

A qualitative analysis of university athlete's perceptions and negotiations of health and athletic participation

By

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores student-athletes' relationships with food and exercise, often referred to as eating and training thus unpacking how student-athletes come to understand health within the context of university sport. The unique nature of the study, with its focus on intercollegiate sport in Canada, contributes to the lack of knowledge about Canadian sport athletes' experiences of sport, and it provides a qualitative lens to consider how student-athletes construct notions about the body, health and performance. Seventeen (eight female and nine male) student-athletes, from Memorial University 2010-2011 varsity roster participated in this study. Participants were representative of varsity sports offered at the university, including individual sports: cross-country running, swimming and wrestling; and team sports: basketball, soccer and volleyball. Data collection involved four focus group discussions and follow-up semi-structured interviews with four individual student-athletes. Using discourse analysis, informed by Foucault's concepts of the panopticon and technologies of the self, data analysis exposed how cultures of sport not only shape student-athletes understandings of eating and training but also how sport normalizes and regulates specific (un)healthy ideas and practices.

Keywords: student-athletes, Canadian university sport, eating and training practices, gendered discourse

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The primary focus of attention in sport... is the body and its attributes... this need not imply that the mind is not involved... but it is the body that constitutes the most striking symbol as well as the material core of the sporting activity (Hargreaves, 1986, p. 13).

1.1 Background of the study

Student-athletes are often thought of as healthy and capable individuals; they are capable of participating in elite level sport while pursuing a university degree. Striving for success seemingly requires them to be able to manage their time, set realistic goals, and actively balance academic pressures and expectations along with athletic pursuits requiring them to push the physical, psychological and social components of their bodies on a regular basis. What remains unknown in what seems to be a simple student-athlete identity is how the complex commitments of being an academic student and a university athlete, in particular in the context of Canada's university and sport systems, relates to understanding ideas of healthiness, within a demanding environment. The consensus that university athletes are at risk for developing disordered eating and other contentious health practices has remained relatively high over decades of research (Busanich, 2011). Athletes are at a greater risk for developing eating disorders than their non-athletic counterparts due to increased pressures for thinness placed upon them (Burke & Cox, 2009; Busanich, 2009; Busanich & McGannon, 2010); Byrne & McLean (2001); Garner, 1991; Wilmore, 1991); and eating disorders appear most frequently in sports which emphasize aesthetic elements and those that require athletes to have a specific body weight (Burke & Cox, 2009; Busanich, McGannon & Schinke, 2012; Byrne & McLean, 2001; Dick, 1991; Thompson & Sherman, 1999). Furthermore, there are significantly

more reports of female athletes to engaging in unhealthy eating practices (Busanich & McGannon, 2010; Byrne & McLean, 2001; Dick, 1991; George, 2005). Research suggests that female athletes frequently demonstrate high amounts of anxiety and distress surrounding their bodies and weight that often get tied to eating and exercise practices (de Bruin, Oudejans, Bakker & Woertman, 2011; Krane, Stiles-Stipley, Waldron & Michaelnok, 2001; Kroshus, Goldman, Kubzansky & Austin, 2014; Markula, 1995; Zanker & Gard, 2008). More readily such understandings have come to be understood in relation to body dissatisfaction (Furnham, Badmin & Sneade, 2002).

Although my research is not intended to dissect the prevalence of eating disorders across athletic populations, the aforementioned historical record of research with athlete populations informs my current study. It is through a detailed qualitative examination of student-athletes' relationships with food and exercise, often referred to as eating and training among this population, that leads to my interest in student-athletes' notions of health and wellness. My thesis unpacks how student-athletes come to understand health within the context of university sport. Existing within sport culture and university academic expectations many student-athletes face incredible pressures, whether self-imposed or otherwise, to continue to achieve success. My research aims to uncover and describe how eating and training practices are conceptualized and understood by student-athletes. It also poses questions about how the ideologies of eating and training become constructions of healthiness, if at all, among this population. Furthermore, it addresses how male and female student-athletes construct ideas about health in relation to their specific sport participation and performance. There are many gaps in the literature related to student-athletes' constructions of health and healthiness that support the need for this

research project; however the overall purpose of my thesis is to examine and analyze student-athletes' relationships with ideologies of health in relation to university sport participation. In some ways the framework of the study may parallel eating disorder research among athletes more generally, but this is not the focus of my study.

1.2 Statement of problem

Limited research has sought to examine university student-athletes' perceptions and negotiations of health practises and athletic participation through qualitative measures. There is limited research focusing on Canadian student-athletes health and participation in varsity sport; and there is less qualitative inquiry into the lives of student-athletes' as they navigate the pressures of academics and athletics at the university level. Learning how eating and training messages are taken up, resisted and/or challenged through the discursive practices of sport culture allow broader understandings of health and the body. These understandings are valuable contributions the current research project offers to the education and sport context. The research questions that provide the framework for this study include:

1. How do student-athletes construct notions of "healthy" eating and how do they practise "healthy" eating?
2. How do student-athletes engage in sport specific training? More specifically, how do they understand and practice "healthy" training in relation to their sport?
3. Do significant others (i.e. coaches and parents) influence or impact student-athletes understanding of practices of "health" as it relates to their sport participation or more generally?
4. How does gender relate to socially constructed notions of health practices and athletic participation?

1.3 Significance of Study

As previously mentioned there is a lack of research focusing on Canadian student-athletes' understandings of health and the research that does exist is primarily from a positivist perspective using quantitative methods. Overall studies examining athletes and eating, athletes and training, and coach/parents influence on athletes, have encompassed quantitative methodological approaches (Busanich, 2011; Garner, 1991). These researchers have employed surveys and questionnaires to document the prevalence of disordered eating and weight-control practices in athletes along with the role coaches and parents/guardians occupy in these disordered practices. In general these studies approach athletes experiences of training and weight control from a behavioural perspective whereas the current study aims to use sociological approaches to understanding how student-athletes come to make the decisions they do around issues of training and eating for their sport participation. Thus, to look beyond the traditional objectivist notions of 'disordered eating' requires a shift in the construction of what is considered 'healthy' and how this manifests in the lives of student-athletes. Through utilization of qualitative methods student-athlete narratives can be used to understand how food and exercise are negotiated and experienced by athletes in the context of taken for granted social, cultural and gendered discourses of sport participation (Busanich, 2011). Within sport research, qualitative approaches have been called for to further reveal influences and meanings not yet considered, as well as expand upon understandings of athlete's experiences of disordered eating (Papathomas & Lavalley, 2006, 2010; Petrie & Greenleaf, 2007). As previously mentioned this thesis is not intended to examine disordered eating practices

among student-athletes but I would be remiss to not consider the literature that does exist in relation to athletic populations and eating disorders.

The Canadian context and more specifically, the Atlantic coast experience of student-athletes, makes this study extremely valuable to the Canadian Intercollegiate Sport (CIS) system, and to university campuses across Canada. The unique nature of the study, with its focus on a variety of intercollegiate sports, and both male and female student-athletes, is one of the first studies to interrogate how this population comes to understand health within competitive sport environments. This study contributes to research from a qualitative standpoint, providing a rich and detailed understanding of student-athletes' experiences of sport and health. By attending to the personal narratives of elite student-athletes from a sociological perspective, practitioners can be more reflexive regarding the complex meanings surrounding the body, food and exercise.

1.4 Summary

A sociological framework provides a complex and layered understanding of student-athletes' sport experiences as it relates to the construction of health. Understanding student-athletes' perceptions and negotiations of their health as it relates to training and eating can provide valuable information for coaches, administrators, parents, trainers and other athletes' about the ways in which sporting expectations guide the ways health plays out in the everyday lives of young athletes in Canada. Chapter Two, the 'Literature Review', provides an overview of the current state of research on the eating and training practices of elite athletes, as well as a review of some key studies investigating the role coaches play in shaping the lives of athletes. In Chapter Three, 'Methodology', I establish the value of qualitative inquiry and outline the use of

qualitative research methods as tools to collect data and explore the health and athletic participation narratives of student-athletes. Chapter Four, 'Body Facism', acts as the first of the combined 'Findings and Discussion' chapters. Through the deconstruction of student-athletes' narratives, the chapter discusses the athletic body as a showcase within sport. Chapter Five, '(UN) Healthy Surveillance Practices & the 'Coach' is divided into three sections. The first section critically examines the coach-athlete relationship framed by Foucault's notion of panopticism as an optic of disciplinary power. The second section focuses on student-athletes' perception of the influence their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) provide in relation to their sport performance. The third section explores the utility of sport as a tool to rationalize specific health practices, focused on eating and training. Wrestlers, in particular, are identified in this section as they illustrate both the surveillance and normative practices constructed in and through sport environments. Chapter Six, 'Pain and Pleasure' focuses on pain, something that is seemingly normalized in sport and pleasure, something that is derived from the restrictive practices related to food (non) consumption or the excessive practices of training.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The athlete is confronted with complex mechanisms of power that act as an 'agency of discipline' and 'a productive manufacturer of truth'. (Miller, 1993, p. 38)

This chapter is broad in scope, providing an overview of the positivist and post-positivist research relating to eating and training practices among university student-athlete populations. This chapter also provides an overview of theories and research studies constituting dominant Western understandings of the socially constructed athletic body, and provides a more general review of the impact of significant others (coach(s), parent(s)/guardian(s)) on student-athletes' sport participation. Lastly, the chapter provides an introductory analysis of pain literature as it constructs the sporting body. Pain, is normalized as a pleasurable experience within the realm of sport participation and has implications for how student-athletes understand and practice "health".

2.1 Introduction

The relationship between the body, food and exercise is complex and remains poorly understood within the athletic population (Busanich & McGannon, 2010; Busanich, 2011; Busanich, McGannon & Schinke, 2012). As the majority of research in this field has focused on disordered eating literature through a biomedical and psychological lens, limited understanding of athletes' health practices and body experiences have been investigated beyond these biophysical parameters (Busanich & McGannon, 2010). The aforementioned issues surrounding disordered eating have been apparent for several decades; with key findings suggesting that athletes' body experiences are gendered, with females demonstrating a high prevalence and/or risk of disordered

eating than males, especially at higher levels of competition and in sports where success is deemed weight-dependent or determined by subjective judging and/or esthetic appearance (de Bruin, Oudejans, Bakker & Woertman, 2011; Dick, 1991; Kroshus, Goldman, Kubzansky & Austin, 2014; Sundgot-Borgen, 1994; Sundgot-Borgen & Torstveit, 2004; Thompson & Sherman, 1999). Although these findings are strongly influential in both the construction of bodies and sporting cultures, they simplify the interconnections of social and cultural understanding of the body and the construction of gender. These studies focus on prevalence or coping strategies which give little insight into how disordered eating is phenomenologically experienced over time (Papathomas & Lavalley, 2010).

In more recent decades, researchers have begun to explore the ways in which food and exercise practices are negotiated and experienced by elite athletes in the context of social, cultural and gendered discourses (Busanich & McGannon, 2010; Busanich, 2011; Busanich, McGannon, Schinke, 2012; Cosh, Crabb, LeCouteur & Kettler, 2012). The current study illuminates the social, cultural and gendered realities constructed through the everyday experiences of student-athletes. By filling the gaps in the literature and providing a rich and textured understanding of relationships student-athletes development with the body, food and exercise this study is seminal within the Canadian university sport context. My research does not seek to refute or accept the predetermined conclusions of biomedical approaches to exposing athletic populations' relationships with food, rather this study explores and refines the complexity of living as a student-athlete from a sociological perspective.

More readily, bodies conceptualized as machines and technologies of fitness is just one way to view the athletic body. This understanding lays the groundwork, which foreseeably enables such constructions and notions of the utilitarian approaches to body knowledge to be mapped onto the athletic body. Within the following section I utilize the work of Brian Pronger (2002), amongst a selection of other researchers in the sociology discipline to identify how the athletic body is constructed in and through sporting cultures. These scholars utilize different terms to describe the body and the various practices constitutive of bodies, athletes and identities which can be applied to broad understandings of body relations constructed in and through sport.

2.2 The Sociological Body

When one considers the rapid rise of interest in the body, health and fitness within contemporary popular culture the recent social constructivist interest in the three-tiered relationship between the body, food and exercise among elite athletes is perhaps not surprising (Shilling, 2003). As the physically fit body becomes normalized and idealized in modern societies, images of lean, sculpted, muscular and hairless bodies have become dominant. People have come to aspire to an 'idealized' body and the attractiveness, health, longevity and personal security it has come to represent (Pronger, 2002).

Taking advantage of modern scientific knowledge of the technology of physical fitness, an array of techniques has become available for maximizing the body's potential. Over the past three decades, technologies of fitness are best understood as a scientific vision of the body and approach to training that has come to dominate popular culture and the athletic culture of sport. Instead of being a site for a deeper understanding of corporeal pleasure and joy, the body is more often viewed as a machine that is used to achieve

instrumental purpose (Shilling, 2003). As a machine, the body and its constitutive parts must be developed, coordinated, maintained, and fixed to be as productive as possible or repaired when they break down. From a sociological perspective the rational, instrumental approach to the body is not natural but a socially constructed experience that positions the body as needing to be controlled through rationalized and diligent practices of self-surveillance. From this perspective, people accept and seek forms of body assessment and regulation most readily through the use of weight control measures such as diet restriction, exercise, weigh-ins and fitness tests (Pronger, 2002). Pronger further suggests that measureable performance outcomes are most noted and given priority over subjective experiences of bodily pleasure and joy. This approach to the construction of the body aligns with the vision of the athletic body, one that holds the body to a mechanized like existence, stringent dedication to bodily practices of food restriction and dedicated rationality towards fitness regimes. The discipline and control needed to perform in a machine-like way situates student-athletes as willing partners in this type of approach to bodily relations. These instrumental approaches to body awareness are socially constructed and normalized practices maintained in sport and will be discussed and reviewed further within subsequent sections in this literature review.

Modern understandings of the body are predicated on what is thought to be healthy which is largely and loosely based on the way bodies look within popular culture. The omnipresence of these popular representations of the healthy, fit body undoubtedly contextualize the ways in which people read bodies whether they themselves follow exercise and dietary regimes or not (Pronger, 2002). Unfortunately however, the healthy body displayed in popular media images and films is not necessarily a healthy body, but

is often conflated with notions of healthiness. As described by Pronger (2002) as an *intertextual ensemble* (p.145), people evolve their own understandings of healthy and fit in multiple and highly fragmented ways based on the information made available to them. The meanings given to the body in any culture are the foundation for people's ideas and beliefs about sexuality, beauty ideals, body image, fashion, hygiene, health, nutrition, eating, fitness, aging, race, disease, violence and power, and other factors that affect our lives.

In addition, these superficial yet functional views of the body shape cultural relations with the body influencing deep personal feelings such as desire, pleasure, pain, and other sensations that individuals use to assess personal well-being, relationships, and quality of life. Based upon such recognitions, other scholars have proposed the notion that a full understanding of the body, beyond a biophysical perspective, requires one to understand bodies in relation to social and cultural ideologies (Butler, 2004; Cole, 2000; Shilling, 1994). The subjective experience of the body is equally valued in some sociological perspectives and will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

However, first it is important to identify the influence of the connections between consumerism-fitness-body relations. Individuals become consumers of bodily ideals shaping their consumer practices (Moola, Norman, Petherick & Strachan, 2014). As bodies become objects to be shaped and maintained like machines and as biophysical markers of health become readily identified, the body becomes a project requiring attention and work. Through the adoption of such rationalized and normalized practices, the body becomes a *project*. Shilling (2003) described the body project, moreover bodies as 'malleable entities' which may be worked on to fit the designs of the owner. In

contemporary popular culture, body is something that can be controlled and invested in, further maintaining the mind-body distinction that is characteristic of modernism. Thus, healthy bodies can be achieved through diet and exercise; strict disciplinary practices that not only shape an awareness of the physical body but influence the social and relational aspects of body relations. Furthermore, the disciplinary practices normalized within western culture are frequently understood and normalized as the pursuit of the healthy body. The idea of a healthy body is associated with weight and shape over and above other more scientific understandings and emotional aspects of health (Bordo, 1993). In her scholarly review of feminism, western culture and the body, Bordo (1993) suggests that it was in the late nineteenth century that practices of body management became a commonplace middle-class preoccupation, with dietary concern becoming attached to the pursuit of an idealized physical weight and shape. Body management through preoccupation with fat, diet and slenderness quickly became one of the most powerful normalizing mechanisms of our century, insuring the production of self-monitoring and self-disciplining subjectivities. Sensitive to any departure from social norms, habituated practices of self-improvement and self-transformation named to be healthy or productive pursuits rendered bodies complicit in the production of normative ideals. For women, this self-surveillance arose as they developed relationships with their bodies and broader social expectations for female bodies (Bordo, 1993). The following section will more elaborately discuss the gendered body and sport, to develop a more informative understanding of the body of literature surrounding gender as a construct within the sport domain.

2.3 The Gendered Body & Sport

I would be mistaken to talk about bodies as a singular category. Acknowledging the multiple social categories (i.e. race, culture, age, socio-economic status, sexuality, ethnicity, etc.) influencing collective and individual understandings of the body is important. While each social category influences macro and meso understandings of the body, this study will only focus on gender as one variable among many that socially construct the body and influence eating and training relations. To this end, the following section will review literature that discusses the construction of gender, acknowledging valuable research specifically focused on athletic populations.

2.3.1 Hegemonic Femininity & Masculinity

The meanings surrounding the body are profoundly gendered in a way that is linked to both hegemonic femininity and masculinity. Defined by Gillett and White (1992), hegemonic femininity and masculinity refer to the dominant representations of how one should look and act in order to embody culturally defined masculine or feminine roles. Since this definition, it has however become a more common argument by researchers that multiple femininities and masculinities may exist that may be contradictory to the hegemonic roles (Budgeon, 2013; Connell, 1987; 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012), or that there is a continuum of masculine and feminine subjectivities (Butler, 2006). As such, it is suggested by researchers that those individuals who do not meet the traditional hegemonic identities associated with femininity and masculinity are challenging conceptions of what it means to be a man and a woman in today's society, and thus are at risk of becoming "the other" (Krane, 2001; Pronger, 1990). Recent sport and cultural research reveals highly nuanced gender

experiences in a variety of sporting cultures and thus further engages debates about the usefulness of hegemonies as a concept (Baker & Hotek, 2011). There is a continuum of constructions related to masculinity and femininity and one of the contributions of this research project is to uncover the multiple masculinities and femininities constituting student-athletes' sense of identity.

Within literature on sporting cultures, traditional and alternative masculinities have been identified such that the tidy categories of what constitutes gender are made messy as notions of femininity and masculinity overlap and intersect. Research conducted by Baker and Hotek (2011) suggest that scholars need to begin to understand men's sporting behaviour as falling along a continuum from orthodox masculinity to femininity. They argue that athletes enact highly masculine behaviours at the same time that they exhibit feminine behaviour.

2.3.2 Double-Bind Masculinity

The literature that has been published to date has focused on hegemonic masculinity as a crucial concept. In particular, adolescence has been identified as one of the time periods when young men begin to negotiate and explore various forms of masculinity. A study conducted by Norman (2011) critically examined how young men learned to embody masculine subjectivities by taking up available subject positions within a highly gendered culture. Norman (2011) argued that,

Young men are confronted with competing discourses of masculinity where they are simultaneously incited to work on and transform their bodies into culturally recognizable ideals, while at the same time remaining distant and aloof to the size, shape, and appearance of their bodies (p. 430).

Through discussion of male bodies, health, diet and physical activity, it was argued that young men are confronted with competing discourses of masculinity whereby they must eat and exercise to transform their bodies into culturally recognizable masculine figures, while at the same time avoid placing too attention into the appearance of their bodies. This was coined as a double-bind of masculinity. Resolving this double-bind of masculinity, young men use sport to reproduce the privileges of masculinity. Norman demonstrated that young men take up, deploy, and perform discourses of normalcy, healthy active living, heterosexuality, and individualism as they negotiate the tensions around performing and being masculine. Interestingly, boys showed a comfort with expressing, analyzing and comparing bodies – their own and their peers’ – against those ideals depicted by media. Many of those comparisons were drawn from male sport athletes or music performers. In a separate study, Ricciardelli, McCabe and Ridge (2006), explored the construction of the adolescent male body specifically through sport. The findings in this study suggest that many adolescent males use sport performance to make favorable comparisons about their body size. Specifically, the attributes which adolescent males like about their bodies are synonymous with those associated with being successful at sports. The two studies document how young men are open to talking about their bodies in relation to sport and reveal the complexities of learning to be masculine in a culture that interweaves masculine cultural performances into sport performance.

Sport, in the twentieth century, has given men an arena in which to create and reinforce an ideology of male superiority (Bryson, 1987, Kidd, 2013; Messner, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990). Athleticism has become virtually synonymous with masculinity. Sport has long been regarded as a site for the development of masculine behaviours and

has evolved into one of the most important sites of masculinizing practice (Drummond, 2002). Drummond (2002) argues that the centrality of the male body within sport demands more attention due to the perceived role sport plays in the social construction of masculinity in a male's life. The current study provides an additional context in which to understand how young adult men, specifically student-athletes, come to understand their bodies and moreover their health in relation to sport performance. Thus, the current study contributes to the evolving body of literature surrounding masculinity and sport participation.

2.3.3 Masculinity, Injury & Pain

Hegemonic masculinity as it is used within the sport sociology literature draws largely from Connell's notions of masculinity. Connell (2005) suggests masculinity is not a static sense, noting that only a few men will occupy hegemonic masculine positions, and she explains how men will actively engage in acts to challenge the dominant notions of masculinity as they compete for the more hierarchical positions. Hegemony does not mean violence is enacted to assert dominance, although hegemony can be supported by force. What remains key to the production of hegemonic masculinity are the cultural and institutional practices of persuasion that seemingly invite men to strive to occupy subject positions produced through dominant notions of masculinity. Sport is one cultural institution that through its very practices and expectations calls men to occupy specific masculinizing roles that reinforce dominant notions of hegemonic masculinity. Messner (1990) describes the routine existence of pain and injury in male competitive sport when he states,

In many of our most popular sports, the achievement of goals (scoring and winning) is predicated on the successful utilization of violence - that is, these are activities in which the human body is routinely turned into a weapon to be used against other bodies, resulting in pain, serious injury, and even death (p. 203).

Thus, the successful utilization of violence and disregard for health help reinforce notions of masculinity that position male bodies against one another. Other studies have focused on the ways in which men learn to embody masculinity where self-injury is also a violent component of Western notions of masculinity.

For example, Young, White and McTeer (1994) conducted a study examining the centrality of forceful notions of sport in the lives of men, in attempt to identify how pain, the risk of injury, and injury itself have come to be accepted as normal components of sport participation. Through in-depth interviews with Canadian male athletes, researchers explored participants' experiences of injury to show how men learn to disregard risk of physical harm and to normalize pain and disablement as part of the sport experience. The authors concluded that athletes who express pain or remove themselves from competition because of injury run the risk of being stigmatized by peers as less than fully masculine, particularly if the injury is not perceived as serious (i.e. life threatening). Nixon (1992; 1993) suggested that the pain and injury experience of athletes may be best understood within a context of a network of social relationships which may contribute to the willingness of athletes to play hurt or knowingly or unknowingly risk greater pain and, injury, even long term disability. As individuals assume an athletic identity they become conditioned by the sport and inherently the sport culture they operate within, thus succumbing to the 'culture of risk' associated with elite sport participation (Loland,

Skirstad & Waddington, 2006). An athlete's masculinity comes into question when he does not conform to the expectations of a male athlete with regard to pain tolerance. In addition, if he is not prepared to sacrifice his body for the team his dedication to his teammates is questioned and if pain is not tolerated his identity is threatened to be perceived as 'soft' or 'feminine' (Loland, Skirstad & Waddington, 2006).

Within the performance of hegemonic masculinity, bodies are called to continuously act in ways that produce and reproduce ideas about how the male body should act and what it should like. More specifically, Drummond (2005) suggests that many men construct masculinity through doing rather than being. Similarly, Kelly and Hickey (2008) suggested that for athletes, defining the body through what it can do allows it to be strengthened, repaired, and cared for. Thus, it is the continuous need for performativity that enables males to embody a masculine identity that reinforces or limits dominant approaches to masculinity. Dominant body ideals impact men as they do women and these bodily expectations are part of hegemonic masculinity. This was alluded to earlier and needs further unpacking to exemplify how male athletes are also constituted by their bodily performance and ideals.

Although the research related to male body image is sparse in comparison to studies on females and body image, the research that has been conducted has shown that male athletes also use exercise as a tool to mold their bodies toward an ideal masculine figure (Bridel & Rail, 2007; Gillett & White, 1992; Laberge & Albert, 2000). In contrast to body ideals that are linked to emphasized femininity, the ideal male body signifies characteristics that are culturally tied to masculinity, such as strength, power and authority (Gillett & White, 1992; Whitson, 1990). Drummond (2001) described strength,

muscularity and masculinity as a triplex, particularly for young males for whom the *'muscles make the man'* (p. 8). As such, in contrast to the female ideal, the masculine ideal of muscularity is achieved by building the body up rather than trimming the body down. Research has shown that males strive to have a muscular, sculpted body as a way to restore and/or maintain masculine traits (Gillett & White, 1992; Laberge & Albert, 2000). Males who are lacking a large, muscular build or are focused on losing body mass are often feminized in relation to their appearance and/or practices (Gillett & White, 1992). Interestingly however, even in forms of exercise that produce a much leaner male body, such as long distance running, masculinity is still achieved through sporting prowess and the development of a hard body (Abbas, 2004).

Of particular relevance to the current research is a study conducted by Bridel and Rail (2007), focused on de/re constructing the gay male marathon corporeality. Bridel and Rail found that the male distance running body acted as a site of resistance to the hegemonic masculine ideal of muscularity. This article explores the ways in which 12 Canadian gay male marathoners discursively construct their bodies within and beyond the marathon context. Many of the men took pride in their "thin and sleek" bodies. The performance and aesthetic benefits of having an athletic and attractive body shaped other people's response to their bodies. The men themselves simultaneously recognized their bodies as more "feminine", acknowledging the lower social value respectively placed on their bodies both inside and outside of the gay community. Despite the preceding negotiations, the majority of men in the study continued to construct their lean and toned bodies as masculine. In this context, masculinity was defined by the achievement of optimal health, performance and good looks. In the following sections, I will discuss the

literature surrounding the masculinized meanings of food and exercise. Drawing on the previous work focused on performative male bodies, the research draws on those practices and understanding that enable male student-athletes to define their bodies through what it can do, in terms of eating and training regimes.

2.3.4 “Masculinized” Meanings of Food

Historically, an abundance of research exists surrounding the deep connection between women and food across multiple cultures; however, less research has focused on the historical relationship men have had with food (Busanich, 2011). Seminal work related to men and food was conducted by Adams (2003), indicating that men’s eating has been tied to overconsumption and overindulgence, especially of meat, in a way that is linked to hyper-heterosexuality and masculinity. It is the promotion of ‘masculine’ foods, such as meat and potatoes, burgers, and pizza that such heterosexuality and hyper-masculinized diets are reinforced (Busanich, 2011). Research reveals that it is important for the maintenance of dominant masculinity ideals that men remain inferior in their eating habits, cooking and food preparation skills as compared to females (Gough, 2006, 2007; Gough & Conner, 2006; Moss, Moss, Kilbride & Rubinstein, 2007). Additionally, Moss and colleagues (2007) suggested that it was important for the men to prepare their food simply and quickly, via a microwave oven, and out of necessity rather than derive any pleasure from the process of food preparation thus furthering dominant masculine ideals and roles. Another study found that men often reject healthy eating, as the acts of dieting or deprivation in any form (e.g., replacing foods that taste good with healthy food that does not) were feminized and thus positioned as threatening to their masculinity (Gough & Conner, 2006). These findings are likely linked to media discourse that situates

men's cooking and eating habits within a framework of hegemonic masculinity (Moss, et al., 2007). Although these conclusions have yet to be mapped on male athletes, similar connections with food preparation and consumption may be evident in athletic populations, thus this study will fill a dearth of knowledge related to males and eating practices and more specifically male student-athletes' relationships with food and food practices.

Sport culture and dominant notions of gender are important contextual factors that shape male athletes' experiences and require particular attention when attempting to understand how male athletes come to understand their sport participation in relation to health practices. The following section will switch to an analysis of female bodies in relation to masculinizing ideals with a similar connection to issues of performativity. This performance is one that calls women to be fit but not masculine. Like embodied masculinity, the performance of femininity is also tempered with dominant notions of what it means to be a female body, with historical, social and political callings engrained into its existence. These two gendered approaches to masculinity serve to illustrate how gender is understood as a continuum.

2.3.5 Gender & Exercise

Since the dramatic rise in the fitness industry in the early 1980s and the increasing participation of women in a diverse array of sport (Krane, 2001), cultural ideals for female bodies have become even more stringent. The idealized athletic female body is imagined as a lean, taut body with some but not too much musculature (Brumberg, 1997). There is a careful balance between 'lean' and 'toned' rather than defined and bulky (Markula, 1995). Perhaps not surprisingly, this has resulted in physically active females

challenging dominant notions of femininity while also struggling to look feminine (George, 2005; Krane, Stiles-ShIPLEY, Waldron & Michaelnok, 2001; Markula, 2014). Over the last three decades, several studies have recorded women's investment in exercise and the resulting experiences (Markula, 2014). One common finding has been the identification of women's interest in sport but also a concern for achieving, or working to obtain the ever-illusory ideal body shape (Dworkin, 2003; Haravon, 2002; Markula, 1995; 2014).

Markula (1995) makes a significant contribution to this body of literature in her work on the cultural dialogue surrounding the female body image in aerobics. First and foremost the women in this study worried about being thin, and once sufficiently thin, they worked on muscle tone. Some women believed that toned muscle actually would make them look smaller. However, while claiming admiration for a toned body, the women did not desire visible muscularity. Over a decade later, Dworkin (2003) recorded similar responses in her ethnographic study of women's exercising patterns, specifically focused on a gym space, inclusive of aerobic exercise classes. She stated that women in her study wanted to become strong without sporting bulging muscles. Participants regularly engaged in cardiovascular exercise, with a select few women engaged in weight lifting. Both of these studies demonstrated how females choose to engage in exercise practices that allowed them to pursue the dominant social construction of an ideal, feminine body. Markula (1995) concluded that the social construction of the female body is narrow through its depictions of the ideal body as one that is firm, but shapely, fit but sexy, and strong but thin. This idealization pervaded women's exercising and sport culture.

Kolnes (1995) uses the concept of heterosexuality as one of the primarily organizing principles in women's sport. For women involved in sport, the need to look and act feminine is part of the processes that maintain sport as a heterosexual culture. Women who appear to both look and act feminine are privileged over women who may look and act more masculine. Returning to Connell's (1995) approach to gender, for women's sport, notions of emphasized femininity are constantly negotiated. As a reminder, emphasized femininity is considered an exaggerated form of femininity and is the idea that woman must conform to the needs and desires of men. Based on the consequence of nonconformity to this hegemonic femininity in sport, female athletes must go out of their way to show that they can be both athletic while meeting the socially accepted expectations of a 'female' body (Krane, 2001). This leads many sportswomen to emphasize feminine characteristics to avoid prejudice and discrimination (Kolnes, 1995; Krane, 2001). If women are successful and too athletic, the need to overcompensate with traditional feminine markers becomes an act, or a performance, of both being a female and an athlete.

A relevant study that connects with my current project identifies how female college athletes occupy powerful, athletic positions both in their sport and their institution while they also remain connected to dominant forms of femininity. An autoethnographic study conducted by George (2005) explores the negotiations NCAA Division-I female soccer players experience as a result of their sport participation. George argues that despite the ways in which sport allows women to gain control over their bodies, there still remains a culturally produced glass ceiling that exists for female athletes, restricting the amount of musculature that is acceptable. While gaining muscle improved strength and

performance in the sport setting, the participants noted that it informed their relationships with beauty and femininity in ways that made them feel unhappy and unhealthy. These views of the female body are opposing realities as women athletes' continuously challenge ideals related to performance and appearance (George, 2005).

George (2005) further identifies a constant struggle between wanting to train hard for competition, but not wanting to train too hard such that their effort to maintain or strive for the ideal feminine body is not in jeopardy. For example, the athletes in this study expressed that they often resisted heavy weight-lifting, which would make them stronger for their sport, due to their anxiety over having over-developed musculature in their legs. Interestingly, legs have been readily recognized by media representations as a problem area in women (Markula, 1995), thus perhaps perpetuating the anxiety the athletes feel over their leg musculature. Additionally, there was also a co-existing fear of fat that was perpetuated within the team subculture. The competing body ideals that existed for these athletes created a constant negotiation between performance and appearance. The pursuit of the ideal body thus became a source of anxiety and for many women in the study the striving towards performance equally affected the goal of meeting culturally defined feminine images (George, 2005).

Other researchers have demonstrated that muscularity can be experienced in multiple ways and it does not always carry a uniform meaning (Chase, 2008; Mosewich, Vangool, Kowalski & McHugh, 2009). Mosewich et al. (2009) suggest that the meanings of muscles in female athletes vary depending on the context and "range from intimidating, strong, and 'manly' to functional, necessary and desired" (p. 104). Female athletes also resist stereotypical feminine practices: pushing their bodies in the weight

room (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004), taking pride in their muscular or larger physique (Chase, 2008; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004), and participating in more aggressive sports that challenge femininity (Krane, 2001). Women have stated that they refuse to participate in “body talk” around their teammates when the importance of their athletic pursuits is connected to any body-based appearance discussions (Scott-Dixon, 2008). Through this brief review of research it is evident that the tensions between performance and appearance are gendered and well documented in sport culture.

2.3.6 Gender & Body Dissatisfaction

Limited research has investigated men’s embodied experiences of eating and training practices but some psychologically based studies have found that men, similar to many women, do have varying degrees of satisfaction with their bodies. One study suggested that, despite weight and shape being clearly related, men appear to be more interested in shape than weight, whereas women primarily desire a specific weight or alternatively approach exercise as a process for weight loss (Anderson & Di Domenico, 1992). These researchers suggest that such difference can be a product of the difference in male and female ideals. The male ideal is a V-shaped figure with an emphasis placed on large biceps, chest, and shoulders; whereas the female ideal is to be extremely thin, with the emphasis placed on slim hips, bottom, and thighs, perhaps more of an I shaped figure. In this study, it appears that women are more likely to weigh themselves often and to diet frequently in order to lose weight, whereas men are more likely to utilize training practices and to be less reliant on eating practices. These two self-monitoring actions may be shifting in contemporary contexts; men’s relationships with food and food preparation continue to influence how they think about and talk about eating practices in relation to

sport (Burke & Cox, 2009; Busanich & McGannon, 2012; Byrne & McLean, 2001; Drummond, 2002; Gough, 2006).

Exercising continues to figure prominently in women's weight loss regimes. Several other research studies found that women's motivation for exercising was related to weight control and body tone (Furnham, Badmin & Sneade, 2002; George, 2005; McDonald & Thompson, 1992). Weight plays a prominent role in women's relationships with their bodies and health and men have historically been constructed as being concerned with shape over weight.

2.4 Eating Disorders, Disordered Eating & Constructions of the Body

Relationships between performance and appearance have been documented in relation to sport culture. As mentioned previously the association between eating practices—eating disorders and disordered eating—in sport are becoming burgeoning areas of research. Research focused on documenting the incidence of eating disorders in sport is one trajectory of inquiry (Byrne & McLean, 2001; Currie, 2007; Dick, 1991; Garner, Rosen & Barry, 1998), while another line of questioning is emerging around the relationships athletes develop with food (Burke & Cox, 2009; Busanich, 2011; Busanich & McGannon, 2010; Cosh, Crabb, LeCouteur & Kettler, 2012). Busanich (2011) conducted a study focused on looking beyond disordered eating and into the meanings of the body, food and exercise relationship, specifically in distance runners. Her research explores the complex relationship between the body, food, and exercise in male and female distance runners. Her research suggests that, the relationship between gender, eating and the body remains poorly understood as it draws primarily on biomedical and psychological studies. Specifically, literature pertaining to athletes' eating and body

experiences have primarily been conceptualized as pathological and/or linked to individual deficiencies, such as low self-esteem or body image distortion as determined through gender differences (Busanich & McGannon, 2010).

According to Busanich and McGannon (2010), sport researchers have yet to explore gender beyond the level of a categorical variable and have failed to explore the complex ways gender permeates athletes' relationships with their bodies, food and exercise. Busanich (2011) builds on the aforementioned research, suggesting that the full complexity of how the experiences are socially and culturally constructed and the meanings ascribed to certain eating and training practices, have been largely ignored. Other researchers have called for qualitative approaches to interrogate what and who influences athletes' relationships with food to better understand athletes' experiences of disordered eating (Papathomas & Lavalley, 2006; 2010; Petrie & Greenleaf, 2007).

Western cultures have a preoccupation with diet that has historically functioned to normalize ideas about self-discipline and self-control. Bordo (1993), in her seminal analysis of women's bodies and cultural ideologies, suggests that the preoccupation with diet, fat and slenderness is "the most powerful normalizing mechanisms of our century" (p. 186). Given the broader social interest in the body, within sport environments the body figures centrally in performance. It should therefore come as no surprise that athletes monitor and regulate their food and experience commitments. However, what remains relatively unknown is how athletes rationalize their own preoccupation with diet, fat and dominant appearance ideals. Gendered practices of beautification, of which dieting is a beautification practice for many people, are part of the consumer culture focused on disciplining the body to achieve body ideals (Pronger, 2002). The perpetual

conflation of health with beauty reifies ideologies of bodies within western culture. Practices like dieting and exercise are largely associated with body modification projects, but are positioned to be in the pursuit of achieving “good” health (Pronger, 2002).

2.5 Foucault’s Influence on the Study of the Body

When thinking through this notion of learning to practice or take up dominant cultural messages about the body and health, the work of Michel Foucault is useful in analyzing how cultural ideologies about bodies and comportment become normalized. Foucault, the French philosopher, extensively examines the ways in which societies have utilized power relations to guide population and individual behaviour. It is the disciplining and governing of bodies that can be mapped on to sport environments. However, before applying his work to the current study, a brief introduction to his perspective on the body is needed to contextualize how social ideas about bodies emerge. The Foucauldian approach to the body is characterized by a substantive preoccupation with the body and those institutions, which govern the body (Foucault, 1988). It is this epistemological view of the body that gets produced by and within existing institutions through discourse (Shilling, 2003). Discourse can be viewed as “*sets of deep principals incorporating specific grids of meaning which underpin, generate and establish relations between all that can be seen, thought and said*” (Foucault, 1974 as cited in Shilling, 1993, p. 75). At the most general level, Foucault’s work was concerned with mapping the relations that exist between the body and the effects of power on it. Moreover, the mutually constitutive effects of power and bodies are central to many of his theoretical perspectives (Foucault, 1977).

Foucault positioned Western cultural relationships with the body as a project- “the body project” and he understood this to be a rational approach for individuals and societies to exercise discipline over the individual body as well as the population. Individuals, through their subjection to institutional discourses, learn to assume responsibility for their welfare; they are overtly and covertly assigned practices of self-care. Although I note the voluntary nature of the self-care, it is a practice that seemed to be taken up as individuals who are free to choose but the choices provided by the state were guided by dominant ideas and practices related to governing populations. It is through such disciplines that Foucault (1988) identified how the body becomes the *‘object and target of power’*. The body constitutes a link between practice and organization of power. Through the pursuit of an ever-changing, hegemonic ideal, bodies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation and improvement (Foucault, 1988). Foucault defined the subjected and practiced bodies as a production of what he termed ‘disciplinary power’; arguing that it is discipline that created, and continues to create, well-disciplined or *‘docile’* bodies. The docile body can only be achieved through strict regimen of disciplinary acts. Shilling (2003) notes that discipline requires individuals to be conscious or actively concerned about the management and maintenance of their body and in contemporary contexts this disciplined body is also preoccupied with appearance and cultural norms. Normalizing the discipline of the body suggests that bodies either fall within or extend cultural norms. According to Foucault (1988) disciplinary power is a form of power focused on the control and discipline of bodies, exercised fundamentally by means of ‘surveillance’ (Foucault, 1988). The idea of

surveillance, in this context, will be given particular focus in a latter paragraph within this section.

Foucault's (1988) concept of governmentality can also be useful when deconstructing the athletic body. Foucault's work recognized power not only in terms of hierarchical, top-down power of the state, but also the ways in which social control evolved such that individuals seemed to make choices that benefited the state. Knowledge became a source of power. As dominant discourses become more commonplace social control circulates such that individuals learn to govern themselves. Through practices of surveillance, the prison system, the medical professions and schooling process become sites where bodies are rendered docile; these bodies are taught the importance of being productive. One of the useful examples to consider in relation to this project is Foucault's notion of the 'ideal' soldier in the seventeenth century. The description of the ideal soldier was that of a male, who was easily recognizable in body and action, and symbolized a high authority of honor (Foucault, 1974). The soldier portrayed an idealized norm of conduct, for example, the way a proper soldier ideally should walk, stand, march, and so forth. This ideal established the normative body of which individuals were rewarded or punished for conforming to or deviating from. The types of bodies produced in sport strongly connect to the idealized body Foucault describes in his work. The athletic, docile body can only be achieved through strict regimen of disciplinary acts. The athletic body, through its visibility, can be a conforming or deviating symbol of athletes' sport participation.

Another useful concept applied in this research is Foucault's (1977) seminal work in relation to the panopticon. The panopticon is a prison structure that renders prisoners

self-monitoring (Foucault, 1977). In general, the central observatory allowed guards to constantly monitor the inmates. Knowing that they were always under scrutiny the inmates began to monitor their own actions and behaviors – to self-monitor. This is the parallel with the elite athlete. Thus, the panopticon offers a useful way of understanding the mechanisms that inculcate athletes to diligently subject, transform and impress their bodies to disciplinary techniques of repetition and intention. The notion of panopticon, in and of itself, operates within sport as an optic of disciplinary power; a mechanism of surveillance and discipline, which instates a conscious awareness and visibility, that renders athletes docile bodies. It becomes easy to see how parallels can be drawn between the disciplining of a soldier and the disciplining of an athlete through processes of surveillance and self-governance. There is docility in athletic training that materializes as a result of subjection to detailed control of time, space and modality of movement, which may be controlled by a more formidable coach. Athletes, by nature of the performance of sport are under constant surveillance; hence they come to monitor themselves, to regulate their activities based upon this gaze and the expectations inherent in it. In high performance sport, panopticism serves as a mechanism to normalize and homogenize athletes according to the plans of the coach and institutional standards of the sport culture itself (Shogan, 1999).

2.6 Sport: An Optic for Modern Disciplinary Power

Foucault's understandings of the workings of disciplinary power and the political investment in the body can be best exemplified in the context of sport. Despite the fact that high-performance sport competitions now occur in a post-modern context, the making of high-performance athletes is still essentially a modern project (Shogan, 1999).

Sport functions as a modern disciplinary power (Shogan, 1999); existing as a site for the production of high-performance athletes through the use of disciplinary techniques that control or ‘*discipline*’ athletes in order to produce the desired athletic skills. Through manipulation of space, the organization of time, and the use of graduated, repetitive and systematized disciplinary techniques, bodies become embedded with habituated gestures, procedures and values of the sport discipline. It is these technologies that control and ‘discipline’ athletes resulting in specific athletic skills constitutive high-performance sport. Shogan (1999) states: “The discipline of high-performance sport produces a set of knowledges about ‘the athlete’, who is then controlled and shaped by these knowledges in a constant pressure to conform to a standard of high performance” (p. 10).

Focused on the socially constructed athletic body, Shogan (1999) examined the making of high-performance athletes in modern sport and the ways in which diversity within and among athletes disrupts the potential for modern power to consume athletes’ lives. She describes the ‘making’ of high-performance athletes as a process by which – “through the subjection to elaborate and minutely detailed organization of their movements - powerful athletes are made or produced” (p. 15). It is through such ‘making’ that the athletic body becomes an exemplary docile body.

2.6.1 The Athletic Body

The performative expectation of athletes reflects Foucault’s notion of the docile body as the culture of sport calls athletes to be highly disciplined, regulated and normalized bodies within a system that consistently requires the body to push the very boundaries the institution of sport is constructed within. Much like the general population who is instructed on how to take up consumer practices related to working to achieve the

ideal body shape and size, athletes have to become consumers of bodily practices, restrictions and excesses. As a population who focuses on their body's performance, elite athletes continuously monitor and assess their bodily regimes to achieve their goals or expectations; such monitoring is enabled through the use of measurable performance outcomes (Shogan, 1999). For example, the ability to endure pain is used as a marker of a disciplined body; as well bodies that are starved of calories to reduce body fat are described as fit and healthy in sporting contexts (Robinson, 2002).

High-performance sport requires conformity to technologies that produce skill and these skills require repetitive, detailed training, and automatic performance. For some people, athletes may appear to be 'dupes' controlled by a more powerful coach (Shogan, 1999). However, athletes are a resource for coaches, thus modern athletes face incredible pressures to perform for themselves and their coaches. In being treated as a performative resource, the contemporary sporting body is defined increasingly on the basis of discipline, toughness and achievement. In terms of discipline and conformity, athletes increasingly deliberate an unprecedented amount of attention into the personal and social construction of an 'athletic' body; a body 'made' through subjection to limitless boundaries. In an effort to produce skilled, disciplined bodies, athletes subject their bodies to repetitive and meticulous training.

2.6.2 Weight Regulation & Body Modification

Surveillance of athletes' bodies is commonplace in sport environments, despite evidence that athletes' are at a higher risk of developing disordered eating than non-athletes (Byrne & McLean, 2001; Cosh, Crabb, LeCouteur & Kettler, 2012; Garner, Rosen & Barry, 1998; Sundgot-Borgen, 1993; Sundgot-Borgen & Torstveit, 2004).

Particularly, research surrounding strict eating and training regimes has focused on combat sports as these sports readily require athletes to meet a weight target to qualify for their event. Burke and Cox (2009) suggest that a successful approach to making weight requires effort over the entire year including the preseason, season, postseason, and off-season. Thus, the weight concerns and weight-making experiences of combat athletes have an impact on their everyday nutritional practices. As the authors note, the need to make weight in many combat sports dominates the nutritional interests of athletes and coaches. Within the sport culture of weight-related sports the common vernacular is to talk about cutting weight or making weight. Research surrounding nutrition in combat sports appears diverse with literature that both supports and refutes the claim that dietary practices utilized by combat sport athletes are simply normalized in the sport culture. As the combination of extensive weight loss and inadequate nutritional strategies used to lose weight rapidly for competition in weight-category sports may negatively affect athletic performance and health (Pettersson, Ekstrom & Berg, 2013), it is important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of elite combat-sport athletes reasoning for practices of weight regulation. As a result, researchers have continued to examine the practices of weight regulation among elite athletes in combat sports.

Burke and Cox (2009) draw attention to the ‘science of sports nutrition’ as becoming so sophisticated that specific eating strategies are now developed to suit not only each combat sport, but even each type of competition or workout undertaken by the athlete. They suggest that supporting the fuel and nutrient needs of training will allow the athlete to train hard, recover quickly between sessions, maintain health, and reduce the risk of injury. As mentioned in an earlier section, research has suggested that despite

weight and shape being clearly related, men appear more interested in shape than weight, whereas women more primarily desire weight loss. However, such research must be more thoroughly investigated to understand how such negotiations occur among elite athletes, particularly combat sport athletes.

Weight regulation has been suggested to help elite athletes develop a feeling of belonging to the specific sport culture and assists in the formation of a sport identity by influencing one's own perception and comprehension of oneself as an athlete, as well as how one is perceived by others (Pettersson, Ekstrom & Berg, 2013). Additionally, weight regulation provides a means for athletes to reduce feelings of uncertainty (Pettersson, Ekstrom & Berg, 2013). Thus, the regulation of weight through dietary means allows athletes to gain complete control over something in times of tension and distress. There are challenges to good nutrition practices including the need to manipulate food and fluid intake to meet weight goals. Additionally, maintaining strict nutritional practices may be more difficult for athletes due to the limited ability to find access to suitable supplies in the competition environment or to have access to specific nutritional foods when traveling away from home (Burke & Cox, 2009). Whether or not weight regulation mediates a self-image of being a 'real' athlete or provides a mental advantage to the pre-competition preparation, body weight regulation is not uncommon among elite athletes' practices and appears commonplace and normalized in sporting environments.

In recent decades, discussion of body modification through running as a primary participatory motivation and outcome has surfaced. The idea of running as a practice of body modification has been attributed to contemporary representations of healthy bodies propagated through media images and texts. In this context, body modification has been

defined as the desire to lose weight, to change musculature and/or shape, or to become more ‘physically attractive’ (Major, 2001; Smith, 2000; van Ingen, 2004). Abbas (2004) has proposed that though running has often been promoted as an accessible activity that contributes to the pursuit of a “healthy lifestyle,” there is concurrently a visual representation of a dominant body type in running texts that shapes participants’ expectations and pursuits. Depictions of the distance-running body are often presenting it as lean, muscular, stereotypically masculine, and youthful. According to Abbas (2003), this is a privileged body type that subordinates aging and/or female bodies—bodies that has become more prevalent in the running community. Johns and Johns (2000) add that visual representations of certain bodies also reproduce a body type that is often linked with distance running ‘success’.

In sport, researchers conclude that the drive for thinness among female athletes primarily results from the belief that achieving a lower weight and lower percentage of body fat will enhance performance particularly in endurance sports (Johnson, Powers & Dick, 1995). Although not a sport that requires extreme thinness, many swimmers and coaches believe that the slimmer or leaner a competitive swimmer is, the better s/he will perform (Drummer, Rosen, Heusner, Roberts & Counsilman, 1987). Similar to the section previously noting that combat sports focus on weight-related practices for performance, other sport cultures seem to emphasize the notion that lean bodies will enhance performance. This research provides a glimpse into the lives of student-athletes as they pursue their favored sport at an elite level while also attempting to remain healthy for competitive and academic purposes.

2.7 Influencing Factors in Student-Athletes Lives

2.7.1 Coach-Athlete Relationship

The coach-athlete relationship is a crucial component of university sport participation. Researchers note that coaches play an integral part in the lives of athletes, taking on multiple roles in their relationships with athletes (Johns & Johns, 2000). Although one would not typically go so far as to say that coaches directly encourage athletes to engage in potentially harmful eating practices or to use pathogenic weight control methods, several studies have demonstrated that the coach can be a risk factor for the development of eating disorders because of strong pressure to keep body weight low or because of the impact of his/her coaching style (Sundgot-Borgen, 1994; Thompson & Sherman, 1999). Despite such considerations, the complexity inherent in the coach-athlete relationship continues to be under researched and under appreciated by scholars, coach educators and practitioners (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003; Saury & Durand, 1998). This study contributes to this gap in knowledge by examining how the attitudes, knowledge and other characteristics of coaches influence athlete's ideas about health and healthy practices.

The current study does extensively examine this relationship by identifying how the role the coach shapes an athlete's interpretation of sport culture and thus impacts an athlete's relationships and ideas of health. Traditionally, coaches set workloads, establish ways of behaving, observe limitations and act as authorities about sport and other disciplinary practices for athletes to comply with. Thus, the privileged position of the coach is defined by their claims of expertise, technical knowledge and an access to

limited resources like knowledge of the sport that are deployed as a disciplinary forms of power (Johns & Johns, 2000).

In recent decades, the traditional power-dominated coach-athlete relationship has been the subject of some critical scrutiny (Birrell & Cole, 1994). Other research has opened up the doors to re-consider the meaning of the *'discourse of expertise'*. The *'discourse of expertise'*, within a culture of conformity, leads to privileged positions for coaches (Johns & Johns, 2000). Through this combine notion of expertise and privilege, Johns and Johns (2002) suggest unquestioned, compliant and dependent athletic identities form. From this understanding, the knowledge power relationship between coach-athlete can be key in shaping the type of relationship an athlete develops with his or her body. Limited research has sought to learn from athletes, while they are still engaged in their specific sport participation, how their interactions with their coaches influence their daily training or eating practices. This study contributes to this dearth of knowledge.

2.7.2 Parent-Athlete Relationship

The impact of parental commitment to their child's sport and sport career development has been documented within a number of research studies, focused predominately on adolescent athletes. Across research studies, emotional support and role modelling have been positively related to both enjoyment and participation level in sport (Frederick & Eccles, 2005). Additionally, paying registration fees, purchasing equipment, providing transportation, and attendance at games and/or practices are often positively interpreted (Stein & Raedeke, 1999). In contrast, negative outcomes include excess amounts of pressure and high parental expectations. Coakley (1992) suggested that as a parent's level and intensity of involvement in their child's sport increases children tend to

report feeling trapped and experience sport burnout. Stroebel (2006) suggests that the positive and negative effects associated with sport do not result from participation per se but from the nature of the sport experience. Rather, it has frequently been shown that an important feature in determining the nature of the experiences is the quality of adult leadership (Byrne, 1993).

Despite the growing body of literature focused on adolescent athletes, an extensive review of literature reveals negligible research on university-aged student athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s) involvement. Furthermore, little research has been conducted to understand how the aforementioned research findings translate at the university level. The current study seeks to uncover the athlete's subjective evaluation of their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) involvement. This research does not focus on either the positive or negative outcomes of parental involvement in their children's sport, rather based on the literature reviewed, it provides space for student-athletes to talk about their perceptions of their parent/guardian involvement in order to gain greater insight into the contextual factors influencing the young adults participating in this study.

2.8 Culture of Risk

The final subsection to consider in this literature review is the culture of risk. Sport is not without its risks. Pain and injury have a direct impact on the bodies of individuals involved in sporting practices. As a result, the demands of the sporting culture work upon athletes in a way that make them willing to subject their bodies to injury and pain; as such elements are frequently thought to be essential ingredients of an elite athlete's sport participation. Within the masculinized sport culture, there are socially constructed ideals that equate practices of playing through pain and taking risks with

qualities like commitment, reliability and character (Drummond, 2001; Loland, Skirstad & Waddington, 2006). Within earlier sections of the literature review, research studies outlining the construction of hegemonic masculinity presented the notion of the socially constructed understanding of the body and its connection to injury and pain. With limited research related to females' responses to injury and pain in sport, my project seeks to explore how both genders related to pain and injury during university sport participation. Shilling (2003) described pain as a form of bodily capital, a bearer of symbolic value. Such a description of pain, resonating in the form of muscular discomfort and exhaustion, signifies improvement within the sport culture. It is through such pain that athletes achieve an internalized gain of superiority and efficacy. The current study takes into context the notion of pain as being pleasurable.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter presents a diverse body of literature integral to the foundation of the current study. A review of literature related to the social construction of bodies and the relationship developed with the body through food, training and sport is highlighted. I have included a broad analysis of research relating to eating and training practices, specifically focusing on student-athlete populations where research is available. Additionally, the gendered experience of athletes— notions of emphasized masculinity and femininity, in relation to their bodies, food and exercise, is reviewed. This chapter draws attention to the impact of significant others—coaches and parents—in relation to student-athletes sport participation. In addition, there is a preliminary introduction to the cultures of risk and notions of pain and pleasure as these are constitutive elements of sport culture in contemporary settings. Upon reviewing these bodies of literature this

project extends research examining Canadian student-athletes' understandings of health through a qualitative lens.

Chapter 3: Methodology

'It is the array of epistemological, theoretical, and methodological choices made by qualitative researchers that sets qualitative research apart as a particular and fruitful way of understanding social phenomena'. (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004, p. 1)

This chapter provides a methodological underpinning of qualitative research and outlines the methods employed in this research study. An extensive methodological rationale is described, along with a description of the research design, participants and setting, data analysis, ethical considerations and reflexivity in the current study.

3.1 Methodological Rationale

Based upon an extensive examination of literature in the field, it is evident that there is a lack of qualitative research exploring student-athletes knowledge and practices of eating and training for health and/or performance reasons. Many studies examining the relationships between athletes and eating, athletes and training, and coach/parents' and athletes, have used quantitative or positivist approaches to research. Surveys and questionnaires have dominated the minimal amount of research documenting the prevalence of disordered eating and weight-control practices in athletes.

Researchers have called for qualitative approaches to further explicate the influences and meanings not yet considered in relation to the complex factors influencing athletes' participation in sport (Paphomas & Lavalley, 2006, 2010; Petrie & Greenleaf, 2007). One way to gain access to the complex meanings surrounding the body, food and exercise, and acquire greater insight into how active individuals experience such meanings, is to elicit personal stories (Smith, 2010; Smith & Sparkes, 2008; 2009).

Scholars, from a post-positivist position, agree that stories act as a medium through which individuals come to know their world and derive meaning, providing a glimpse into the social cultural and historical landscape as well as the process of individual meaning-making (Riessman, 2008; Smith, 2010; Smith & Sparkes, 2009). Through the use of qualitative measures, including focus groups and in-depth, semi-structured interviews, I document how the athletic body is socially constituted in relation to social institutions and the discursive practices of health that have not yet been uncovered in relation to the student-athlete population.

3.2 Research Design

The diverse and elaborate nature of qualitative research gave this research study a distinct edge to understanding the social phenomena and reality of sport cultures and their relationship to university athletes' health practices and athletic participation. Research was carried out by means of four focus groups, involving four to five participants each. Two focus groups included participants involved in individual sports, including cross-country running, swimming and wrestling, and the other included participants involved in team sports, including basketball, soccer and volleyball. In addition, follow-up one-on-one, in-depth semi-structured interviews were completed with four of the focus group participants.

Using two forms of qualitative approaches aided in providing rich insights into the student-athletes lives as they shared narratives with fellow student-athletes and in a more personal setting during interviews. As a diversified field, qualitative research has the ability to generate rich, detailed data that enables us to make sense of reality, describe the

social world and social relations and develop theoretical interpretations to further our understanding and knowledge (Petherick, 2008).

3.3 Participants

A convenience sample of seventeen student-athletes from Memorial University 2010-2011 varsity athletes' population participated in this study. All participants were current university student-athletes, varying from first to fourth year of athletic eligibility. Participants were representative of all varsity sports offered at Memorial University including individual sports: cross-country running, swimming and wrestling; and team sports: basketball, soccer and volleyball. Of the seventeen participants involved in the study, eight female and nine male student-athletes volunteered to participate.

3.4 Setting

This study took place at Memorial University. The institution is a member in the Association of Atlantic Universities, and located within the Atlantic provinces of Canada. As an eligible representative, the institution is an established member of the Atlantic University Sport (AUS) Association, as an affiliate of the Canadian Interuniversity Sport. Within the institution, Memorial Athletics is a Division of the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation. It supports twelve varsity teams in six sports previously mentioned. In addition to these teams, some Memorial students have formalized sport teams that are self-funded. These programs are referred to as club sport programs and many of these teams compete at a competitive level. Currently Memorial has teams in curling (men's and women's), cheerleading and rowing that compete under the club sport umbrella. For the purpose of this study, only the twelve varsity teams have been explored.

Athletics has been a part of Memorial University for over five decades, playing an important role in fostering an identity for the initial institution – Memorial University College (MUC). According to Dr. A.C. Hunter, former college vice-president, sports helped the first generations of students to build the collegiality that characterized the institution. During the college years, students pursued various athletic endeavours in the St. John’s area, competing against other local teams, which continued into the university era. In the early 1950’s, MUN’s former “Beothuks” began competing against other Canadian university teams, which was later to be renamed the “Sea-Hawks”.

3.4.1 Travel

Each Atlantic University Athletic Department must abide by and uphold athletic regulations. Individual athletic departments determine the allocation of funds to support their programs and teams; however, the budgetary circumstances of each athletic department are influenced by the university’s budget along with the Canadian Intercollegiate Sport organization. Based upon the budgetary guidelines set by Memorial’s athletic department, team coaches determine travel opportunities for student-athletes. For individual and team sports, coaches have the freedom to decide which student-athletes will travel based on a series of criteria. This becomes significant to this study as the opportunity to travel and compete informs how student-athletes view their physical performance and participation, in addition to the effects this process has on their academic commitments.

3.5 Recruitment & Data Collection

After a written submission was approved by the athletic director, Michelle Healey, it was then circulated to varsity coaches. Upon receiving the support of her coaching staff

the athletic director approved the recruitment process. Initially a formal recruitment letter was provided to all varsity coaches to be shared with their athletes through email. As all teams were in the off-season, the coaches of each team were asked to contact their athletes through email to provide them with the textual description of the research as shown in Appendix E. Those who replied to my indicating that they wished to learn more about the study were contacted by email with a list of available time slots, and focus group scheduling began. There was one exception to this process. The women's varsity basketball team was contacted in person by me during a team meeting. The coach was not present but it was suggested that meeting the team would be more helpful in recruiting participants.

All student-athletes were provided with a verbal and textual description of the research study. Sufficient time was given to the participants to read the information given, as well as to ask any questions that they might have concerning the study. After all questions were answered, and all information regarding the study was completely understood, a consent form was provided to each participant. Two copies of the informed consent were signed by both the participant and the researcher; one copy for the participant and one copy for the researcher. This allowed individuals interested to remain anonymous.

Before beginning each focus group, participants were introduced to one another in a comfortable and pleasant manner and environment. Information about confidentiality related to participant's comments was introduced at this time. Participants were provided with snacks and beverages to ensure a relaxed environment was established. Following verbal synopsis of the research, a reasonable amount of time was allotted to participants

to read and complete the consent form. All consent forms were witnessed by the primary researcher to indicate that the study had been explained competently, that questions and answers had been invited and that there was belief that all participants fully understood what was involved in being in the study, any potential risks for the study and that he/she had freely chosen to be in the study.

Upon completion of the consent form, each focus group participant was asked to provide specific demographic information; year of eligibility, sport position, and a Y or N to indicate whether they wished to participate in the follow-up interviews. Wrestlers were asked to indicate their weight class as an alternative to sport position. All participants were asked to individually create a pseudonym.

The focus groups began with several broad questions to start a free flow of discussion among participants. Typically, each individual in the focus group took a turn to respond to the first question; providing short, concise responses. Upon directing their response to the researcher, they would visually and/or verbally communicate to a fellow participant that it was their turn to respond. The interactions between participants seemed to establish an environment where some rapport with each other emerged. As the questions became more complex, participants' comments began to shift the dynamics of the group such that participants began talking when they felt comfortable sharing responses rather than waiting in sequential order to respond to the questions posed. Story-telling and joking were commonly used by participants. Focus groups lasted approximately ninety minutes; or until all topics identified in the focus group guide were adequately discussed. The discussions were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

An ethical application of this project was approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and was applauded by the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation ethics policy. The process of obtaining participant consent began when interested participants were given a verbal synopsis of the purpose of the study, the procedure and their affiliated involvement. The potential harms and benefits related to their participation were outlined. The anonymous nature of transcribed data was affirmed, as well as the uncertainty of confidentiality associated with focus groups as an approach to research.

Although the study was proposed to have minimal harms, all participants involved in this study were only requested to share information they felt comfortable disclosing. As the focus group and interview questions concentrated on asking student-athletes to reflect on their health practices which may reveal personal responses or practices that may require the assistance of a trained health counselor, all participants were informed of their complete access to the counseling services available at Memorial University's Counseling Centre (UC-5000). A detailed brochure of the University Counseling Centre services was given to each participant upon completion of the consent form.

Participants were informed that anonymity could not be guaranteed during the focus group discussions, but participants were informed to choose a pseudonym to support anonymity in the research. Prior to each focus group conductance all participants were required to consent to complete privacy and confidentiality of all information disclosed in the sessions. All participants were strongly encouraged to respect the confidentiality of other focus group members. However, due to the inability to guarantee

that other participants in the research would follow such protocols, participants were asked to keep this in mind when responding to questions as it is possible that some of the information disclosed in the focus group discussions may be used outside of the group format.

Upon receiving informed consent from all participants, it was clearly communicated to individuals that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that resignation from the study at any time was possible without penalty. In addition, participants were made aware that at any point throughout the research process, they could request that the information provided by them not be used. Participants were informed that all in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups would be audio-recorded, however if they declined the complete audio-recording of the interview, their participation would cease. However, participants were told that they were free to ask the recording to cease, if they choose to share information during an interview session they did not wish recorded.

Participants were informed that their identity would not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons unless there were legal reasons to contact others; only the primary researcher and supervisor/advisor would have access to the research materials, which would be kept in a secure location. Any reference to the identity of the participants that would compromise their anonymity would be removed or disguised prior to the preparation of the research reports and publications. Participants would be addressed verbally and textually as their pseudonyms. While all ethical protocols were upheld, my unique position as a researcher, graduate student and former student-athlete requires further interrogation. I was aware of the power dynamic and ethical responsibility I held

as a former student-athlete collecting data within a population of varsity athletes, some of whom I knew more than others. I will discuss this ethical issue in a following section on the reflexivity.

3.7 Data Analysis

Initial analysis consisted of developing general themes which were recurring throughout and across focus group discussions. Transcripts were reviewed specifically for themes explicit to the focus group questions, and research objectives. Initial focus group discussion analysis promoted familiarity, as outlined in Powney (1988), to the way research participants habitually talk, and to the particular idioms, terminology and vocabulary used by the studied population. Similarly, elicited themes emerging from the data were combined to provide a contextualized understanding of the ‘lived experience’ of participants as a form of meaning production.

The selection of interview participants proceeded initial focus group discussion analysis. Participants were elected based on four criteria; equal representation from genders, equal representation of team and individual sport athletes, representation of participants who provided narratives illustrating dedication and investment to their sport, and those participants which agreed to participate in the interview phase of the research process. Selected participants were contacted by email with a list of available time slots, and scheduling was done in this manner. Individual interviews began by discussing specific pre-determined questions for all interview participants. After the schedule of questions was completed, questions pertaining to each individual’s focus group discussions were used to probe for further clarification of group discussions. Interview questions were developed after an initial analysis of the language participants used in the

focus group or how they individually commented or did not comment on topics discussed in the focus groups. Interviews lasted approximately one hour; or until all topics were adequately discussed. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Interview transcripts were analyzed thematically by cross-referencing themes with those exposed from focus group discussions. Data analysis was conducted following each interview. Complementary to focus group discussions, interviews provided more information to use in the deconstruction of ideas related to health, health practices and athletic participation. Using discourse analysis, the interview transcripts highlighted the choices individuals make as they talk about specific topics. Edley (2001) provides insight into how language works within discourse by stating,

A language culture may supply a whole range of ways of talking about or constructing an object or event, and speakers are therefore bound to make choices. However, the options aren't always equal. Some constructions or formulations will be more available than others. They will be easier to say (p. 190).

In analyzing the interview and focus group transcripts I placed emphasis on capturing the patterns of language use, trying to determine if there were any regularities or irregularities of meaning, to reveal how participants take up, resist and challenge specific discourses associated with health, health practices and athletic participation. Discourse analysis provides a framework to explore how meaning of health, in this study, affect student-athletes' lives both in the ways they use language to communicate their ideas of health but also in relation to how they relate to their bodies. I should note that member checking

occurred in both the focus groups and individual interviews. Initial codes were determined by myself, in relation to the literature and studies reviewed in the preparation of the research. After this preliminary analysis through discussions with my supervisor/advisor codes were collapsed or expanded to highlight the mean-making processes student-athletes undergo in relation to health and athletic performance. In these discussions key themes emerged upon discourse analysis.

3.8 Reflexivity

Qualitative research is interpretive in nature and the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. In order to develop skills as an interviewer, I enrolled in two courses related to research methods: one based in epistemological inquiry and the other focused on developing qualitative data collection skills. I also completed a pilot focus group and interview to hone my interviewing skills and establish the practicability of the questions prior to conducting this project. I believe such preparation allowed me to become confident in my interviewing ability and allowed me to consider my role in this research study.

The aim of the study was not to force the participants into regurgitating specific responses based on my presumption or assumptions, but I wanted to ask questions to allow participants to relay their own thoughts, experiences and insights. Still, it is impossible to set aside prejudgments and experiences, and therefore, my personal characteristics bring importance to this study. Rather than eliminate my influence on the study and its participants, my goal was to initially understand my presence and position through self-reflection (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). As stated by Parker (1999), “when we

interpret and reinterpret a social issue, we are always bringing ourselves into the picture” (p. 84).

I believe my position as a former student-athlete both facilitated and constrained my interactions and relationships in various aspects of my study. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that my gender and new position as a graduate student may have had an influence on participant responses. The ontological and methodological values I hold inform my approach to the research topic; shaping why I became interested in the topic and how I choose to study the subject matter. I understood my position as a researcher as one related to participants; recognizing that the interaction between the researcher and participants is a complex enterprise of interpretative moments. I envisioned myself as an active participant in the research; and in doing so, considered my subjective being as a vital consideration throughout the research. Through a reflective critical consciousness, my accountability as a producer as well as consumer of knowledge was continually challenged. Throughout the study, I continually kept a journal to document my thoughts, memos, etc. This allowed me to document the reflective components I encountered throughout the conductance of the study.

Within the focus group and interview phases, I sometimes shared experiences with participants in a way to engage the group or people in further discussion and in another way to connect with comments being made. Perhaps not surprisingly, some participants assumed that I could relate to their narratives. They would comment and say “like you know”. To which I would add to or further question their statements. According to Creswell (2009), researchers should consider their own biases, values, reactivity, and judgments which influence the validity of the data collection and conclusions. With this

in mind, I deliberately conducted the study with flexibility and open-mindedness, recognizing my position within the research and applying such recognition to my data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings & Discussion (Body Fascism)

The rationalization of modern elite sport has resulted in the emergence of an empirical analytical paradigm in which the discourse of performance and scientism has led to the advancement of productivity, efficiency, prediction and accountability.

(Johns, 1996, p. 116).

As previously stated in the methodology chapter, a convenience sample of seventeen student-athletes from Memorial University of Newfoundland's 2010-2011 roster participated in this study. Student-athletes varied in year of eligibility for athletic participation from first to fifth year and were enrolled in various programs of study. Participants were representative of all varsity sports offered at Memorial University inclusive of individual sports: cross-country running, swimming and wrestling; and team sports: basketball, soccer and volleyball. Of the seventeen participants involved in the study, there were eight female and nine male participants. Research was carried out by means of four focus groups, involving four to five participants each. Two focus groups included participants involved in individual sports, including cross-country running, swimming and wrestling, and the other two focus groups included participants involved in team sports, including basketball, soccer and volleyball. In addition, follow-up in-depth semi-structured interviews were completed with four of the focus group participants.

The next three chapters contain the findings from this research project and are simultaneously analysed in relation to key themes generated from the voices of student-athletes in relation to the theory and framework supporting this thesis. Chapter 4 focuses on issues of body fascism and draws upon a Foucauldian framework. Chapter 5 focuses on critically examining the coach/athlete relationship framed by Foucault's notion of

panopticism as an optic of disciplinary power. The chapter also focuses on the student-athlete's perceived influence/role of their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and explores the utility of sport as a tool to rationalize specific health practices, focused on eating and training, among wrestlers. Chapter Six, addresses issues of pain, that are normalized in sport, along with the pleasure that is derived from restrictive practices or training.

4.1 Introduction

There is a plethora of academic literature theorizing about how women, in the general population, become more concerned with body image than men and are more likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies (Sundgot-Borgen, 1993; Sundgot-Boren & Torstveit, 2004). Within sport cultures, female athletes have been positioned as a population consumed with the 'ideal' athletic form; thus, research in sport predominantly focuses on the female athlete's body. With notable exceptions (Drummond, 2001 or 2002; Atkinson & Kehler, 2010; Norman, 2011) there is less information about male athletes' and their relationship with body image. Based on such conclusions and the limited information focused on this population, male athletes' relationships to body image in sport is an area explored in this study.

I begin with a focus on male student-athletes because they openly discussed being concerned with achieving a particular body shape and size, which seemed to be beyond having a body to achieve success in their respective sport performances. Men may have always had this concern; however my research suggests that today's men are willing to discuss their bodies in relation to the functionality of their body in addition to the aesthetic qualities of their body. As a society, strength, courage, dominance and certain forms of aggression characterize the common ways 'we' identify masculinity. This

common view of masculinity is foreseen to necessitate silencing of body anxieties, in attempts to reaffirm their masculinity (Atkinson & Kehler, 2010). The male participants' narratives in the current study suggest that competing discourses of masculinity are continuously negotiated as they are incited to work on and transform their bodies into culturally recognizable ideals, while at the same time remaining distant and detached to the size, shape, and appearance of their bodies.

The male student-athletes in this study continually negotiate their practices, taking up, resisting and performing discourses that constitute the previously identified normative ideals of masculinity (i.e. strength, courage and dominance). John (a second year swimmer) is confronted with competing discourses of masculinity daily. In an attempt to reaffirm his masculinity, he talks about his body as not able to get too 'heavy' in order to benefit his performance. He states,

There is definitely an ideal shape and ahh; you don't want to be too heavy when you're in the top of your season. You want to be in good shape, right. So, it's obviously going to affect you... If you're kind of heavy in swimming it's not going to benefit you. Like, the ideal [referring to the ideal body for swimming] is tall and lean, so. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

The ideologies surrounding the transformation of male bodies in relation to culturally and recognizable ideals are reaffirmed by Norman's (2011) study. Although his research investigated how young men actively fashion embodied masculine subjectivities by taking up available subject positions within discourse, this research reinforces the notion of *double-bind masculinity* established within his research. The male student-athletes within the current study are confronted with competing discourses of masculinity daily,

thus they utilize specific eating and training practices to reproduce normative ideas about the masculine body. While working on their masculine figure the male student-athletes upheld but also challenged dominant masculine ideas of what is expected from males when they talk about their bodies. In support of the double-bind masculinity introduced by Norman (2011), the athletes within the current study also take up a unique way of talking about their body shape, size and appearance. In general, when making reference to their body shape and size, as lean, muscular, solid, and so forth, the student-athletes spoke about the body they needed to participate in their sport successfully. They packaged their bodily descriptions within the sporting context and sporting body.

Additionally, in line with the young men in Norman's study, the student-athletes in the current study perform discourses of normalcy; taking up dominant ideas about healthy active living. Specifically, living within this double-bind masculinity highlights both the privilege and the challenge of being a male student-athlete. In one focus group, male athletes (representing soccer, volleyball and basketball) talked about doing things with the 'guys', referring to training necessities such as weight lifting. There was a sense of celebration of the masculine practice of weight lifting that was inferred from these athletes. The male volleyball players in particular used rugby training, a stereotypically more masculine sport, as a way to develop their bodies and celebrate masculine training practices. Similarly, through strict eating regimes, or 'clean' eating practices (as defined by some athletes), there was a shared interest and discipline amongst the male student-athletes that reinforced masculinized behaviour. These examples will be discussed in more detail in the following sections, in addition to the highlighted challenges being a male student-athlete embodies.

4.2 An Exemplary Case: Dan's Bodily Narrative

In recent decades, several researchers have argued that sport provides a context for adolescent boys to talk about their bodies, through both a functional and aesthetic lens (Drummond, 2001; Norman, 2011; Ricciardelli, McCabe & Ridge, 2006). The current study also reveals that young men are able to talk about their bodies. Although they do not specifically identify this talk as body image “talk”, they do openly discuss desirable body shapes. Strategies to engage in this type of talk are connected with the young men's performance strategies. They seem to grant each other and themselves the opportunity to identify their body shape or segments of their body in relation to aesthetic qualities if they connect these narratives with sport. The participants in this study talk about their bodies in terms of power, strength, force and speed reaffirming notions of hegemonic masculinity associated with their practices. A performance strategy enables male student-athletes to talk about their bodies from a utilitarian approach that is not surprising as it reaffirms the patriarchal structure shaping the sporting environment. There is one participant in the study however who speaks of masculinity and body shape in ways that convey many topics of the ‘unspoken’. That is, the unspoken dialogue surrounding masculinity, bodies and body image that expose the body anxieties males experience.

Dan's (a first year soccer player) narratives illustrate his relationship with his body, health and masculinity. Through the discussion of body shape as a functional component of sport performance, Dan discussed both the *functional* and *aesthetic* components of a fit, muscular body. Dan states,

So I realized that instead of using skill I could use being in shape as [Pause] a big advantage. Especially back when you're younger because not a lot of people put

emphasis into that... So I guess that just sort of carried through. I realized that as long as I was like the fastest on there, the strongest one there – there would be a place for me on the team. (Individual Interview #2)

Here, Dan uses his experience and knowledge of physical training to create a masculinised and disciplined body. Much like the work of Drummond (2005) who suggests that many men construct masculinity through doing rather than being, Dan's body becomes a central site for proving his masculinity. It is through 'doing', that Dan reaffirms his masculinity. In line with the reaffirmation of masculinity, Dan resists and takes up various sporting discourses, allowing him to take control over his sport participation.

The utilitarian approach to constructing the body resonates in sporting environments. Dan often described his body in terms of what it could do but he also aspired to train so he could do more. Strengthening and developing the body for its applicability in sport was one narrative that Dan regularly discussed. Kelly and Hickey (2008) suggested that for athletes, defining the body through what it can do allows it to be strengthened, repaired, and cared for. Thus, it is the active approach to performativity that enables males to embody a masculine identity that reinforces or limits those masculine characteristics they see fit by defining their bodies through what it could do. Dan had an embodied sense that reinforced his self-perceived masculinity. This example from Dan, constructed what Rutherford (1992) defined as a 'performative' male body. Throughout Dan's dialogue he identifies that his skill may not be his greatest asset; but being strong and fit makes his performance difficult to overlook. Dan illustrates how dominant forms of masculinity interweave such that his body is suitable to his specific sport position.

The ways in which masculinity plays out in culture is produced and reproduced in sport. The triplex of strength, muscularity and masculinity, discussed by Drummond (2001) can be applied to how Dan reproduces the privileges of being male and playing sport. He reproduced dominant masculine characteristics while simultaneously constituting sport culture. Dan's example may not be new to sport sociology literature but his narrative does indicate that these processes of producing hegemonic masculine ideologies continue within sport (Bryson, 1987; Connell, 1995; Messner, 1990).

Similar to the findings of Ricciardelli, McCabe and Ridge (2006), Dan reportedly used sport as a socially acceptable forum for comparing his body with other young males. Overtly, Dan discusses his aesthetic appearance as a product of his functional body. In other words, his athletic performance is discursively constructed with his aesthetic influence. Such constructs reinforce the work of Ricciardelli, McCabe and Ridge (2006) which suggested that what males like about their bodies are synonymous with the characteristics associated with being successful at sports (i.e. being strong and muscular). My research suggests that these same characteristics shared between what males like about their bodies and those they associate with success within sport are embedded in young adult males as they continue to use sport as a way to display masculine comportment.

In the current study, especially Dan, talked about being '*the fastest and strongest one out there*'. In doing so, Dan reinforced the use of his sport performance as a means to make favourable comparisons about his body size. The sporting context provided Dan, and fellow participants, with an acceptable and non-threatening medium for explicitly discussing and comparing their bodies with other male student-athletes. As

well, in terms of his sporting body, Dan discussed the importance of achieving the ideal image of a goaltender. This image was distinctly different than his fellow teammates as it allowed him to explain his build. Again, sport acts as a medium for Dan to make comparisons between his body and that of fellow teammates and their body shape:

Umm, well for a goalie I believe we have to be a different build... If I was a player it would be a totally different story. You see players they normally have bigger legs and are skinnier up top cause they're always running like... Yeah, but I dunno with goalies we have to be a bit more solid. (Individual Interview #2)

Interestingly, Dan uses the word *solid*; to describe his desired body shape. Such a depiction illustrates a body that is firm and stable. The characteristics of firmness and stability resemble the dominant images of men within our culture. Through his word choice and dialogue, he reveals a rigid approach to embodiment. He views his body as an object to be worked on, especially in relation to his sport performance. Although the means to obtaining a normalized body can occur through various ways, the ideal male body in relation to the environment is a normative representation of dominant masculine images and cultural expectations set for men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gough, 2006). Dan through his connection to sport replicates those dominant narratives as he describes his body. Interestingly, outside of being a university athlete, Dan also participates in competitive hockey. He states,

Conveniently for me where I'm a goalie you can have the same body size [for both sports]. But if I was a player in soccer it would be really hard to do. I probably would have given up one of the sports coming through - Because most people I know - well cause I wouldn't really be able to do it. Or maybe I - like say if I was

training for soccer I would be smaller I wouldn't be as good at hockey, or vice versa. Like being too bulky [in hockey] and trying to play out on the soccer field...that would slow me down. (Individual Interview #2)

Dan describes his body as ideal for two sports; the position he plays in soccer allows him to also excel in hockey. Both team sports are not completely comparable but the typical ideas of masculinity associated with these sports allow him to cross the boundaries between the two at very competitive levels.

In addition to the sport-based relationship with his body, Dan also conveys a concern for the aesthetic appeal of a fit, muscular body. While not dissatisfied with this body, Dan openly talks about the work he puts into his body. His continual efforts to improve his body are directly linked to sport, yet he also talks about his connection with the physical appeal of this body. He spoke about the male body through his athletic pursuits; normalizing and regulating how he sees his body and what he does with and to his body. Again, this connects to research conducted by Norman (2011). Norman (2011) suggested that “young men are confronted with competing discourses of masculinity where they are simultaneously incited to work on and transform their bodies into culturally recognizable ideals, while at the same time remaining distance and aloof to the size, shape, and appearance of their bodies” (p. 430). For Dan, his body is important to him, yet his narrative highlights how he is and is not invested in the appearance of his body size and shape. Dan clearly illustrates discourses of masculinity, coined by Norman (2011) as a double-bind of masculinity. For example Dan states,

Like I find if you're in good shape then you look good but you also are in shape for your sport... So like, I don't train specifically to look good or to be good at

sports... They just sort of come together... If you train hard enough specifically for your sport, you're going to I guess look good, or whatever.

(Individual Interview #2)

He struggles to talk specifically about his interest in looking a particular way, but he also uses the dominant cultural understandings of male bodies in sport to rationalize the time, commitment and energy he puts into his training. Looking good is important but it is not the reason for “getting in shape”. It is through the disciplinary practices of sport that Dan conveys his dedication and commitment to his body performance. Dan uses disciplinary training practices to produce a body that is valuable both functionally and aesthetically, while simultaneously reaffirming his masculine sensibilities.

The overlap between aesthetic appearance and functionality of the body, as it is described by Dan, illustrates how the two are enmeshed within his relationship to his body. He extends this *double-bind* perspective to other male bodies making it difficult to separate the tensions involved in the work men do on and for their bodies in sport. Dan is the only participant in the study who classifies individuals who work out at the gym to be athletes. What is surprising about this is that Dan does not limit his understanding of athletes or athleticism to specific sports. He defines an athlete as someone's level of commitment and focus on their body, regardless of what physical activity they engage in. While this definition was not gendered, he did compare his practices with those in the gym. Dan states,

No I definitely consider myself an athlete. [Being an athlete] it's not just playing sports – like someone who goes to the gym and gets in shape and is in perfectly good shape, I would still call them an athlete. (Team Sport Focus Group #2)

From a Foucauldian view of the body, the person who goes to the gym and gets in shape is participating in the dominant and normative practices of the culture where one looks after one's self, becoming a disciplined body—a docile body. The idea that bodies that work-out are in good shape or “perfectly good shape” suggests that disciplinary views of the body are applied to people who work on and work at their bodies. In contemporary western culture, the emphasis on being healthy requires individuals to take responsibility for their health and well-being, a modern day docile body emerges (Pronger, 2002). Being in good shape is important to Dan and influences his perceptions of others who invest in their bodies.

4.3 The ‘Showcase’ Body

While Dan became a focal point within this study other student-athletes illustrated a clear connection to their bodies but in ways that exemplify how the body becomes a showcase for both discipline and conformity. For John (a second year swimmer), there appears to be more negative feelings with the body as a ‘showcase’ for his coach and fellow student-athletes. Unlike Dan who *actively* used his body to demonstrate his dedication to his team and position, John more passively identified his body as being a showcase for discipline and regulation. However, John's perspective is also related to his sport participation. If the body is identified as a display case for practices of disciplinary technologies as Shogan (1999) states, swimming is one sport where bodies are read immediately. For John it was unavoidable that he not present a body regulated by disciplined eating and training practices. He states,

I think there is definitely an idealized body shape or weight in swimming cause you're, you can see how much you're in shape, how good you're in shape. When

you come back from off-season everyone sees you and says oh well he's not in shape or he is in really good shape... The coach can tell if you've been training in the off-season. Like, [Laughs] your whole body is on view really, so you know... There is some pressure to be up to par and to be in shape. Cause there's no way you can hide it [Laughs], really. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

To obtain their idealized body shape, male athletes understood the 'showcased' body differently. George (2005) documents how women's bodies are viewed as objects (George, but in this example, John takes up and uses the objectified body to laugh at how he knows his body shape is judged, not only for performance reasons but also for his own connection with an idealized body shape and weight for his sport). Whereas John talks about being put on view as a seemingly inevitable aspect of his sport, Dan talks about his eating and training practices. If players are active throughout a game their fitness is on display. Dan, as the goalie, may not feel others see or know about the fitness needed to play his position. He displayed such emphasis when he earlier mentioned the legs of soccer players as forming as a result of running.

Johns and Johns (2000) have suggested that the pressure to conform to an ideal slim, worked 'swimming body' is hegemonically enforced both through the cultural value of such a body, and through coaches' 'expert' knowledge of how to attain it. Through the discursive practices of the swimming subculture, athletes are taught how to view and experience their bodies in particular ways. Such perceptions contribute to shaping swimmers' identities and understanding of what it means to be an athlete (Johns & Johns, 2000). This statement is demonstrated in a quote by John (a second year swimmer). He states,

And even personally some of the girls, their always worse. They're like, you can tell, a girl comes back and their like she's one-hundred and sixty pounds that's not good and this girl is like – she's fine. There is nothing – she's in shape. I would think she's in shape. She's [Pause] - A regular person would say oh yeah, she's in shape but the swimmers are very hard on one another I think, for girls anyway, from what I know... Yeah, the girls are harder on each other. And they like have an idea that they think you should be in really good shape and if you're not then that's considered not in shape. So, they definitely have an idealized body weight and body shape that you should be [Pause] - For the most part anyway. And you can definitely tell. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

When asked if male swimmers feel the same sort of pressure as he suggests female swimmers experience, John was reluctant to answer. Perhaps not surprisingly, he utilized the sport context as a means to openly discuss the body image concerns he shared with female student-athletes; such concerns were enveloped into the sport context. John was cautious to frame his response within the boundaries of being acceptably male, specifically focusing on body functionality (Norman, 2011; Pronger, 2002). Describing his body in terms of his sport allowed John to express concerns over his body, all while reporting such concerns from the perspective of his sport expectations. He states,

Well, no. I don't, well I guess to some extent [Laughs] because you can see in it, everyone can tell. The coach can tell if you've been training in the off-season. Like, [Laughs] your whole body is on view really, so you know... There is some pressure to be up to par and to be in shape. Cause there's no way you can hide it [Laughs], really. (Individual Interview #1)

Similar to Dan, John comes to understand his sporting body in terms of a performance strategy. In Foucauldian terms John had become and remains the subject of his own surveillance. Such surveillance was exaggerated for John because, in his sport, his body was exposed to public view permitting what he saw as *“the critical eye of the coach and the other athletes to judge the degree to which he had adhered to his regime”* (Johns & Johns, 2000, p. 227). He became influenced by a *“normalising gaze; a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, classify and punish”* (Foucault, 1977, p. 184–5). The concept of ‘gaze’ is a powerful mechanism in terms of power and surveillance. It is a subtly constant watch, or gaze, over athletes that enforces regime upon them. The influence of the coach on student-athletes’ sport participation and health practices will be further discussed in the following chapter.

4.4 The ‘Athletic’ Body

Participants were asked to discuss and elaborate upon their opinions of what, if any, specific body type was associated with their sport. Initially, participants began with straightforward, non-evaluative responses; stating the most obvious physical characteristics (lean, strong, tall, short). However, within focus group discussions participants began to take up, resist and challenge the dominant discourses associated with the athletic body. This negotiation process was not a gendered discussion as both female and male student-athletes illustrated how athletic bodies are normalized but also challenged within and across individual and team sport settings.

The first individual-sport focus group provided dialogue about the dominant body types each athlete associated with their respective sport. However, participants deconstructed the dominant notions of their sport’s production of an athletic body to

create new ways of understanding their sport, and in turn their individual sport performance. Upon being asked if a specific body type could be identified for their particular sports, student-athletes began talking about dominant body types as a product of training. Although they see a specific body type as the identifiable ‘ideal’ for their sport, they rationalize that through their sport and its training practices they can achieve a modifiable variation of ‘the’ athletic body. Such variation matches that body which produces success (Johns & Johns, 2000). For example, when asked if a specific body type can be associated with the sport of cross-country running, Francois (a first year cross-country runner) initially suggested that a runner’s body is analogous to an Ethiopian, providing no following description. As his teammate Liz (a second year cross-country runner) began to negotiate the body type she associates with running it was clear that both participants fed off one another to take up and resist the conventionally displayed ‘runner’s body’.

Liz: I was going to say that the ideal body type I think that you have a picture of, in sports usually, in running and its ahh, umm... A lean person but like tall or short. It could be, it could be seen, umm, elite runners that are, their typically lean but their umm, they can be six two or they could be five two and still be very good but then on the other hand there’s people who do very well, who perform well, that aren’t the typical body type, and ahh, you know that person doesn’t really look like a runner or their bigger but ahh, but they do well so. I don’t think its uniform across the board but it’s definitely an assumption that there’s, that you kinda, oh that person looks like a runner.

Francois: Yeah, there seems to be, there’s a stigma around what body type would make a runner. But I mean there is no defined body type, there’s definitely a personality type if you want to be a runner. Umm, but I think the running itself kind of creates the body type if there is a specific body type. So, if someone looks like a runner they’ve probably been running for a long time. They don’t have inherently big legs or something like that... But there’s no physiological blue print for a runner. I mean they’re just people who run.

Liz: That’s true. It kind of forms along the way. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

The athletes identify what a collection of researchers' have come to describe as body modification (Shogan, 1999; Shilling, 2003). In recent decades, discussion of body modification through running as a primary participatory motivation and outcome has surfaced. The idea of running as a practice of body modification has been attributed to contemporary representations of healthy bodies propagated through media images and texts. In this context, body modification has been defined as the desire to lose weight, to change musculature and/or shape, or to become more 'physically attractive' (Major, 2001; Smith, 2000; van Ingen, 2004). Such visual representations of certain bodies act to reproduce the body type that is often linked with distance running 'success' (Johns & Johns, 2000).

Upon rationalizing that individuals of the non-typical runner's body type can be successful, student-athletes talked about their own bodies in their sport. In the initial segment of the discussion Liz acknowledged the dominant notion of a runner's body; yet she later resisted such discourse when she talks about the ability of the non-stereotypical runner to do '*well*'. Although Francois did identify the ideal running body as an Ethiopian body he too later did not construct a runner's body as a genetic predisposition to big legs; rather he suggested that a runner's body is *made* through the physical act of running over a long period of time. The discussion did not unpack how big, big legs relate to sport in great deal or for what gender; however the discussion does connect with the way sport provides opportunities to engage in body modification projects. Both student-athletes identify with the dominant notion of the athletic body for their particular sport and they illustrate just how bodies are discursively produced. Similar findings were described by

Busanich, McGannon and Schinke (2012) in their study on distance runners and expanding understandings of the body, food and exercise relationship.

Building on the interaction of his fellow focus group participants, John (a second year swimmer) revealed a comparable relationship between his body and his athletic participation. However, much like Dan, John more openly discussed his body shape as the central regulator of his participation. He states,

It does shape you. Like, there are no big bulky guys in swimming. But obviously height is an advantage so [Laughs]. I don't fit into the regular swimming category, I guess. But at the university level I think training is a big thing. Like you see a lot of guys at the AUS [Atlantic University Sport], their only about my height and they can win distance events and stuff, so definitely training is a big thing at this level. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

In a seemingly subtle manner, John references his height throughout his discussion of the swimmer's body; specifically through the analysis of other male swimmers bodies. Interestingly, although John constructs height to be a significant advantage within his sport, he shows a relentless intent to maximize his body's capacity to excel through the technologies of training. Thus, sport as an optic for disciplinary power exists as a site for the production of high-performance athletes through the use of disciplinary techniques that control or discipline athletes in order to produce desired athletic skills (Shogan, 1999). John's relationship with his body is one that reproduces ideas about height and sport performance, to which I would add masculinity. By focusing on this training practices or the emphasis on training to achieve success, he is able to work within the means of high performance varsity sport to express both his desires for performance and

his relationship to training and his body. John spoke of training practices as a means to shape his body and its performance to rival that of a taller swimmer. John uses a normative body structure of a typical swimmer to compare and understand his own body's performance. The discursive practices of training are used to guide how language constructs the body, in particular bodies in sport. Although height may be a concern for John, he adamantly discusses the way his body adapts to the strategies he employs to improve his sporting ability. For example, food restriction and increased training practices are rationalized as strategies to assist in his sporting endeavours. These eating and training strategies disguise body related concerns for male student-athletes as sport performance is used to rationalize choices and practices. As discussed previously these body modification practices are seemingly normalized in sport and for men are not something they like to draw attention to (Norman, 2011). These concepts will be continued to be discussed in the following chapters.

4.5 Team Sport Athletes

The examples of athlete's relationships with their bodies and training have thus far illustrated the importance of the *functional* body in sport and student-athletes' abilities to talk about the *aesthetic* qualities of the body, mostly in relation to their sport performance. These often-dichotomous relations with the body are exactly what Pronger (2002) was referring to when he wrote about the disciplinary practices of sport. The team sport athletes' dialogue provided a unique and also different trajectory to understand the athletic body. The team sport focus group discussions centred on bodily narratives less explicitly and more on the team dynamic influence of their health and sport participation. Noticeably, team sport athletes did not talk about the body as a pivotal dynamic of sport

participation. Unlike individual sport athletes who discursively produce their bodies via training and eating regimes in relation to sport's performative culture (Shogan, 1999; Shilling, 2003), team sport athletes provided less attention to deconstructing body-based discourse. In general, team sport athlete's responses were directed at the team as a whole, whether the athletes were talking about eating and/or training practices. Thus, the team dynamic or 'we' provided the central feature for the focus of team sport athletes dialogue.

4.5.1 The Team Dynamic

I would suggest that through the repeated use of the word 'we' the team sport athletes assumed there was a commonality among each individual's experience of the body and these bodily experiences traversed the different sports. Team sport athletes focus less on their specific body regulatory patterns but talk about their bodies as a collective hence the term *we*. The athletes combine to compose a team, but their individual performance and their individual body is a marker in relation to the teams' efforts, accomplishments or struggles.

The structure of individual sports (i.e. cross-country running, swimming and wrestling) places athletes as the central or focal point of the sport itself. As the focus of the sport is placed on the *individual*, athletes come to understand their bodies as instruments, which can be used, subjected and transformed. Due to the nature of individual sports, including swimming, running and wrestling, stringent pressures are placed on athletes to make the travel roster and thus reinforce a constant pressure for the continual need to make the travelling or upcoming competition. As a result individual sport athletes subject their bodies to rigid eating and training practices to not only succeed in their sport, but to ensure participation in competition.

For team sport athletes, sport participation is focused on group participation. It is not simply about the individual getting ahead, but the team as a whole. However, like individual sport athletes, team sport athletes are concerned with their off-season training. The following narratives illustrate how team sport athletes described these practices in ways different than the individual sport athletes. Brooke (a second year basketball player) described off-season training in a way that directly connects with her team. She states,

Like the summer is a time when not every other team is training and not every other team is in the gym... So it's a time when you can really surpass other teams because if you're in the gym doing the work when you come back in September you're going to be better than those other people [referring to other teams] ... So I found this season, like, especially this summer, like last season I thought I worked hard but this season I wanna work even harder because I want to be better in September. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

This quote illustrates the group dynamic of training. Her transition from 'team' to 'I' exemplifies how her improvement as an individual correlates directly with her understanding of the team's improvement. Like the individual sport athletes, team sport athletes self-commitment and self-surveillance guides their training practices, but the ultimate goal is rationalized in relation to group performance. Although Brook acknowledges that you do need to train on your own to get an extra step ahead, her personal progress is relevant only in relation to the team.

Like individual sports, coaches are involved in the operation of off-season training in order to be able to surveil or scrutinize athletes' commitment to their respective sports.

Bob, (a fourth year basketball player), discussed the role of the coach with regard to training practice design. He states,

This summer and stuff he's [the coach] like laying it all out there saying like how to lift, how many times we're going to lift, like running, like distances, like how fast we should be doing things, like everything is layed it out for ya.

(Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Much like research focused on the body as a machine, guided and steered by the coach becomes apparent in Bob's comment. The team as a "machine" also signifies that the collective must work together, each athlete contributing to the machine that is the team. It can be seen in this example how athletes are constitutive of the machine symbolism or the machine-like disciplinary approach to sport that reproduces the various processes that call the athlete's position on the team into existence. The team operates under the guidance of the coach, thus individual athletes seem to occupy subject positions that distance themselves from any sense of individuality contributing to the collective dynamic of the team, often led by their investment in their coach to help guide their collective 'good' (Johns & Johns, 2000).

Athletes talked about engaging in training practices together; encouraging and influencing one another in a social context that operated to improve their training routines. For Andre (a fourth year volleyball player), his coach implemented a program specifically for his team because of their body shape and size. Andre states,

This is the first year that my coach has done anything with regard to off-season training, but it's not even sport specific. Like I said, I have a rugby program because he thinks we're all too skinny... But yeah, just like one of the guys on our

team said I have a program we can do if everybody needs to gain muscle, because that's what our coach said. Our coach said that he would have a different one done in six weeks. So we'll see if he does that. I dunno... He just said we're all too skinny and there is no point even doing a sport specific one now because it wouldn't do anything because we are too skinny. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Here the coach gets away with commenting on the male athletes being too skinny. The athletic male body is socially expected to be muscular and toned and dominant images of male athletes in most team sports are also identified as big and strong. Based on these dominant approaches to masculine expectations the coach implemented a program to make his athletes muscular similar to the stereotypes of male rugby players.

In the following quote there is a connection between weight and muscularity. Although the quote does not explicitly define muscularity, Bob talks about weight as what is seemingly inferred to be muscular weight. Weight is used to define their performance and hence guides their off-season training:

Bob: That's ahh, like for our team we're really like a small team cause we had some injuries and stuff, and like that's what we're doing. We had a program... we're going to try and put weight on for the first couple months and then we're gonna... we're going to do more like sports like agility and that kind of thing after.

Cait: Yeah, that's really important for us too, to be stronger, because umm, we are one of the smallest teams in the league. But at the end of the year we were one of... number two in blocking so like it really shows that that training helps so.
(Team Sport Focus Group #1)

It is evident in this dialogue that there is a clear association between strength and weight. It is interesting how male student-athletes were willing to talk about their bodies and their willingness to see weight as a positive component of their physical development. As

noted earlier, research has shown that males strive to have a muscular, sculpted body as a way to restore and/or maintain masculine traits (Gillett & White, 1992; Laberge & Albert, 2000). Males who are lacking a large, muscular build or are focused on losing body mass are often feminized in relation to their appearance and/or practices (Gillett & White, 1992). Thus, the masculine ideal is achieved by building the body up, a deliberate intent to maximize strength and weight, or musculature. In this context, both the terms weight and musculature are used synonymously with strength, and building the body up.

4.5.2 Bodies Defined

In the team sport focus group discussions, little attention was given to the sport specific body. Although athletes describe a ‘fit’ body, they spend little time deconstructing this narrative as it is a seemingly homogenous sense of the body. For individual sport athletes, shape is used to describe both being “in-shape” but also having a “shape”. Individual sport athletes describe their bodies directly in relation to the expectations for bodies participating in their respective sports. However, for team sport participants, there are normative bodies with deviations related to shape and size sometimes included. Student-athletes discursively produce the body in various ways, constructing their sport participation around having an athletic body and feeling ‘*in-shape*’. Cait (a fourth year volleyball player) states:

But like for volleyball, like I'm not like ahh, it's not going to make me a better player if I'm, if I just, like feel like I'm in shape. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

When asked what feeling “in-shape” meant, Cait states:

I dunno, like I don't feel lazy, I don't feel like [Pause] like when I don't eat good or workout I feel like my heart is just like [Pause] heavy or something. Like, I

dunno... I don't even like waking up in the morning when I don't feel [Pause] in shape. Like, I find it's harder to wake up early and like get my day on the go and like also it prevents injury. Like one of my friends tore her ACL like two days, two weeks before we went to Canada Games and she was like it's because I'm, I wasn't in good shape. I wasn't in as good of shape as I could have been... Like you know, you can feel when you're in shape, like you feel strong, you feel good about yourself. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Cait associated being 'in-shape' with an overall sense of well-being or feeling good. In line with Foucault's understanding of technologies of the self, Cait deems herself worthy of positive feelings, like feeling good, if she follows her training regime and stays in shape. When not in shape the emotions of these feelings are manifest in her utilitarian approach to her body relations (i.e. heavy heart). Additionally, she not only states being in-shape makes her stronger and more energetic, but it is also prerequisite to preventing injury.

Male participants also discussed being '*in-shape*' as their preferred state of being. For Bob (a fourth year basketball player), being in-shape is directly related to the ability to perform his sport skills with greater ease. He states,

It definitely makes you feel better if you are in shape and stuff and like even throughout the season if you know you are in better shape, it's like it seems easier. Like practice wise and like, even like playing like forty minutes a game and stuff like that it's like it just seems so much easier for ya, but like if you, if you feel like you're not in the best shape that you can be I find it like drags you down a little bit maybe even mentally. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Team athletes did not discuss weight related regimes specific to their sport, thus the connections to mental preparation are focused on being in-shape. Being in-shape for many participants was not a gendered practice, it was a practice focused on sport performance. Bob accentuated the utilitarianism of his body for his sport performance, as did Cait. Similar to other participants, Bob's concern for being 'in-shape' is a general concern, existing both in and off-season. Other team sport athletes within focus group discussions reiterated similar desires to be in shape in their explanations of what it feels like to be in-shape:

Nichole: *And what does it feel like to be in shape?*

Karla: *Just feel better.*

Ang: *Great!*

Zack: *More energy. Just – you feel so much better about yourself.*

Ang: *It's definitely a confident booster.* (Team Sport Focus Group #2)

Ang (a third year basketball player) indirectly associates feeling strong with being in-shape. She states,

But since training seriously I just – I feel much more in shape. I know the difference of what's in shape and what isn't... This is the first year like weight training has been taken seriously on our team and if we all put on muscle obviously we're getting bigger... You feel so much more confident on the floor that you can do things. You can do drills so much better.

(Team Sport Focus Group #2)

Interestingly, when referring to weight training Ang is speaking generally about the weight training regime herself and her teammates follow in the gym. In this case, she understands weight training as a method to get more muscular. To this athlete, developing muscle firmly equates with getting bigger. From her outlook, getting bigger is not

necessarily a bad thing as it shows positive results for her performance, as well as her teammates. Looking at the team as the metaphorical *machine*, athletes train together to get stronger which results in an overall greater operation of the team on the court. In the above statement, Ang shares the belief that as a team they are getting bigger, getting stronger. As a machine, its parts must be developed, coordinated, maintained and fixed when they break down (Shilling, 2003). Individually, each athlete sees his or her personal improvement in strength as a contribution to the entire functioning of the team. In elite sport the body is measured, classified, typed, labelled, conditioned, trained, regulated, and assessed in terms of its performance (Shogan, 1999).

Throughout the team-sport discussion it is clear that at least two athletes, both a male and a female, use the term weight in a positive sense. Unlike the individual sport athletes who talked about body modification practices to lose weight these athletes want to gain weight. Both males and females desire to use weight for enhancing their performance while also developing confidence related to their sport skills and abilities. The metaphorical view of the body as a machine contributed to the overall functioning of the sport teams such that, as a machine builds it needs the commitment and common understandings of what it feels like to be in-shape to allow athletes to buy-into training routines, thus normalizing these practices both during season and in the off-season.

Among team sport athletes, discussion of health and what it means to healthy were topics that did not occupy space within focus group discussions unless asked about specifically. Interestingly, Ang (a third year basketball player) also talked about how training led to feelings of being healthy. She states,

We have a new coach and since we've been training with him our health has soared through the roof and you can see it in the way we play.

(Team Sport Focus Group #2)

For Ang training leads to feeling healthy, strong and confident, all characteristics she rationalizes with her sport participation in mind. Although Ang did not elaborate to state how she defined healthy within this context, she seemingly related such inferences to the regimented training experience her new coach brought to practice sessions. In terms of food consumption, Ang was the one female athlete who openly talked about the guilt associated with food consumption. She stated,

At the same time like I don't know about you guys, but as girls you want to stay a perfect shape like ya know. You don't want to think – okay I ate that now I have to slack off. Not perfect shape but... ya know... ya wanna – You don't want people looking at you thinking how can you be an athlete... Yeah how do you play a sport.

(Team Sport Focus Group #2)

Here, not only did Ang illustrate the guilt associated with food consumption, she also opened up issues of emphasized femininity. Moments do arise where female student-athletes did talk about the dominant female ideology, yet these were minimal, especially in a mixed gender focus group setting. Ang also talked about the importance of social expectations filtering into her sporting environment. This is where the continuum of femininity expectations and performance comes to surface. Some women distance themselves from dominant notions of femininity or any markers of femininity whereas other women negotiate the tension on an ongoing basis (Connell, 1995). As suggested by Krane (2001), based on the consequence of nonconformity to this hegemonic femininity

in sport, female athletes must go out of their way to show that they can be both athletic while meeting the socially accepted expectations of a 'female' (Kolnes, 1995). If women are successful and too athletic, the need to overcompensate with traditional feminine markers becomes an act, or a performance of both being a female and being an athlete. Thus, as exemplified in the previous example, female student-athletes often experience a constant struggle between wanting to train hard for competition, but not wanting to train too hard such that their effort to maintain or strive for the ideal feminine body were not in jeopardy. Another similar example will later be discussed for a female participant, Brooke. However, her dialogue surrounding her body and the struggle between the feminine, yet athletic body falls within her understanding of her coaches' expectations.

Although individual and team sport student-athletes were not directly compared, Ang's discussion of femininity is an anomaly for the entire female population of student-athletes' participating in this study. Yet, some male participants talked about females, femininity and sport. Dan (a first year soccer player) states,

Like, umm, I don't know sometimes soccer girls are expected to be like I dunno - not to say more muscle bound - but basketball girls... are expected to be like stronger because they are aggressive on the court. And like volleyball [girls] are sometimes seen as tall. But I - I guess they come in all shapes and sizes, but... like someone can look at a guy and go - he's on the basketball team... And you look at another guy and he's like tall and slim and he's on the volleyball team.

(Team Sport Focus Group #2)

Other discussion within focus groups illustrated how participants attempted to name other student-athletes' sport participation based on their body shape and form. Karla (a first

year soccer player) described a situation in which she and a teammate had a conversation with swimmers about how you can easily tell what sport athletes play by their body shape and size. She stated,

Me and Robyn were in the bathroom and there were two swimmer girls and the joke of the night was guessing what everyone did. And they were like you must be soccer. And we were like – now how did you guess? And they were like – well you don't have big arms, you're not tall and you don't really have one arm stronger than the other from volleyball. (Team Sport Focus Group #2)

According to Karla, it is easy to tell what sports athletes play – *'swimmer have really broad shoulders and small hips'*. Although Karla identified specific body features with specific sporting bodies, she continued to discursively produce the sporting body in various ways. This team sport example does not differ much from the runner's talk about the runners' body as being formed along the way. Thus, there appears to be a shared perspective among student-athletes that shape is made based on the actual training practices associated with sport.

4.5.3 Team and Individual Sport Eating Practices

With regard to eating practices, team sport athletes talked about food as a means to fuel their bodies, specifically referencing carbohydrates and pasta. Individual sport athletes, on the other hand, talked about 'lighter foods' in terms of avoiding feeling 'sick' or 'ill' and thus ate foods similar to that of a caveman in order to avoid bloating and discomfort. Consuming food outside of their regular routine was commonly acknowledged as causing stomach discomfort and had to be avoided specifically on practice or game days. Whether such sickness was actually real is unknown but this

reaction may be a way to rationalize specific food practices and the avoidance of guilt. Team sport participants rarely discussed ‘sickness’ with regard to food consumption. In addition, team sport athletes did not openly discuss how specific foods could affect their performance in practice or games.

Overall, individual sport athletes appeared to have a greater connection to the food they choose to consume and rationalized the effects of specific food groups. John (a second year swimmer) talks about food consumption and practice as interrelated practices. He stated,

Okay, like I said before I usually eat based on how I’m going to feel at practice kind of, so like I would not over indulge or anything if I know I have a tough practice coming up. But if I, like on the weekends, if I’m hungry I’m going to eat whatever I want to, really... Usually my weekends involve a lot of like pizza and fast food. (Individual Interview #1)

He later expressed that he keeps a fairly strict diet over the week because he does not want to make his practice bad or ‘anything like that’. Cait (a fourth year volleyball player) holds a more general outlook on her eating practices. Her approach to ‘healthy’ eating does not place the same emphasis on an eating regime. Cait stated,

But like I’m always thinking about it [referring to her meals], like I’m conscious about it because of my sport. But umm, yeah a lot of times I just don’t have time to eat. But I find that I’m eating health – I try to eat as healthy as I can and I do research on what I’m supposed to be eating and stuff like that. Our team attended like a, I want to say like a nutritionist here a few weeks ago. So I am conscious about it [referring to her eating practices] but whether or not I do it all

the time depends on time. I like – I don't feel good about myself if I don't eat healthy. I'll wake up in the morning after eating bad the day before and like know that I ate bad because my stomach will hurt and like I won't feel – I'll feel groggy. I won't feel awake really. (Individual Interview #3)

Thus, Cait similarly recognized the stomach discomfort readily discussed by individual sport athletes. She too acknowledges the impact unhealthy eating will have on her performance at practice, but sees her poor performance as a result of feeling 'weak'. When she discussed accidentally skipping a meal due to limited time she also comes back to the feeling of 'weakness'. Thus, her understanding of food consumption, or lack thereof, falls more along the lines of the team sport demands of strength, power and finesse. She identified food as giving her strength rather than taking away from her performance.

Similarly, other team sport athletes talked about not having time to eat in the days and not preparing their meals the night before but grabbing something less healthy at the University Centre. Food preparation and consumption is important but it is talked about differently by team sport athletes than by the individual sport athletes. Team sport athletes do not share a similar level of restraint for unhealthy foods as many individual sport participants. According to Brook (a second year basketball player), eating healthy is not a priority for her teammates, although they have the educational knowledge to engage in healthy eating practices. She stated,

We don't eat healthy at all. Well we've had a nutritionist come in and tell us what to do and we've had all that, but people don't really listen to it... I remember one time Dave [the coach] asked me to write down what I ate for a week and then

show it to him [Pause] cause he like didn't think I was eating healthy enough, well not even healthy enough, he didn't think I was eating enough of the healthy food, of like healthy foods I guess. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Similarly, Bob and Andre (a fourth year volleyball player and a fourth year basketball player, respectively) talked about themselves and their teammates as eating out often (i.e. McDonald's). They rationalized that their teammates feel that unhealthy food does not affect their performance as much. Keeping in mind, Andre has been told he is skinny and Bob seems to have a large appetite, the types of food consumed are not surveilled the same as other student-athletes' participating in this study. These athletes' ideologies of food and eating draw a strong connection to earlier published work in this field. In line with the work of Gough (2006, 2007), Gough and Conner (2006) and Moss, Moss, Kilbride and Rubinstein, (2007), these male athletes' narratives demonstrate a dominant masculine ideal whereby the athletes' remain inferior in their eating habits, cooking and food preparation skills. In some ways they appear to reject healthy eating. Gough and Conner (2007) suggest males do so to avoid the femininity associated with acts of dieting or deprivation, and thus the potential threat to their masculinity.

Additionally, Brooke (a second year basketball player) discussed her teammates eating habits while on road trips. She stated,

I know some of the girls, one of the girls ran to the vending machine and got a few chocolate bars and ran back to the room without Dave [the coach] seeing her... Like, I don't think we really eat that healthy when we are in-season, besides when we are with the coach. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

For Brooke, there is no apparent pressure to eat healthy outside of when in the coach's presence. In general, team sport athletes constructed their eating practices as a team oriented regime again connecting with their sense of collective identity. There is a social component to food for these athletes that is marked through their discussion of their eating practices and the shared experiences they have together with food. For Brooke and fellow athletes, eating practices were discussed as regular events involved with being part of a team: road trip team dinners, eating lunch together throughout the week, eating pre-game meals together. Contrastingly, individual sport athletes' focus of food more directly pertains to the self; with participants discussing their eating practices as individual in nature, and eating was never something that was shared among teammates. It may be that the social component to food for team sport participants takes away the intra-team competition between athletes and as there is less of an 'unknown' between teammates, that is often present between individual sport athletes. Individual sport athletes use their eating practices as a tool to achieving a body that can put them ahead of teammates (or competitors). For team sport athletes, food is a means to socializing and engaging with teammates.

Throughout the latter parts of this chapter I have given predominant attention to the narratives of team sport athletes, as little direct focus was given to this population of athletes in the earlier sections of this chapter. As I discuss team sport athletes' narratives of health and sport participation, I draw on individual sport athletes' experiences to shape and formulate key themes that emerged in the research findings. It was not my intention to explicitly compare and contrast the sports and participants, but rather to explore the similarities and dissimilarities both groups of student-athletes construct related to their

health and sport participation. In the development of a thematic analysis the relationships between and amongst the two groups presented important qualities that helped shape how I analyzed the production of health discourse.

4.6 Summary

Although broad in scope, this chapter presents an extensive body of research relating to university student-athletes' perceptions and negotiations of health practises and athletic participation. As discussed within the introductory component of the chapter, direct attention is given to male athletes from different sports to better understand the health ideologies male student-athletes construct around their bodies and body image. This is a valuable contribution of the research project and contributes to the currently available body of literature reviewed in Chapter 2. In addition, a diverse analysis of both individual and team sport athlete's narratives is provided. As key themes are presented throughout this chapter surrounding eating and training practices, it became clear that individual and team sport athletes have similar and dissimilar negotiations related to how they come to understand health. There is an interesting section on the athletic body that reveals the different ways these student-athletes come to understand and talk about their bodies, based on the sport they are connected to. It was key in the analysis that when identifying the discursive practices shaping health, I understood the context of the student-athletes' sport and the sporting culture constructing both the sport and the athlete, as these effects play a role in their narratives. Particularly, for the male athletes in this study, sport culture and dominant notions of gender are important contextual factors that shape the student- experiences. These elements require particular attention when

attempting to understand how male student-athletes come to understand their sport participation in relation to health practices.

Chapter 5: Findings & Discussion (UN) Healthy Surveillance Practices

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relations in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principal of his own subjection. (Foucault, 1977, p. 202-203)

5.1 Introduction

Using Foucault's (1977) idea of the panopticon and its approach to surveillance this chapter reveals the ways in which student-athletes monitor their own bodies and so-called healthy practices. As discussed in Chapter 2, the panopticon is a prison structure that renders prisoners self-monitoring, however it also offers a useful way of analyzing the mechanisms student-athletes use to diligently subject themselves to disciplinary techniques of repetition involved in sport training. In high performance sport, panopticism serves as a mechanism to normalize and homogenize athletes according to the plans of the coach and institutional standards of the sport itself (Shogan, 1999). Athletes consciously monitor their bodies through strict health practices in line with the normative expectations they come to understand based on the role of their coach, and other influential figures.

The concepts that construct the panopticon were explicitly illustrated to as student-athletes talked about their bodies and bodily regulations within focus group discussions and interviews. In order to address the role of significant others in student-athletes' lives, in relation to food and exercise, the power position of the coach became a significant topic of discussion. The athletes talked about the coach's role in their sport participation and the need to perform to a level which meets the coach's expectations.

Thus, the coach was commonly illustrated as a figure that regulated athletes' involvement in sport which had an impact on how student-athletes described their health practices. How athletes took up, resisted and challenged the discourses associated with health, the body and athletic participation were strongly based on how they understood the role and responsibilities of their coach in relation to the standards of their sport. It was evident throughout discussions with athletes that coaches play an influential role in shaping how athletes think about, practice and learn eating and exercising routines. Moreover, coaches of specific sports, whether team or individual, constructed a sporting environment that shaped how athletes related to eating and exercising as ways to understand and describe their health and healthy practices. Sport is intricately tied to student-athletes' sense of identity and coaches also play an influential role in relationship formation.

5.2 The Coach, Self-Surveillance & the Panopticon

Researchers have discussed the coach–athlete relationship in top-level sport as being characterized by hierarchy and inequality (Johns & Johns, 2000; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003). Coaches hover over athletes and have considerable control over the type of information provided and the assessment of athletes' performance in sport (Johns & Johns, 2000). Jones et al. (2003) describe the relationship between the coach and athlete as an organization structure, where by the coaches learns to manage athletes thoughts, ideas and behaviors, which is never equalitarian. The following example illustrates how student-athletes position the coach, as an informed, educated and trusted person. Cait (a fourth year volleyball player) stated,

It's definitely a big influence I think. Like, if my coach would say, say something that is really good for me I would take it into consideration... Because, like, yeah,

I know – I know the basics of the Canada’s Food Guide or something like that. But I definitely, if I hear something good from someone I respect, then I would definitely consider that and try to use that to help me. (Individual Interview #3)

In high performance sport, the structure of training sessions acts as an organized site where athletes can be seen by the coach(s) through constant engagement in activity. The student-athletes discussed the role of their coach in determining what training practices they should engage in. While not always present coaches, provided supplemental workouts that were not really supplemental, as student-athletes’ engagement in this additional practices was surveilled both by the coach and fellow student-athletes. Cait (a fourth year volleyball player) understands the need for circuit training in comparison to a strictly ‘*cardio*’ regimen based on her coaches’ explanation of volleyball as an anaerobic sport. She carried this understanding of her sport over to her individual training as she engaged in anaerobic training. Trusting her coach who pointed out that her performance would increase if she did some weight-training. Bob (a fourth year basketball player) discussed his training regime and a structured plan designed by the coach. Not only is the plan structured for when the coach is in attendance, but a structured plan is provided for student-athletes with strict expectations that everyone will follow these directives on their own time. Bob stated,

Our schedule is pretty close to the girls’ basketball. In pre-season, we practice five days a week, during the week and we have weekends off. We have early morning runs Tuesday and Thursdays twice a week and then we have to get in the weight room three or four times just on your own and we have a program to follow. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

This quote emphasizes the role of the coach as someone who assists with physical training. For the sports of basketball, volleyball and soccer the predominant role of the coach was in fact to do just that; design and structure their physical and mental training programs. Student-athletes across team sports talk about their sport participation as a pre-determined schedule to be followed. Similar to Jones et al. (2003), coaches manage bodies; they organize individuals towards a collective goal. One way to accomplish this is through the 'schedule' that student-athletes come to understand as their schedule designed to enhance the sporting experience. For example, Cait's coach implements circuit training with her team, based on the connection between the sport demands and circuit training demands, in terms of physical exertion. It is through the training regime put in place by the coach that Cait comes to understand the demands of her sport and hence how she negotiates her physical training practices. This connects back to student-athletes' negotiations of specific sporting bodies, as discussed within the chapter on body fascism.

Perhaps not surprisingly, as the structure of individual sport teams requires that only a specific number of student-athletes are able to travel to away competitions, individual sport athletes talked about the coach's central responsibility as selection of the travelling team roster. In addition, they discussed the coach as a manager of individuals in time and space. Illustrated in both focus group discussions and individual interviews, individual sport athletes constructed ideas about training as a 'pre-competition' (something needed to make the team), which notably impacted and shaped their relationship to the health of their body. These student-athletes talked about their regular training practices as opportunities to prove their worth and their ability to perform; as a demonstration of their 'healthiness', or an opportunity to expose their 'healthy' body.

To illustrate the travel roster selection, which accompanied individual sport team participation, a thorough description from a participant is included. John (a second year swimmer) stated,

For the season coming up now, the coach put in new time standards to travel to meets. So, like sometimes because you have to make difficult decisions between who to take... This time, to make it easier he put in time standards, so we have to make these in order to travel... They [The coaches] only take so many people to travel meets. So you always have to be performing your best at practice and you always gotta be, yah, on your 'A' game. (Individual Interview #1)

This quote illustrates the coach's decision-making process in selecting student-athletes. Cross-country running and wrestling participants also discussed the structure of their sport and the small number of student-athletes making travel rosters, placing the coach in a position of responsibility and power. In line with the work of Stevenson (1990), the athletes were concerned with developing a role identity that they perceived to be desirable and valued; the confirmation of this identity was solidified by the coach. Evidently, the coach served an important role as an evaluator of the potential success of the athlete: through an ambiguous, yet omnipresent existence. Realizing that they can be seen by the coach, athletes begin to monitor their own behavior in relation to fellow athletes and the standards of the sport.

John (a second year swimmer) sees his coach as the ultimate facilitator of his participation, and thus continually monitors his body, and sticks to routine training and dietary regimes to meet the 'ideal' body that will not only enhance his performance, but also help him receive recognition from his coach. The coach's use of power drives

athletes to self-monitor their behavior, which also constructs sport culture. The coach can tell which student-athletes have trained and everyone else can see their teammate's body. It is through such visibility that student-athletes come to the realization that body shape is often a component of performance assessment. Thus, the nature of individual sports, such as swimming, places student-athletes under significant pressure to conform to the standards of coaches, teammates and fellow student-athletes; in order to maintain a disciplined body in the on and off-season. The practices individual sport athletes engage in become normalized as a product of the competition on all levels.

Cross-country running seems to follow similar surveillance practices. While discussing the limited number of cross-country runners allowed to travel to a meet, Liz (a second year cross-country runner) stated,

So in practice it even seems like sometimes there's a competition going on that's unspoken. You're out there [running] but at the same time you're working together and working against one another. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

Similarly, John (a second year swimmer), in discussing the importance of attending training sessions stated,

So that [the unspoken competition between athletes in practice] like helps you train better, if more people like come to practice. So you're trying to beat them and get faster. So the whole thing is a competition, right.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

It is interesting that this athlete acknowledges an unspoken competition which enforces in him a need to push himself, while struggling for a position on the travel roster. This unspoken competition in and of itself creates power relations between athletes that push

athletes to excel in every avenue of their sport participation, whether it be in practice or outside in the gym. John later stated that the time standards enforced by his coach (to make the travelling roster) keep him training during the off-season:

It [the expectations and time standards enforced by the coach] keeps you training hard. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

This connects back to the idea of the panopticon, or self-surveillance discussed by Foucault. Outside of regulated training practices, student-athletes continue to monitor their bodies to meet standards enforced within the sport culture surrounding their sport. The aforementioned dialogue shows that individual sport athletes use the travel opportunity as a way to talk about how the reward of competing—travelling to a competition—determines how they exercise power in their sport training (i.e. how many practices an athlete will attend, how much effort and discipline goes into sport training, how food/caloric intake can be monitored to enhance performance). For example, John (a second year swimmer) illustrated the relationship between food, training and the desire to meet the coaches' expectations:

If I didn't have to worry about how I would feel in practice I think I would just eat like pizza for lunch instead of a sandwich. But, I want to perform well in practice.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

It is the technologies that produce high-performance athletes, which come to determine the “‘A’ game” athletes strive for in training. In order to attain and meet the expectations of practice time standards, student-athletes must negotiate their daily living practices, including eating and training regimes, to ensure they bring their best performance each

practice. This all connects back to the coach as a figure of surveillance and his/her position as a knowledgeable expert.

The gaze of the ever-present coach positions this person in a very powerful role. Drawing from Foucault's panoptic gaze, the awareness that one may be watched leads to an internalization of the gaze and a policing of one's own behavior (Shogan, 1999). In high-performance sport, the watchful eye of the coach and the normalizing standards of the sport become embodied by the athlete. Athletes feel like they should present an image that is always prepared for competition while also being knowledgeable about the training cycles: endurance, speed, building and tapering. Student-athletes in this study hold themselves to high performance standards to impress their coaches and establish themselves among their teammates (in both individual and team based sports).

Athletes come to monitor themselves and discipline their lives irrespective of whether or not the coach is actually watching. The invisibility of the coach's gaze encourages athletes to survey, with degrees of distress, their own bodies for signs of inadequacy and limitation. In Foucauldian terms, the athlete becomes his own 'guard' or disciplinary (Foucault, 1977). Several participants highlighted this point revealing the need to produce a 'healthy' body to impress the coach(s). As previously discussed in Chapter 2, John (a second year swimmer) talked about the need to be '*up to par and to be in shape*' and the pressure this demand creates as his sport requires him to expose his body, or in some ways *showcase* his body. Dan (a first year soccer player) similarly used his body as a display of his dedication. He states,

I guess even like looking good your coach will see that you're in shape and then it shows that being committed, being to every practice [Pause], I dunno, going, just

going and working your ass off in practice and showing that you really care. All of the little things add up, because coaches look at the whole picture. And even like if you show discipline towards being in shape your coaches can tell. Like where I'm a goalkeeper – a lot of goalies are the out of shape ones. But it's a lot easier to be respected by a coach if you're in shape.

(Team Sport Focus Group #2)

Here, Dan reinforced how conformity takes hold of an athlete, in part, because he or she is visible. Interestingly, Dan understood his sport participation as a 'pre-competition' among teammates, albeit not for a travel roster, but rather for a position on the team. He states,

So I realized that instead of using skill I could use being in shape as [Pause] like a big advantage. Especially back when you're younger because not a lot of people put emphasis into that... So I guess that just sort of carried through. I realized that as long as I was like the fastest out there, the strongest one there – there would be a place for me on the team. (Team Sport Focus Group #2)

It is interesting that Dan, a goaltender, relates to the coach in ways that are similar to the individual sport athletes. The individual sport athletes construct the coach to be an authoritarian figure who is responsible for making travelling rosters and setting training routines. Dan had an established role on the soccer team, but his more intimate interactions with the coach because of the unique position of being a goalie was described similar to the individual sport athletes. These groups viewed the coach as someone who surveilled and assessed their individual performance as a priority over the routines of the

team or people trying to make the team. Individuals were responsible for their own training and behaviors.

Student-athletes come to understand their eating and training practices in relation to the expectations set by coaches. The coach is always evaluating and the student-athlete is always performing. Within this context, student-athletes are left to make their own interpretations of coach's expectations. In an attempt to succumb to the 'wants' of the coach, student-athletes engaged in various practices of conformity. Many student-athletes see conformity as advantageous. The lure of being rewarded by more competitive opportunities incites some student-athletes, whereas for others, there seems to be an intrinsic accountability to coaches and fellow student-athletes. One athlete in particular clearly exemplified the latter. Brooke (a second year basketball player) talks about her coach, Dave, as a figure of importance. While discussing her motivation for attending Memorial University she placed her coach as central to her decision. She stated

I went on a few recruiting trips to different universities but I ended up wanting to play at MUN, like Dave was talking to me throughout high school and the thing with basketball is that a lot of girls from Newfoundland grow up, like, because there is only one university here, it is always Dave Rex, Dave Rex, Dave Rex, like it is always him. When you kinda grow up always wanting to play for him.

(Team Sport Focus Group #1)

It is evident she wanted to impress her coach and she has admired his role in her development as a player. She rationalized her athletic identity as a product of her coaches' philosophy and commitment to her development. She stated,

Our coach always says you have time for three things and you have time for two things, but there are three things: the athlete, and then there's the student and then there's partying. You can pick two of the three. Yeah, two things that he said you can pick. And obviously, I guess that's how I identify myself - as a student-athlete. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

It is important to recognize how the coach-athlete relationship is socially constructed and embedded in power relations; however such relations are not always a coercive type of power. The coach-athlete relationship is a crucial component of university sport participation. Johns and Johns (2000) discuss a '*discourse of expertise*' which places the coach as a knowledge giver and the athletes as receivers. In this sense, athletes are in need of the knowledge coaches can provide if they desire to improve their performance. Unarguably, coaches sit in a privileged position built up through their knowledge of the sport and related health practices, and their access to limited resources. However, although the powerful position they hold influences athletes sport participation, athletes themselves actively participate in the sport and accept the demands of high-level sport participation. From this view, coaches can be seen more as a facilitator than a dictator of performance reinforcing the embedded power relations between the coach and athlete as productive, not coercive.

While discussing the influence of coaches on student-athletes' eating practices, Brooke continued her efforts to please her coach. This is evident when she stated,

We have to get weighed in and before, if we get weighed in, I eat so much food like two days before so I can weigh more, so that Dave [The coach] won't be mad... At the beginning of the season and then at the end of the season he

brought up my self-discipline to me in my meeting. He said like you lost this much weight blah, blah, blah, but I knew that at the beginning of the season I remembered to do the trick of like eating a lot before. It makes me weigh like that many pounds more. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

As a technique to achieve the desired ‘extra weight’ for weigh-in, Brooke discussed wearing long sleeve shirts and a few shirts underneath to disguise her weight. She expressed a clear concern over the importance of weighing more in the initial weigh-in to impress and seek the approval of her coach. Her overt rationalization for ‘throwing’ weight is directed toward avoiding disappointing or ‘upsetting’ the coach. Through conformity to the rationale of training and competing according to the plans made by the coach, Brooke takes up these expectations and over-conforms training and disciplining her body as she aims to please her coach, even if it means being under-weight on the weigh in. When asked why her coach would want her to weight more, she stated,

Well my results will be better on the fitness test. If you weigh more, like your jump max will be better. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

It is interesting that Brooke attempts to increase her weigh-in weight through specific strategies that do not actually require her to put on weight. Yet, in the above statement she draws a relationship between weighing more and having a better jump max score. Although her weigh-in value is not entirely ‘real’ weight, she does not discuss any connection between how this affects her jump max score. She perceives that the false weigh-in weight will satisfy her coach but if it is not real weight, how will it relate to her performance? Here Brook, who earlier talked about being weak, needs to increase the numbers associated with her weight. She assumes the discourses of many females who

diet, weighing less is seemingly more attractive or better (or some combination of both), but she also recognizes that her lower weight score reduces her performance (jump max.). Yet, she is not concerned about this aspect of her subjectivity. This athlete demonstrates an interesting dynamic in sport for females. This overlaps with much of the research published by George (2005), as discussed within the literature review.

The theme of being in shape is a component of many student-athletes' relationships with their bodies and their sport. However, these relationships are complex. This athlete illustrates how female student-athletes have monitored their bodies in ways that over-conform to sport's normalizing practices. In some cases the training is excessive and the food consumption is minimal leading to many complications. These relate to not only health concerns but also social and relational concerns for the coach-athlete relationships. Unlike the soccer players who were too skinny and needed to bulk up, this basketball player, although she does not state specifically, is being monitored for her skinniness as it is a health concern. Brooke inadvertently talks about her coach monitoring her eating practices in ways that resemble other eating disordered studies (Busanich & McGannon, 2010; Johns & Johns, 2000). In the example from this research Brooke stated,

I remember one time Dave [The coach] asked me to write down what I ate for a week and then give it to him [Pause] because he like, didn't think I was eating healthy enough. Well not even healthy enough, he didn't think I was eating enough, of the healthy foods I guess. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

The dialogue of this athlete reinforces the complexity of health in relation to sport. It may be that Brooke is also negotiating the boundaries of femininity within sport (Kolnes,

1995; Markula, 1995). In this case, Brooke draws a line between gaining weight to please her coach, and misleading or even manipulating her weight in weigh-ins to preserve her relationship with her body. The health concerns of the coach do not seem to be the health concerns of Brooke. She discussed the impact of more weight to increase the score in a fitness drill; she maintained her approach to eating in relation to the weigh-in. She takes up the knowledge of her coach in her understanding between the linear succession of fitness level and weight gain, but deliberately refutes such understandings through her own negotiations with her body. George (2005) suggested that while gaining muscle may improve strength and performing in the sport setting, it hinders the athletes' perceptions of their own beauty and femininity. Thus, one explanation for Brooke's relationship with eating and training could be connected with the so-called opposition and struggle female athletes experience between the performance body and appearance body (George, 2005).

Johns and Johns (2000) suggest that athletes who are willing to follow a power structure prefer to have some autonomy to conform to values espoused by the coach. In my study, student-athletes took the information shared from their coaches and applied this to their training and eating patterns, for the most part. Some student-athletes resisted the encouragement to eat particular foods or to eat in general, while others directly applied coaches' information about eating into their daily lives. For example one athlete, disregarded the coaches advice to consume more food unless she was about to weigh-in when the team had regular weigh-ins. The only team to discuss weigh-ins was the women's basketball team and in particular this athlete used the weigh in as an example to highlight her resistive approach to this practice by her coach. Regardless of the role of the coach and the sport, in both focus group and individual interviews, student-athletes

remained active participants in the construction of health ideas, while also being shaped by the tutelage of their coaches.

5.3 Perceived Influence/Role of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

As a result of the age and level of competition of the athletes, the perceived influence of parents significantly differed from the perceived influence of the coach for the student-athletes. Student-athletes stated that parents did not play a significant role in their varsity sport participation. Many athletes talked about their parent(s) as having an influence in the early years of their enrolment in sport which extended to high school. However, as varsity athletes they felt their participation and commitment was strictly a result of their own abilities and choices at this point. One athlete, Robert (a second year wrestler) stated,

I mean we're all adults now. You're not going to have your mom or dad coming around and picking up after you, being like – Did you weight train today? Did you get your cardio session in? Are you eating healthy?

(Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Conceivably, student-athletes expressed a continual acceptance of responsibility for their participation and commitment, acknowledging that '*at this level you don't need to be told*', shared by Zack (a third year basketball player). He also suggested,

I think we're at the age now where we know the difference between healthy and unhealthy. (Team Sport Focus Group #2).

From a Foucauldian perspective, these student-athletes are comfortable narrating how they have assumed a sense of self care that supports their sport performance. Although, when questioned directly student-athletes did not acknowledge a direct influence of their

parents/guardians on their current health practices and sport participation, it was apparent that when further questions about health practices were posed parents/guardians continue to influence and inform the choices student-athletes make. Unlike the invisibility and ambiguity of the coach's gaze, the influence of the parent(s) is relatively circumstantial. One example of this 'situational' influence is demonstrated by the associations student-athletes perceive between their parent(s)' homes and their food consumption. Across focus groups and individual interviews, student-athletes talked about the negative feelings they have toward returning home and the guilt associated with giving into the foods outside of their regular eating patterns. Specifically, while discussing foods consumed to enhance performance, Susan (a second year wrestler) described her feelings toward moving back in with her parents and the difficulty she finds eating healthy there. She stated,

When I lived on my own I would buy healthy foods, like I would never buy Pepsi or I wouldn't buy chips. My parents and my younger brother they like that stuff, so when it's there I eat it. It was a big adjustment for me not to, like not want to eat everything, cause like when I used to visit home for the weekend I would just eat my face off, but now I do that every day, so. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

In this case, the reference to 'everything' encompassed both healthy and unhealthy foods. For Susan, 'everything' was symbolic of the abundance of food available at her parents' home that she inevitably found difficult to resist now that she lived there full time. Doug (a third year wrestler) expressed a similar outlook on food availability in his parents' home within the same focus group discussion. In describing a period of time when he moved home, Doug stated,

I hate it, like I went home for one summer and it was just food everywhere.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Amy (a second year cross-country runner) similarly agreed that when she goes home *'there is food too'*. With the exception of Susan identifying Pepsi and chips as available foods, student-athletes typically described a 'general' abundance of food at their parents' homes. Whether or not the food was considered 'healthy' or 'unhealthy', the access to food seemed to carry negative connotations. In a one-on-one interview, John (a second year swimmer) equally shared the understanding of his fellow individual sport athletes. While discussing his drastic reduction in weight in his first year of varsity swimming, John attributed much of his weight loss to the absence of home cooked meals. He stated,

I found like when I cook I try to cook healthy. I don't probably; I don't cook as much as my mom would cook [Laughs]... She, when I would get home from swimming, it would be a huge plate of spaghetti or something there, right and I would just eat whatever was on my plate.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

He further expressed that he now finds it easier to maintain his weight because he lives on his own and prepares his own food – *"Like mom always cooks desserts and stuff, so, I like, I can't, I can't say no [Laughs]"*. Interestingly, John identified his situation as different from the stereotypical 'freshman fifteen' as his experience was totally the opposite. The negative feelings student-athletes associate with the abundance and variety of food available in their parents' homes highlights the relationships that form around food and in particular student-athletes' interests in controlling their food consumption and general access to food. The tensions related to their ability to resist food consumption

outside of their disciplined eating practices was evident. It seems that the student-athletes in this study all struggle with 'giving in'. The parents' presence seemingly makes discipline and techniques of the self more difficult.

The 'guilt' student-athletes discuss is not one strictly pertaining to the consumption of food; student-athletes also feel guilt associated with the rejection of the food available to them. Francois (a first year cross-country runner) clearly illustrates this sentiment in his intricate discussion of his parents influence on his eating practices. He stated,

I find for me there is a bit of a struggle almost. Well, my parents are divorced so if I go to my dad's house, I mean he smokes, his girlfriend smokes, the house stinks like smoke and they - they don't eat very healthy either. She has a lot of fatty foods, there's a lot of cream and ya know, the old rich diet... So I find whenever I'm there I find myself feeling like I'm being rude by rejecting something that they have made. I will feel like I don't really want to eat this but I don't really. I guess if there was any influence on my dad's side it would be I don't want to eat like that. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

He continues to discuss 'his' home, more specifically his mother's home as the healthier house. He stated,

I do find that where I live more in my mom's house there is always ya know healthy foods to eat and typically I'm not home for meals anyways. I'm either here or I'm at work doing something so most of my food I'll make by myself. (Individual Sport Focus Group #1)

Similar to others, Francois loses control over his regular routines and self-management when he visits his father. His more permanent living situation, with his mother, allows him to gain control over the foods most readily prepared in their home. He further identifies that there is often somewhat of a ‘role reversal’ between himself and his mother; as she seeks to learn more about diet from a health perspective. This statement clearly illustrates the accessibility for Francois to make his own choices and his ability to inform his mothers’ interests in diet.

5.4 Sport as a Tool to Rationalize Health Practices: A Look at Cutting Weight

In this section I focus particular attention on wrestlers and the act of cutting weight. For wrestlers, the act of cutting weight was rationalized by its obligatory existence in the sport. Cutting weight means rapid weight loss prior to a competition. Student-athletes recognized that the process of cutting weight is seen by individuals outside of the sporting culture as dangerous and unnecessary, however they talk about their practices as healthy and necessary as they rationalize such practices in terms of their sport demands. One focus group which involved three wrestlers and one cross-country running provided valuable and detailed information surrounding the process of cutting weight and weigh-in. Although ‘cutting weight’ can be deemed as dangerous, I analyze the discursive practices within the process that seem to be normalized among research participants and perhaps more broadly in sport. Wrestling participants commonly spoke of ‘cutting weight’ as a requirement of wrestling that can be seen as a customary practice. The process seemed to be justified and explained as a *mandatory component* of the sport itself, by both Susan (a second year wrestler) and Doug (a third year wrestler). Doug also described the process of cutting weight as *‘business as usual’*; while many others

seemingly described the processes involved in cutting weight as comparable to having a part time job or taking an extra course at university. Such a reference was made in relation to the time commitment and dedication sport takes, similar to having a part time job or taking an extra course at university.

For student-athletes, cutting weight was significant because it could impact one's success in the sport and the weight categories allowed for individuals to train and compete if they belonged to a specific weight class. In a focus group discussion, two wrestlers discuss such notions when they state,

Susan: If you want to wrestle you have to make weight class. Cause I mean, if me and Robert were in the same weight class and Mary can only send one wrestler, our coach Mary, umm, we'd have to wrestle off and then, or we'd have to change weight class, right.

Robert: And that'd be bad for the team to have to wrestle off. It's a lot better to drop down and make a different weight class then have somebody sit at home when they could be competing, right. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

As shown in this conversation between athletes, cutting weight is not simply a practice athletes engage in to achieve performance success; it is understood as a direct element of the sport discipline. Many athletes talked about how individuals outside of the sporting culture consider such practices to be dangerous or unnecessary. Susan (a second year wrestler) provided a clear example when she talks about her coaching experience with young wrestlers. Specifically, she talked about a grandparent not understanding why the athlete, her grandson, could not eat McDonald's as a reward for his participation in a competition they had attended. She mapped such an example onto her life, as well as fellow teammates. She states:

They just don't get it... Like you said [referring to a fellow wrestler], it is mandatory. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

As student-athletes come to understand the process of cutting weight as ‘mandatory’, they begin to open up alternative ways of understanding and using those techniques or practices that result in the most *optimal* weight loss. Many of the athletes talk about developing an ‘expertise’ for cutting weight – as they have learned through experience. Robert (a second year wrestler) explains how the process is socially constructed in the sport:

Well, in high school for the first time I cut weight I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I was, I had a coach who told me what to do and I was just like I don't need to do that, I'm going to do this. It was kinda a learning experience and that probably wasn't the best [Pause]. Had I listened to him it would have been smart, but like doing it on your own I didn't approach it the right way. Whereas now, you start to cut on time and you do it more so with diet then [Pause] say dropping a lot of weight. You know how to hydrate yourself properly and it's just, there's a way to go about it. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Interestingly, Robert's response is a result of being asked whether the stigma surrounding cutting weight involves healthy practices. Based upon his words and the tone, which sounded confident and assured, Robert used the practices or techniques involved in cutting weight to illustrate how there is a healthy way to lose weight. There was no pause to question whether cutting weight was not appropriate for the sport. The discipline needed to cut weight in a healthy way could be planned and followed; again, another example of how practices in sport seemed to be normalized. With regard to the eating component of weight cutting, Robert's understanding represents more of a ‘science of sports nutrition’, as described by researchers Burke and Cox (2009). The researchers

discuss this particular science as one becoming so sophisticated that specific eating strategies are now developed to suit not only each combat sport, but even each type of competition or workout undertaken by the athlete. They suggest that supporting the fuel and nutrient needs of training will allow the athlete to train hard, recover quickly between sessions, maintain health, and reduce the risk of injury. Robert describes his practices within a similar context. The need to make weight in his sport dominates his nutritional interests but in a way he sees as normal. For Robert, weight cutting appears to be a science of nutritional modification matched with a specific training regime. His level of experience with weight cutting places him in a confident position, as he has learned the particular ‘science’ behind it.

Susan (a second wrestler) similarly indicated that experiences from high school made cutting weight significantly easier. She stated,

Umm, to cut weight this year, like, umm, basically just – I only started cutting like four days before and I had about eight pounds to cut but I found it really easy because like Robert said, we had a lot of experience from high school. So you just basically eat oranges and egg whites and pieces of chicken breast for four days. It’s actually not that bad and the last day you just sweat it out a lot on the treadmill [Pause], with a lot of clothes on. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

In addition, Susan recognized the importance of the coach in developing early experience and knowledge about cutting weight. She stated,

Our coach in high school, he did like [he is related to this athlete –his name and association has been removed for confidentiality purposes], he did force some people to cut a lot of weight but he let them know ahead of time. But I don’t think

he's made anyone do that [make someone cut a lot of weight in a short time] in high school, just because you know he was trying to teach us early the healthy way to do it. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

For Susan, those who cut weight dangerously are solely a result of their own actions. In discussing a fellow high school teammate who became 'sick' as a result of his cutting practices, she ensured the group that 'it was his own decision, it wasn't the coach'. Similar to Robert (a second year wrestler), Susan acknowledged the negative stigma but resists such attitudes, as individuals can and should learn how to proceed with the practice in a "healthy" way. She followed up her explanation of cutting weight by stating,

But a lot of people, there's like a negative attitude towards it [Cutting weight] but it's not that bad... There are extremes, there are wrestlers who go and cut a lot, like fifteen pounds in a day but none of us have ever had the need to do that.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

By taking up their own ways of engaging in practices of cutting weight, while resisting many others, these student-athletes create individualized ways of preparing for competition. They understand such ways as healthy; healthy being defined as mandatory but not dangerous. When student-athletes were asked to describe dangerous ways of cutting weight, Robert (a second year wrestler) eagerly extended his understanding of such practices. He states,

Like somebody who doesn't like adjust their diet or anything coming up to it... And then like the day before they wanna make a weight class and they are say like, fifteen pounds over and like... And have to cut like a whole lot of water

weight like right away... It's just not [Interrupted], It's not smart... They just starve themselves and just like sweat for the entire day.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Fellow teammates suggest other unhealthy practices including working out in a sauna with garbage bags on or wearing multiple layers of clothing (winter coats, scuba suits). Interesting, when asked how 'cutting weight' differed from 'dieting', student-athletes indicated that training is the most obvious distinction. As Doug (a third year wrestler) said, "*definitely training as hard as we do just sucks the calories*". Fellow teammates discussed the addition of extra training sessions in collaboration with monitoring food intake. The association between the 'extra' training, on top of their regular training regimes and practices acted as a means to burn '*just an extra couple hundred calories*'. Participants further illustrated the importance of training as a means to curb hunger, in addition to the elevated consumption of water. In addition, student-athletes rationalized the increase in training combined with the decrease in food consumption by suggesting that such habits actually lead them to feel '*more energized*'. At the same time, some athletes did recognize the discomfort associated with the last days of the 'cut'. Doug (a third year wrestler) states,

I'd say, I'm for the most part, I'm more energized. When I'm on the go, I'm a lot hungrier, say in the off-season I don't really get hungry. I don't know why. But then I'm like, I can't wait for my next meal, I guess cause my metabolism is so fast. But like a day or two before when you're cutting weight and stuff [Pause] you're definitely pretty tired and dragged out then.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Similar to Doug (a third year wrestler), fellow teammates defined the day of competition as the ‘*worst*’ day. Robert (a second year wrestler) referred to the entire process of cutting weight as comparable to a “*big runners high... up until the day of*”. The depiction of the ‘*worst*’ day is inscribed with notions of hunger and fatigue. As participants consider the weigh in, they eagerly search for a normalization of the associated feelings. This is suggested through the quick action of participants to finish one another’s sentences. This is evident in the below conversation between participants where they discuss the last couple days of the ‘cut’, including the day of the competition:

Doug: *You probably haven’t eaten in a while so you’re just...*

Susan: *[Cut In] But as soon as you, as soon as we eat, you’re just...*

Robert: *[Cuts In] Fine.*

Susan: *Fine, like completely fine.* (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Weight regulation has been suggested to help elite athletes develop a feeling of belonging to the specific sport culture and assists in the formation of a sport identity by influencing one’s own perception and comprehension of oneself as an athlete, as well as how one is perceived by others (Pettersson, Ekstrom & Berg, 2012). The student-athletes in this study talk about weight regulation and ‘cutting weight’ as a mandatory component of their sport, one which connects them and distinguishes them as a unique population. Additionally, weight regulation provides a means for athletes to reduce feelings of uncertainty. Such findings are supported by the recently published work of Pettersson, Ekstrom and Berg (2013) on practices of weight regulation among elite athletes in combat sports and the advantages they provide. Similar to the athletes within the aforementioned study, the student-athletes’ involved in the current study gain control over their uncertainty toward competition through controlled eating regimes. It allows them to

invest their energy into things under their own control. In the following chapter, this health practice will be discussed in terms of the pleasure student-athletes derive from cutting weight. Although student-athletes talk about cutting weight as a mandatory part of their sport, it is clear throughout their discussion that it too is also pleasurable for the athletes.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has presented a look into the diverse healthy or potentially unhealthy surveillance practices encompassed within the sport culture and the role of coaches and parents/guardians within sporting contexts or in relation to eating and training practices. In particular the wrestling example highlights how coaches can inform sport-related practices that may not be healthy, but if constructed in the “right” way, student-athletes accept and reproduce these practices as healthy. The current study does not seek to extensively examine the relationship of each of the three components of this chapter (i.e. coach, parent/guardian and sport), but rather seeks to recognize the considerable role each plays in shaping an athlete’s interpretation of the sport culture thus influencing their notions of health. The following chapter will build upon many of the constructs exposed and discussed within this chapter. Specifically, it will approach the dialogue of the athletes in terms of the pleasure associated with their sport participation and restrictive health practices.

Chapter 6 (Pain/Pleasure)

Sport is not forced labour; it must be and does include a strong voluntary flavour.

(Heikkala, 1993, p. 401)

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I briefly touch on the manifestations of pain and pleasure within sport, as they are understood by the student-athlete. I begin the chapter by drawing on the work of Foucault and his depictions of disciplinary power to better understand the pleasurable connections student-athletes experience in and through competitive sport participation. I then direct the remainder of the chapter towards the notions of pleasure as it relates to pain. There appears to be an inevitable pain associated with the physical and mental demands of elite sport. Shilling (2003) describes such pain as a form of bodily capital. This description of pain, resonating in the form of muscular discomfort and exhaustion, signifies improvement within the sport culture. It is through such pain that student-athletes achieve an internalized gain of superiority and efficacy. My research focuses on how student-athletes use this pain to establish what they perceive as pleasurable experiences. It is the manifestation of pain within pleasure that makes my study a valuable contribution to this body of literature. In a latter section of the chapter, I also discuss pain as a product of injury – drawing on the athlete’s narrative surrounding pain and injury. Based on the shared narratives, I analysed the gender dynamics surrounding pain and injury and the broad ideologies student-athletes construct. Finally, I discuss the influence the coach has on student-athletes understandings and experience of pain and pleasure within sport.

6.2 Pleasurable Connections in and through Competitive Sport

My analysis is drawn from the work of Foucault and his approach to disciplinary power and the political investments in the body. I have taken these concepts and applied them to sport, similar to Shogan (1999). Foucault's *'Technologies of the Self'* (1988), assist in theorizing embodiment based on participants' comments and understandings of health. Within Foucault's work he portrays technologies of self as ways in which people put forward or surveil their selves in society, and the ways in which they are enabled or constrained in their use of different techniques by available discourses (Foucault, 1988). For athletes, technologies of the self include such elements as being responsible for their bodily actions, committing to dominant ideas of health, and regulating their daily routines. Combined, these operationalization's become normalized in sport and within athletes' daily lives.

There is a pleasure or desire associated with sport participation that is based on student-athletes' investments into their bodies through specific disciplinary techniques that have been elaborately analyzed in the preceding chapters. Their participation involves a deliberate intent, by their own means or with the help of others, to subject their bodies to practices, which will transform their bodies in order to attain a certain state of 'perfection' (Foucault, 1988). Through these technologies athletes learn to become intensely aware of the importance of the body and adopt the technologies to allow them to achieve a certain way of being, or a certain state of being (Foucault, 1988). Through the use of such technologies, namely regimented eating and training routines, athletes draw a fine line of what is acceptable and unacceptable within their sport participation. For example, Johns and Johns (2000) demonstrated that wrestlers, synchronized swimmers

and track athletes consider nutrition as a necessary dietary obsession for their athletic preparation. The athletes in the study did not consider their relationship to food to be transgressing any natural biological parameters. Johns and Johns (2000) noted how these practices were rationalized and normalized as part of athletes' lives. In general, similar rational approaches to food and relationships with eating were found in the current research project. Wrestlers, in this study, took pleasure and enjoyed disciplining their bodies while also surveilling their food consumption. These findings will be discussed in more depth in a later sub-section of this chapter.

Through deliberate practice and conformity athletes are often viewed as a population that makes sacrifices for their sport participation, or "the game". They categorize and compartmentalize their interests to focus on sport training and other possible interests are intentionally denied, demonstrating a commitment to their respective sport. Athletes themselves construct the discursive effects of cultural practices within sport in and through the interrelationships with coaches and fellow athletes. For athletes, sport participation is not viewed as any sort of sacrifice; rather ideas about commitment are continuously produced and reproduced through the way athletes view themselves and others. Interestingly, the student-athletes in my study did not identify their training regimes as a form of '*sacrifice*', per se. But they did talk about their training regimes and eating practices as habits and choices. Athletes talked about the freedom to make decisions, yet they also acknowledged the power of their sport culture in shaping that freedom, and thus their training and eating practice habits and choices. Student-athletes stated that they had chosen this path with an inherent interest in the sport based on the physical demands, social interactions, and comparative processes (i.e. athletes

being compared to other athletes and comparing themselves to other athletes). Through discussion of their sport participation, student-athletes constructed sport as an enjoyable experience, a component of which is related to the recognition that coincides with the commitment, dedication and perseverance that comes from being identified as an athlete. In addition, being a student-athlete carried a sense of prestige and pride.

Nichole: *So how does it make you feel to be part of Memorial University athletics?*

Robert: *Warm and fuzzy.*

Susan: *Umm, it ahh, people recognize you as an athlete which I kind of like. I like being recognized as an athlete. A student-athlete is even better [than the athlete title alone] because it shows that you have certain characteristics and I don't know, my families' proud, my friends are proud of me.*

Nichole: *Yeah?*

Susan: *So yeah, warm and fuzzy is a good description.*

Nichole: *[Addressing Amy] And how about you?*

Amy: *I just like...the cross-country team we have sort of a like a family. Well, the group is so close. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)*

Recognition for being a student-athlete brings with it a sense of belonging and descriptive words that convey a sense of pleasure and fondness. For Susan, the deep sensation of pleasure is associated with the recognition she receives from her friends and family over her status of being a student-athlete. Through the internalization of her family and friends sense of pride for her, she noted a sense of warmth that seemed more internal than simple recognition from other people. Other student-athletes also discussed an internalized sensation of belonging and connection that arose through their sport participation. It is the influence of the team/group dynamic, a sense of familiarity and mutual understanding that accompanies their sport involvement that constructs student-athletes as occupying pleasurable subject positions. In the above discussion, Amy clearly directed her attention away from the status of being a student-athlete to focus her attention on the pleasure she

took from being part of a team, what she described as a family. For others, the pleasure derived from sport provided a well-rounded university experience. Robert (a second year wrestler) stated,

It's a sense of comradery almost – the fact that you are part of a team.

(Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Doug (a third year wrestler) further expressed pleasure, in the Foucauldian productive sense. He required little to no coercion to conform to the expectations set for most productive university students. Rather, he embodied the opportunity to be focused and driven. He stated,

Yeah, it feels like I did something while I was in university [referring to his involvement in university wrestling], instead of just partying all the time and going to class. (Individual Sport Focus Group #2)

Similarly, Robert talked about his participation in a similar context. During his first two years of university he did not wrestle. In describing this part of his life he talked about his regret for not participating in those early years; referring to his lack of participation as a 'huge mistake'. In the context of this statement, Robert related his experiences to his fellow teammate and focus group participant, Doug. Like Doug, Robert felt that sport provided him with a fulfillment that he 'did' something while he was in university. To these student-athletes, sport filled in the gap to make their university participation seem complete. Like other student-athletes in the current study, Robert (a second year wrestler) and Doug (a third year wrestler) derived pleasure in what a student-athlete embodies and represents. Student-athletes use the visceral connection to their bodies to derive a sense of pleasure while being in a university setting. They have a love for the game and they

dedicate endless time, energy and resources to sport being part of their university experience. This theme of body regulation and commitment strongly links back to Foucault's concept of power being productive in that people take up and occupy specific positions within society while at the same time derive some form of pleasure from being a disciplined body. Productive power signifies the ability of discourse to produce subjects with different social identities and characteristics yet these positions are relatively uniform as dominant disciplinary practices are normalized within social structures (Foucault, 1988). For the student-athletes in this study, their sense of athletic being is constructed through the disciplinary and normalizing techniques of power – a productive power which reproduces desirable characteristics of a 'student-athlete'. In one focus group, student-athletes recount their sporting experiences prior to university to explain their investment in university sport.

Nichole: *Why did you join varsity athletics?*

Karla: *Well I knew most of the girls. I played soccer with them anyways so that just interests me.*

Ang: *I just love playing the sport. I wanted to keep playing it.*

Zack: *Yeah. That's the same with me. Coming out of high school, umm, I came to Memorial to play basketball, so.*

Dan: *Yeah same with me, I guess. I played like all-star soccer and high school soccer so I just kept doing it, I guess.*

Ang: *I just wanted to keep increasing the competition.*

Karla: *Well, you hit that age where you don't really have anything else, cause you're done like minor soccer...*

Dan: *Yeah... you probably want to play for your school too. It's fun.*

(Team Sport Focus Group #2)

These team sport athletes discussed their feelings of being part of Memorial University's athletic program as fun and all around an enjoyable experience. University sport was noted as bringing many pleasurable moments into the student-athletes' lives. These athletes also identified feelings of disappointment that emerged when seasons or official

training times terminate. Karla (a first year soccer player) actually described her involvement as a learning experience. She stated,

It was [referring to her first year involvement] a learning experience. Like I learned a lot and it was – I had a lot of fun. At times you were like when is the season ever going to end and then when it's over you are depressed [Laughs].

(Team Sport Focus Group #2)

The fellow members of the focus group shared a common sense of disappointment with the season ending:

Nichole: *Is it a relief when your sport finishes for the year or is it like you guys said you feel depressed?*

Ang: *For like one week you like, yes! I don't have anything to do.*

Karla: *Great.*

Ang: *And then once that week's done I'm – I miss it.*

Karl: *Yeah.*

Ang: *And I want to start up training right away.*

Nichole: *Do you guys miss the actual sport or do you miss being active?*

Ang: *Both.*

Zack: *Yeah, both.*

Karla: *Umm, I would say being active. It was a huge system shock going from where our season is so short and it's every day, fitness every day. And then you go from that to doing nothing.*

Dan: *It's much more the team thing for me. Like I play hockey during the winter so I'm always doing something. But I just like being around the team all of the time. When it's over you sort of miss it.* (Team Sport Focus Group #2)

It is apparent that pleasure is multi-dimensional to student-athletes and it resonates for different athletes in a multitude of ways. Pleasure is strongly associated with a sense of belonging and part of that process is established through eating and training routines. While not always considered for health reasons, the student-athletes in this study did negotiate their food and training regimes in relation to their spot on a varsity team. Student-athletes also took pleasure from the self-perceived status of being a student-

athlete and the identity this position provided for them among their peers and family members. The social interactions and team dynamics were also noted as important and pleasurable experiences.

Identifying the pleasurable moments and connections offered through sport was a central theme in this project. However, I would be misguided if I did not identify the parallel theme of pain that also appeared in student-athlete narratives. There is pleasure associated with competition and pushing one's body through pain to achieve a higher or stronger performance outcome is pleasurable but also painful. In many cases, the pleasure associated with competition is the reward obtained from the dedicated work student-athletes put into practices and/or games (i.e. making the travel roster, more playing time), yet these accomplishments do coincide with challenging the body and the mind to endure circumstances and practices that can shift from pleasure to pain and back again. Gard (2000) in his research with boys and embodiment noted that talking about pain is actually a currency that enables masculine identities to emerge. Given the gendered dynamic of pain and pleasure and sport's cultural construction of pain and pleasure, the following section outlines how student-athletes came to understand their participation in sport as a negotiation of pain as a pleasurable experience(s).

6.3 Painful Realities made Pleasurable

A good example of the association between pain and pleasure, as a normative part of sport, is constructed in wrestlers' dialogue in both individual interviews and focus group discussions. Although perhaps not a healthy practice, the wrestlers in this study commonly talk about cutting weight as an enjoyable and rewarding experience. In connection with the research conducted by Johns and Johns (2000), the wrestlers in the

current study understand the practice of weight management through cutting as a normal and consistent component of their sport participation. While discussing the foods they consumed during a cut they demonstrated an enthusiasm towards their restrictive practice(s) and a sense of pride in their ability to maintain such discipline. One athlete, Ronald (a fifth year wrestler) referred to the process of cutting weight as comparable to a 'runner's high' referring to his euphoric state during the prolonged process of cutting weight. Interestingly, his fellow teammate Doug (a fourth year wrestler) also talked about feeling 'more energized' from his restrictive and regulated eating and training practices. Although this process may seem exhausting to those outside of sport, cutting weight was rationalized by student-athletes as providing them with a competitive advantage. From a physiological sense, the potential exhaustion experienced through restrictive eating practices and increased training is ameliorated by the body's release of endorphins that make periods of fatigue/exhaustion pleasurable rather than painful.

For the male wrestlers there is a pleasure in eating like a 'caveman'; or eating only those foods which can be found outside. This pleasure exemplifies a self-proclaimed masculinity that is defined by their eating practices (Johns & Johns, 2000). The 'caveman' diet identified by male student-athletes in this study reinforced a sense of masculinity and extreme maleness. In Gard's (2000) terms, the restrictive eating practices and the 'caveman' diet provided currency to talk about their bodies and body regulating practices. The wrestlers took up the masculine, habituated roots of the prehistoric caveman, to represent strong and fearless capabilities in relation to sport. In addition to the symbolic value of such eating practices, the rewards of eating a restrictive diet in and of itself was identified as providing further pleasure for athletes (Pettersson, Ekstrom &

Berg, 2013; Burke & Cox, 2009). In this study, both the identification of the type of diet and the normalizing processes of restrictive eating suggests male student-athletes take pride in a ‘shredded’ body obtained through regulation and discipline. The aforementioned example leads into the following sub-sections, which discuss the complex relationship between pain and pleasure, as it exists within the sport culture. I use a critical analysis of power within sport to analyze the interconnection between pleasure and pain within student-athletes’ lives.

6.4 The Manifestation of Pain within Pleasure: A Critical Analysis

For the remainder of this chapter, I focus on ideas of pleasure that are associated with feeling pain, the risk of injury and the actual injury itself. Through an examination of physicality I identify how pain, the risk of injury, and injury itself come to be accepted as normal components of sport participation and performance. Outside of the common sense understanding that people participate in sport because of the way these activities make them feel, there is discrepancy between research findings surrounding why people remain involved in something that often produces painful experiences (Loland, Skirstad & Waddington, 2012). As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, student-athletes participate in sport for various reasons, all which provide meaning and purpose to the individual. However, it appears through my research that student-athletes share a sense of satisfaction and desire that comes from pushing their bodies through limitless boundaries and putting themselves at risk for injury or pain to experience moments of pleasure.

Loland, Skirstad and Waddington (2012) introduced the notion of pain as pleasurable through the realms of masochism or the tendency to take pleasure from one’s pain and suffering. According to the aforementioned researchers, for athletes pleasure is

experienced through the prolonged pain they endure to compete at an elite level. The student-athletes in this study appear willing to place their bodies at risk in a variety of sport contexts. They talked about their commitment to sport as a profound factor in their willingness to take excessive risks with their bodies that are not necessarily beneficial to their long-term health. For example, student-athletes were less concerned with the risk factors associated with restrictive eating, excessive training or running extra miles than making the team, being part of the travelling roster or gaining extra playing time.

For both male and female student-athletes, dominant ideas about masculinity pervade sport. Thus, student-athletes masked their pain to be stoic, firm and non-emotional as this is symbolized as a sense of strength and dedication. Furthermore, through their experience as elite athletes, they became accustomed to witnessing and experiencing pain and injuries. Seemingly, the constructions of pain and pleasure largely reify dominant sport discourses that reinforce athletes to play through pain (Johns & Johns, 2000; Loland, Skirstad, & Waddington, 2006). Shogan (1999), in her work with high performance athletes, notes how playing through pain in elite sport symbolizes fearlessness, toughness and sacrifice suggesting that these expectations are essential within any high performance sport community.

As dominant constructions of pain and pleasure have been acculturated into athletic participation, the student-athletes in this study have also learned how to manage their bodies in a certain way, hiding pain, tolerating injury and returning to play sooner than one should to avoid the foreseen repercussions of being weak, non-committal, selfish or self-indulgent. The student-athletes are aware that sitting out for even short periods of time sets them back and portrays them as 'weak' by definition within sport culture. For

some student-athletes it is the fear of a fellow teammate taking their position, or the loss of athletic capital that drives them to disregard pain. Such ideologies seem to call athletes to play through pain and injuries to show discipline and sacrifice for their team and, by extension, their coach. To ensure their role on the team is maintained and their skill and fitness continues to develop, athletes are reluctant to sit out or wait for injuries to heal before returning to play (Loland, Skirstad, & Waddington, 2006). For the student-athletes in this study, pain was simply negotiated as an inevitable outcome of their sport participation.

Interestingly, the participants talked about pain in different ways. They strongly based their understanding of pain and injury on whether they saw such elements as positive or negative in relation to their sport participation. For example, Dan (a first year soccer player) talked about injury as a positive symbol related to his dedication to his sport.

Dan: I find if you hurt yourself playing the sport then it's nothing to hang your head about. You're out there doing what you could but if you're doing something stupid on the weekend, like break your foot or something, like that, I'd be so ashamed about that almost. Yeah, like if you hurt yourself while playing your sport then...

Ang: Yeah, then it's something acceptable.

Dan: Yeah exactly, because it is part of the game. (Team Sport Focus Group #2)

In this discussion, both Dan (a first year soccer player) and Ang (a third year basketball player) acknowledged the acceptance of injury within sport. The student-athletes talked about putting their bodies on the line; internalizing a deeply embedded 'culture of risk' which forces them to tolerate injury and normalize pain. Inadvertently, the student-athletes understand that risk is a product of their sport participation. Although Dan did not directly discuss positive and negative pain, he makes associations about the places where

self-harm is tolerated or accepted. Another athlete, Bob (a fourth year basketball player) talked openly about his understanding of pain. He stated,

Richard [the coach] always talks about good pain and bad pain and he says good pain is something that, well it won't set you back anymore, and the bad pain is something that will hurt you more, like hurt you, make you like more injured, so... I guess there is a certain line where you got to draw.

(Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Interestingly, in response to being asked whether or not playing through risky practices is healthy or unhealthy, Bob stated,

I guess it's unhealthy, but like it could be healthy too because if you're hurting your team, you can't breathe on the floor, you can't play to the best of your ability [Pause]. I guess that's not really healthy either. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Here, Bob shows a complex negotiation between how he understands healthy and unhealthy practices. Initially, he defined healthy as knowing when to sit out for the purpose of not hurting the team's ability to succeed; if you are too injured to play you are not contributing to the team. Although he started his comment acknowledging that playing through an injury is unhealthy, he chose to negotiate this idea in relation to the team's health. Here Bob exemplifies the continuum between healthy and unhealthy practices. He does not truly come to a definitive realization of whether the practice is health or unhealthy. Bob negotiated the multi-dimensional facets that influence how he defines injury.

For the student-athletes, the positive aspect of pain and injury appeared to involve those injuries that are seen as commonplace among sport participation. For example, Cait

(a fourth year volleyball player) talks about ACL injuries in females as being a simple 'matter of fact', a reality for competitive female athlete. She states,

I mean every single team in the AUS has someone with one of those knee braces on, like, someone has torn their, has torn their ACL. Like, it's really common in female athletes. I think, I think it's because of our hips or something I heard.

(Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Here, Cait commonly accepts such an injury to be essentially unavoidable do to the physicality of sport and her gender. Her fellow teammate, Andre (a fourth year volleyball player) shared a common understanding of ankle injuries – “*It's always somebody's ankle*”. As ankle injuries seem to be the most prominent injury for volleyball players, little emphasis is placed on healing. In fact, the injury appears to be of little importance to the student-athletes and does not carry any gendered connotations.

As a common occurrence in sport, student-athletes seemingly desensitize the process of getting injured. Interestingly, despite there being little attention given to injury (i.e. ankles and hip injuries commonly occur as a product of sport being physical), as discussed in an earlier section, the student-athletes showed strong concern with not sitting out due to an injury. They emphasized the importance of playing through the pain and directed attention towards pain and injury in relation to performance. They negotiate whether it is healthy or unhealthy to play through an injury, but commonly appear to accept getting injured as an inevitable product of their sport participation. Such findings from the current study draw comparisons with work of Young, White and McTeer (1992), Nixon (1993) and the recent work of Loland, Skirstad and Waddington (2012). This common practice transcends multiple decades as athletes become more embedded within

their sport culture. This deep connection to sport seems to encourage athletes to succumb to the ‘culture of risk’ associated with elite sport participation.

Within the final section of this chapter, I will address the influential role of the coach on student-athletes understandings and experiences of pain and pleasure. Although not a primary focus on my research study, the following section provides valuable information about coaches and influential figures and their relationship to student-athletes sport participation.

6.5 The Influential Role of the Coach

Within the sporting culture, there has been reinforced support for the need for athletes to play through pain and injury by coaches, athletes and the surrounding environment (Johns & Johns, 2000; Prain & Hickey, 1995; Wright, 2000). As previously mentioned in this chapter, experiencing pain but denying its impact on the body or performance symbolizes fearlessness, toughness and sacrifice in sport. These characteristics seem to be normalized within the sport community. As dominant constructions of pain and pleasure have been constructed within athletic participation, athletes have learned to manage their bodies in certain ways: hiding pain, tolerating injury and returning to play sooner than one should to avoid the foreseen repercussions of being weak or losing one’s space within the dynamic structure of a team.

Through dialogue, it appears that the student-athletes in my study negotiate their understanding of pain through negotiating their coaches’ ideologies and projected stance on pain. The ideologies that the coaches held toward pain and injury are readily taken up by student-athletes as they negotiated their bodies and sport performance. Andre (a fifth

year volleyball player) exemplified this notion when he described his inability to sit out due to the overt demands of his coach. He stated,

I can't remember ever being a hundred percent and I don't even know what it feels like, but there's instances where, like this season, I went on a trip and like my wrist was hurt so I didn't practice at all for like two to four days before hand and then we went on a trip and we were getting smoked and he [the coach] was like you got to play, like this is getting ridiculous, you got to go play! And I had my jeans on sitting on the bench taking stats and he made me go get changed and then I had to like tape myself up but I didn't even do it the second game cause I had two games in a row. He said you're definitely not playing tomorrow and it happened again, so I just went on halfway through the game and played but like I knew I probably shouldn't have. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Here, Andre recognized the pressure placed upon him to compete. As a fifth year player, his role as a leader on the team left him with little time to allow for the proper healing of injuries. Although he experienced pain, he played through his injury based on the embarrassment his coach expressed, but he also did not want to let his coach or teammates down. Accompanying this statement, Andre stated that it is 'impossible' to say no to a coach when they need you play. He said,

When I go see the athletic therapist, my coach just says yeah he can play and she's [the athletic therapist] always like 'ahh, well I'm going to give him the final say', and 'ahh, I don't know'. And then he's always like 'yeah, okay come on'. It's not like a question at all. Yeah you're practising, come on.

(Team Sport Focus Group #1)

Cait (a fourth year volleyball player) shared a similar attitude with respect to saying ‘no’ to the demands of her coach. This is evident when she stated,

Our trainer always says don't - if an exercise is hurting you. A lot of us have shoulder issues, so he's like if an exercise is hurting you I will modify it. There is no need for you to train through pain but umm [Pause] like when we are practicing, I mean like, I'm really the only setter on the team. Like, we have other people but they play other positions. So, like when I hurt my back and my coach was like come on Cait we really need you for practice, it's really hard to say, well it's really hard for me to say no to him [the coach] ... Just because, like, I love him to death but [Pause] and like I love my team. I don't want to hurt them. But, at the same time, like my back was really hurt, so it's a tough decision.

(Team Sport Focus Group #1)

For Cait, there is an acknowledgement that playing through an injury is not always necessary; however due to the demands of her coach she experienced a struggle to decide when to draw the line, a commonality among the team sport athletes. Interestingly, although Cait talked about having many injuries she identified that she only ever sat out for one; when she had sprained ligaments in her back and actually could not physically move to play she was forced to sit out. In the narrative above, she also subtly identified that multiple players on her team have shoulder injuries. Again, these student-athletes' comments about bodies, injury, pain and sport suggest a desensitization that is normalized in sport participation.

Bob (a fifth year basketball player) also shares the tension of his fellow focus group participants. He stated,

There is definitely a pressure from coaches I find. I rolled my ankle and he [the coach] was like 'oh, that will be fine, just tape it up and I'll get you back in' kind of thing. Just like, assuming I'm fine. (Team Sport Focus Group #1)

The coach encouraged the athletes to play through pain; through inherent interest to gain success. Although student-athletes discussed the need to play through pain and associated injuries for the team and coach they regularly normalize the processes that enable them to continue to play as well as following the disciplinary directives of their coaches. These findings contribute to the gaps in knowledge pertaining to the complex coach-athlete relationship available within the current body of literature. Particularly it contributes to knowledge surrounding how coaches' attitudes influence athlete's ideas about health and healthy practices.

6.6 Summary

Although this research specifically investigated student-athletes perceptions and negotiations of their health and athletic practices, understanding how coaches influence individuals' relationships with their bodies and approaches to health provides beneficial information for both short-term and long-term injury prevention (and health) among this population of student-athletes. This chapter reveals the discussions circulating in relation to pain and injury within sport and the multidimensional understandings student-athletes hold regarding pain and pleasure. Throughout the focus group and individual interviews, student-athletes commonly spoke about pleasure and showed a strong enjoyment in sharing their narratives relating to how sport makes them feel. Pain, however, was presented as a contested event and complex feelings arising within athlete's narratives. Although pain was an accepted part of sport, how specific injuries were responded to,

especially by the coach, influenced how student-athletes further rationalized the connection to being injured as a normal experience. Although injury remains a commonplace occurrence within sport, it is clear that both male and female student-athletes negotiate when to test the boundaries of pain and while both genders have difficulty determining what acceptable pain is and what is not, each follows the disciplinary practices of sport as they play through pain and injury.

Chapter 7 (Conclusion)

Sport, in giving value to certain physical attributes and accomplishments and denigrating others, affirms certain understandings of how mind and body are related, how the social and natural worlds are connected. The identity of the athlete is not, therefore, a natural outgrowth of physicality but a social construction. Sport absorbs ideas about the respective physical potential of men versus women, whites versus blacks and middle class versus working-class or moral people. In doing so, sport serves to reaffirm these distinctions. (Wilson, 1994, p. 37–38)

7.1 Summary

The purpose of this thesis was not to dissect the prevalence of eating disorders across athletic populations, but rather through the use of detailed qualitative methodology, gain a greater understanding of student-athlete's relationships with food and exercise. Research has continued to look beyond disordered eating as it has been traditionally studied, giving focus to the meanings of the body, food and exercise relationship in athletes (Busanich & McGannon, 2011). This study contributes to the continually evolving body of literature within this field of research, providing more extensive understandings and detailed stories of student-athlete's sport participation and health practices in relation to embodiment. To obtain the presented findings, I listened to the stories of seventeen male and female student-athletes from a wide representation of university sports. These stories provided a diverse and holistic presentation of student-athlete's constructed meanings of the body, food and exercise, unpacking how student-athletes come to understand health within the context of university sport.

Sport is a mechanism that varsity athletes use to rationalize their eating and exercise practices. Whether such practices are 'healthy' or 'unhealthy' is arbitrary as individuals define such concepts within their own means. Through regimented eating and exercise and training practices athletes utilize their bodies in ways that continue to reproduce dominant ideologies of sport. Student-athletes used their sporting backgrounds and social influences such as coaches, parents/guardians and teammates to formulate their own ideologies about health in relation to sport. In some instances, student-athletes did resist and challenge dominant sporting discourses yet their approaches to health within sport seemed to reproduce dominant societal and sport ideals of health. Disciplined eating and exercising practices were important for success in sport. Correspondingly success in sport seemed to impact participants' narratives about health.

Research that focuses on the different ways males and females talk about their body, food and exercise, suggests athletes use the discourses made available to them thus both constituting sport and their choices in relation to sport performance (Gill, 2008; Krane, 2001; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004; Markula, Burns & Riley, 2008; McGannon, Johnson & Spence, 2011; Wright, O'Flynn & Macdonald, 2006). This research project significantly contributes to gender and sport research by exploring gendered discourses of eating and training practices; how male and female student-athletes come to embody a wide range of so-called health practices through disciplinary technologies that are seemingly normalized within team and individual sports. The significance of this study is outlined below.

Firstly, the current study provides a major contribution to research focusing on Canadian student-athletes. Although research surrounding Canadian youth and sport

involvement has increased in recent years, much less research has been directed toward Canadian university sport, especially Atlantic Canadian university sport. Secondly, many studies examining athletes and eating, athletes and training, and coach/parents' influence on athletes, have utilized quantitative methodological approaches (Burckes-Miller & Black, 1988; Garner, 1991; Striegel-Moore, Silberstein & Robin, 1986; Wilmore, 1991). Thus, to look beyond positivist notions of identifying 'disordered eating' patterns among this population, a post-positivist approach highlights a cultural shift that is needed to think about what is considered 'healthy' eating and training in sport and how this manifests in the lives of student-athletes. The use of qualitative methods enables the exploration of how health ideas are constructed by student-athletes to better understand how relationships with food and exercise are negotiated and experienced by athletes in the context of taken for granted social, cultural and gendered discourses of sport participation.

7.2 Delimitations

It is impossible to set aside my personal characteristics, experience and values as these have intersected with my understandings of sport and have been interwoven into this study. The student-athletes involved in this study were aware of my role as a student within the Faculty of Human Kinetics and Recreation at Memorial University, and my experience as a former varsity athlete at the university. Thus, my position as a student and former athlete may have influenced their responses to my questions regarding their athletic participation and health practices. Rather than eliminate my influence on the study and its participants, my goal was to initially understand my presence and position through self-reflection (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Thus, I believe my position as a former

varsity athlete both facilitates and constrains my interactions and relationships in various aspects of my study. Nevertheless, the researchers own biases, values, reactivity, and judgments shape data collection, analysis and ultimately the conclusions any research study offers (Creswell, 2009). I reflected upon my position in relation to the research and as an athlete through the research process.

Additionally, through preparatory courses during my degree I gained experience in qualitative data collection but more substantively a pilot study was conducted to develop my interviewing and focus group skills prior to implementing the project. While through the pilot study I established a logistical approach to the data collection questions it is also necessary to acknowledge both my role in the research and developing research skills. My study was designed to be exploratory however how I have operationalized variables may have unintentionally guided me towards collecting evidence related to my perspectives and experiences. Despite preparation, the questions and both non-verbal and verbal cues may have swayed some participants to answer in a certain way based on the researcher-participant interaction. At moments I was drawn into discussions as a former student-athlete, while at others I was astutely aware of my role as researcher. The excitement of the project, from both being an insider and an outsider, was taken into consideration through the data collection and analysis phases. To this end, I attempted to also involve the participants in the analysis of the data. I acknowledge that all research is premised around assumptions; however I have attempted to address my own throughout the research process through member checking and thematic consultation. Although my study has identified delimitations, I believe I utilized my resources and supervisory advice to conduct a thorough and concise qualitative study.

7.3 Limitations

There are a number of limitations I have identified in my research study. Namely, I recruited student-athletes from only one university, thus limiting the generalizability of my research findings to primarily Atlantic University student-athletes. In addition, the current study provided representation from only specific sports in the AUS conference, inclusive of cross-country running, swimming and wrestling, basketball, soccer and volleyball. With regard to data collection methods and procedures, only those student-athletes really interested in the topic or comfortable enough to participate in group discussions participated in the initial data collection component of the project. Additionally only some of the participants volunteered to participate in a one-on-one interview. However, more volunteered than anticipated and I did have criteria established to determine interviewees. Given that I was exploring discourses of health, the participants in this study volunteered because of their interest in the topic or their willingness to discuss the ways in which sport shaped their health pursuits. In addition, the group environment may have prohibited athletes from reporting all thoughts and feeling they may have had, especially given the discussion topics. The complexity of sharing eating and training practices among a population that is constructed as being health conscious and prone to self and other surveillance may have limited the types of information participants shared within the group and in the semi-structured interviews. These limitations are not uncommon when collecting empirical data in qualitative research studies.

7.4 Future Recommendations

There is limited research focusing on Canadian student-athletes health and participation in varsity sport; and there is less qualitative inquiry into the lives of student-athletes' as they navigate the pressures of academics and athletics at the university level. The Canadian context and more specifically, the Atlantic coast experience of student-athletes, make this study extremely valuable to the Canadian Intercollegiate Sport (CIS) system, and to university campuses across Canada. Several specific recommendations are provided to consider how student-athletes' constructions of health may be used to inform some of the sport policies at the university level. First, if athletic teams are engaging in weigh-ins, information could be shared about the benefits of healthy eating and exercise relationships from a trained professional, who is not connected with the coach. A health professional with sport nutrition knowledge and awareness of body image issues could inform athletes about healthy approaches to eating and exercising. The trained health professional being at arms length from the coach might help some athletes be more honest and responsive to their nutritional needs or their feelings of weakness that may arise for not receiving the proper or enough nutrients based on their training requirements. Much like addressing student-athletes with an injury, turning a blind eye to body image issues in sport, coaches can selectively see or respond to the health needs of athletes. Second, knowledge of cutting weight seemed common among the student-athletes and this can be a dangerous practice. Addressing these restrict eating and excessive exercising practices is paramount to protecting student-athletes safety. If peers know about these practices coaches and upper level administration must as well. Thus there needs to more knowledge presented about the dangers associated with normalized practices in sport and this can

begin in various levels of sport organizations, including high school varsity sports programs, university athletic departments, the Canadian Sport Institute and Sport Canada. Third, creating a culture where student-athletes have support to address their health and sport performance interests with athletes from other sports may minimize the hesitancy to talk about health-related issues with specific teammates. This should be an option for both team and individual sport athletes, as each group of individuals is hoping to be as successful as possible but together they can share concerns about their athletic and potentially academic performances. To establish this culture where long-term health is promoted coaches will also need further support to recognize, address and shift some of the (un)healthy practices of their student-athletes. Coaches write off the so-called anti-social behaviours of drinking and partying or activities for their student-athletes but providing more awareness and support for coaching staff to learn about the benefits of healthy eating and the longer term consequences of perpetuating cultures of ill-health or excessive training may have shorter and longer term benefits for student-athletes and sport.

In summary, by attending to the personal stories of university student-athletes within a socio-cultural context, coaches, sport administrators and health professionals or health practitioners can use this information about student-athletes' relationships with eating and exercise to better inform their communication about the complex meanings that construct athletic bodies, food and exercise. Understanding athletes' perceptions and negotiations of their health as it relates to training and eating can provide valuable information for coaches, administrators, parents, trainers and other athletes about the

ways in which sporting expectations guide the ways health plays out in the everyday lives of young athletes in Canada.

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Appendix A

Statement of Ethical Issues

Scholarly Review

This thesis is proposed to the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation. It has been reviewed by my supervisor/advisor, Dr. LeAnne Petherick.

Harms and Benefits

Harms

This study is proposed to have minimal harms as all participants involved in this study will only be requested to share information they feel comfortable disclosing. Focus group and interview questions will be asking student-athletes to reflect on their health practices which may reveal personal responses or practices that may require the assistance of a trained health counselor. All participants in this study will have complete access to the counseling services available at Memorial University of Newfoundland's University Counseling Centre (UC-5000). A detailed brochure of the University Counseling Centre services will be given to each participant upon completion of the consent form. Furthermore, it is possible that some of the information disclosed in the focus group discussions may be used outside of the group format. This risk will be clearly explained to participants. All participants will be asked to keep this in mind when responding to questions and respect for each other will be strongly encouraged.

Benefits

There are minimal benefits from participating in this research; however, through interaction with other student-athletes, this research is expected to help participants learn more about themselves and how they understand themselves in relation to their athletic

participation. Findings from the study may be used to further develop student-athletes support offered by MUN Athletics.

Free and Informed Consent

Prior to participation in the study, the primary researcher will convey the research purpose to all participants, through the use of both written and verbal descriptions. Following this protocol, it will be clearly communicated to participants that participation is completely voluntary, that all identities will remain anonymous and that resignation from the study at any time is possible without penalty. The primary researcher will discuss the procedures, harms/benefits and precautions of the study with participants. In addition, participants will be made aware that at any point throughout the research process, they may request that the information provided by them not be used. Participants will be informed that all in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be audio-recorded. After signing the consent form, each participant will have indicated that they understand both their role in the study and the purpose of the research.

Competence

All participants in this study will be completely competent to understand the objectives and consequences of the research, and to take part in both focus group and individual interview protocols.

Parental or Third-Party Consent

Not applicable.

Age of Consent

The participants involved in this study will range from varsity student-athletes completing their first year of eligibility to varsity athletes completing their fifth year of

eligibility. However, athletes under the age of nineteen will not be permitted to participate in this study.

Free Consent

There will be no coercion to participate in this research. Participants will be offered water/tea/coffee when participating in focus group discussions or face-to-face interviews, but no services or rewards will be exchanged for participation.

Recruitment Process -

Upon ethics approval from ICEHR, a convenience sample from the 2010-2011 varsity student-athletes will be selected in collaboration with the Athletic Director of Memorial University of Newfoundland. A written submission will be provided to the Athletic Director describing the scope and objectives of the research, the research rationale, and the role of participants in the research study. This formal recruitment tool will provide the Athletic Director with sufficient information to contact the coaches of all varsity athletic teams [See Appendix C]. Upon confirmation from the Athletic Director, the primary researcher will provide a verbal and textual description of the research to each varsity team separately. The textual description will contain contact information of both the primary researcher and supervisor/advisor in case anyone has further questions [See Appendix E]. Immediate questions will be entertained.

Classroom Administration of Questionnaire

Not applicable.

Deception

No deception will occur. The researcher will provide participants with information to the best of her abilities.

Documentation of Informed Consent

In order to participate in this study, all participants must have signed a written consent.

The Process of Obtaining Consent

For in-season varsity teams, the primary researcher will attend a practice or team meeting. All meeting times will be determined through contact with the coach of each team. For off-season varsity teams, the coaches of each team will be asked to contact their athletes through email to provide them with the textual description of the research, as shown in Appendix E. The primary researcher will be included on the email list, and advised of the interest of athletes through such contact. Sufficient time will be given to the participants to read the information given, as well as to ask any questions that they might have concerning the current study. After all questions are answered, and all information regarding the study is completely understood, a consent form will be administered to each participant. Two copies of the informed consent will be signed by both participant and the researcher; one copy for the participant and one copy for the researcher. All informed consent documents will be stored in a secure location in the supervisor/advisors office in the Human Kinetics and Recreation Department at MUN, and destroyed five years after the completion date of the study.

Consent for Various Aspects of the Study

Participants will be informed that face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions will be audio-recorded, and that the recordings will be transcribed and archived for a period of five years. If someone wishes to have the audio-recorder stopped

during a segment of the data collection process, the researcher will oblige. If someone entirely refuses to be audio-recorded they will be unable to participate in the research.

Consent vs. Release

Participants agreeing to participate in the research are voluntarily agreeing to the research process outlines in the project summary.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All information gathered from the study will remain confidential. The identity of all participants will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons; only the primary research and supervisor/advisor will have access to the research materials, which will be kept in a secured location for five years. To ensure that all issues of privacy and confidentiality are reduced, transcribed data will be locked in a separate location from informed consent forms. Any reference to the identity of the participants that would compromise their anonymity will be removed or disguised prior to the preparation of the research reports and publications. Participants will be addressed verbally and textually as their pseudonyms. Audiotapes/videotapes will be destroyed or erased after a five year archival period. Participants will be asked to disclose only what they feel comfortable sharing in the focus group and interview settings. Data collected will be only be used in relation to this research project.

Limits to Confidentiality

Although all information collected in this study will be treated in a respectful and private manner, limitations are proposed. Due to the focus group data collection method, all disclosed information will be available to fellow participants. Although the researcher will safeguard the confidentiality of focus group discussions, they cannot guarantee that

other participants in the research will follow such protocols. Prior to focus group collection all participants will be required to consent to complete privacy and confidentiality of all information disclosed in the sessions. Respect for confidentiality will be encouraged to all members of the focus groups.

As the information presented involves the disclosure of potentially unhealthy practices, participants may disclose information indicating that they may be in need of protective intervention or social support services. By law, the primary researcher must report such information to appropriate authorities.

Conflict of Interest

Not applicable.

Inclusiveness

This study will target the Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador varsity student-athlete population. For the purpose of the study all participants will be required to be current university student athletes, varying in year of eligibility of athletic participation. For the purpose of the study, participants will come from six different sports, inclusive of individual sports: cross-country running, swimming and wrestling; and team sports: basketball, soccer and volleyball.

Aboriginal Peoples

Not applicable.

A Note on Participation Observation

Not applicable.

Appendix B

Consent Form for Student-Athletes

Project Title: The qualitative analysis of university student-athletes' perceptions and negotiations of health practices and athletic participation.

Primary Researcher: Nichole Adams (School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Supervisor: LeAnne Petherick (Assistant Professor, School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Researchers: Nichole Adams

B.Sc Kinesiology [Hons]
Masters Student
Tel: (709) 689-6580
Email: v45nma@mun.ca

Dr. LeAnne Petherick

Academic Supervisor
Tel: (709) 864-4547
Email: petherick@mun.ca

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled, "A qualitative analysis of university student-athletes' perceptions and negotiations of health practises and athletic participation.

This form is the part of the informed consent. It is designed to give you a brief introduction to the research purpose and summarize what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about the material present, or information not included in this form, feel free to contact the primary researcher and/or academic supervisor.

Please take the time to carefully read this form and understand the information provided.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether you wish to participate or not. If you choose not to participate, or to withdraw from the study once it has started, there will be no penalty.

Introduction

The social constructions which have shaped how people understand what a varsity student-athlete must be enforce specific practices of eating and exercise with which athletes must engage in, and do engage in, to reach the "ideal" athletic form and

performance. Athletes in their desire to attain such perfection avidly monitor and discipline their bodies to achieve peak athletic performance. These performance expectations differ between sports and how each athlete comes to understand his/her health in relation to athletic expectations warrants further understanding.

Purpose of the Research

This study is interested in qualitatively analyzing Memorial University student-athletes' perceptions and negotiations of health practises and athletic participation. The emphasis of the research is designed to better understand the ways in which varsity student-athletes construct or develop notions of health practises and athletic participation; to investigate the health practices related to eating and exercise engagement by athletes in individual and team sports and Memorial University in the 2010-2011 athletic season; and to understand the gendered dynamics of health practices and athletic participation among student-athletes.

What you do in this study

Your involvement in this study will be to participate in a focus group, and possibly a follow-up in-depth, semi-structured interview. The focus group will consist of between six and eight participants, discussing their athletic training (i.e. eating and exercise practices). Questions will be asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members.

All focus group participants will be invited to complete a face-to-face interview. The selection of interview participants will be based on equal representation from genders, representation of team and individual sport athletes, and participants who present focus group narratives that illustrate dedication and investment to their sport. The interviews will consist of more specific discussion of participants' athletic training.

Length of Time

This research will involve your participation in a focus group discussion that will take between sixty and ninety minutes, and selected participants will also participate in a semi-structured individual interview that will take about sixty minutes. Both focus groups and individual interviews will be scheduled at a time that is convenient to participants and will take place within the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation.

Risks

This study is proposed to have minimal harms as all participants involved in this study will only be requested to share information they feel comfortable disclosing. However, as focus group and interview questions will be based on personal and confidential information, participants may provide information which may be upsetting to them despite the researchers' intentions. All students will be informed of the counseling services available at Memorial University of Newfoundland's University Counseling

Centre (UC-5000). A detailed brochure of the University Counseling Centre services will be given to each participant upon completion of the consent form.

Benefits

Through interaction with other student-athletes, this research may help participants learn more about themselves and how they understand themselves in relation to their athletic participation. In addition, this research can provide pertinent information for the Athletic Department at MUN as to whether or not they require more direct counseling or support resources for student-athletes.

Anonymity

All information gathered from the study will remain confidential. The identity of all participants will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons; only the primary research and supervisor/advisor will have access to the research materials, which will be kept in a secured location. Any reference to the identity of the participants that would compromise their anonymity will be removed or disguised prior to the preparation of the research reports and publications. Participants will be addressed verbally and textually as their pseudonyms. Audiotapes/videotapes will be destroyed or erased at the completion of the study. Participants will be asked to disclose only what they feel comfortable sharing in the focus group and interview settings.

Confidentiality

Although the researcher will safeguard the confidentiality of focus group discussions, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the research will follow such protocols. Prior to focus group collection all participants will be required to consent to the privacy and confidentiality of all information disclosed in the sessions. Respect for confidentiality will be encouraged to all members of the focus groups.

As the information presented involves the disclosure of potentially sensitive issues, participants may disclose information indicating that they may be in need of protective intervention or social support services. By law, the primary researcher must report such information to appropriate authorities.

Recording of Data

All focus group discussion and interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. If participants decline the complete audio-recording of the interview, participation will cease. However, participants are free to ask the recording to cease, if they choose to share information during an interview session they do not wish recorded.

Reporting Of Results

Upon developing concepts and generating theory, validated research findings will then be formally written in a thesis. All data collected will be destroyed after five years of being stored in a secure location.

Storage of Data

All informed consent forms will be stored in a secure location, accessible to only the primary researcher and supervisor/advisor, and separate from data collected during the focus group and interview. Data obtained from the focus group discussions and interviews will be kept with the researcher for analysis purposes, when not in use stored securely in a locked cabinet. Participants will be addressed textually as their pseudonyms.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. How do student-athletes interpret “healthy” eating and how do they practise “healthy” eating?
2. How do student-athletes engage in sport specific training? More specifically, how do they understand and practise “healthy” training in relation to their sport? Does this change based on fluctuations in athletic season?
3. Do significant others (like coaches and parents) influence or impact student-athletes understanding of practises of “health”?
4. How do the socially constructed notions of health practises and athletic participation vary between male and female student-athletes?

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact:

Primary Researcher

Nichole Adams
v45nma@mun.ca

Phone: (709) 689-6580

Email:

Supervisor/Advisor

Dr. LeAnne Petherick
petherick@mun.ca

Phone: (709) 864-4547

Email:

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee of Ethics of Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University’s ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the

way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature of this forms means that you have:

- You have read the information about the research;
- You have been able to ask questions about this study;
- You are satisfied with the answers to all of your questions
- You understand the purpose of the study and what your role as a participant will entail;
- You understand that the focus group and interview will audio-recorded unless you indicate otherwise;
- You understand that your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdrawal at any time, for any reason, without penalty.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights, and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form for your records.

Your signature indicates:

I have read and understood the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been successfully answered. I consent to participate in the research project, understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

Signature

Date

Researcher's signature indicates:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks for the study and that he/she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of the Investigator

Date

Appendix C

Letter for Athletic Director

(To be written in an email)

Dear Mrs. Healey,

I am a student of the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation of Memorial University of Newfoundland and am currently completing my Masters in Sport Psychology. I have writing you as a formal recruitment tool to seek approval for my research study.

My study is interested in qualitatively analyzing Memorial University student-athletes perceptions and negotiations toward health practises and athletic participation. The emphasis of the research is designed to better understand the ways in which varsity student-athletes socially construct notions of health practises and athletic participation; to investigate the discursive health practices related to eating and exercise engagement by athletes in individual and team sports at Memorial University of Newfoundland in the 2010-2011 athletic season; and to understand the gendered dynamics of health practices and athletic participation and among student-athletes. This research will involve athletes' participation in a focus group discussion that will take between sixty and ninety minutes, and selected participants will also participate in a semi-structured individual interview that will take about sixty minutes. Both focus groups and individual interviews will be scheduled at a time that is convenient to participants and will take place within the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation.

This study is proposed to have minimal harms as all participants involved in this study will only be requested to share information they feel comfortable disclosing. However, as focus group and interview questions will be based on personal and confidential information, participants may provide information which may be upsetting to them despite the researchers' intentions. All students will be informed of the counseling services available at Memorial University of Newfoundland's University Counseling Centre (UC-5000). A detailed brochure of the University Counseling Centre services will be given to each participant upon completion of the consent form. Through interaction with other student-athletes, this research may help participants learn more about themselves and how they understand themselves in relation to their athletic participation. Furthermore, the focus group and individual interviews may act as a resource for participants to further their knowledge regarding stress, health practices and athletic participation.

Thank you for your time and assistance with this project.

Nichole Adams
B.Sc Kinesiology

Dr. LeAnne Petherick
Academic Supervisor

Masters Student
(709) 689-6580
v45nma@mun.ca

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Appendix D

Verbal Recruitment Statement for Student-Athletes

Hello everyone,

I would like to thank you all for giving up your time to be here. I will take just a few minutes of your time. My name is Nichole Adams. I am second year Masters Student in the faculty of Human Kinetics and Recreation. My Master's Degree is focused in the discipline of Sport Psychology.

For my thesis project, I am qualitatively analyzing university athletes' perceptions and negotiations of health practises and athletic participation. I am looking for volunteers to participate in a focus group discussion, and possibly, depending on specific criteria, a semi-structured face-to-face interview. The focus group and interview topics proposed will revolve around discussing the ways in which varsity athletes interpret and practise "healthy" eating. In addition, how they engage in sport specific training and understand/practise "healthy" training in relation to their sport. Finally, both data collections methods will focus on examining how significant others (like coaches and parents) influence or impact student-athletes understanding of practises of "health".

The focus group will be approximately sixty minutes of your time. For those who are selected to participate in the follow-up interview, this will also take approximately sixty minutes.

This is a great opportunity for you to participate in a research project and share the experiences that you have through being a student-athlete. Participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, and later wish to withdraw their will be no repercussions or penalty. Please be assured that all information shared in the data collection methods will remain confidential.

Thank you for your time.

Appendix E

Textual Recruitment Statement for Student-Athletes

[Two copies of this form were provided to student-athletes – one form to keep and one form to submit to researcher. This allowed the researcher to collect contact information from student-athletes who are interested in participating but all student-athletes will return the form, thus limiting identification of who may or may not participate]

Hello everyone,

My name is Nichole Adams. I am second year Masters Student in the faculty of Human Kinetics and Recreation. My Master's Degree is focused in the discipline of Sport Psychology.

For my thesis project, I am qualitatively analyzing university athletes' perceptions and negotiations of health practises and athletic participation. I am looking for volunteers to participate in a focus group discussion, and possibly, depending on specific criteria, a semi-structured face-to-face interview. The focus group and interview topics proposed will revolve around discussing the ways in which varsity athletes interpret and practise "healthy" eating. In addition, how they engage in sport specific training and understand/practise "healthy" training in relation to their sport. Finally, both data collections methods will focus on examining how significant others (like coaches and parents) influence or impact student-athletes understanding of practises of "health".

The focus group will be approximately sixty minutes of your time. For those who are selected to participate in the follow-up interview, this will also take approximately sixty minutes. All focus group participants will be invited to complete a face-to-face interview. The selection of interview participants will be based on equal representation from genders, representation of team and individual sport athletes, and participants who present focus group narratives that illustrate dedication and investment to their sport.

This is a great opportunity for you to participate in a research project and share the experiences that you have through being a student-athlete. Participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, and later wish to withdraw their will be no repercussions or penalty. Please be assured that all information shared in the data collection methods will remain confidential.

I have provided my contact information below, as well as my supervisor/advisors. Please feel free to contact us at any time. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time.

Nichole Adams

Dr. LeAnne Petherick

*B.Sc Kinesiology [Hons]
Masters Student
Tel: (709) 689-6580
Email: v45nma@mun.ca*

*Academic Supervisor
Tel: (709) 864-4547
Email: petherick@mun.ca*

Please provide your name and contact information if you are interested in participating in this research.

Name: _____ Contact Info: _____

Appendix F

Focus Group and Face-to-Face Interview Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. *Please describe your participation in sport while at university.*
2. *Why did you join varsity athletics?*
3. *How does it make you feel to be part of Memorial University's athletic program?*
4. *Can you describe your relationship between athletics and academics since being at university?*
5. *Is it important other people know you are a varsity athlete? Please explain.*
6. *In general, what are some of the things you do to stay "healthy"?*
7. *Do you do these things with your sport participation in mind?*
8. *Are there any practises you engage in which you consider to be "unhealthy"? If yes, why do you consider these practises "unhealthy"?*
9. *Do you receive support to help make healthy choices from your parents/guardians or coaches? If yes, how so? If no, can you suggest why not?*

Interview Questions

1. *In particular, can you tell me how sport participation impacts your eating practises?*
2. *How much emphasis (i.e. time, effort, preparation) do you place on healthy eating? Does this emphasis change based on upon whether it is on, off or pre season?*
3. *Do you feel pressure to eat healthy? If yes, why? If no, why?*
4. *In particular, can you tell me how sport participation impacts your exercise engagement?*
5. *How much emphasis do you place on training for your sport? Does this emphasis change based upon whether it is on, off or pre season?*
6. *Do you feel pressure to train for your sport? If yes, why? If no, why not?*

7. *Do you parents/guardians or coaches have an influence on your eating choices and/or exercise practises? If yes, how do? If no, why not?*
8. *How do you define success within your sport?*
9. *How are the health practises you outlined related to achieving this success?*

Appendix G

Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Eligibility Used	Sport
Francois	1	Cross-Country Running
Jill	1	Wrestling
John	2	Swimming
Liz	2	Cross-Country Running
Brooke	2	Basketball
Bob	4	Basketball
Cait	4	Volleyball
Barrett	5	Soccer
Andre	4	Volleyball
Amy	2	Cross-Country Running
Susan	2	Wrestling
Doug	3	Wrestling
Robert	2	Wrestling
Dan	1	Soccer
Karla	1	Soccer
Zack	3	Basketball
Ang	3	Basketball