes' lenses, there were four aspects that really stood out to them and impacted their experiences; the presence of the coach, the instruction from the coach, the competitiveness of the coach, and the personal side of the coach.

The strength and conditioning (SC) coaches are present in the collegiate weight room at all times, and their presence in the weight room had a considerable impact on the way the athletes trained. The female athletes at this particular university were divided between two of the SC staff, one female coach and one male. There were no differences in how the athletes viewed either of the coaches. Athletes under both coaches explained that they were very energetic and enthusiastic, and encouraged the athletes to push themselves harder. Amy said, "That's why I like, from that like, we just want to do better for him, because he, he give the 100% to train us (sophomore tennis player). Most of the athletes explained that this type of encouragement helped them challenge and push themselves in the weight room in ways they would not otherwise.

Furthermore, the education from the SC coach was important in athletes feeling confident while doing the lifts. It appears that there is specialized training for the freshman athletes, or transfer athletes, when they first come in. This specialized training is meant to teach them correct lifting technique, which is important for injury

prevention. Liz indicated, “She’s really technical. Like, they like the lifts and everything to be perfectly right. Like, I mean, as freshman even though I had a background in lifting, she made us do weeks and weeks of no weight” (freshman softball player). While Taryn explained that this made her feel comfortable: “She starts you, you know, with a lower amount of weight. And then progressively lets you go to a heavier amount. And I really, I really liked that...It made me feel more comfortable lifting, for sure” (sophomore soccer player). This seems to be particularly important because these athletes indicated that a lack of knowledge in weight training was debilitating for them in the public weight room.

The SC coach also played an important role in making weight training more appealing for female athletes. As mentioned previously, female athletes face the stigma of ‘bulk’ and weight lifting, which consequently has caused concern for female athletes and has resulted in women holding back from lifting in the weight room, among other management techniques. One way the SC coaches have overcome this, whether purposefully or accidentally, has been to create competitions and games among the athletes: “We have two groups, so we’ll compete in the weight room. Um, like some of the lifts and when we did sprints and then like with meals and stuff. So he pushes you, he’s really good, I really like him” (Megan, senior tennis player). The female SC coach does this with her teams as well, and has received similar responses from the female athletes.

Finally, the female athletes valued the personal aspect of the SC coach. Many of the athletes described the coaches as being nice and easy to talk to. The strength coaches showed interest in how the athletes were doing personally, and the coaches supported

the athletes in their sports by attending games or matches. All of these personal aspects of the strength and conditioning coach are important in building trust between the athlete and coach. Since the strength and conditioning coach is the primary educator and overseer of female athletes in the weight room, how they relate to the athletes is highly impactful.

The role of the strength coach is a crucial factor of the strength and conditioning environment, as well as the presence of teammates during the lifts. Athletes expressed that lifting with their teammates evoked feelings of competitiveness, as well as provided opportunities for team building and encouragement. For some athletes, lifting with their team became an area off the field to prove themselves amongst other athletes on their team. Liz explained, “You’re with your teammates...there’s a lot of things on the ball field that you can’t really control. But in the weight room, that’s where you can take care of your business, it puts you in your place” (freshman softball player). Other athletes said that it pushed them to know that their teammates were cheering for them, and the volleyball team in particular took advantage of the weight lifting sessions to build team camaraderie.

The presence of other teams or athletes is another important factor to take into consideration when discussing the collegiate weight room. Most teams utilize parts of the weight room when other teams are also training. The weight room at this university in particular has an upper track, which is used for warming up and dynamic stretching; there are lifting platforms and racks where the major lifts are completed, and there is an open middle space for prowler pushes and sprints. Typically, the SC coach coordinates

which teams are using which space, and it was found that up to two or three teams would be using the weight room at one particular time.

An important discovery from the interviews was that the presence of other teams, particularly male teams, did not have a significant impact on the female teams' training. Most of the female athletes had the perspective that "an athlete is an athlete" in that space, that there was really no difference between the male and female athletes in the strength and conditioning environment because they were all training for the same goal. They viewed other athletes in that space as a positive impact. Seeing how athletes on other teams, male or female, pushed themselves, it in turn encouraged the female athletes to challenge themselves. Some female athletes took special satisfaction in knowing they could lift as much as some of the male athletes. They also believed that having other athletes in the weight room with them helped with the upbeat and motivational atmosphere, which transferred to their own personal attitudes about training.

Goffman's (1959) role management technique of role segregation may help to explain the differences felt by the female athletes in the collegiate weight room versus a public weight room. In the collegiate weight room, they are among their peers, people who share the same identity and goals. Whether male or female, as one athlete put it, "an athlete is an athlete" in the weight room. Since sport has traditionally been a male terrain, female athletes have been viewed as transgressing into male territory. This has resulted in a stigma that surrounds female athletics, as described in detail in the literature review. When people are stigmatized, which is when attributes that reflect a discrepancy between individuals assumed identities versus their real identities

(Goffman, 1959), they have to cope with that stigmatization. Role segregation is a way of doing that, in which one “segregates his [sic] audiences so the individuals that witness him in one of his roles will not be the individuals who witness him in another of his roles” (Goffman, 1959, p. 137). In a public weight room, which has been clearly shown as still being a gendered space, the stigma is more quickly attached to females who transgress the boundaries of that space and enter the weight room to lift weights. This produces feelings of intimidation and discomfort, so the female athletes respond by distancing their athletic identity in that space, and instead embrace a feminine role by exercising on the treadmill and elliptical machines. However, in the collegiate weight room, this role-distancing technique is not viewed as necessary.

Attitude Differences Between Underclassmen and Upperclassmen

Previous literature published on female athletes and their negotiations with their femininity and muscularity found that younger athletes tend to prioritize the “feminine body” over the “performance body,” while the upper classmen attended to the “performance body” (Howells & Grogan, 2012; Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009). Due to the literature, one of the research questions I sought to answer was: what are the differences in attitude or belief among lower classmen and upper classmen collegiate athletes? In completing the semi-structured in-depth interviews, it quickly became apparent that there were no consistent similarities among the different sport teams with gender negotiations between the upperclassmen and lowerclassmen.

Instead, each sport team displayed varying degrees on how their lower classmen and upper classmen approached weight lifting. For example, the tennis team’s seniors were very disciplined and embraced weight lifting, while the lower classmen were

hesitant. In comparison, the softball lower classmen were not satisfied with the amount of weight lifting and wanted to do more, and even did extra on their own. They viewed the upperclassmen as being “complacent” and not giving full effort in the weight room. Therefore, no consistent findings emerged from the data regarding this question.

However, while not explored in-depth for this study, the differences in attitude appeared to be more significant due to sport culture instead of class standing. The sport of cross-country, for example, believes that weight lifting should be entirely avoided during season, and only lifts before season for injury prevention. Conversely, the sport cultures of volleyball, softball, soccer, and tennis view weightlifting as beneficial as long as it does not result in excessive bulk, and strongly believe in balancing it with body-weight exercises. The culture of gymnastics typically embraces only body-weight training and conditioning, but it appears that it is slowly accepting weight training as well. In track, there is a wide variety of beliefs due to the different nature of each event; the pole-vaulter explained that lifting weights was acceptable as long as it was for strength and not mass, while the thrower said that weight lifting was a critical factor in throwing, and almost all throwers begin weight lifting in high school. Interestingly, the beliefs of the respective sport cultures reflected many of the personal beliefs of the individual athletes.

Conclusion

The multiple bodies that emerged from this study were the ‘culturally normative female body’ and the ‘athletic body.’ This ‘multiple bodies perspective’ (Cox & Thompson, 2000) can further be explained by Goffman’s (1961) ‘multiplicity of selves’ concept. While a separation of roles exist for the female athletes in this study between

the two identified bodies, it is impossible to completely separate these roles, thus placing the female athletes in a position where they perceive they must manage these roles to adhere to societal expectations. The ideal feminine body projected by the culturally normative female body was one that was 'tight,' 'toned,' and 'slender,' while being void of 'bulk' or size. Since athleticism requires muscularity, the athletic body was viewed as something to be closely monitored; muscles were viewed as desirable in the sense that they evoked a sense of pride in the female athletes as they showed their hard work. However, their muscularity had a 'glass-ceiling,' and crossing the muscularity ceiling was considered a transgression of gender norms.

While acknowledging that lifting weights had positively impacted their sport performance, athletes in this study still viewed avoiding bulkiness as more important than gaining muscle to enhance ability. Some athletes admitted to holding back in the weight room for fear of bulking up. Others believed that the weight training regimen at this university was not one that would bulk them up, so they did not alter their behaviors, yet indicated that if they were to bulk up, they would stop. Finally, others completed extra cardiovascular training in an effort to reduce bodily size. These management techniques confirm that the female athletes in this study valued the culturally normative female body over the athletic body.

When specifically examining the weight room environment, there was a major difference between the public weight room and the collegiate weight room. The public weight room was viewed as a space that was intimidating and reserved for men. The collegiate weight room, however, was an environment that was viewed as welcoming to both male and female athletes equally. The role of the strength and conditioning coach

in the collegiate environment appeared to be the most important factor in determining its positive atmosphere. The strength and conditioning coach provided the female athletes with encouragement, supervision, and education. By creating competition during workouts, and allowing athletes to choose their own music, the coaches made lifting weights more appealing to female athletes. Finally, the coaches showed support for the athletes by attending their games and matches, which in turn earned the trust of the female athletes.

Other factors of the weight room environment were the roles of teammates and the roles of other teams. Teammates were viewed as a positive influence in the collegiate weight room, as their presence enhanced team camaraderie. Athletes viewed their teammates as being a crucial part in pushing and challenging them in their own lifting. Lastly, the presence of other teams, both male and female, was viewed as positive. Watching other teams lift weights evoked a sense of competitiveness in the athletes that pushed them in their own weight training.

When examining the differences between the attitudes and beliefs among underclassmen athletes and upperclassmen athletes, no consistencies were found. Instead, it appeared that individual sport culture had a greater influence on the athletes' views of muscularity.

The strength and conditioning environment, which includes the weight room and the strength and conditioning coach, has become instrumental for collegiate athletics, particularly programs at Division-I institutions. While the main purpose of strength and conditioning programs are to prevent injuries and enhance athletic performance, there remains a resistance to fully participate among female athletes. While it is encouraging

that the collegiate weight room has proven to be a safe space, it is clear that an ideological barrier still exists for female athletes.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Female athletes still face managing multiple bodies, those bodies being the perceived “culturally normative female body” and the “athletic body”. According to the athletes in this study, the normative body ideal is one that is ‘tight,’ ‘toned,’ and ‘slender,’ while being void of ‘bulk’ or size, while the athletic body is one that requires muscularity, and essential to elite-level sport performance. Findings from this study suggest that the athletic body is viewed as something to be closely monitored; muscles are considered desirable as long as the ‘glass-ceiling’ on muscularity is not breeched. Consequently, athletes resist muscularity due to the belief that muscles are masculine, and view having too much muscle as transgressing on gender norms.

It is clear that the athletes in this study utilize management techniques in the strength and conditioning environment. First, some athletes admit to holding back during weight lifting sessions to avoid the musculature that they believe will accompany this type of activity. Second, some athletes hold the belief that the weight-training program at this particular university will not increase their muscularity, and therefore, do not alter their behavior. However, these athletes suggest that if they were to notice their body increasing in musculature that they would indeed hold back. This indicates that a fear of muscularity still exists for these athletes, indicating that an ideological barrier also still exists. The third management technique used by some athletes in this study is partaking in additional cardiovascular training to reduce body size.

When considering which aspects of the strength and conditioning environment influence female athletes, it appears that the collegiate weight room environment is a

welcoming space to female athletes, while the public weight room environment is an intimidating space. Athletes identify the presence of the strength and conditioning coach in the collegiate weight room as a primary factor of that space being considered positive. The strength and conditioning coaches at this university seek to enhance the athletes' sport performance, as well as, create a program that prevents sport injury. Additionally, the strength and conditioning coaches provide the athletes with encouragement, supervision, and education, all of which contribute to the female athletes feeling comfortable in collegiate weight room. Another aspect of the strength and conditioning environment that is important is the presence of teammates and athletes from other sport teams. This presence appears to create a competitive atmosphere, which encourages athletes to challenge themselves and builds camaraderie.

Inconsistent with previous research, no consistent findings emerge when interviewing underclassmen and upperclassmen athletes in regards to their attitudes or beliefs about weight training. Instead, it appears that the attitudes and beliefs vary from one sport team to the next. While not explored in depth, each sport cultures' beliefs seem to have a greater influence on the athletes' views of muscularity and strength training than class standing.

This study contributes to the literature in a number of ways. First, it contributes to the body of research on the complexities that female athletes face in regards to the social meanings that surround being both a woman and an athlete. An assumption when using a critical feminist interactionist perspective is that social life involves a continuous process of change as values and conflicts of interest are never permanent

(Coakley, 2006). As society's meanings of gender change, it is important to understand how these changes manifest in sport as an institution because sport not only reflects society's beliefs, but it also reproduces, resists, and transforms gender relations.

Secondly, this study provides a rich understanding of how female athletes negotiate their meanings of muscularity within the strength and conditioning environment. Strength and conditioning is an aspect of collegiate athletics that has become extremely important over the past few decades, and is viewed as critical to the success of athletes at the NCAA Division-I level. This study also highlights the importance of the strength and conditioning coach, as they seem to be a major influence in aiding female athletes to overcome the ideological barriers that surround weight lifting for women.

Implications

Due to the findings from this research, some practical implications arise. Gender negotiations within the institution of sport are continually changing as athletes, coaches, administration, and society interact and create new meanings. This is a process that takes time, and in regards to the multiple body management, it is important that those involved with female athletics continue to support female involvement and celebrate athleticism as a gender-neutral trait.

More specifically, the strength and conditioning coach has the opportunity to impact the experiences that female collegiate athletes have at the Division-I level. Strength and conditioning coaches play a big role in building confidence for female athletes in the weight room. Through supervision, education, and encouragement the strength and conditioning coach can help female athletes overcome their fears and

anxieties about weight lifting. Additionally, strength coaches can create a fun and competitive atmosphere by implementing competitions among the athletes, which stimulates the competitive nature that the athletes already possess. This further encourages the athletes to lift weights to their potential, which enhances their sport performance. Finally, the strength and conditioning coaches should seek to maintain the collegiate weight room as a gender-neutral space that is welcoming to female athletes.

Limitations

The limitations for this study are: regional variations, university size variations, strength & conditioning program philosophy variations, and a lack of racial conversation. First, the participating university at which the research was conducted is a Midwestern university. There could be variations found at universities in different regions of the United States; for example an East Coast university or Northwest university. Another limitation is the size of the university. Larger Division-I athletic programs may have different cultures and beliefs than the university athletic program studied. It can also be recognized that there are many different training philosophies within the profession of strength and conditioning. Coaching and training philosophies could vary from one university to the next, which could highly impact the female athletes' meanings of weight training. The weight room environment could also vary, which could impact how the female athletes view the weight room space. Finally, the discussion of race is absent from this study. Racial differences and influences are not explored in-depth in either the literature review, or the study. Of the athletes interviewed, only two identified as non-Caucasian.

Suggestions for further research

It is suggested that follow-up studies be completed in order to gain a deeper understanding of how gender negotiations are managed in the strength and conditioning environment. Follow-up studies should also be completed that seek to understand how sport culture affects the beliefs and attitudes of female athletes in the strength and conditioning environment. Additionally, research should be conducted at universities varying in location and size. Finally, the influence of racial differences should be examined in follow-up studies.

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APPENDICES

General Background

1. What is your background in sport? (Type of sports played, age started, etc.)
2. When did you start playing the sport that you play now? What appealed to you about it?

Weight Training background, performance in the weight room, and environment

1. When did you start lifting weights?
2. If you can remember, what were your ideas, beliefs, and/or concerns about weightlifting before you started?
3. Tell me about your current training program.
4. Can you tell me about your experiences in weight lifting? What stands out to you? Do you enjoy strength training?
5. What impact, if any, do you see in your overall sport performance?
6. Within your specific sport culture (ex: sport of softball, sport of volleyball, etc.), do you think that weight training is viewed as positive or negative, and why?
7. What are some of the beliefs that your teammates hold in regards to weight lifting?
8. What differences, if any, do you see in the ways that lowerclassman and upperclassman train in the weight room?
9. What is the weight room like? Do you lift while other teams are lifting? Does that impact you in any way?
10. What is your strength coach like?

Femininity, athleticism, and Gender in the weight room

1. What does it mean to you to be a woman in the weight room? Explain.
2. How do you think being a woman in the weight room impacts your experiences with strength training?
3. What challenges do you face, if any, as a woman in the weight room?
4. Do you think your challenges or experiences are different than male athletes? Why?

5. What do you think is society's definition, view, and/or expectations of ideal femininity?
6. How do you think that impacts women in sport? How does that impact you in your sport?
7. What does it mean to you to be a female athlete?

8. How do you think society's views or expectations of gender affect you in the weight room? How do you manage this?
9. What do you think it means to appear muscular as a female athlete? How do you think people perceive muscular female athletes?
10. How do you think weight training has affected your muscularity? Has your body changed? What does this mean to you?

Any final thoughts/concerns/questions?

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: A Qualitative Analysis of Gender Dynamics with Female Collegiate Athletes in the Strength and Conditioning Environment

Research Team: Rachel Roth, Graduate Student, Department of Kinesiology, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

This consent form describes the research study to help you decide if you want to participate. This form provides important information about what you will be asked to do during the study, about the risks and benefits of the study, and about your rights as a research participant.

If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the research team for more information.

You should discuss your participation with anyone you choose such as family or friends.

Do not sign this form unless the study research team has answered your questions and you decide that you want to be part of this study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This is a research study. We are inviting you to participate in this research study because you are a Division I FCS female collegiate athlete. The purpose of this research study is to provide personal narratives which examine the gender dynamics experienced by female collegiate athletes in the strength and conditioning environment.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

Approximately 16 people will take part in this study at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

WHAT IS THE CRITERIA FOR SUBJECT SELECTION?

The people selected for this research study, must be on the roster of an intercollegiate women's sport team and be able to reflect on those experiences.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

If you agree to take part in this study, your involvement will last for the length of the interview, approximately 1 hour. Additional interviews may be requested if there is a need to follow-up on your previous responses. If any additional interview is needed, it will take place within a couple of weeks of the first interview.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

If you consent to participate in this study, you along with the researcher will set up a time, date, and place to meet to conduct the interview. At that time the interviewer will ask you to sign and date the consent form and complete the demographic survey, after which the interview will begin. On both the demographic survey and during the interview, you are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer and to stop the interview at any time.

Audio/Video Recording or Photographs

One aspect of this study involves making audio recordings of interviews. At the start of the interview the participant will be asked if the interview can be recorded. The participant may request at anytime that the tape recorder be turned off. To help ensure confidentiality, a pseudonym will be placed on the tape. The recordings are made so that the interview can be transcribed and then coded for content. The transcription will be completed by the investigator. The tape(s) will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office where the investigator will be the only person with access to the recordings. The tapes will be destroyed once the research is complete. Your signature on the separate audio tape consent form indicates that you agree to be a part of this study with the knowledge that your responses will be recorded on audio tape.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS STUDY?

There may be some risks from being in this study. The only foreseen risk to taking part in this study involves possible discomfort with examining your thoughts and feelings about your experiences with being a female collegiate athlete.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

I don't know if you will benefit from being in this study. However, I hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study because the understanding gained from this research may help us to better understand how female collegiate athletes negotiate their meanings of femininity and athleticism within the context of the strength and conditioning environment and in turn challenge strength coaches and athletic administration to make improvements for the betterment of gender equity.

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

WHO IS FUNDING THIS STUDY?

The University and the research team are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

I will keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, it is possible that other people may become aware of your participation in this study. For example, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you.

To help protect your confidentiality, I will use a pseudonym on the audio cassettes and transcripts so that information collected cannot be immediately connected with an individual participant. All information collected will be kept in a secure location.

If we write a report or article about this study or share the study data set with others, we will do so in such a way that you cannot be directly identified.

IS BEING IN THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you won't be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

I encourage you to ask questions. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact: **Rachel Roth, (503) 502-7584 rothr@siu.edu** or Dr. Bobbi Knapp, faculty advisor for this research project, (618)453-3324.

This Informed Consent Document is not a contract. It is a written explanation of what will happen during the study if you decide to participate. You are not waiving any legal rights by signing this Informed Consent Document. Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Subject's Name (printed):

(Signature of Subject)

(Date)

Additionally, your name below indicates that you agree to be a part of this study with the knowledge that your responses will be recorded on audiotape.

(Name of Subject)

(Date)

Permission to attribute quotes:

I agree ___ I disagree ___ that members of the research team may quote me in any subsequent papers that come out of this study.

“This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office of Sponsored Projects Administration, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709. Phone (618) 453-4533. E-mail siuhsc@siu.edu”

Demographic Survey

Please take some time to complete the following demographic survey. You can skip any questions that you would prefer not to answer or quit the survey at anytime. The survey results will be connected to your interview transcript using a coding method that is not linked to your informed consent form thus helping to maintain confidentiality in this study.

1. Please select the racial category that best represents you (may select more than one).

- American Indian/Alaskan Native/Hawaiian Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino/or Spanish origin
- White/Caucasian
- Other _____

2. Please select the sex category that best represents you

- Female
- Male
- Intersexed

3. Please provide your age_____

4. Please select the sexuality category that best represents you.

- Asexual (not sexually attracted to others)
- Bisexual
- Heterosexual
- Homosexual

5. Please select the gender category that best represents you.

- Male
- Female
- Other: _____

6. Please select the year in school that best represents you.

- Red-shirt freshman
- True freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- 5th year senior
- Transfer student: Please indicate year in school:_____

VITA

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Special Honors and Awards:

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Gender Negotiation of Female Collegiate Athletes in the Strength and
Conditioning Environment: A Qualitative Analysis

Major Professor: Bobbi Knapp, Ph.D