A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF GIRLS' PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ONE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Science
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ABSTRACT

A feminist, qualitative methodology was utilized in this study of girls age 11 and 12 in one educational setting. A combination of semi-structured interviews and participant observations provided a detailed picture of the girls' physical activity experiences. Data analysis indicated that the educational setting is an institution that reinforces patterns of male dominance through the "hidden curriculum". Girls in all three settings of this study, the playground, academic classroom, and physical education class, were prevented from achieving their full physical, intellectual, and emotional development as a result of both direct and indirect stereotypes and sexist ideologies. Children who did not conform to the dominant values of aggression, power, and strength challenged these values and discovered ways of negotiating their preferred mode of playing and competing.
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INTRODUCTION

The importance of physical activity for the general population has been widely recognized (Ontario Ministry of Health, 1992). Concerns regarding women's health have recently emerged with research indicating that physical activity can aid in the prevention and treatment of certain illness and disease (Drinkwater, 1994). The importance of incorporating regular physical activity into the daily lives of girls and women cannot be understated. Girls who feel confident and healthy in their outlook towards physical activity will likely experience a healthier adult life (Munnings, 1992). However, the low rates of physical activity participation have been cited in girls and adult women (Lenskyj, 1995). Questions arise as to the causes of such disinterest. Feminist sport scholars are moving towards a greater understanding of the deeper issues involved in the lack of participation of females in sport and physical activity. The issues of harassment, lack of female role models and media coverage of women's sport, inequitable programs, and lack of opportunities for female needs and desires have been increasingly included in sport and leisure studies literature (Hargreaves, 1994; Lenskyj, 1995, 1994b). Although many studies are emerging on girls' lived experiences in sport (Dewar, 1987; Varpalotai, 1987, 1995), more research must be undertaken to consider the daily context of the girls' lives and the numerous socializing influences that act to determine their participation in sport and physical activity.

This study locates girls' everyday experiences within a wider social context of gender relations. Relational analysis is a recent research phenomenon that has emerged in the socialization literature and employs ethnographic research methods (Donnelly & Hay, 1996). In attempting to uncover and understand the experiences of the grade five and six girls it was imperative that I include key feminist theoretical perspectives utilizing the ethnographic approach. Gender itself is "a major social and theoretical category...it is a conceptual tool to understanding the social world as well as a theoretical construct that requires careful, sustained analysis" (Hall, 1988, p.331). The issue of gender is central to this thesis and
interpretations of the present study are informed by various feminist theoretical approaches including liberal and radical feminist. In addition, the utilization of hegemony theory proved useful in the analysis and discussion.

A thorough review of the literature follows this introduction and provides detailed research in categorical and thematic form. I have selected research that is specific to the age of the girls in my study and expanded on studies that can contribute to issues of methodology and theoretical orientations. Chapter three highlights the rationale and purpose of my study which includes more detailed research questions that have guided this work. The research methodology I employ is located within a qualitative paradigm and utilizes one school site for an in-depth analysis of girls' experiences in physical activity.

The major results from my study are organized within categories that emerged from my data. In addition, I developed categories and themes that were similar to pre-existing literature and theories. I identified several problems in this elementary school that impinged on the full social, physical, and emotional development of the girls. My discussion in Chapter five develops the finding that the school is an avenue of reproducing gender inequalities, whether in the classroom, playground, or PE setting. The school should be contributing to the overall development of the individual but I discovered that girls are dominated in the PE class by boys who exert their power, aggression, and control in the activities. I also highlight, however, the acts of resistance by the girls (and boys) to the dominant notions of masculinity that prevail in this school. The final Chapter reiterates the major points of this study, and includes the implications for future research and recommendations for change.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review will present the major research findings related to girls in physical activity. For organizational purposes the following four realms of the educational setting will be addressed separately: (1) play, (2) sport and physical activity, (3) classroom setting, and (4) physical education.

For the purposes of this research, sport and physical activity will be defined according to Fitness Canada's *A Blueprint for Action: Active Living for Canadian Children and Youth* (1989).

Physical activity refers to human movement involving large muscle groups, total body movement, light to significant energy expenditure and pleasurable reinforcing activities typically pursued in games, outdoor leisure pursuits, recreational sport, dance, aquatics, individual or group exercise and play. It is an umbrella concept that incorporates physically active pursuits ranging from formally structure programs to those that may be quite spontaneous and informal (p.33).

The four categories of the literature review will inevitably overlap. A review of both the academic and physical education settings, for example, may result in common themes on the gendered nature of schooling. As well, research and theoretical perspectives in the physical education realm may overlap with points presented in the review of sport and physical activity. It will be the overall linkages between these settings that are important within a case study approach.

Play Literature

Early Play Behaviours

Research in the area of early childhood socialization recognizes that play behaviours differ between the sexes (Fagot, 1974, 1981; Greendorfer, 1993; Lewis, 1972). Michael Lewis (1972) researched "Sex differences in play behaviour of the very young", focusing on
one-year old infants to determine if sex role behaviour occurs earlier than three years of age. Lewis found that girls were more likely than boys to remain close and touch the mother. Additionally, the girls did not explore their environment to the extent of the males in the study. These behaviours were closely aligned with the differences in toy preferences as Lewis states that "boys used more gross motor activity, while girls used more fine motor activity. In addition, boys liked to bang toys and throw them about, while girls liked to play with groups of toys" (p.38).

Beverly Fagot's (1974) American study of toddlers between the ages of 18 and 24 months of age recorded parental reactions when both the mother and father interacted with their child. Fagot found that parents were less restrictive in the range of activities for girls than for boys, although fathers stated they would treat a girl more gently than a boy when they played. Additionally, mothers felt that it was necessary to curb the aggressiveness of a girl and be selective in the choice of a playmate. This study is an example of early play literature that reflects biological essentialism and neglects to question what external forces may be influencing parents to respond to the child's behaviour in a sex differential manner. An important issue raised in Fagot's and Lewis' (1972) studies is the physical space restraint on female toddlers. Thus, from an early age, girls are hindered in their spatial and gross motor movements.

In her analysis of the effects of early play behaviours on later sport development, Greendorfer shows that certain dispositions toward later physical activities can result from early socialization (Greendorfer, 1983). Fagot (1981) investigated the influence of teachers and peers in play situations. She cited less positive reactions from other playmates and the teachers when a girl engaged in high activity levels. This differs significantly from the response of the boys in the study who were encouraged for their more assertive behaviours. Greendorfer's (1983) critique of differential treatment is important in reviewing Fagot's study as the girls are effectively being socialized to limit their activity levels. In more recent research Greendorfer (1994) is critical of the differing child rearing practices that essentially
inhibit girls from moving their bodies in fluid, confident ways. The findings of Lewis (1972) and Fagot (1974, 1981) demonstrate that Greendorfer's concerns for more non-discriminatory play opportunities are necessary.

Female Deficit Literature

American researcher Janet Lever (1976) explores the consequences of children's leisure in promoting crucial role skills that result in success in modern society. In terms of subject selection, Lever had been progressive in conducting research on girls. This is in stark contrast to the research of Piaget (1965) who studied the development of moral values in boys' rule-bound games but neglected to examine any girls' games. Similarly, Mead (1934, cited in Lever, 1976) demonstrated the importance of play as an arena for developing complex role-playing skills but utilized young boys for her research. Sue Parrott (1979) demonstrates in her ethnography of a second-grade recess, the same pattern of generality that Piaget and Mead assume. Parrott neglects to mention the girls present in the playground and the only occasion that girls were mentioned in the research study was in the boys' descriptions of the games "girls catch boys" and "look under girls' skirt" (p.211).

Janet Lever's (1976) research uncovers many details of both girls' and boys' play patterns. However, Lever develops her work using the boys as the standard to which girls are compared. Such a study presupposes that the male model of play and subsequent development of social skills and capacities are viewed as worthy of emulation. Lenskyj (1994a) addresses the pattern of measuring girls and women by male standards of behaviour, referred to as the "female deficit" model. In terms of play patterns and participation styles, the values that girls attach to sport and physical activity (play included here) are not deemed important in light of the "male-defined world of competitive sport" (Lenskyj, 1994a, p.35). Janet Lever's research will be presented to illustrate some of the problems involved with using boys as the standard for all appropriate and future productive behaviour.
Lever's (1976) detailed research involved the collection of observational data, semi-structured interviews, written questionnaires and a diary record of playtime activities. Her subjects consisted of 181 fifth grade boys and girls from three schools. The results of this study found that boys play outdoors more than girls; boys play in larger groups; boys' play occurs in more age-heterogeneous groups; girls more often play in predominantly male games than boys play in girls' games; boys play competitive games more often than girls and boys' games last longer than girls' games (p.480-481). Lever's assumptions about girls' activities represent the female deficit model when she notes that "girls' play, to a large extent, is spontaneous and free of structure and rules; its organization is cooperative more often than competitive" (p.484) and boys possess "interpersonal skills [which] have obvious value in organizational milieu" (p.485). Lever used this study to examine the barriers that exist for women in reaching the upper levels of such careers as business administration. Feminists have critiqued Lever's work based on her assumption that in order to be successful in the traditionally male dominated areas, a girl/woman must play/work like a male (Gilligan, 1982).

Gilligan (1982) emphasized a female and feminist perspective in critiquing Lever's work. Gilligan's examination of Lever's research linked male models of corporate success to masculine values. Gilligan states: "In contrast, the sensitivity and care for the feelings of others that girls develop through their play have little market value and can even impede professional success" (p.10). This researcher's emphasis on female connectedness and relation to others is the hallmark of her critique.

**Girls' Play Preferences**

Research influenced by feminism has similarly identified social and fun aspects as important in girls' play and games (Branta, Painter & Kiger, 1987; Hoppes, 1987; Kraft, 1989; Lindsay, 1984; Malcolm & Mobily, 1989). Branta and colleagues' (1987) study of 90 000 Michigan children aged five to sixteen illustrated that girls by age eight still prefer same-sex peers and place emphasis on social conversation while playing. Lindsay (1984) studied
playground activities in ten Alberta elementary schools and concluded that girls were sociable and cooperative in their concern for each individual player in the game. The high degree of cooperation between the girls illustrated more focus on process than outcome. Lindsay viewed the boys' games as more product or winning oriented. This study provided an interesting point for further analysis; namely that boys and girls in mixed play groups found a balance between cooperative and competitive elements (p.11). Thus, both the boys and girls learned how to negotiate and enjoy varying degrees of play behaviours.

John Evans (1986) utilized naturalistic inquiry to examine the detailed workings of the game selection process in an Australian elementary school. He provides evidence of high interpersonal relationships among the girls and a generally less active involvement by the girls in team games. One teacher in the study replied that

the girls will start picking their girl friends first and the boys will start by picking the most capable boys. Every once in a while you have a girl who is really athletic and the boys will want her on the team; but overall, boys go after ability and girls go after friendships (p.7).

Evan's interviews revealed that the girls' interpretations and understanding of the game selection process were relevant in understanding their physical activity. As one girl stated: "well, kick soccer is a lot easier to play than football. Most of the girls can't throw or catch very good; also the boys don't usually want the girls to play football or basketball" (p.7). Evans illustrates how the boys assume leadership and responsibility for the game selection and team makeup. The methodology used in Evan's study is a positive example of how children's interpretations, and more specifically females voices, can show the varying perspectives of all children involved in games and play.

Girls' degree of social interaction during play time was examined by Robert Kraft (1989). His study of Delaware children during unstructured play time in the school setting was an attempt to determine the activity levels of children outside the formal physical education curriculum. It was determined that boys were more active than girls (45 percent
versus 38 percent) and girls demonstrated more social interaction than the boys. This social behaviour was a factor in the low levels of active behaviour found in the moderate to vigorous level coding groups (p.22). Hoppes (1987), furthers the sociability research in his report that girls at all levels of sport and play never cease to value kindness, cooperation and fair play elements (p.67).

**Gender as Socially Constructed**

"What is expressed in play is no different than what is expressed in culture" (Caillois, 1961, cited in Richer, 1990, p.64)

The literature to this point has emphasized differences in play between the two sexes without an examination of the larger processes that influence and at times, dictate these behaviours. Feminist research such as Gilligan's (1982) has provided new insights into the ways that girls relate to one another in relationships and how these can be viewed as positive rather than negative values. These values can viewed as worthy within a society saturated with predominantly masculine ideals.

The focus of the following review of research is the placement of play within the wider socio-cultural sphere. The view of gender as socially constructed and a product of prevailing systems and patterns of domination will be included (Bailey, 1993; Greendorfer, 1982; Hasbrook, 1993, 1995; Hughes, 1988; Richer, 1990; Thorne, 1994).

Stephen Richer (1990) succinctly states that what is missing in the play literature is

an attempt to link children's play to central social issues, in particular patterns of structured inequality; it is within the play world of children that the earliest beliefs about gender are presented and reinforced, beliefs that affirm the naturalness of horizontal and vertical gender differences (p.5).

The horizontal differentiation refers to groups that perform societal activities considered to be of equal value in society. A vertical differentiation allocates differing or unequal value to
certain activities (p.13). In his comparative examination of gendered play practices in Canada and Poland, Richer studies the degree to which prominent reproduction of gender inequality occurs. Children were asked to draw their favorite sport, game, or other activity in an attempt to get at dominant play practices. Richer's data consisted of drawings that showed differences between the play practices of girls and boys in both countries; "almost 40% of the Warsaw boys and over 50% of the Ottawa boys depicted inter-group competitive activities, the girls' depictions are largely of non-competitive play practices; such as skipping, recreational skating, and walking" (p.47). Additionally, a large number of girls from both countries include boys in their drawings which differs from the males in that virtually no girls are included in their favorite activity. This finding echoed the observations of Evan's (1986) research in which girls were more likely to include boys in their games and boys refused most of the girls entry into their more aggressive games.

However, Richer's (1990) interpretation of his findings extended beyond a statement of sex differences and subsequent sex stereotyping. He posited that boys in both societies, one capitalistic and the other state socialism (at the time of research), are overwhelmingly patriarchal. His concern with researching children's images of gender and play was an effort to understand how inequalities are maintained in society. Some of the important discoveries that Richer made that support his theory of a patriarchal system existing in Canada and Poland stemmed from the following examples; the tendency for boys to draw themselves as the largest and most prominent figures in their drawings; boys exhibited a much greater tendency than girls to draw human figures that spatially dominate the physical environment, and to provide little or no environmental detail (p.84-85). Richer concludes that his findings lend credence to the large differences between genders in both types of societies. He further posits that such differentiation parallels the staunch labour market and domestic differentiation in both countries (p.106). This study is provocative in its examination of gender differentiation in play activities and its resultant parallel to wider universal forces of power and domination.
Stephen Richer (1990) emphasizes that social change in power distribution between the sexes can occur with a commitment of both genders to resist, struggle and contradict the internalization of gender roles (p.4). Barrie Thorne (1994) addresses the issue of gender contradictions in her in-depth study of American elementary children's experiences of gender in the school. Thorne's book, *Gender Play*, highlights her central premise, that gender is socially constructed (p.3). Her research was grounded in the data from the daily lives of children. However, like Richer (1990), Thorne believes that children "act, resist, rework, and create; they influence adults as well as being influenced by them" (p.3). Her work is intent on discovering "how do children actively come together to help create, and sometimes challenge, gender structures and meanings" (p.4).

Hasbrook (1993, 1995) focuses on the gendering practices that occur in the context of a minority inner-city school in the United States. She focuses on young children as very few studies exist in this area of gender relations and social constructions of gender. Her use of participant observational data gathered over the period of four months identifies and describes how both intentional and unintentional disciplinary practices produce dichotomies in boys and girls with respect to physicality, sexuality, and bodily adornment (1993, p.2). Similar to Thorne's (1994) study of elementary children, Hasbrook focuses on the diverse masculinities and femininities that emerge in this young group of school children. Hasbrook also suggests that many children struggle to resist the dominant masculinities and attempt to define their own gendered identities. Of importance to the present study the subordination of femininities was a key finding in Hasbrook's two studies.

The emphasis in Thorne and Hasbrook's work moves beyond sex differences and into the realm of social relations and interactions. The emphasis on the contextual and fluid nature of relations between the sexes opens up the possibilities for social change. Indeed, Thorne emphasizes that literature and research that compartmentalizes boys and girls into separate groups and cultures "glosses the fact that interaction varies by activity and context" (p.102).
This point is relevant in all aspects of the school setting, including playgrounds, the classroom and physical education class.

Linda Hughes (1988) examines the dualistic nature of gender stereotyping in her study of girls' games. Hughes cites the cooperative/noncompetitive, active/passive, aggressive/physical versus verbal/symbolic as examples in the play literature that extol the differences between boys and girls. The feminist ethnographic framework utilized in this study focused on the ways that girls constructed their game. Hughes reports that the girls were more concerned with how the game was played and not, for example, the competitiveness of the boys in the group (p.685). Similarly boys in Hughes observations did not fall neatly into the act of simply getting girls out of the game. Similar to Thorne (1994), Hughes concludes that efforts must be made to counter the dualistic nature of play literature. She asserts that such research "will have the subtlety and richness of our understanding of children's everyday lives, to identify important continuities as well as discontinuities across and within gender boundaries" (p.686).

**Sport and Physical Activity Literature**

**Sport Socialization**

Sport socialization "refers to the complex processes by which individuals are encouraged to participate in a sport or physical activity, whether at the recreational or competitive level. Family members, peers, teachers, coaches, the mass media and the advertising industry all play an important part in sport socialization" (Lenskyj, 1994; p.7).

Sport socialization involves many of these influences stated and will be examined for their role in influencing female participation into sport and physical activity. A practical starting point of an analysis of sport and physical activity is a review of the literature that focuses on the gendered nature of this social institution. Thus, socialization through sport involves an identification and understanding of the traditional and current values and sporting
practices that act to define sport (Theberge, 1994). This evaluation of the literature will discuss the influence of peers, family and the school on sport participation for girls.

As feminist Nancy Theberge (1994) has noted in her analysis of sport socialization, it is necessary to "broaden our analysis to a consideration of sport as a social practice imbedded in a social and cultural context characterized by forms of power and domination and legitimized by ideology" (p.189). Additionally, she notes that sport serves as an important medium in which male domination is perpetuated and the reinforcement of gender inequality occurs.

**Sport as a Male Preserve**

Sporting practices today are replete with masculine characteristics. Lois Bryson (1990) summarizes the assumptions involved when sport is labeled as a male preserve:

To be better at sport (by implication even for those men who do not participate in athletics) is symbolically translatable into being better or more capable in other areas of life. Through a dialectical process, women, who are culturally defined and perceived as incapable of equaling men at sport, are rendered inferior and, by inference, less capable in many areas of life (p.173).

The definition of masculinity is, in effect, excluding those values or traits that are non-masculine, or "other" (Bryson, p.173). Included in masculine defined sport are the values of aggression, individualism, toughness and overemphasis on competition (Bennett et.al., 1987; DiIorio, 1989; Greendorfer, 1982; Kidd, 1990; Lenskyj, 1994a, 1994b; MacNeill, 1988; Nelson, 1994; Theberge, 1995; Whitson, 1990).

SanGiovanni and Boutilier (1983) address ideology, with the example of sexism as an integral part of the belief system that legitimates inequality. The explanation and justification of superiority for men in society pervades many, if not all institutions that involve relations between males and females (Connell, 1987). The authors discuss the persistence of sexual inequality in our culture and how individuals are shaped by this overwhelming belief system that "is taught to us from infancy and incorporated into our consciousness; it shapes our self-
images and affects the way we relate to others and how we experience the world" (SanGiovanni & Boutilier, p.94).

**Hegemony Theory**

Hegemony is a necessary concept to be identified in any literature concerned with gender and sport relations (Bennett et al 1987; Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; DiIorio, 1989). Judith DiIorio (1989) addresses this concept as "the processes by which ruling groups within society foster consent to relations of dominance in those they rule" (p.50). The important components of hegemony center around process and interaction between human beings in society. The struggle, negotiation and resistance of people acts to "retain their creative potential and with it the possibilities of developing collective, cultural expressions in opposition to those of ruling groups" (DiIorio, 1989, p.50). Connell (1987) provides a further elucidation of the concept of hegemony which will prove useful. He differentiates between social ascendancy based on force and ascendancy that is reliant on "a balance of forces" (p.184) These forces are what Connell regards as "states of play" and he continues,

> hegemony does not mean total cultural dominance, the obliteration of alternatives...other patterns and groups are subordinated rather than eliminated. If we do not recognize this it would be impossible to account for the everyday contestation that actually occurs in social life (p.184).

**Woman-Centered Approach**

Within the sport literature, there are numerous empirical studies utilizing hegemony theory and among them are numerous Canadian feminist scholars. For the purposes of this paper, feminist research will be examined. MacNeill (1988) examines hegemonic relations within the female activities of aerobics and female body building. She cites both of these activities as emergent views that act to challenge the assumptions of the dominant or ruling group, primarily males (p.274-275). Aniko Varpalotai (1995) utilizes hegemony theory in her
examination of ringette and the Girl Guides as she examines identity development in young women. The researcher emphasizes the necessity for a more collective identity in these girls as they remain constrained by a social reality that gives very few women opportunities for leadership in sport organizations.

Judith DiIorio (1989) presents the beginning stages of an ethnographic research on an American women's recreational softball league. Her aim is to address and "adequately understand gender relations and hegemonic processes in sport" through the voices of the female players (p.51). In understanding gender as a social construction, the theoretical perspective she utilizes is an effort to analyze the patriarchal ideologies permeating sport. DiIorio is primarily concerned with identifying the meanings of sport from the participants within and in turn, utilize feminist frameworks to examine both traditionally masculine and feminine assumptions (p.52).

Alison Dewar (1987) follows a similar research paradigm in her analysis of girls' experiences in the physical education area. Dewar illustrates the application of hegemony theory to this important sporting sphere. Bredemier and her colleagues (1991) employ feminist qualitative methods to explore women's ways of knowing in five physical activity settings.

Descriptions of dichotomous values in which the emphasis focuses on differing social realities in men and women is stressed by Ann Hall (1988) and Jennifer Hargreaves (1994) in their argument for a non-sexist, women-centered, and feminist scholarship. Both authors identify the need for a discourse that is enabling for females and not restricted to "the masculinity-as-culture discourse of gender and sport" (Hall, 1988, p.338). Hegemony theory is a useful concept for understanding the ways in which girls and women make sense of their lives and individually and collectively act to challenge masculine assumptions in sport and physical activity.
Female Values in Sport

The previous section identified research on male values in sport, and the following is an examination of relevant research that has identified female values in the sport and physical activity realm. Traditional male behaviours include aggression, competitiveness, toughness, and an ability to dismiss pain (DiIorio, 1989; Kidd, 1990; Lenskyj, 1994; Whitson, 1990). In this regard, traditional female behaviours have been viewed in relation to male values in sport. This "female deficit" model (Lenskyj, 1994a) is a starting point for any analysis of females' experiences in sport. Feminist researchers and scholars have recently examined the experiences and needs of females within sport in an effort to understand how sport might better suit their goals, aims, and desires.

As feminist research is increasing, female attitudes and values such as having fun, cooperation, socializing and connecting with others are now being viewed as a welcome redefinition of sport and the development of a wider range of physical activities for both males and females (Granskog, 1992; Hoferek, 1982; Kidd, 1990; Lenskyj, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c; Richer, 1988). Mary Hoferek (1982) presents a challenge to the rigid sex-role stereotyping that occurs in sport. Her research focuses on how a restructuring of sport would expand the potentialities of men and women learning from one another. For example, both sexes playing sport together can identify the positive aspects of many women who emphasize the process rather than the traditionally male product or winning attitude.

In another qualitative, feminist research study, Birrell and Richer (1987) voice the feelings of women softball players regarding their personal experiences in sport. They discovered that many of these women's softball experiences had centered primarily around winning, hierarchy as seen through the player/coach relationship, elitism, exclusivity, depreciatory behaviour toward opponents and unhealthy and unsafe practices. Birrell and Richer provide a transformative definition of sport that in effect counters the traditionally institutionalized form.
The mixing of masculine and feminine defined values is convincingly illustrated in Bredemeier et al. (1991). Their research on women's experiences showed that "participants tended to value cooperation regardless of the degree of competitiveness of their physical activity involvement; competition and cooperation seemed to be interdependent rather than dichotomous concepts" (p. 104). Jane Granskog (1992) in her qualitative study of one triathlon culture, unveils important gender role dynamics that show men and women transforming traditional stereotypes. She concludes that both sexes are generally unresponsive of the competitive and aggressive values that have typically defined sport in the modern age.

A similar challenge to the values deeply rooted in dominant sporting practices is cited by Mary Duquin (1995). This author identifies a future sporting world that is based on an "ethic of care" in which nurturance, historically viewed as a female trait, guides the partnership model of sport.

Approaching sport from the perspective of an ethic of care means that a priority is established in relation to all the myriad motivations that might prompt engagement in such a way so as to preserve and reinforce oneself as a caring person. The ethic of care grounds moral behavior in nurturance and values the importance of needs and emotions, of social relationships and responsibilities (p. 118).

Duquin is presenting a model of sport that is an alternative for both men and women and therefore does not divide values into masculine and feminine.

**Socialization into Sport**

**Family**

The family represents an important influence in female sport participation (Brustad, 1996; Butcher, 1983, 1985; Greendorfer, 1977, 1983; Kimiecik, Horn, & Shurin, 1996; Lenskyj, 1993; McElroy, 1983; McGregor, 1995; Williams, 1993). The play literature illustrated the sex differential child-rearing practices that exist (Fagot, 1974) and this is further evident in sporting practices (Greendorfer 1977). Greendorfer found that early childhood sport activities (ages 5 to 12) were highly influenced by the family unit and neighbourhood. In
addition, the motor skill development that occurs in this childhood time frame is often a predictor of later sport participation (Greendorfer, 1982). Thus, family influence, whether in the selection of early childhood toys or specific sex role expectations of behaviour from the child, has been identified as an important factor in the subsequent participation or non-participation of the individual.

Parental support for their child's sport participation is addressed in Robert Brustad's (1996) study of 107 Los Angeles schoolchildren of Latino, Caucasian and African-American descent. For the purposes of this paper I will focus on the girls' results. For the 59 girls in this study, their view of physical activity increased most significantly when they perceived their parent's enjoyment of physical activity. To a lesser extent, the girls were attracted to physical activity if their parents actively encouraged them. Thus, Brustad's results indicate that girls may view exercise as enjoyable if their parents have had positive experiences in sport and physical activity themselves. According to Brustad the role modeling process must now extend to the affective dimension that parents demonstrate toward exercise.

In a similar study to Brustad (1996), researchers Kimiecik and others (1996) focused on relationships between American children's beliefs, perceptions of their parents' beliefs and their moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. The participants in this study included 81 children of Euro-American descent between the ages of 11 and 15 years. There were 26 girls and 55 boys included however the results are not analyzed along gender lines. Although the researchers clearly indicated that the home/family influence on a child's physical activity participation does not exist in isolation from external influences such as their peers, school, media, and other significant adults, they designed the present study in isolation from these outside influences. Within such limitations Kimiecik and colleagues found that "children's beliefs are related to their perceptions of their parent's beliefs regarding their moderate-to-vigorous physical activity involvement" (p.334). In effect, the parent is influential in directing their child toward certain views or attitudes related to levels of physical activity exertion. The sex of the parent or child was not a factor in this study. This differs from research by Janice
Butcher (1985) which focuses on the parental influence on girls' subsequent sport participation.

Butcher (1985) found that Canadian parents were a significant influence in different types of sport participation such as community-organized activities. Within these activities participation fees, various equipment, and modes of transport were required and meant that parents were directly involved in the sporting process. Within the realm of parental influence on sporting participation, Lenskyj (1993) provides a perspective often overlooked by researchers in this area; that of "behind-the-scenes work" (p.270) of buying equipment, providing meals, fundraising, driving to games/events and volunteer work. These responsibilities are often performed by the mother and can be a considerable form of encouragement for girls.

Within the family structure it is important to include the influence of siblings in the socializing process. Greendorfer & Lewko (1978) found that parents had a greater influence than siblings on both boys and girls sport participation. Lenskyj (1991, 1993) suggests that female athletes are influenced by male siblings and fathers but that this pattern of influence is changing as a combination of significant other influences create a wider array of encouraging sources for females. Thus, Greendorfer and Lewko's earlier research may reflect a more traditional model of sport socialization that does not take into account wider socializing factors.

Peers

The web of connection that females experience (Gilligan, 1982) can be paralleled in the sport and physical activity sphere. Peer groups are an influential factor in female sport participation (Dyer, 1983; Eder & Parker, 1987; Greendorfer, 1977; Hasbrook, 1992; Lenskyj, 1993; Varpalotai, 1987; Williams, 1993). The peer-group culture researched in Eder and Parker (1987) provided insight into the different values and attitudes that are learned through extracurricular activities in the school. These masculine and feminine values are
internalized by the individuals and can be strong predictors of subsequent participation or non-participation in sport. These researchers claim "that simply providing the opportunity for participation in an activity does not change the peer culture of adolescents" (p.202). Cases in which female coaches attempted to highlight the achievements of female athletes was openly criticized by other male coaches in the school. Eder and Parker conclude that cheerleading in this particular school had the most salient influence on females. The girls' concern for appearance and weight and the values, attitudes and beliefs that accompanied this activity were a negative influence on female sport participation.

An American study examined interactive socialization processes in which the individual is an active player in the interpretation and shaping of her experience. Important insights were provided in the peer interaction literature (Kunesh, Hasbrook & Lewthwaite, 1992). The researchers collected data in a predominantly working class school through participant observations, informal interviews and naturally occurring conversations. In this ethnographic study the meanings that gender holds for adolescents in varied contexts was identified through the observation of 12 different peer groups. The cheer leading peer group was found to be the most salient and highly valued activity for the girls. This primarily stemmed from the researchers' interpretations that male athletics were the most highly attended and "culturally significant in the school" (p.204). In addition, the researchers identified boys in physical education classes as a major source of negative peer treatment "primarily by criticizing girls' physical skill performance and constructing them as subordinate to those of the boys" (p.385).

Kunesh et al (1992) and Eder & Parker (1987) provide evidence that peer group interactions can have debilitating consequences for those girls seeking approval from their friends and peers. Aniko Varpalotai (1987) confirms the perpetuation of stereotypical attitudes that sport socialization processes involve. However, this researcher has provided an in-depth account of Canadian adolescent girls' sport subcultures (ringette camp) in which she identifies areas in women's sport that have the potential to serve as sites of resistance and
social change. Varpalotai identified socialization into sport as an area fraught with patriarchal values and thus, values learned reflect a primarily masculine domain. Her study uncovered the strong influence of the informal peer group as the young women reinforced the family influence and continued the sport participation pattern. Additionally, the adolescent girls cited the peer group as an avenue "to introduce them to team sports, and the camaraderie found there, as well as the pleasures of physical activity and competition, reinforcing their enthusiasm and commitment" (p.419). This qualitative study is exemplary in uncovering and understanding the lived experiences of adolescent girls and provides insight into the positive peer group and collective affiliation that acts to challenge masculine assumptions regarding sport.

The influence of the peer group extends to the concern of women and girls with maintaining relationships and stressing the fun aspects of physical activity. Carol Gilligan's (1982) work emphasizes the importance of connection and relatedness manner of girls and women. Within the sport arena Gilligan's ideas have been applied by Lenskyj (1994) when she stresses the fun aspects of sport and physical activity. The 1984 Canada Fitness Survey further illustrates the sociable aspects of sport and physical activity that rates the availability of a partner as a factor that will promote and encourage more active lifestyles in females ("Changing Times", 1984). Additionally, the emergence of women's sport activities such as female only softball, hockey, and soccer leagues amply demonstrates the surge of interest in female peer activities (Birrell & Richter, 1987; DiIorio, 1989; Fenton, 1995; Lenskyj, 1993; Straw, 1994)

**Academic Setting: The Classroom**

This section will provide an overview of literature on girls' education as a background to the formal physical education curriculum. Much of the feminist literature focuses on the adolescent years when sex-typed courses play an important role in relegating females to
subordinate positions within the labour market (Clarricoates, 1980; Eyre, 1991; Kenway & Willis, 1993; Russell, 1987; Taylor, 1989). The focus of this thesis is pre-adolescent girls and in that regard, the subject and course selection at this school level is not a pertinent issue. However, other relevant issues in the literature relating to differential or preferential treatment practices by teachers and the perpetuation of masculine and feminine stereotypes will be examined. The literature will examine physical space limitations for girls, verbal harassment by males, and girls' conformity to traditionally feminine behaviour. Thus, these issues that are prevalent in the primary and elementary schools can provide insight and support for the reproduction of the sexual division of labour that develops in later years.

Sandra Acker (1988) cites teacher preferential treatment and "weaving of differentiation into the very fabric of school life" (p.308). Acker indicates that feminists in the sociology of education must move beyond blame the victim approaches (in this case, girls), and attempt to locate the sources of differential achievement in a patriarchal institution. According to this author anti sexist initiatives must be implemented to end discriminating teaching practices. Acker states that these discriminatory acts result in female achievement deficits. Similarly, Smith, McCoy and Bourne (1995), in their research on student perspectives in the schooling process revealed that gender relations were a central issue in the schooling process. They discuss "the regime of the classroom, that is, the ways in which power relations are sustained and regulated in the everyday practice of classroom behaviour by teachers and students and by school and board authority" (p.3). Both Acker and Smith et al. illustrate the extent of power in educational institutions from teachers in the classroom through to government policy.

**Teacher Interaction**

The role of the teacher in the reproduction of power relations in the school is aptly illustrated in an Australian study on teachers' differential treatment of the sexes in the classroom. This research cited recurring patterns of teachers attending to male student
demands at the expense of the girls learning ("Classroom interactions," 1992). For example it was shown that teachers knew boys names long before the girls in the class despite teaching both sexes for a number of years. Most girls in this study expressed their dismay in the "domineering and demanding behaviour of boys in the classroom" (p.7). Additionally, teachers assumed that quiet girls in the classroom understood the material because males would readily disrupt the class to announce their problems or misunderstandings.

Gender bias in teacher interaction is further evident in a study by Eyre (1991) of a coeducational home economics class. This research in an inner-city, multi-ethnic, secondary school in British Columbia illustrated that boys dominated the student-teacher interaction while quieter boys and the majority of girls remained silent. Eyre summarizes her in-depth study of this setting as one that supports

concern about gender bias in curriculum content and classroom pedagogy. It was clear that treating students 'the same' meant catering to the perceived interests and experiences of boys...I suggest that the curriculum supported a particular kind of masculinity, one interested in authority, technology, and control (p.215).

Many studies draw attention to an educational system that does not validate girls' experiences and the contribution of women throughout history (Ballon, 1994: Edwards, 1993; Eyre, 1991).

The previous section has identified research that documents male dominance in the classroom through teacher differential and discriminatory practices. Educational researcher Diane Reay (1990) provides support for these studies and also evaluates one British anti-sexist educational initiative that involved single sex groupings. Her research on ten and eleven year old girls and boys focused on a program to develop more caring and nurturing behaviour in the males and increased self-esteem and self-assurance in the girls. Reay's conclusions on the success of the program included several advantages for the girls such as improved academic achievement, more assertiveness in mixed sex groups, and increased physical and strength and fitness (through self-defense and dance). The researcher examined some of the
responses of the male students to demonstrate the ingrained attitudinal forces that work within the educational and societal realms. Many of the boys showed little interest in nurturant activities and expressed positive responses for the traditionally masculine activities such as woodworking.

A similar anti-sexist initiative has existed in the Toronto Board of Education for over ten years. The "Girls for wendo and boys for babies" program has focused on promoting self-defense skills in girls and nurturant, caring behaviour in male students. This program is aimed at elementary children in an attempt to combat the perpetuation of traditional masculine and feminine behaviours.

**Gender Stereotyping**

Reay (1990) describes serious repercussions for girls' learning experiences when masculine and feminine stereotyping occurs in the school setting. Within these constructs the nature of the "hidden curriculum" emerges (Orenstein, 1994; Reay 1990; Russell, 1987; Smith et al., 1995; Thorne, 1994; Varpalotai, 1987). Peggy Orenstein (1994) in her book *Schoolgirls*, provides a concise definition of the "hidden curriculum" as the unstated lessons that students learn in school: it is the running subtext through which teachers communicate behavioural norms and individual status in the school culture, the process of socialization that cues children into their place in the hierarchy of larger society. Once used to describe the ways in which the education system works to reproduce class systems in our culture, the 'hidden curriculum' has recently been applied to the ways in which schools reinforce gender roles, whether they intend to or not (p.5).

The concern of feminist educational scholars regarding gender stereotyping is succinctly stated by Susan Russell (1987): "girls in school, it is revealed through the education process, are the focus of pressures to encourage them to accept subordinate positions in both the labour force and the family" (p.343). From the earliest schooling processes, children are socialized with clear ideas of what it means to be a girl or boy (Bailey, 1993; Best, 1983; Delamont, 1990; Reay, 1990; Thorne, 1994). Raphael Best's (1983) ethnography of an
American primary school entitled *We've all got scars*, illustrates the different stereotypes that are learned and perpetuated within the school. The boys in her study developed competitive and achievement-oriented skills and a disdain for girls' activities as early as grade one. Best reports that the boys' emphasis on scars from fighting or taking risks in games and sports were worn like badges of honour.

The physical space that girls and boys occupy, the verbal and sometimes physical harassment experienced by girls and the quiet, disciplined behaviour of female students will be examined in this section. Within the gender stereotyping category, girls are frequently disciplined for not conforming to traditional feminine behaviour in the classroom. This is illustrated in an early British study of four different schools in which Katherine Clarricoates (1980) describes how girls are often scolded for displaying aggressive play behaviour, including swearing. The teacher in this study actively singled out the female students, rather than the males for their "inappropriate" behaviour and stated "I expect a high standard of behavior from my girls and fighting and swearing is totally inexcusable" (p.33). Recent literature on stereotyping in the classroom illustrates that very few changes have occurred since the early 1980's. Similar "good girl" images whereby female students were called upon to sustain order and quiet in the classroom were identified in a recent Australian government study ("Classroom interactions", 1992). This study found that teachers assumed female students should always exhibit control while in the classroom. Any girls who did not conform to these traditional stereotypes of obedience were viewed as having serious social problems. This differed markedly from the male students who were displaying similar outspoken or inappropriate behaviour, but the teachers viewed this behaviour as "controllable" or normal (p.20-21).

Delamont (1990) presents evidence that teachers differentiate their instruction and behaviour with pre-school children along traditional gender stereotyped lines. The teacher in this research would remind the girls when they hopped around the classroom to "walk like little ladies" whereas the boys were given an extra opportunity to jump and dance to the music.
The physical space that boys occupy is addressed by Reay (1990) as one of the reasons why a single-sex grouping was organized in this researcher's school. She cited the classroom and playground areas as dominated by boys and a threat to girls overall levels of achievement.

Harassment Issues

Within the coeducational classroom, the opportunities for boys to harass girls have been cited by numerous scholars (Eyre, 1991; Orenstein, 1994; Reay, 1990; Smith et al., 1995; Tutchell, 1990). Orenstein provides cases of sexual harassment in her in-depth research and analysis of two American schools. The verbal harassment that occurs in the form of derogatory comments from boys in the classroom is also prevalent in the literature ("Classroom interactions", 1992; Eyre, 1991: Naveau, 1992). Eyre cites the power that boys hold in simple situations such as seating arrangements in the classroom. Girls revealed that boys made derogatory comments about their hair, body or clothes but the researcher as a participant observer heard more disturbing comments. Eyre heard boys refer to girls as "'cows', 'bitches', 'evil'..." (p.205). Additionally, the author observed several cases of boys ridiculing girls, woman teachers and the quieter boys.

It is worthwhile to return to Diane Reay (1990) as she outlines the major concerns that emerged from the anti sexist initiatives in Preston School, London. The teachers summarized their interest and regard for change in the school system by identifying the following areas for further examination:

1. that girls receive markedly less teacher attention time;
2. that peer-group boys dominate playground and classroom space;
3. that girls contribute less often and less confidently to class and mixed-group discussion;
4. that girls lack confidence in approaching various sex-stereotyped activities, i.e. computing tasks, practical and technological activities, physical education and games (p.46).
These four aspects of the academic setting present a link to all major categories of this paper, namely the playground, classroom and physical education class. Peggy Edwards (1993) expands on the socio-cultural context of the school in overcoming inequitable and sexist practices. She states that a comprehensive understanding of the overall school environment is key to eradicating discrimination and unhealthy teaching and policy practices. Reay's (1990) concern requiring further examination of physical education and games will be addressed in the following section. Thus, the problems and concerns expressed in the classroom will be linked to the physical education setting.

Physical Education

Within the age group that will be addressed here, namely eleven and twelve year old girls, the issue of separation versus integration will be examined from the standpoint that both sexes of this age group display no marked physical ability differences (Docherty & Gaul, 1991; Lenskyj, 1985, 1991; Williams, 1993). In such cases, it is vital to examine the integration issue from feminist theory and practices that accept, reject or combine the groupings of girls and boys.

Integration Problems

Lenskyj (1985, 1991) states that activities during childhood need not be divided in accordance to the sex of the student. The combined sports and games in the pre-pubertal age range will enable some girls to physically challenge themselves especially in light of girls only programs that generally are "diluted" versions of the boys only programs (Lenskyj, 1991, p.22). However, from a more radical feminist perspective, integrating physical education classes can create problems, primarily for girls, (boys are limited in important ways also). The following aspects of integration in physical education will be examined in an effort to plot the difficulties faced by schools and , more specifically, teachers instructing the classes: boys
harassing girls, boys dominating game play, an over-emphasis on winning and competition, and stereotyped behaviour.

Boys Harassing Girls

Many researchers cite examples of boys verbally harassing girls in physical education classes (Edwards, 1993; Griffin, 1989; Kunesh et al, 1992; Smith et al., 1995). Kunesh et al. illustrates the mixed group game settings as a limitation on girls' full involvement in sport. The boys in this research criticized girls for their inability to throw the ball properly in flag football. The researchers also noted that the boys' negative treatment of the girls resulted in many of the females not signing up for team sports because they feared the same verbal negation would continue from the boys. In a similar context, Smith et al.(1995) interviewed girls and young women for their perspectives and views of the schooling process. The unstructured interviews and focus groups allowed the girls the freedom to speak on any issue at school. The girls spoke of boys regarding them as incompetent and inferior, with comments from the males such as "weaklings", "girls can't play hockey, they suck", "you suck, you can't even get the ball in the net" (p.17).

An Alberta study on the experiences of young women in physical education illustrated the verbal harassment that occurred when these students participated in a co-educational swimming session (Humbert, 1996). This qualitative study thoroughly examined the theme of young women's pressures to be thin. The exploration of issues such as showering in front of other female students and the year end swimming trip illuminated the anxieties that these young women face in the physical education setting. The boys would make comments in reference to the young women in the swimming area: "look at that fat chick, or 'she has no boobs" (Humbert, 1996, p.23). For some of the young women their idea of an enjoyable swimming session is dependent on whether the boys refrain from making rude or harassing comments to them.
Patricia Griffin (1989) supports the verbal harassment literature in her observations that classrooms in which game play dominates and therefore less control is exerted by many teachers, there is a tendency for boys to normalize name-calling and verbal assault on less capable individuals. The harassment that can occur in classes where teachers are not conscious of equitable and non-sexist instruction can lead to the domination of boys over many girls and less able and competent boys.

**Boys Dominating Game Play**

Katherine Snow (1995), a Canadian physical educator in a coeducational setting, provides interesting accounts of girls and boys that she has taught from grades two to six. Through her personal accounts and knowledge of feminist issues in physical education, Snow highlights the surge in male dominance that occurs during the elementary years. For example, she describes no physical capability differences yet the boys will often assume a leadership position and girls do not challenge boys taking opportunities to score first in drills or games. In mixed team game situations girls (grade five) often remain silent and allow the males to control the game and make calls for passing to the girls. Snow further demonstrates that a "holding back" occurs in grade six when the girls defer passing opportunities to the boys on the team. The author notes "by contrast when the girls play competitively with girls they are uninhibited. Tara scored six points in the girls' tournament game, yet she did not even attempt a shot during the co-ed basketball game in class" (p.23).

Similar comments are made by a gym teachers in Little and Borowy's (1991) examination of young women's experience in community sport mixed programs in Toronto; "they have found that a group of very competent female sports players can become intimidated and unsure of themselves the minute their male counterparts join the game" (p.31).
Overemphasis on Winning and Competing

Within the coeducational physical education classes, the primacy given to competition reflects a male-dominated model of sport that does not value cooperation and friendship (Lenskyj, 1994). Lenskyj further notes that the female preferred way of relating to others in the sporting sphere does not place primacy on win-at-all costs measures and scoring victories. June LeDrew (1996) uses Lenskyj's (1994a) article "Girl-friendly sport and female values" in her exploration of three women teaching primary physical education in a Saskatchewan elementary school. LeDrew's study found that these women empowered themselves to resist the patriarchal values often cited in sport and physical education. The primary teachers supported a physical education that is inclusive and sensitive to the differing ability needs of the children. In such a program, the female values of connectedness, continuity, and personal loyalty are key components for success (p.31).

Smith and others (1995) report that boys often set the tone in mixed-gender sports activities. Girls who could play with males mentioned traits associated with competitive sport that many progressive sports scholars are attempting to change; aggression, and toughness, for example. Hall and Richardson (1983) expand on these descriptions in their identification of traditional physical education curriculums based on the male motto, "higher, swifter, stronger". In such environments it is clearly a problem for those students that have no regard or interest for such activities.

Promotion of Stereotyped Activities

The stereotyped behaviours that were examined within the academic setting closely resemble the perceived abilities and behaviours of males and females in the sporting realm. Williams (1993) provides quotations from British pre-adolescent youth that clearly demonstrate the sex-typing of activities; "I think that girls are better at skipping and boys at football" (7-year-old boy), (p.128). Indeed, the stereotyping of males and females is evident in teacher perceptions as well (Evans, 1987). This author notes the gender expectations of
one teacher in which girls and boys were treated as distinct groups with separate skills and ability levels. In assumptions of this kind, there are problems of polarizing the genders into specific categories that do not reflect ability and experience.

Further to this gender bias research is a study by Donnelly and Hay (1996) in which the authors investigate the existence of gender biases in teachers' evaluations of elementary school children in physical activity. Their study of 655 elementary students in Southern Ontario showed that boys are provided with higher physical competency responses from the teachers than the girls even though both sexes should have fallen within the "average" mean result. Donnelly and Hay conclude that the positive bias experienced by the boys in the study may act to support the boys' continuance in the activity. Teachers are identified as one of the major socializing agents in reproducing gender differences. However, as Donnelly and Hay point out, the majority of primary school teachers in Ontario are women and not PE specialists. In such cases the likelihood of these teachers being confident in their own physical activity abilities will have to be factored into an understanding of what children learn from these important socializing agents.

Stereotyping behaviours are evident in simple school routine activities in which the girls expressed disregard for male and female teachers who treat them as unequal to the boys. The females recounted examples of boys being chosen to move objects even though more girls offered to help the teacher. In this case the teacher was a female and the respondents noted that she chose boys to do many similar activities or errands (Smith et al., 1995).

Williams (1993) discusses similar cases of primary aged girls who are overlooked in moving gym equipment. Williams contends that "requests for help with apparatus in PE from 'a couple of strong boys' have little logic in a class of pre-pubertal children where the strongest children in the class are quite likely to be female" (p. 131). These incidents and examples illustrate the influence that teachers and coaches can have in promoting and perpetuating traditional images of femininity and masculinity in the school setting.
influence that teachers and coaches can have in promoting and perpetuating traditional images of femininity and masculinity in the school setting.

Thus, the issue of integration versus single-sex groupings for PE is complex for all groups involved from the teacher through to policy and curriculum makers (Lenskyj, 1985, 1991). However, the aim of many feminists is to allow both boys and girls an opportunity to experience gym class to their fullest potential (Williams, 1993). In such cases, it is necessary to create an environment that is conducive to individuals learning and expressing themselves without threat of harassment. Pat Griffin (1989) develops a model for equitable practices in the PE curriculum addressing issues such as race, gender, and motor ability. Researcher Margaret Talbot (1993) identifies the key definitions and interpretations of equality of opportunity in PE to demonstrate the differing ability levels of students and what this means for equitable instruction practices. The applicability of these equitable practices in the gymnasium will rely to a large part on the teacher training involved. Ideally, a PE specialist will have detailed knowledge and training on gender issues, and thus be in the position to administer fair classes for both boys and girls of all ability levels. Donnelly and Starkes (1983) conducted a "Review of the Hamilton Board of Education Elementary Itinerant Physical Education Programme" and found that teachers, students, and principals were overwhelmingly in favour of specialist teachers conducting PE classes, despite the higher costs involved. With such support for PE specialists the possibility exists for more equitable PE classes.

Sheila Scraton's (1992) book, *Shaping up to womanhood: Gender and girls' physical education*, identifies all of the key arguments against mixed sex groupings in secondary PE. Her research of four secondary schools in the United Kingdom provided similar cases of boys dominating and harassing the PE classes, and teachers reinforcing traditional gender and homophobic attitudes and stereotypes. Scraton's examination of these integration debates is located in the wider structures of society and will be useful in an examination of girls' physical activity experiences in the present thesis.
Radical feminists...argue that male sexuality functions to control women in work, sport, leisure, social space, schooling, and so on. This control operates both in the private and public spheres and benefits all men regardless of their desires and objectives (Scraton, 1992, p.13).

Summary

Pre-adolescent girls' experiences in physical activity can be viewed as the result of a complex array of socializing situations and agents (Butcher, 1983; Lenskyj, 1994b; Williams, 1993). The literature has indicated that early childhood experiences for girls in physical activity limited their motor skill acquisition. The cycle of gender stereotyping in parental rearing practices continues today and is linked to subsequent sport participation patterns in later years (Greendorfer, 1994).

The emphasis that girls place on social interaction, fun, and companionship is evident in three spheres, the playground, PE classes, and formal sport clubs and organizations. These values have not been identified in traditional research that focuses on "malestream" sport. Values such as aggression and intensive competition have been the center of sport and leisure studies but this literature review highlighted feminist studies that have placed primacy on female values (DiIorio, 1989; LeDrew, 1996; Varpalotai, 1987, 1995).

The school as an institution reinforces traditional stereotypes and patterns of male dominance and female subordination. Girls' physical activity development is not reaching its full potential because of inequitable conditions in the PE setting.

The research presented on play, sport and academic realms has informed the present study, specifically by providing key areas to begin the research process. The initial stages of the observational period required some information and research on girls in the school setting and specifically a focus in identifying their perspectives. To this end it was necessary to be learned in the major research that has occurred in these areas. In achieving my purpose of understanding and examining the experiences of girls in physical activity in the school it was necessary as well to extend my knowledge base by continuously questioning my own
assumptions and the current literature that was available. It is within such a framework that I utilized the key themes in the literature review.
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to observe, document, and analyse the physical activity experiences of grade five/six girls in one educational setting. Within such a wide expanse of literature on girls in sport and physical activity, it was necessary to identify research questions that guided the literature review. The following questions stemmed from an extensive search of feminist literature within sport but also extending to the realms of playground and classroom research.

(1) How important is play behaviour to later sport development in girls?
(2) What do girls value in play, sport, and game activities?
(3) What is implicitly learned in physical education, playground, and classroom settings regarding gender relations?
(4) Are girls capable of resisting the dominant values and characteristics of traditionally male defined sport?
(5) How do the various socializing agents and situations interact and influence girls' sport participation?
(6) How does the school promote or subjugate the voices and actions of girls in the PE and classroom settings?

These research questions informed the study and provided some degree of direction. The following rationales expand and highlight the purpose and objectives of the present study.

Rationale

There has been an extensive amount of research on females in sport and physical activity (Lenskyj, 1991). However much of this research has been informed by one ideological standpoint historically framed by male-centered conceptions of knowledge (Hall,
Thus, research beginning with the standpoint of females will "fill the gaps left by past generations" (Lenskyj, 1991, p.13). Other Canadian feminist scholars are also pressing for further sport and leisure research that is grounded in the lived experiences of girls and women (Dewar, 1987; Hall, 1993; Varpalotai, 1987, 1995). These feminists are concerned with addressing the particular needs and concerns of this unique part of the population. The girls in the present study need to be understood for the following reasons: (1) Health concerns, (2) Increase body awareness and confidence, (3) the basic right to experience sport and physical activity for all the social, emotional, and physical benefits it can provide. These will be addressed in the following section.

**Health Concerns**

Several recent studies have illustrated the low levels of physical activity in youth (Stephens & Craig, 1990; Ontario Health Survey, 1990). For example, the Ontario Health Survey found that slightly over 60% of males and almost 40% of females aged 12 were classified as active, however 16% of males and 32% of females were considered inactive. A further important study by King and Coles (1990) illustrated a noticeable decline in sport and physical activity participation for females between the ages of 11 and 15 (p.3). Some reasons that have been cited for the low female participation rates include fewer opportunities for involvement, an uncomfortable sporting environment, and lack of female role models (Hoffman, 1995; Lenskyj, 1994).

One component of the rationale for studying this problem concerns the potential health risks for future generations of women. In particular, research has found that moderate amounts of physical activity can decrease the risk of breast cancer in pre-menopausal women (Bernstein et al., 1994) and is highly effective in lowering rates of such conditions as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension and obesity (Drinkwater, 1994). The onset of osteoporosis is another important health concern for women. This debilitating condition affects one in four women over the age of fifty but studies have shown that physical activity
helps attain a higher peak bone mineral content before menopause. The importance of teenage females building up their bone mineral density at this time of their lives is crucial (Drinkwater, 1994; Munnings, 1992; Women's Health Matters, 1995).

**Increased Body Awareness**

Young females can obtain an increase in body awareness and confidence through physical activity and sport. Peggy Edwards (1993) provides a detailed report of the links between young females, physical activity, and self-esteem. The author concludes that many factors are interacting in the process of increasing self-esteem in young women, including the development of pro-social behaviour (an increase in the individual's perception of interpersonal peer relationships (p.3)), supportive feelings from coaches and teachers, mastery of skills and a sense of control in physically demanding situations, and a more positive body image (p.20).

The literature is additionally linking physical competency in females to decreasing the likelihood of physical or sexual assault. Although it is very difficult to prevent an attack from happening, females that carry themselves in a confident, assertive manner can discourage a potential attacker (Bray, 1987; Lenskyj, 1995). Many women have cited stories of "alienation" from their bodies. The joy of movement has never been fully experienced or actualized by women who can relate horror stories from physical education classes in their youth (Lenskyj, 1995). A recent article in the popular press magazine *Chatelaine* (October, 1996) illustrates one such story. The editorial "Getting Physical" by Rona Maynard emphasizes the humiliation and degradation she felt throughout PE classes:

> My classmates picked me last for every team, and I don't blame them: when the ball came my way, I'd run in the other direction (the only exercise I ever got in class). I dropped phys ed in my teens and spent most of the next 20 years sitting down (p.8).

Maynard highlights many of the benefits that have been presented thus far and this represents a positive sign in conveying the important message about physical activity for young and older
women. However, Maynard accepts blame for her inability to play well in PE class. She is not taking into account the atmosphere of competitiveness and the practice of student team selections which has been criticised in recent PE research (Griffin, 1989). Maynard does provide details of the project *On the Move*. This program targets young female teens that "have faced their own gym-class demons" (Maynard, 1996, p.8). The present study aims to understand what girls feel when they participate in physical activity, especially in the formal setting of the school gymnasium.

**The Right to Participate**

In a democratic society such as Canada, it may be argued females have the basic right to experience sport and physical activity for the wide range of benefits it provides. It is therefore important to study the concerns and perspectives of this group of young women to enable educators and policy makers to attend to their specific needs in physical activity. The Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation has issued a *Policy on Full and Fair Access for Women and Girls in Sport and Physical Activity* (1994). Such a document will extent the benefits that physical activity provides to a "human rights point of view" (p.3). The importance of providing a full, equal, and equitable range of opportunities in a harassment free environment will require research that identifies the specific activities in which girls want to participate.

**Personal Rationale**

One of the main reasons I chose to pursue the topic of females in sport and physical activity stemmed from my own experiences. I have been physically active in a wide range of sports from the age of three. I have participated in traditionally "feminine sports", such as figure skating, and "less feminine" activities such as rowing. I use these terms loosely because the rapid acceptance of girls and women in sport is creating more opportunities for individuals to choose an activity that suits their needs and desires. However, I understand that my
experiences are not the "norm" for females in sport. Indeed, I can recount my own experiences and forms of harassment and discrimination at all levels of the sport system.

When I proposed a rationale for this thesis, I looked to my own positive experiences in sport (although many negative ones exist). I had enjoyed the PE classes through elementary school, and excelled in the Canada Fitness Tests. These were in co-educational contexts. At the high school level I chose PE in the single sex school and learned a vast array of physical activities from two female PE specialists. This single-sex experience is a bit unusual as most schools today are mixed sex and in fact, my former school is now co-educational.

When I looked around the recreation facilities where I am employed, I noticed the under representation of females in the activities, especially the free weight room where I will quickly admit, the "chilly climate" is clearly in existence. This prompted me to ask my friends, who attended the same schools as me in Newfoundland, to describe their PE and sport experiences. I indicated to these individuals that I would use their comments as part of my personal rationale for this paper and all of the women agreed to this. Their responses included:

"I hated gym class, especially gymnastics, it was so dangerous and I never trusted the teacher with his knowledge."

"Up until grade six I didn't care for phys ed all that much. I found that the teacher (and others in the class!) were a bit fanatical about the activities. He seemed to ridicule me and the kids when we couldn't perform at the level he had designated for us. It really turned me off that I had a teacher that would sooner tease than encourage us."

"I hated the Canada Fitness Tests; it was so humiliating; the flexed arm hang and ranking of everyone. I did enjoy gymnastics and getting to play badminton with my good friend."

"I liked gym class up to grade seven but then the gymnastics and tumbling routines we had to make up horrified me; it didn't seem like gym classes provided activities that would provide interest for lifelong enjoyment."
"I used to be so excited about gym class that I would have my clothes laid out the night before. Without gym class in school I would have seen no reason to show up at all."

All of these voices vary and touch on many important issues in PE. Many of these concerns appear in the literature whether in the structure of PE class (organization and selection of activities), teacher effectiveness, or long term effects of PE involvement in the school. My assumptions regarding the present study are affected by my own experiences and the voices of my friends who were active at the same time as me. Despite the twenty year gap between my own years in elementary school and the girls in the present study I expected very few positive changes. The concerns that were mentioned above will likely still exist. My assumptions are grounded in the view that institutions such as the school remain very resistant to change despite the impact of the feminist movement. However, the girls in the present study may be somewhat more progressive in their resistance to sex-stereotyping in the predominantly male domain of sport. Some of these stereotypes have been weakened with the advent of feminist initiatives in the sports arena.

The essence of utilizing qualitative methodology within a feminist framework for analysis is to capture the perspectives of as varied a group as possible. The above quotations mention many of the relevant issues seen in the research today; however, the degree of humiliation and hatred for PE is difficult to capture unless this particular methodology is used.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Case Study Research

This study employed a qualitative approach utilizing a single site for in-depth analysis. The qualitative methods explored and described the lived experiences of the girls in their natural setting, the school. The case study approach utilizing an ethnographic (cultural descriptive) approach resonates with the girls' own experiences; it is contextual and influenced by my interpretations (Merriam, 1988). Concepts, hypotheses and theories will be built from the observations and findings specific to this site. This inductive analysis (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) is descriptive and pragmatic to emphasize the applied nature of case study research in the educational sphere (Merriam, 1988). Indeed, ethnographic approaches allow the researcher to instigate social change through the "inside" view of a specific culture (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Selection of Subjects and Setting

The school which I selected for this study was both supportive of my research and represented a diverse group of children. The participants represent varied socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, primarily Anglo-Saxon, Polish, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The total enrolment is 507 elementary children from kindergarten through to grade eight in a Toronto separate school. Purposeful sampling, within the qualitative research design, was utilized for selection of participants for the interview stage. The participant observational stages involved general observational sessions of many of the children in the playground, not necessarily confined to the girls selected for the interview stage. The participants for this study were eleven girls from the grade five/six split classroom. This method of selection will be further developed within data collection procedures.
Data Collection

Within qualitative research, the concern lies in process and meaning. The initial data collection consisted of field notes from classroom, gymnasium and playground observations. The second stage of data collection involved the semi-structured interview with the eleven participants. The selection of data collection methods relates to the purposes of the study. Firstly, the natural setting is the optimal environment to observe girls engaged in physical activity. Through the girls' actions in the playground and PE class, it was possible to garner a certain degree of knowledge on their physical activity experiences both in a structured (PE class) and unstructured environment (playground). Secondly, these observations have evolved over a lengthy period of time in the school setting, and in combination with informal talks with the girls, I gained more specific information utilizing the semi-structured interview method. The interviews represent a more organized and specific method of identifying some of the important socializing influences in their lives. In addition I formatted some of the questions to ensure that the girls can speak about their experiences in the PE class, classroom, and playground. These responses were an invaluable tool for understanding the interactions and occurrences in the school environment.

Participant Observation

The participant observations occurred over a five month period between November and April and involved two half days per week. Given that my task was to explore and seek an understanding of the girls in their natural setting, and that their perspectives were critical in this study, a lengthy observational period was necessary. Indeed, Glassner (1976) notes that a participant observer will become less visible to the children as they grow accustomed to the additional adult presence. This was one of my primary goals but in addition I wanted the girls to express their views and perspectives comfortably in my presence.
The words and actions of the participants provided the primary sources of data in combination with the interview material. My role as a known investigator allowed me to move about, question and observe in an unrestricted way. I conducted the observations two days per week on the physical education days. These were afternoon sessions that involved primarily math, social studies, or special events such as skating trips or religious assemblies. The initial "wide focus" in observations became detailed as the study progressed. The field notes contained verbal and non-verbal behaviour, observer insights and interpretations. Within the school setting, mental notes and jotted notes were immediately developed into full field notes when the observations were complete for that session.

Utilizing participant observation for this study allowed me to directly experience activities as they occurred in the classroom, gymnasium and playground. The feel of each of these settings was an important element in discovering the varied meanings for the participants. Additionally my role as a participant observer meant I could occupy both an insider perspective and also have the opportunity to step outside the action and become more detached (Spradley, 1980).

Throughout the fieldwork many topics were discussed with the girls relevant to physical activity and beyond (for example school problems, outside interests). These informal discussions were helpful in shaping interview questions and adding a personal component to the interview process.

**Interviews**

The interview sessions occurred at the end of the five month observational stage. The participant observations concluded and the interviews were conducted over a period of five consecutive days. Purposeful sampling evolved over the course of my five months of observations. There were many cases in this school that supported the research on girls' incompetence in the physical activity realm. However, within purposeful sampling as Marshall and Rossman (1989) contend, "the researcher must engage in the critical act of challenging the
very pattern that seems apparent... alternate explanations always exist" (p. 119). Thus, my observations sought to identify a variety of female competency levels ranging from the low skilled, hesitant girls to the assertive, physically confident ones. Eleven students were selected based on their competency levels and the variety of activities in which they engaged. Although there were 22 girls in the classroom under study I limited the number of participants based on previous qualitative research I had conducted, discussions with other graduate students who had utilized this approach, and on the advice of my supervisor. I was aware of the time constraints for this project and felt that in combination with the fieldnotes from participant observations, there would be a large amount of data with which to base my research findings. The girls selected for the interview were provided with an interview consent form. All returned the forms with parental consent and agreed to the interview.

The semi-structured interviews occurred for 30 minutes during lunch hour. Consent forms were returned to the teacher prior to the interview (see Appendix A). The semi-structured interview format was used for this age group based on the advice of researcher Paula Bourne. Her role as a researcher within the Gender and Schooling Papers (Smith et al., 1995) involved focus group discussions with females from grade six to high school (P. Bourne, personal communication, March, 1995). Within individual and small focus group interviews (from two to five persons), it is difficult to evoke detailed responses and explanations.

A small tape recorder was used for the interviews and the major questions and headings were repeated in the same order for all the respondents (see Appendix B). The interview questions stemmed from the literature researched, my own experiences at this age level, and the work of Canadian researchers Janice Butcher (1983, 1985) and Wendy Dahlgren (1988). These researchers' work on the influence of a girl's home environment, support systems in sport participation, and PE experiences were helpful in forming the types of questions that would pinpoint or lead to a greater understanding of girls' experiences in physical activity. I eased into the interview by relying on questions that were informal and
related to general physical activity in the playground and gymnasium. Many probes were added to ensure the questions were answered at some point during the interview. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed for later analysis. The results will be available to both the principal of the school and the teacher involved in the study.

**Data Analysis**

Glaser and Strauss' (1967) analysis methods were adapted throughout this phase of the project. Within their work on analysis methods I utilized the constant comparative method in which the generating categories emerged from my observations of the children's actions, behaviours, and interactions between themselves and the teachers. In addition, my literature provided guiding themes that served as focus points in the initial stages of the observations (Silverman, 1993). Throughout the research I was guided by a feminist framework that posits gender as a central category of analysis (Dewar, 1987). Thus, an understanding of the unique experiences of girls in physical education was initiated and framed by feminist research questions as outlined in the introduction.

Ongoing analysis during the fieldwork created categories to further explore, scrutinize, and alter. Bogdan and Bigden (1992) emphasize "particular research questions and concerns generate certain categories. Certain theoretical approaches and academic disciplines suggest particular coding schemes" (p.166). The final analysis involved categories primarily based on feminist theoretical orientations. The girls who resisted, negotiated, and challenged the prevailing gendered patterns of physical activity assured that the study examined rich and varied responses.

The interview categories were grouped according to the major questions and headings in the structured interview. Major categories such as neighbourhood influences, sibling activity levels, parental involvement, and so forth were considered themes in the final discussion and analysis. In the case of interview questions that dealt specifically with PE
classes, I categorized the major themes but used this information to supplement my observations in the gymnasium.

During the initial coding stages, the fieldnotes were broken down into major meaning units or particular points and ideas considered noteworthy for the study. I separated the fieldnotes into the three settings for organizational purposes. The creation of categories within these areas of the school, namely the playground, classroom, and gymnasium were guided by what Bogdan and Biglen (1992) refer to as "suggested categories...they do not imply that analysis rises only from the data and not from the perspectives the researcher holds" (p.166). The fieldnotes included vast amounts of entries ranging from a child going to the bathroom to verbatim conversations between two students. The narrowing of the categories into patterns of regularities in the setting is a key part of the data analysis process (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). As categories emerged from the data I searched for challenges to the general patterns documented in the existing research.

Delimitations of the Study

My selection of participants for the interview stage was limited to a small sample of eleven students from one school. The purpose was to understand girls' experiences and to locate them in wider societal processes of gender reproduction. This case study does not represent the physical activity experiences of all girls in this age group.

Limitations of the Study

Among the limitations of this study is the intrusion of the participant observer. However, as stated previously, the length of time in the setting undoubtedly eased the degree of attention directed towards the observer. A further limitation related to participant observation is that extended time in a setting may influence the ability to properly view the
familiar as strange (Spradley, 1980). This case study attempted to balance the observer's ongoing relationship with the girls but simultaneously remaining objective in the events that unfolded in the settings.

Qualitative research relies on researcher interpretation, decisions, and analysis. Through detailed notes and attempts to include verbatim accounts, the extent of researcher bias was minimized. My experiences and perceptions will have an affect on the research conclusions but it is the justification of these interpretations that remains important.
RESULTS

The findings generated from the respondents will be presented in the following subsections: the family and peers as socializing agents, socialization situations that include the neighbourhood, use of community centers/organized sporting clubs, team sports/extracurricular activities, and the availability of equipment.

Interviews and formal classroom findings will be supplemented with playground observations. The major themes that emerged from the fieldnotes will be presented. The final section of the results will address the emergent themes from the classroom and PE setting, the gymnasium.

The participants in this study bring to the school setting a broad range of experiences in physical activity. The following section will serve as an introduction to each of the eleven respondents. This word picture will provide the groundwork for the results and discussion sections of this paper.

The socio-economic status of the respondents was speculated from general demographics that were available through informal conversations with the students and the teacher. None of the respondents appeared to live in subsidized housing. They were either living in apartment complexes of primarily Polish immigrant families or detached houses. It was surmised that these respondents were from working to middle class income families. Although all the respondents consented to the interviews, some degree of anonymity will be preserved; therefore pseudonyms will be used for the remainder of the thesis.

Sherri

Sherri was in grade six and 12 years old at the time of the interview. She lives with her parents and five year-old sister in a house close to a major park and school yard. She has been active in sports since she was very young and continues in a wide variety of sports today. Sherri mentions her younger sister’s play activities but does not include baby-sitting duties.
She is allowed to play sports and games after her homework during the week, but she has much more freedom on the weekend to play with friends.

Sherri seems to have reached puberty as she is one of the taller students in the class and is physically well-developed. She has an athletic build and a confident manner in physical education and the classroom.

Kelly
Kelly was 11 years old during the interview stage and in grade five. She was born in Calgary and is of Vietnamese descent. Her family moved to Toronto approximately five years ago. Her parents own a local convenience store and the family resides on the upper level. Kelly has an older brother and a younger sister who are active in play and sport activities. She is quietly assertive and a talented athlete in the physical activity realm.

Tosha.
Tosha was 11 years old and in grade five during her interview. She is of Vietnamese descent and lives in a house near a library, park, and school. Tosha has three sisters, aged fifteen, thirteen, and seven. She is actively involved in neighbourhood and school sports. Tosha is athletically built, tall, gifted, quick, and skillful in the physical education class.

Linda
Linda is an only child and lives with her parents in a home near the school. She was 11 years old at the time of the interview and in grade six. She enjoys playing with her younger friends in her neighbourhood but does not specify whether she baby-sits these children. Linda has a keen interest in young children as she volunteers for kindergarten duty and enjoys their company in her neighbourhood.

In terms of Linda's physical development, she is slightly overweight and has reached puberty. She is one of the tallest students in the class but is not as athletically skilled as some
of the other girls. Linda is confident in classroom situations and is very intelligent in all the academic areas.

**Hilary**

Hilary was born in Czechoslovakia 11 years ago and moved to Toronto when she was seven years of age. She lives with her parents and three year old brother in an apartment complex similar to many of the Polish respondents. Her interest in sports began in Czechoslovakia and she continues to be involved today.

**Wendy**

Wendy was 11 years old at the time of the interview and lives in an apartment complex with her parents and 14 year old sister. Wendy's family moved from Poland five years ago and she is heavily involved in competitive club swimming. She is very thin and has not reached puberty. She shows much ease in her body movements in the physical education class.

**Melanie**

Melanie was in grade five and 11 years old at the time of the interview. She arrived from Poland less than two years ago and is residing in the same apartment complex as her Polish friends and classmates, Ivana and Alexis. Melanie's shy personality opens up when she is talking in smaller groups. She is tall and slender but appears to be in the pre-pubescent stage of growth and development. She is slightly hesitant in physical education class compared to the stronger and more skilled individuals.

**Alice**

Alice is a grade five student and 11 years old. She is a first generation Canadian with Peruvian parents. Alice, her eight year old sister, and parents live in a house with many
recreational opportunities nearby. Alice plays with her sister most of the time and baby-sits an infant during the summer months.

**Debbie**

Debbie is an only child and lives with her mother in the same apartment complex as Hilary and Wendy. She moved from Poland to Toronto three years ago and is very close friends with her Polish classmates. Debbie is slightly overweight but is confident during play activities in the playground and physical education class. She has not reached puberty and is of average height.

**Alexis**

Alexis was a grade six student and 12 years old at the time of the interview. She is an only child and lives with her parents in the predominantly Polish immigrant apartment complex. Alexis arrived from Poland almost seven years ago and spends most of her time playing with classmates in her neighbourhood but also baby-sitting a younger female neighbour.

Alexis is the tallest student in the class and very quiet. She has reached puberty and is not self-assured in her body movements in physical education. She is slightly hesitant and awkward in her movements.

**Anne**

Anne is the oldest of four children. She has a nine year old sister and two brothers aged five and three. Anne spends the majority of her time playing in or immediately around her home. She spends a great deal of time with small children as she volunteers for the kindergarten duty in the school playground and classroom lessons. Anne is one of the smallest students in the class and has not reached puberty at this time. She is very confident
and verbal with her friends but hesitant and awkward in her running and general physical movements.

Socializing Agents

Family

Parental Influence

Seven out of eleven respondents described sports or games that they participated in with their parents. The respondents and parents participated in a range of activities from tennis, soccer, and bike riding to walks in the park. As Wendy states: "I go swimming with my dad, sometimes he plays catch with me or soccer and my mom plays ball with me, touch football." Hilary talks about her early sporting experiences as a child in Czechoslovakia. She recalls the numerous outdoor activities with fondness: "I've been swimming since I was little and loved it because my mom took me a lot in our lake and it was nice to swim in it and we had waterslides and things like that and my dad taught me to swim there" (Hilary). Today, she continues to be active with her parents in tennis, biking and skiing and emphasizes her preference for outdoor sporting pursuits.

The respondents indicate the differing levels of participation with their parents. Fathers are mentioned in seven of the participants interviews whereas only five participants indicate that their mothers were physically active with them. Sherri provides a telling response when she states: "My mom is not as active as my dad but she still tries and I hope I'm not like my mom when I get older, I hate to say it, it's just she's not that active." Similarly, Alice mentions that her mother must be coaxed to participate in physical activity: "She sometimes goes swimming with us but she gets ear infections so she can't go as much. Tennis she plays with me but not all the time, only if my dad goes 'come on go, go'; she plays baseball with us and that's about it." Tosha, a very active and talented athlete, explains that her family involvement in sport and games is primarily limited to her father. She indicates that her
mother "doesn't really play sports" but that she periodically plays tennis with her father. Tosha feels that her future may not involve too much sport and time for activities: "when you get older you have to be mature and do other things, like my mom tells me to stop playing and do my homework and help her with the dishes, garbage, clean the table: When I get older I have to do the housework more." Another student raises the issue of domestic responsibility when she comments: "with my mom I usually cook and ride my bike, probably go to the laundry, but not much because she usually does other things...she sometimes vacuums or I have to do that or else she gets really mad, and then I have to wash the dishes, like if she's sick." Alice further adds in this part of her interview that she often helps her father fix the family car. Although her family appears to be traditionally sex stereotyped in family responsibilities, Alice is learning a combination of household duties from both of her parents.

Two of the respondents spoke highly of their mother's involvement with them in physical activity. Debbie, an only child living with her divorced mother, plays tennis with her and indicates that her mother is very physically active. Similarly, Alexis an only child, insists that she plays sports primarily with her mother: "my mom plays badminton with me and soccer and dad also; but I play tennis and basketball with my mom only."

Several of the respondents commented on which parent was influential in their present sport participation. Linda, an avid horseback rider, cites both her parents as influential in her participation in horseback riding. She spends two weeks in an intensive riding camp during the summer months. Both of Linda's parents were responsible for her participation on a baseball team that stemmed from the riding camp. One competitive swimmer mentioned her father's influence in swimming which influenced her to do the same. She became enrolled in a local swim club through a friend's involvement. Similarly, Sherri asserts that her main influence in sport participation is her father: "My dad because he's been into sport since he was young and I wanted to follow what he did and it's fun too." Sherri's earlier comments regarding her mother's lack of participation provide some indication that she views early and successful participation by her father as an important influence on her own sport involvement.
Hilary, a former competitive swimmer, learned to swim in Czechoslovakia from her father and mother; however she recently quit the swim club where she swam up to four times a week for two hours per session. Her mother suggested to Hilary that a break from swimming at this level was necessary: "my mom said that when I came home from swimming I was always too tired to do any homework or anything else." Thus, her mother has been the primary decision-maker in her daughter's amount and degree of participation.

Sibling Influence

The family influence also extends beyond the parents to siblings who are regularly active with the girls. Eight of the eleven participants had siblings who were physically active themselves. The other three respondents had no siblings. Alice presents many detailed examples of her play and sport relationship with her eight year old sister; they engage in formal swimming sessions at the nearby recreation center, play ball hockey in their driveway and enjoy "wrestling" for fun: She states: "when I play with my sister I get to be a little more rough or softer than I have to be; my sister also gets her friends together and we have a really good ball hockey game in the driveway and it's quite a challenge." Although Alice's comments appear somewhat contradictory in her emphasis on both rough and less aggressive play, she is referring to the strict rules that guide the physical education class in which the degree of play is often dictated by the teacher and more dominant players. Tosha also cites a close relationship with her sister in the varied activities that they play: "my sister and I play basketball and volleyball a lot and have running races to see who's faster; we also play tennis and take swimming lessons together in the summer." Tosha comments that sport is important in her family as her older sister is "a very good baseball player" but she usually plays sports and games with her thirteen year old sister more often than her younger sibling.

Anne's family influence is not as promising as the other girls. She mentions that her nine year old sister began running this year but quit after a short time period. Her other siblings are very young and not active with her in the sport and games. Thus, Anne is not
surrounded by an active family. She didn't know what sports or games her parents played as "they're usually at work" and she is unaware of physical activities that interests her younger brother.

Peers

The following section will address the influence of friends outside the school setting. There are several cases where participants had a large degree of overlap in their peer groups in their neighbourhood and at school. Throughout the interview process I wanted to obtain as much detail as possible regarding friendships and peer groups that I could not observe in the educational setting.

Many participants described friends who were primarily the same as in the school. These overlapping friendships seem to involve girls that live in neighbouring apartment buildings. Four of these girls have arrived from Poland in the last one to six years. They are a close knit group both within and outside the school. Debbie moved to Toronto three years ago and all her close friends are Polish, except for Hilary. They engage in sports such as tennis, (adjacent to their building complex), dodgeball, and soccer. Wendy, a competitive swimmer, also includes Hilary as one of her best friends living nearby and in her class.

Debbie, Wendy and Hilary enjoy the same sports and cite swimming in the summer months as fun and something they all do together. They have access to a swimming pool in their apartment complex during the summer months and also the nearby park pool. Melanie arrived from Poland last year and similarly plays with the same friends in school as her neighbourhood. Her two best friends live in her apartment building and are Polish as well: "I like to ride my bike with my friends and I sometimes play tennis with Ivana and soccer as well...we usually play on Friday and Saturday mornings when we have no homework and it's the end of the week."

The issue of homework arose from both Melanie and Debbie. They emphasize the amount of homework they must complete before they play sports and games. These girls stress the importance of completing their English language assignments which they both agree
are very demanding. Melanie participates in the local community center basketball program but alternates the days she can attend depending on the amount of work she must complete.

Three of the respondents describe the friends in their neighbourhood as much younger than their friends at school. In all three cases the play activities they engage in also extends to baby-sitting and/or helping the younger children with homework. They did not identify this as baby-sitting, although at times their descriptions sound very similar to it. Alice, as stated earlier, enjoys playing informal games and organized sport activities with her younger sister. However, she regards her school friends as her closest because she spends so much time with them. Additionally, Alice plays primarily with her younger sister's friends and is responsible for helping her sister with homework. Linda's neighbourhood friends range in age from four to eight years. She regularly plays games such as "tag and cops and robbers" with the children. Linda often brought the younger children into her house or garden to play these activities and she explains that their play areas are limited to the front and back yard and the playroom of the house. Alexis is similar to Linda and Alice as she offers to help her younger friend with homework. In addition, Alexis plays board games and skipping with this eight year old neighbour.

In a different scenario, Sherri categorizes her friends in the neighbourhood in terms of age. The younger children, ages eight and twelve "hang around the house and the park but my older friends come to my house and we usually go down to Bloor Street and shop or just watch the boys play hockey." The variety of activities that Sherri and her friends engage in also depends on whom she is playing with. Her best friend from the neighbourhood and from a different school "is into the same things" as Sherri such as bike riding, skipping, hockey, and basketball. Sherri thinks that her friend is only into these activities because of her own involvement. She insists that she has had a big influence on her friend's involvement as Sherri teaches her friend how to throw a ball properly for baseball and basketball.

Sherri's peer group influence differ from the other girls in that she plays sports with boys in her neighbourhood. These males and females often play mixed groupings and Sherri
recounts a mixed basketball game: "We [girls] won and it was cool because the guys thought they were so macho and everything but we beat them...they were like 'you cheated' and we were like 'how can you cheat?'" Sherri also expresses how her male friends are very helpful in teaching the girls hockey, football, and different versions of baseball that do not use a bat but concentrate on the throwing and catching skills.

Socialization Situations

Much of the impetus for the influence of the neighbourhood, formal or organized sport, and availability of sports equipment stems from my own experiences. Within the feminist social science research, it is highly recommended to draw research questions based on the investigator's own concerns and experiences (Westkott, 1990). I strongly felt that my active childhood was heavily influenced by my "ideal" neighbourhood environment. Indeed, prior to the interview stage I wanted to grasp an understanding of the girls' neighbourhood surroundings in an effort to uncover their sport participation opportunities. Such topics as busy streets, availability of parks, yard space or any other related matters were raised during the course of the interview or in my participant observation sessions. My own experiences at the age of eleven and twelve involved ample opportunities to play sports and games in our quiet neighbourhood. In my view, the large number of children my age and various other age groups fostered a strong desire for active living. My opportunities to expand on these informal activities were varied including my involvement in the local ice skating club. Many of my own neighbourhood friends received much of their sporting experiences from the school teams and extracurricular activities offered. Thus, our formal sporting experiences differed but we remained highly active through both the school and neighbourhood activities.

The amount of sports equipment can be an important influence for children's involvement in sport and games. I had limited access to sports equipment and primarily used a frisbee, tennis balls, plastic football, skipping rope, and basketball for the majority of our
neighbourhood activities. The remainder of our games were formed through our imagination and influence of sporting practices viewed on the television (gymnastics) or from the school PE class (circuit training, and obstacle courses). In either case, all of our neighbourhood friends participated in these activities. All of these factors will be presented in light of researcher Janice Butcher's (1983) categorization of socialization situations.

**Neighbourhood**

The interview material provided relevant information on the type of neighbourhood in which the girls resided. During the interview they were probed for various descriptions of parks, how busy the nearby streets were, and the type of facilities available nearby. In total, approximately half of the respondents lived in close proximity to each other with an apartment complex that provided swimming and tennis facilities. The majority of participants utilized these facilities and biked in the nearby park. Hilary specifically liked the "greenery" outside her apartment building where she could play simple games such as tag with her friends. Similarly, Wendy mentioned that there was a YMCA near her apartment building where her father attends and infrequently may obtain passes for her mother and herself. Alexis uses the baseball diamond and skating rink in the nearby park.

The respondents living in apartment buildings generally agreed on the quiet nature of the neighbourhood as well as the number and type of facilities for sport. The respondents living in houses recounted varied responses. Kelly, for example described her home area as "very busy with cars always around and my parents won't let me play in the park across the street so I play in my friend's front yard or my backyard." Linda, Anne, Alice, and Sherri offer different descriptions of their neighborhood: "my neighborhood is not that busy with cars, but we have lots of people rollerblading, riding bikes, skateboarding and it's safe to play out on the street" (Sherri). Similarly, Anne states that her street is not busy but she still plays in her backyard. She insisted that she doesn't play too much outdoors, mostly in the school yard. Linda plays in her garden quite often even though her area is very quiet. She mentions the
large number of trees and park space to play in, including the baseball diamond nearby. Finally, Alice provides a detailed description of where she lives: "there's a field near my house and a tennis court; we also have a school yard we can play in...there's a humungous hill we can ride our bikes on."

**Opportunity Set**

The following headings address the degree of continued involvement in sport. These are drawn from Janice Butcher's study (1983) in which she outlines the variety of influences in girls' sport participation.

**Community Center/Organized Sport**

The respondents, over a series of questions and probes, highlighted the sports and games which they played. They were provided with ample opportunity to describe all sports they played, whether in the community center, sporting organization, or school team, or with their friends in the neighbourhood. It was possible to loosely categorize the physical activities according to their formal or informal nature.

The participants were predominantly involved in community recreation activities. Many of the respondents have taken swimming lessons at the community centers during the summer months and then swim during recreational hours in the fall and winter months. Hilary, formerly enrolled in a competitive swim club, opts to swim on a recreational basis with Debbie at the local recreation center. Alice has a comparable experience with her school friend from another grade five class:

I go swimming at the rec center for Life Saving Three with this girl from another class and in the summer my mom signed me up for soccer and I'll be doing it in the spring and double soccer in the summer...I'll have to ride my bike there and that'll be fun too.
Melanie, a recent Polish immigrant, is keen about her participation in the basketball program in two recreation centers as she recounts her feelings of success and also the initial insecurities: "Like when I first came to the basketball session and everyone's thinking 'oh my god, she's new' and then I just tried really hard and I'm getting better." Melanie feels that this extra recreation center activity is helping her game both in the recreation center and in PE class.

Three respondents provided brief details on their formal, organized activities. Linda explains the summer horseback riding camp that she has attended for the past two years and her weekly lessons: "I compete in horseback riding, in show jumping and flat work...the summer two week camp makes me much better as we go riding twice a day for two hours at a time." Wendy, a competitive swimmer, practices every day for two hours and her swim club also provides opportunities for cross training with soccer and weight training practices. Finally, Alice includes tennis lessons in the summer, in addition to soccer and Life Saving sessions.

**Team Sports/Extracurricular Sport Activities**

School team sports are a further example of organized sport that will be examined for its influence in girls' sport participation. These extracurricular activities extended beyond regular school hours, including lunch time. Several of the girls spoke to me about the cross country running try outs that were happening during lunch hour. In the case of this particular sport any student who was interested in running could attend the practices and a series of races would be held to determine the representatives for the school. At least four of the respondents mentioned that they were attempting to make the running team. Three were also actively participating in other team sport tryouts.

Kelly is an interesting case of an individual with very little family sporting influence as she states, "they don't really know anything about sport". She has made the school volleyball team the past two years and has been selected to represent the school on the track and field as
well as cross country teams. Kelly cites her friends as an influence in signing up for the various teams as she "sees that it's going to be fun to be involved". Thus, Kelly, an obviously gifted athlete, is heavily dependent on the school sport activities to develop her natural potential.

Tosha, similarly an exceptional young athlete, has been selected for the same teams as Kelly and consequently is making extensive use of the extracurricular opportunities at the school. However, as has been previously stated, Tosha may face conflict with her household responsibilities. Sherri is the third respondent involved in school team sports. She tried to make the basketball team this year but was cut after the third round. However, she states: "I didn't make the basketball team this year but there's always next year, besides they mainly pick the grade seven girls anyway." This student has also been an active member of the volleyball team in the past and noted that she is more comfortable in gym class for volleyball sessions.

Availability of Equipment

A third relevant dimension of the socialization situations that has been highlighted in the literature is the availability of sports equipment. During the course of the interview, the respondents were asked information about their access to sporting equipment, whether it was their friends' or their own. In many cases it can be inferred that if the respondent relayed information pertaining to soccer and baseball participation with her parents, siblings or friends, then sports equipment must be immediately available.

Tosha specifically identified tennis rackets and balls that she uses frequently in the summer. Debbie regularly provides an "all purpose" ball for recess and lunch-time at school and with her friends beside the apartment complex. She also owns a tennis racket which she frequently uses with her mother and friend, but mentions biking as her favorite activity.

Indeed, nine of the eleven respondents specifically stated they owned bicycles and used them very frequently. Also, many of the girls mentioned soccer and handball as common activities they played within their neighborhood. Hilary owns downhill skis (as do all of her
family), tennis equipment, various balls, and ice skates. On one occasion during the course of the study, I participated in an outdoor skating session with the class. All the girls involved in the interview phase owned skates and participated in several school skating activities throughout the winter months.

In conclusion, the majority of the respondents had access to a limited but not insubstantial amount of sports equipment. The overwhelming number that ride bikes, play tennis, and ice skate is an important point to consider when understanding the favorite activities of this gender and age group. This pattern is also indicative of the social class status of the participants. The implications for long term involvement patterns is addressed in the discussion and analysis.

**Informal Educational Setting: The Playground**

The playground was observed for a further understanding of girls' physical activity. These observations are not coded or quantified but reflect more general observations of physical activities in the playground. The categories or themes that emerged are guided by literature in this area but not limited to it. It was very difficult to gather fieldnotes on all girls at playground/recess time. Therefore after several sessions of wide scope observing, I began to narrow down the observations primarily to girls from the classroom under study. This exercise was often fraught with logistical problems as it was not always possible, especially in the early stages of the project, to identify the key participants. Over time, and with more familiarity and sense of order in the playground, my primary aim was to jot quick notes on as many girls from the classroom as possible in the fifteen minute recess period. There were up to nineteen girls to observe, and the fieldnotes consisted primarily of noting the major activity that one or a group of participants were involved in. What has emerged are patterns of organization, not necessarily individual activities.
As Barrie Thorne (1994) notes, her inventories were concerned with showing patterns of "gender geography" in the playground as the activities, spaces and equipment used in this setting were heavily dependent on gender (p.44). While Thorne focused on relations between boys and girls and their play patterns, this research had as its central focus the experiences of girls. To that end, the girls occupied the majority of the fieldnotes. This does not, however, mean that boys or other girls in the playground were ignored, since many of their activities were examined and comparisons made between or within groups of children. The varied activities provide rich data that guide, support and/or refute emerging themes in the other areas of the study.

The following themes or categories emerged from the participant observations in the informal educational setting, the playground: (1) the pre-dominance of same-sex play activities, including the game disruptions that occurred, (2) occasional mixed sex play, which highlights the incidents of children challenging traditional stereotypes, as well as patterns of non-cooperative games and rough play styles, and (3) the high prevalence of inactive girls.

**Same-Sex Play Activities**

As was previously stated, the girls were the primary focus of the playground activities and were observed for the types of games, usual number of participants and sex of participants engaged in the activity. Although quantitative research has been performed regarding playground activities (Evans, 1986; Kraft, 1989; Lever, 1976), this particular research evolved from long-term observations that centered on gender in the development of themes or categories (Thorne, 1995). The same-sex groupings were one visible theme that emerged from the observations. The types of activities that the girls engaged in on the playground varied considerably both in the numbers of participants and the levels of active exertion. For the purposes of this research, levels of activity will be loosely defined when the activity is described. It is not the intent of this research to categorize the physical activities for
physiological purposes but more as an identification of girls' participation in the varied types of games and play.

The various same-sex play activities ranged from two girls playing with a tennis ball against the school wall to a group of at least 10 to 12 girls engaged in dodgeball, volleyball or soccer. Other popular activities included skipping, "statues", football, tag, and simple ball games. It was possible to identify the more active of the girls in the class as they usually engaged in an activity utilizing Debbie's "all purpose" ball. It appeared that without this simple piece of equipment the level of activity would often be reduced to activities such as walking, talking or sitting for the five or six girls who regularly engaged in ball games.

Other games that these girls would play without the ball included "statues" which involved generally between five to ten participants. This particular game involved a moderate activity level as they were required to hold poses or "statues" as well as sprint away from the "statue" looker. Skipping games were also popular with different group sizes. Generally, the smaller skipping games would produce more movement than the larger games involving up to ten girls waiting in line for their turn.

The girls' play activities could not be definitively divided into small or large group play. Different activities provided varying degrees of physical activity and generally, all the games mentioned thus far provided full body movement. The theme of game interruptions by boys was observed and recorded primarily within these skipping games. The frustration experienced by the girls was evident when individuals invaded their sport or games. Within these same-sex activities, several cases of game interference were cited. For the most part these game invasions were performed by boys.

**Game Disruptions**

Within the realm of girls' same-sex play and games, boys were the primary instigators of game break-ups and disruptions. In one case, a girl struggled with a boy to keep her own football. In a similar situation a boy tried to convince a girl to play baseball with the boys
because she had a glove. On both of these occasions the girls refused the boys' requests. With regards to actual interference in ongoing game play, Geoff invaded a soccer game involving five to six girls. They had been keeping the ball within the boundaries of the playground until Geoff intercepted it and gave the ball a powerful kick over the playground barbed wire fence. The girls needed permission from the teacher to retrieve it from the nearby recreation center parking lot. As the girl climbed the fence, Geoff disappeared from the game and proceeded to the opposite end of the playground. At this point in the recess period, very little time remained for the play to continue. I noted that the girls were upset at Geoff for his behaviour but they didn't report the incident to the teacher on duty. Perhaps this behaviour was "normal" in the playground whereby girls see these acts as just a "nuisance".

In another incident of game interceptions, ten girls were playing "jumpsies" in which two girls are responsible for holding the skipping rope around their ankles, knees or waist, depending on the level of the players. In this case, one boy playing football jumped into the game on his way to retrieve the ball. He had enough space to move around the girls' game but disrupted the activity, causing a restart for the girl currently taking her turn. The same boy interrupted the game once more before the end of the fifteen minute recess.

I noted that one regular female participant in boys' football pursuits also invaded the space of the girls' games. In this case, both the girl and her male playing partner worked together to disrupt the skipping game in progress. The girl interfered by jumping into the moving rope and performing exaggerated high leaps over it. Her male friend pulled the rope taut so that the game was forced to stop; the girls involved in the game were upset and yelled their frustrations at the two students.

In a similar format, interference in the girls' games involved the male teacher on recess and playground duty. This teacher was often active in football with predominantly male students, but in this observed incident he quickly jumped into the skipping game as another girl was waiting for her turn. On this occasion the girls were not visibly upset but perhaps the presence and interruption by a male authority figure caused this reaction. This particular
teacher didn't stay or offer to join in the game. In such a situation the strong possibility exists for other students, especially males, to feel that their invasions are justified. Indeed, this particular teacher is probably a male role model as he places his support behind the boys' football activities during the majority of the playground sessions. The instigation for other students to perform the same or similar acts reproduces the general unimportance ascribed to female activities.

Thus, same-sex play activities were the dominant mode of activity in the playground. However, the invasion of boys, or occasionally, girls playing in a boys' game was a cause for concern. It is possible that the disruptions in the girls' games were merely teasing; however, some feminist researchers would consider these as examples of male aggression and sexual harassment (Thorne, 1994). The advent of the girl in this invasion scenario also raises issues of girls disregarding the "sissy" play of females. This will be addressed in a later analysis of male spatial dominance in the playground and PE classes.

**Boys and Girls Active Together**

The dominant mode of play in this setting was same-sex; however, there were numerous occasions in which mixed groupings prevailed. This emphasizes the contextual and fluid nature of the playground (Thorne, 1994) as activities could not always be compartmentalized for each recess session. For example, one group of girls may begin the game with only female participants, but within a brief period of time two or three boys would work their way into the game without the disruptions that were noted earlier. These cooperative games mixed groupings, as opposed to girls versus boys, illustrate the various play possibilities. The evolution of mixed play could involve one girl providing her own ball and in the course of playing a free-for-all soccer game, she invites a group of boys to play with them. My observations of the boys and girls in this informal game revealed a very active group situation and showed no obvious conflict or problems during the course of the activity.
Challenging Traditional Stereotypes

In addition to the large mixed groupings in the playground, I also kept fieldnotes on the alternative activities not commonly identified in the research. In several observational sessions, the playground was an arena for boys and girls to use their space in creative ways. One boy from another class left his football play to join two girls in a dance routine. He imitated their steps and then joined in with them; they were smiling and enjoying the activity. In a separate example, two girls were demonstrating their dance routine to two boys during the playground recess. The boys then performed their own "rap" type dance. In this case they were comparing their routines and having a fun time together. Both of these incidents indicate the varied activities that children engage in while outside the immediate constraints of the "formal" school setting.

Football provided a further example that brought girls and boys together. One specific occasion involved several girls and boys from the class under study engaged in a large-scale informal game of football. There were no set rules and positions that "real" football entails. The object of this particular game was to simply place the football into the designated end zones without tackling other players. I observed that no serious rough play occurred. In a similar observation, a boy and girl taught three girls the formal positioning and calls for football. The girl, already mentioned in the incident of game invasions, was very adept at throwing the football. The boy was her usual playing partner and they worked well together in explaining the throws and play patterns.

These preceding examples illustrate the complexity of interactions between the boys and girls. The cooperative nature was a positive display of non-traditional activities for both males and females. The potential for challenging traditional gender stereotypes in physical activity is evident in these cases. However, there were several exceptions to cooperative mixed-sex play, specifically in the games of "Keep-Away", "Boys Chase Girls/Girls Chase Boys", dodgeball, and soccer.
Non-Cooperative Games and Rough Play

The girls' complaints of boys' rough play were pronounced in the interviews, and I frequently observed the roughness of these same boys in the playground. My observations also revealed many cases of boys "hogging" or dominating the play. In the game of "Keep Away" the boys and girls are competing against each other to keep the ball from falling into the opponents' hands. The girls commented on the roughness of this game and their distaste for the careless and physical nature of the boys' play. This game provided the largest number of complaints of boys' rough play:

"Sometimes you get bumped around and it gets rough like when Jay and Leonard just grab you and pull you back". (Hilary)

"We play "Keep Away" in class but I don't like to play in the playground without a teacher around because the boys get too rough. In the playground the boys are always trying to take the ball from us and want to play and we don't want them". (Kelly)

"It's a stupid game. The boys start getting tougher and pushing and stuff and then I hardly ever get the ball. I really don't like the games that have the boys against the girls". (Anne)

Many of the female participants expressed some enjoyment in playing "rough" games. However, through their voices it is apparent that they feel differently about the boys' roughness which tends to move beyond an acceptable "fun" level. The differing definitions of "rough" play styles between boys and girls is important in this study. Many of the female participants felt that opportunities to fully take part in the game are thwarted by the boys' rough behaviour, especially in the cases of body collisions. Kelly is adamant that the boys' actions should not be tolerated and feels that girls should leave the boys to play among themselves because of their high level of aggression.
**Inactive Girls**

The following section will focus on groups of girls who did not engage in active play at recess. There was a consistent group of girls who played with a ball together. These girls can be considered the most active on the playground. However, at times, some of these active girls chose to talk or walk slowly around the playground. The emphasis in this section will be on the girls who were not frequently engaged in moderate or vigorous games and activities.

In every recess observation I observed at least one incident of girls standing and talking to each other. Because the study is concerned with the physical activity experiences of the girls, their patterns of relative inactivity are important. Many girls chose to walk slowly and talk to their friends at recess, often in groups as small as two or as large as four or five. Other activities involved hand clapping games with the girls either standing or sitting by the yard fence. This activity was usually in small, intimate groups of no larger than three or four students. A similar game that involved minimal physical activity was charades. In this game, usually played by small groups of less than five to six participants only the main actor was involved in any noticeable body movement. Another game that involved a slightly higher degree of activity was the more strategic "Cops and Robbers". This game engaged larger groups of girls, ranging from four to eight in number. It is interesting to note that even though the weather became much colder these relatively inactive games continued. In contrast, however, the moderately active girls who usually played with the ball during recess would find ways to remain active, and in most cases keep warm. Even when the playground was dangerous for the students with ice covering over two thirds of the yard, some groups of girls played pulling games of dragging each other over the ice.

I observed several instances of girls' lengthy planning of recess activities. This involves a comparison to boys but it is made with the intent to illustrate that the girls spent a large amount of time standing, at times even with a ball in their possession. I informally timed these incidents of girls arranging the game or activity and in many cases the girls would spend
from eight to ten minutes of the fifteen minute recess period socializing about events or everyday incidents that were of interest to other girls in the group. However, other recess periods were filled with active girls intensely involved in games and sports. The variation cannot be accounted for in this study but the tendency for girls to emphasize social interaction instead of physical activity is noteworthy in light of the aims of this study.

To summarize the playground results it is noteworthy to reiterate that many of the categories and headings were guided by the literature review. In this regard the link to gender issues was prevalent in the categorizing of same-sex or and mixed activities. The disruptions highlighted the relations between the boys and girls and the problematic results that stemmed from game interferences. The mixed-sex groupings are viewed as an opportunity for boys and girls to try different activities that are not in line with traditional sex-stereotyped games and sports. The rough play observed and commented on by the girls raises an important area for analysis. Finally, the inactivity of many girls in the playground is important in understanding the emphasis that girls place on physical activity in their free play time.

**Formal Educational Setting: The Grade Five/Six Classroom**

The homeroom class was observed twice per week, primarily on physical education days. The subject areas were generally math and social studies during this observation time. However, the subject schedule was not stringent and other activities occurred such as art, special music or religious activities, and Friday "special events" such as an afternoon movie or outdoor skating field trips. The varied activities were advantageous for descriptive note taking.

One major theme that emerged was the regular classroom activities as an arena for challenging traditional sex-stereotyped behaviours. However, more categories emerged concerning the predominance of boys' attention-seeking behaviour and their blatant challenging of both teacher authority and peers. Additionally, interactions between the boys
and girls highlighted the fluid nature of gender relations in the classroom. Such categories as teasing between girls and boys and cooperative patterns will demonstrate this fluidity. The "kindergarten duty" issue will focus on the traditionally feminine values as outlined by Eyre (1991) and the emergent pattern of girls opposing those behaviours viewed as traditionally "feminine".

Throughout these results I will include the names of girls who participated in the interview process. All other girls will not be assigned names to avoid confusion. I will introduce one of the more disruptive boys in the class, Geoff, to illustrate his dominance in the classroom and its effect on the girls. No other boys' names will be used but clusters of boys will be referred to as "disruptive" in the sense that like Geoff, they demand attention and teachers' time.

Boys' Verbal Dominance

The major disruptions in the classroom involved four or five boys from the grade five side of the room. The fifth graders occupy three rows of desks out of five. My first discovery of boys' verbal dominance in the classroom was the overwhelming number of fieldnote entries centered on males. The preponderance of boys seeking attention and expressing their concerns without hesitation to either the class or teacher became an early and disturbing theme. Within this category, the teacher spent an inordinate amount of her teaching time catering to the immediate concerns of this group of boys. The experiences of the girls was the primary focus of this paper and it was clear that the continual interruptions and loud behaviour of the boys inhibited the girls' learning.

The teachers' repeated pleas for quiet and classroom order towards the disruptive boys in the class was a definitive pattern. She responded in many ways to their interruptions: "I have no patience for your yelling out"; "Show me respect"; "You're ruining the discussion for everybody"; "Stop talking out"; "Do you know I've spent the majority of my time talking to you?" She instructed the other students to "ignore Geoff or he'll keep talking."
In a similar situation, a boy yelled at two girls working on the classroom computer and accusingly stated, "You guys aren't supposed to be on the computer!" The girls defended themselves quietly, "Yes we are, just ask the teacher." The same boy illustrated his overpowering behaviour in a "less" academic discussion when the teacher informally asked the students what movies they had recently seen: "Batman, Free Willy, Crimson Tide, and Babe" were his responses. The girls were listening to this discussion but did not offer their movie preferences and the teacher did not inquire any further. It was evident that the boy in this situation had succeeded in getting the teacher's attention and left the quiet students in the background of the discussion.

My notes are full of examples involving Geoff, one of the most disruptive students in the class. His dominating and outspoken manner was a continual cause of frustration for the teacher and students. He often announced that he was finished his seat work ahead of everyone else and would frequently call out, "I don't get this Miss." The teacher was understandably consumed with finding new measures for controlling his actions and words; however, because of his attention-seeking behaviour, she tended to neglect the needs of the other students. In routine questions such as seeking permission to go the bathroom, the girls and a small number of boys would go directly to the teacher's desk. Geoff and a few of the other loud boys would yell from their desks for washroom or drink trips. In either case, the teacher generally would not discipline them for their behavior on such a trivial issue. However, from an observational standpoint, the steady stream of male voices in the classroom lends credence to other researchers' claims of spatial and verbal dominance by boys.

**Challenging the Female Teacher**

The pattern of defiance evident in this classroom ranged from boys questioning the teacher on rudimentary homework assignments to blatant remarks on her knowledge in a subject area. In one case, a male student questioned the teacher on a test assigned for early the following week and exclaimed "Are you absolutely crazy?" to which the teacher
responded, "that is not an appropriate question to ask a teacher." The boy continued his work without the slightest concern.

In another case, Geoff displayed a challenging manner in an incident with the teacher and Tosha. When Tosha and Geoff wrote the homework assignment on the chalkboard she spelled "mapping" correctly but Geoff laughed at her and claimed it was not a word. Tosha erased the word without speaking as she awaited the teacher's final decision. The teacher scolded Geoff because "mapping" was correct and told Tosha to rewrite the word with the original spelling. Geoff continued to challenge the teacher and she gave him a dictionary. He continually insisted that he could "prove them wrong." Through his loud voice and defiant attitude, he garnered much attention from his friends and classmates. When the teacher ordered Geoff to apologize to Tosha he was barely audible but persisted with the teacher on the topic for a few more minutes. It was obvious that Geoff was uncomfortable in admitting a mistake in front of both females, especially when he is considered one of the most popular boys in the class. It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for Geoff's popularity as the girls spoke of the many frustrations that Geoff causes. However, he is considered smart and athletic (football in particular) which, at this age, appears to be the combination that determines the popular male students.

A final example illustrates the challenge to teacher authority within the context of sport knowledge. In this particular case, the teacher returned a football to one of the boys sitting in his desk. She threw it to him lightly and he dropped it on the floor: "Miss, you need some practice on your throw" and she replied, "Well you need some practice on your catch". At this point, the boy stood up and pointed to where he claimed the teacher had thrown the ball, "Look, you threw it here", pointing to a couple of feet away from his desk and the teacher ended the challenge by stating, "well, I never know where you're going to be!" The entire argument became a case of the teacher defending her throwing ability because the boy exuded confidence and knowledge in football. The teacher was left to defend her throwing ability when it was clear that the student simply dropped the ball. It resembled Geoff's defiant
behaviour when the teacher "won" the argument. Within this football scenario, the boy again seemed intent on "winning".

Challenging the Girls

Boys challenging the teacher's authority represented one type of domineering behaviour. In several cases, boys challenged girls in the classroom. In one incident a female student was working on a math problem at the chalkboard but performed the factors incorrectly. Two boys repeatedly yelled at her that it was the wrong answer and she became flustered and uneasy. The teacher continued to help her focus on the completion of the problem but was interrupted by Geoff. He called out, "Let me do it", and walked to the chalkboard to complete the math problem. The teacher did not intervene in this incident and the girl went to her seat.

The classroom computer area was an interesting place for observing student interactions. The teacher allowed two students at once to work on math or play a game at this site. In one instance it was observed that Teena and Geoff were working together on a math problem. Two other boys stood behind them and interrupted as she was having her turn with the mouse. "She's not doing it right, multiply, not divide!" Aidan exclaimed. Geoff took the mouse from Teena's hand and she sat silently. Aidan attempted to reach past her and touch the keyboard but Geoff became angry, stating, "Let me figure it out myself!"

Meanwhile, Teena kept her hand on her lap and periodically pointed to the computer screen. Later in the afternoon two other girls had their time at the computer and both Geoff and Aidan stood behind them and made commands about steps to take and keys to press. The rest of the class were upset at the two boys for blocking material on the chalkboard, and it was only the class' impatience that reluctantly drew the boys away from the computer station. The girls at the computer continued their work.

Boys challenging girls also included harsh forms of imitation and teasing. In one case, a boy balancing a book on his head and showing off to his friends laughed at Hilary when she
stated: "I used to do that when I did ballet, we had to walk around for as long as we could". The boy imitated her pronunciation of "ballet" and sarcastically said, "So you did ballet?" She looked offended and replied that she "doesn't like it anymore and it's really stupid" and quickly put her head down and began to read.

In another example four boys made a concerted effort to challenge the female winner in a special "Hat Day" celebration. The class voted on the best homemade hat and Geoff led a protest against the winner as he believed the votes had not been counted properly and his friend should have won. The girl who won the contest waited patiently for the teacher to appoint a reviewer of the main rules of the contest. It was clear that Geoff's friend had not adhered to the "homemade hat" rule but he continued to complain and even questioned whether the winner's hat qualified under these rules.

**Interactions Between Girls and Boys**

The interactions between the boys and girls often moved from one of cooperation and a helpful working environment to teasing. At one moment a boy may complain to the teacher that a girl was poking his back with a pen and shortly after will be asking the same girl for help with math. In either case the interactions are fluid, changing and highly contextual (Thorne, 1994). The following discussion will present situations that exemplify the wide range of possibilities for gender relations in the classroom.

**Boys and Girls Working Together**

Numerous cases existed of boys and girls sharing ideas and stories. In one instance two boys and two girls were talking about their younger brothers and sisters. Throughout their animated stories, there was a sense of ease and camaraderie among them as they shared common experiences and laughed about them. Similarly, it was observed on several occasions that the boys or the girls would offer compliments on drawings or pieces of artwork. In such instances, there was a genuine regard for the talent and ability of the student. In one case,
Wendy repeatedly covered up her drawing even though other students pleaded for her to show it. David said, "I won't make fun of it, please, really I won't!" Wendy relented and he complimented her work and she seemed pleased with the positive comments.

Both the boys and girls would engage in "horseplay" and their actions supported Thorne's (1994) view of gender as non-significant in certain situations. An act of horseplay may include boys and girls "fencing" with their rulers and according to Thorne such situations are highly irrelevant in terms of gender relations. However, most incidents of play behaviour between the boys and girls in this study had some connection to gender. Thorne mentions that in some social situations, other categories of relations are at the forefront. In one example in the classroom, a Polish boy converses in his native language with three Polish girls. They were working together on seat work and in this particular case, ethnicity is at the forefront of their interactions and not gender.

**Teasing Between Girls and Boys**

The teasing that occurred in the grade five/six classroom was often seen as a form of "goin' with" as described by Thorne (1994). Her research involved the same age group as the present study. Through a series of teasing incidents it became obvious that boys and girls were forming ties with one another in my study. Geoff and Marcia often teased one another about their gender: "You want to be a girl" she would exclaim and he would respond, "No I don't; who knows if Marcia is a girl or a boy?" Marcia was very confident and was one of a few students (male or female) who could silence Geoff.

The teasing continued in forms such as pinching shoulders when seat work was being completed. In such cases, the boys would often yell out to the teacher and then get themselves in trouble. Aidan was one male student who persistently bothered, poked and disrupted Hilary which illustrated hostility more than a gentle form of teasing. Hilary would often sit quietly in her desk reading a book or doing seat work when Aidan would either poke her back or pull her hair. Hilary usually responded in a serious tone, "Leave me alone, stop
bothering me!" Aidan was also the target of a severe scolding from another girl in the class. In this case, a rumour reached her that the boy told his friends she would attend his birthday party and give him a kiss. The girl literally marched down the aisle of desks and angrily stated, "Only in your dreams, anyway, no girls are going to your party."

Actions such as this were a common occurrence and illustrate that the boys in the class were repeatedly testing the boundaries in their teasing behaviour. The boys and girls may also have been exploring heterosexual roles but in the case of Aidan and Hilary, the frustration and anger felt by this female student indicated that Aidan was harassing rather than teasing.

**Displays of Sex-Differential Behaviours**

In this section I will identify the traditionally feminine and masculine behaviours that are frequently cited in research on gender in the educational setting. Eyre (1991) identifies the "feminine virtues of care, concern, connectedness and nurturance" and the masculine dimensions as "competition, power and control" (p.194). Hereafter, female or feminine values and behaviours will coincide with Eyre's description. Within such a framework examples from the classroom will illustrate a pattern of sex-differentiation. The Kindergarten Duty issue will provide the clearest illustration of traditionally feminine qualities. The Case of Martin will highlight male behaviours that do not fall neatly into the traditionally masculine realm. In fact, Martin's behaviours lie closer to the feminine side of the continuum of gender stereotypes.

**Girls Displaying Traditionally Feminine Behaviours**

Just as boys tended to dominate the classroom, the girls were definitively quieter than the boys. This observation does not presuppose that quiet behavior implies less assertive girls. However a pattern emerged of girls waiting for extended periods of time while the teacher attended to a louder, more assertive boy or disciplined other students. Several instances involved girls lining up at the teacher's desk for help while boys often called out from their
seats. There were no occasions cited in my fieldnotes of female students calling for teacher attention from their desks.

Within the theme of traditionally feminine values, many examples included girls speaking of "best" friends and displaying affection to other girls. The connectedness theme was illustrated further when the researcher viewed several cases of "best" friends becoming enemies, but only for a short time. Within the playground girls spoke to me about their friend choosing someone else to play with. Many girls had one or two close friends and often showed their friendships in different ways such as swapping bookmarks or writing in special logs or journals.

The girls' attempts to keep the class under control when the teacher stepped out expressed the traditional female value of care or concern. The girls' assumption of this role can be linked to the concern and worry that students will upset the teacher and thus, the stability of the classroom (Gilligan, 1982). The girls would often use harsh whispers to the disruptive boys or their facial expressions and body language would lend credence to their concern. When the teacher was away from the classroom, the boys exerted their power and authority more than usual, in which case the girls often appeared less visible than ever.

In another example of girls' caring or more nurturing role, a few female students showed concern for one of the quieter boys who had been cut on the nose during recess play and was visibly upset and crying. The girls asked him how it happened and if he needed anything to make him feel better. A further example involved two girls and a boy discussing their movie preferences. Linda stated her "disgust" at horror movies that are not restricted for small children. She had not stated how she felt about the movie for herself but showed concern for young children. This student spends a large amount of time playing and caring for young children. This case leads into the next section which, involves the same student and five others in what will be referred to as "Kindergarten Duty."
Kindergarten Duty

The values of nurturance, care and concern are widely associated with teachers of young children. In this school setting, several girls spent large amounts of time helping the kindergarten classes. It was revealed that as many as six girls and one boy from my classroom study regularly performed kindergarten duty during playground recess time, lunch time, and on several occasions during actual classes. The case of Martin, the lone boy involved in caring for the children, will be discussed in a later section.

Although the kindergarten duty was usually scheduled for play and lunch time, several students were missing important parts of academic classes. There were several occasions in which the girls and Martin were asked to help the kindergarten children with art projects during their own math classes. In addition, these helpers were often late or entirely missed physical education classes. It is understandable that these students were learning important values such as nurturance and early child care; however, the inordinate amount of time that the girls missed from their class and own free time is problematic. Two of the students volunteered as helpers in grade four and have been involved ever since. In a few cases, some disappointment was expressed by two of the regular helpers when they were missing their own recess time.

Some of the helping sessions were not regularly scheduled. On one occasion, the classroom teacher asked for "six girls to come with the teacher." It wasn't clear at this point why the girls were being summoned from their seat work. When I inquired from students sitting nearby, a boy commented that they were helping the kindergarten class with their art work. A further examination of an activity that clearly divides on gender lines is essential. The absence of males from this activity is important in light of the traditionally female values attached to it. This will be developed in the discussion more fully.
**Boys Displaying Traditionally Masculine Behaviours**

Many incidents of overt and subtle behaviours were categorized in one form or another within the category of masculine values. The values of power, control, and competition will be evident in varying incidents. I will draw particular attention to one boy, Martin who is heavily involved with the kindergarten care issue. Similar to the feminine values of nurturance, care and concern, succinctly illustrated through the care of the younger students, this male student will be presented as an example of what is not masculine in this particular setting.

My position within the classroom allowed for informal "chats" and the freedom to walk and observe different groups or clusters of students. From this perspective, I could overhear conversations in the cloak room between boys or girls, or see displays of emotion that often go unnoticed by the teacher or other students. Within the category of masculine values, I heard two grade five boys whispering about steroids and rumours that someone they knew had used them. An instance such as this appears somewhat insignificant but several examples created a pattern related to issues of power and strength. Further example involved two boys carefully taping together the magazine *Mortal Combat* and showing intense interest in the characters and physical moves illustrated in it. In a similar example, the influence and choice of media becomes a relevant and telling instance of male differentiated values. A group of four boys discuss their favorite movies and mention *Mortal Combat*, *James Bond 007*, and *Species*. Within the same discussion, two girls clearly show their disdain for the boys' choices and state their preferences as *Forrest Gump* and *Dirty Dancing*.

The masculine value of power was definitively illustrated as an "allowable" or "unchecked" display in the playground and during physical education class. However, such displays of strength and power were also evident in the classroom. On one occasion, I noticed a six inch hole in the classroom wall and asked the teacher about it. She described an incident of Aidan and Mark "play fighting" and Aidan kicked his foot into the wall. No one was injured in the incident; however, the teacher emphasized to me that these boys are often
involved in "mock combat". Indeed observations on the playground, far removed from strict teacher control, often involve real cases of fighting and injury.

Further to this point, when the teacher joked to Geoff about pursuing a career as a secretary, Keith interfered to illustrate his disbelief at such an idea exclaiming *repeatedly*, "Geoff's going to be a football player, a football player!" Mark joined into the discussion to expand this declaration of admiration, "You should see Geoff, he can beat up 20 guys in 20 seconds!" Aidan is visibly impressed and states "Wow, when did he do that?" All of these boys represent what I have described as the more disruptive group in the class. The display of strength and power is further evidenced in the karate kicks and frequent "body slams" against the gym and classroom walls during recess time.

Bryson (1990) defined one aspect of masculinity as *excluding* those values considered feminine. In light of this statement, the feminine values and traits including care, concern, and emotional expressiveness, can be used in highlighting instances of boys "clinging" to the masculine ideal. During a special Friday afternoon activity the movie, *Free Willy*, contained a scene in which the main male character, approximately 11 or 12 years old openly cried. The group of "disruptive" boys snickered and laughed throughout the scene as a few girls ordered them to keep quiet.

The issue of hiding emotions and displays of feeling was further evidenced when I witnessed one boy crying in the playground lineup. The boys who had fought with him were now taunting him about being a "wimp" and not continuing the fight. There was no teacher nearby to witness the incident and I felt that by taking a neutral stance this incident of taunting would reveal true displays of masculine behaviours and actions. In addition to this display, an example involves Geoff and his friend making comments about the six girls helping the kindergarten teacher. The boys were joking between themselves and one of them stated, "Don't you know girls are better at that sort of thing?"

In a concluding example for this section the masculine links to male professional sport were evident when the teacher asked the class, "How many people have seen a Leafs game?"
How about a Raptors game?" In each case three boys and no girls had attended the games. The teacher engaged in a discussion with these boys and the girls sitting near me commented on the exorbitant amount of money spent on seasons tickets: "You could buy a new TV instead of watching basketball games!"

**The Case of Martin**

The case of Martin demonstrates the strict adherence to traditionally masculine behaviours. Martin volunteered in grade four to help with the kindergarten children and has continued this work with only female helpers. His primary friends are female although he does have one or two close male friends who are a part of this group. His behaviour and mannerisms have been mentioned by male students and the vice-principal of the school. In particular the vice-principal has viewed Martin's behaviours "a cause for concern." The teacher told me these concerns deal with Martin hanging around primarily with girls. On a similar note, a grade seven boy who is also spending most of his time in the company of girls, is also being questioned about his "abnormal" male behaviour.

As I observed a PE class with both Mark and Keith sitting out for not having sneakers with them, I heard their comments about Martin's behaviour and actions: "You know if he didn't have that hair, you'd never know he's a boy, look at him run away from the ball." Indeed, it was observed that Martin did not assume dominant positions in the games as much as many other boys, but for a male, this is considered the ultimate in unmasculine behaviour. I never heard any specific comments from the boys or girls about Martin's help with the younger children although it is possible that the one comment from PE class is an indication that Martin has been stigmatized for spending most of his time with girls and children.

**Girls Opposing Sex-Stereotyped Behaviour**

There was evidence of girls displaying confident and assertive behaviour in the classroom. Girls challenged boys in academic subjects and denounced disruptive boys who
continuously asked other students "What number are you on?", "How many problems do you have left?"

In one case Geoff stood at the chalkboard in a division problem contest against other students (he had challenged the teacher on her short and long division lesson). When the group of students competing against Geoff began to falter, there were calls for a different student to challenge Geoff. Kelly walked confidently to the front of the class and proceeded, under intense time pressures, to finish the problems ahead of Geoff and "win" the contest. Kelly said nothing through the entire incident and quietly took her seat.

In a similar manner, when Kelly and Debbie asked me what I was studying in the classroom, I responded that I wanted to understand what girls are interested at school. They exclaimed, "Well if you need to know, girls are smarter than boys and faster too!" In another case Tosha responded to a boy's assumption that the smartest and best athlete in the class was his male friend. This girl quietly and confidently stated, "He thinks he's the best because he claims he's the best, well he's not the best."

In terms of girls challenging traditional feminine stereotypes, I listened to Hilary and Wendy discuss their career options. Hilary mentioned being a paleontologist, dentist, or brain surgeon, and she further confided that she has always had a keen interest in flying a plane in the army like her father. Her friend, an avid competitive swimmer, believed a swim coach could make large amounts of money or she could make millions of dollars if she won a gold or silver medal in the Olympics. The swimmer exudes confidence when she freely talks about the weight training she does with the swim club. Bernadette is also unfazed by one boy claiming that the toys she is playing with are for boys: "Well, my younger brother owns them and I play with them also." The girls appear to display a different kind of confidence from the boys. The boys assert their dominance verbally whereas the girls represent a quiet confidence that involves support for one another, generally among female friends.

Thus, the classroom is a site of gender fluidity. The dominance of the boys in the classroom was a recurring theme that was illustrated through their verbal challenges to the
teacher and other students, on most occasions, girls. The fluidity of the classroom was indicated through the various interactions between the boys and girls. The moments of teasing were interspersed with cooperative elements and these actions and behaviours were largely dependent on the particular context and situation. Finally, the results of the classroom observations illustrated that traditionally feminine behaviours were prominent through the "kindergarten duty" issue and also that some male students, such as Martin, showed non-conformity to traditionally masculine behaviour.

*Formal Physical Education Setting*

The proceeding section will present various categories that emerged from observations in the physical education class (PE). In addition, the interviews will inform some of these categories as many issues were raised that pertained to PE.

*Physical Education As "Fun"*

The theme of PE as "fun" stems primarily from the interviews with the girls. The term "fun" is a simple but descriptive explanation that was overwhelmingly used by the respondents. In total, ten out of the eleven respondents stated clearly that enjoyment was one of the most important aspects of PE. Wendy, the competitive swimmer, was one exception as she insisted she liked to compete and win in both swimming and PE games such as dodgeball.

Many of the respondents viewed fun in PE as dependent on other students having an enjoyable time. This "enjoyment" seems to include full participation by all the students and required that the boys and girls look like they are having fun, for example smiling and laughing during an activity. Some responses on this theme included:

"I love to see people having fun in gym but also having a good time yourself" (Linda)

"I don't care about losing in a game, yeah like when I lose I still have fun, it's the most important thing to me" (Melanie)
"Having a lot of fun is better cause like when you win, I don't mean to brag or show off or anything, but if I win that's good for me but if I lose it's no big loss either" (Sherri)

A few of the respondents emphasized that keeping the action continuing for as long as possible is the type of fun they like to have in PE.

"I don't care about winning or that kind of thing because that's not good anyway; I just like to see that everybody gets to keep the ball going on the team" (Kelly)

"I prefer to do something that the whole class likes to play...I have a lot of fun and if I lose in a game, it's okay but some people get really upset and start screaming and everything, like Geoff who goes up to people to tell them that he won" (Tosha)

"We had a lot of fun a couple of weeks ago when we played Dr. Dodge for 25 or 30 minutes steady and that was probably our longest game ever" (Alice)

The strong emphasis on enjoying PE is further exemplified during a basketball drill in which a team of three girls repeatedly tell a boy in the group to stop cheating when they collectively keep score: "You're lying Aidan, we only have three baskets, not five!" The game was intended to improve shooting baskets but this boy spent more time watching how many points the other groups were receiving. Through his frantic effort to convince the girls to shoot faster, his shooting and skill improved the least in the group.

**Increase PE Time**

All of the respondents indicated they would like to have more PE each week. Some requested that the PE class be extended to longer than the present 30 minute and 40 minute sessions each week. Melanie comments that in Poland they participated in PE at least four times per week and she would like to see the same in her school. Kelly states: "I would love to have gym everyday with smaller groups of people so that we have more room." Similarly, Hilary mentions that often a game is just getting started and the whole class is "really getting
into it and then the bell rings...I'd like gym a bit longer, spend more time in the games and
have it more often." Clearly, for the Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE) movement,
these views provide solid support.

**Girls' Participation Styles and Behaviour Patterns**

The categories that emanated from both the observations and the interviews provided
differing responses to physical activity. In many cases, girls were viewed as hesitant and
insecure during their participation in game situations. However, on some occasions girls
demonstrated assertive and confident play behaviours. These somewhat contradictory results
will be discussed later within the notion of gender fluidity.

**Girls Supporting One Another**

The evidence of support for each other in PE class was evident in the positive
comments that the girls provided to each other: "Nice try", "Great serve!", "Beautiful shot",
"You can do it." These comments were overwhelmingly spoke by the girls during the class.
The boys and the teacher provided few positive comments. Other acts of support included
frequent "high fives" and clapping when a girl performed a serve in volleyball or a good shot
in basketball. An interesting series of incidents involved Paula, who transferred to this school
last year. She was more physically developed than the other female students and had very few
friends in the class or playground. In fact, many notes were kept on her behaviour in the
playground as she was very inactive, primarily from standing frequently on her own.

In PE class, the teacher stressed sportsmanship and it appeared that support for Paula
was very important to the class, especially to the girls. Each effort that Paula made was
supported by verbal praise and, on a couple of occasions, many students clapping and
cheering for her. In the early phases of the research, it was observed that this student was
extremely apprehensive in PE class but the improvements in her confidence level were clear
over the course of the five months of observations.
The girls' support for other girls was also evidenced during the game of dodgeball in which Kelly and Tosha, the two strongest and most proficient players of the girls (and quite possibly the boys) made an extra effort to provide other girls with the opportunity to participate more fully in the activity. In fact, the primary acts of equity stemmed from these girls as they were aware of other, less able girls not getting a chance to throw the ball in the game. The dominance of play by the boys in dodgeball as well as other unfair practices in PE class will be addressed in subsequent themes.

**Girls' Insecurity and Participation Levels**

As mentioned previously, many girls offered continual reassurances to other girls for either performing well or simply because they felt some girls needed the encouragement to remain positive about the activity. Many cases existed throughout my fieldnotes of girls being hesitant and reluctant during activities. Girls would often stand still and not make attempts to hit the volleyball. These less active participants looked fearful of the oncoming ball and indeed, some of the respondents mentioned this apprehension. Hilary states:

Volleyball is hard because you have to hit the ball over the net and you think and wonder as the ball comes at you, "where is this ball going to land, do I have enough time to get it?" All of this you have to think about as the ball is coming, and you're thinking and thinking and then, boom, the ball hits you! And then you say, "is that my ball?"

In a similar situation, a girl who caught the ball in the dodgeball game literally delayed the play to exclaim, "I can't throw the ball, I'm too scared" and one of the more dominant male players grabbed the ball for the continuance of play. The play resumed with no intervention or complaints from the students or teacher.

In many cases, the girls "hide" in the back of the court so that their chances of getting eliminated are reduced. Two girls were often inseparable and the teacher often spoke to them to move around and not "cling to one another." On other occasions, such as volleyball, some
of the less skilled girls often looked dejected and defeated when their serve didn't make it over the net. The teacher or others attempted to keep the atmosphere positive; however, when the entire class must stand and direct their attention on one lone student who in turn, "fails", then in most cases, no amount of pleasantries will help. Such was the case with many of these girls. Indeed, there was strong sense that several of the girls, in certain activities such as volleyball, were making efforts to be invisible, to escape the class' attention. When the teacher gave them a second chance to serve, for students like Paula, the additional attention became even more unsettling. They often did not seem to concentrate under the pressure and tense conditions. They performed the skill again but quickly escaped to the end of the line.

An extension of the girls' insecurity in PE was illustrated in girls that spoke negatively about their efforts. Linda was an average player in the class for volleyball but would make comments under her breath about her inability to play the game. In one volleyball skill activity, Linda hit the ceiling with her serve and exclaimed in a self-deprecating tone, "No wonder I didn't make the volleyball team this year, look what happens!" Another girls felt the need to apologize to the teacher or the class when she didn't hit the volleyball over the net (it wasn't clear who she was speaking to). She repeatedly said, "I'm so sorry, sorry about that" and ran back to her place by the gym wall. The teacher did not intercede with positive or negative comments and the next person began their serve.

"Rough" Play

In discussing girls' participation styles and behaviour patterns, it is necessary to provide those cases in which girls demonstrated their assertiveness and self-confidence despite the pressures to take peripheral positions in the PE games. Kelly and Tosha were two girls who provided the best displays of fair play combined with precision of skill and knowledge of the games played. As mentioned previously, both girls ensured that others received a chance to throw the ball in dodgeball. When the boys cheered for Geoff and his friends because they threw the ball very hard, but inaccurately, these girls demonstrated finesse in their ability to
shoot the ball both accurately and without the excessive force that the boys valued as a "good hit."

Classifying some of the more aggressive and assertive behaviour of the girls as "rough" play stems not from observations but from the interviews with the girls. In an interesting discovery six girls out of the eleven respondents enjoyed and preferred "rough" or "tough" play. The interviews occurred at the end of the five month observation period and produced several contradictions. Many girls opted to remain away from the action as much as possible. Throughout my observations in the PE class I would only consider a couple of girls as interested in a limited degree of rough play or body contact sports. Thus, the responses of the six girls who voluntarily mentioned rough or tough play as a positive aspect of play were surprising in light of these observations.

In light of this seeming contradiction, the acceptance of differing definitions of rough play was acknowledged. In fact my perceptions of rough play may well have been influenced by what most individuals in sport consider rough, from a predominantly male perspective. Thus, if the girls in this study do enjoy some of the rough play with boys, it may mean less severe cases of pushing and shoving. The girls' earlier comments on being elbowed in mixed sex groupings illustrate that they don't share that rough definition. In this case, rough could mean the boys' behaviour in the playground. However, the girls' definitions sound very different and may well be either aggression, confidence, or a form of assertiveness, such as being "tough". Some of the girls' responses included:

"Sometimes it gets rough, there's lots of pushing by Leonard and Geoff in soccer and in basketball they just grab the ball away from you" (Tosha)

"I don't like the game with boys against the girls because there's so much pushing to get the ball, the boys mostly, like Geoff he always elbows me" (Sherri)

"I think girls should be going after the ball a little more, they should be tougher than they are, boys are tougher than us...that's a bad thing because what if you get robbed on the street, what are you going to do, go, "ahh, help?" You have to go after them or else they'll get away with it" (Alice)
"When we play dodgeball the boys never pass to the girls, they just throw it and when the girl has the ball the boys ask them to give them the ball to throw. They try to take the ball from me and I just say "No!" because they have the ball all the time and now it's my turn (Wendy).

In terms of girls enjoying the physical aspect of being bumped around in games with boys, Hilary makes a telling statement about her views of girls in sport and play activities:

When we play all girls it's not rough at all and I like playing rough and when we play with the boys, it gets rougher and it's different; if it was all girls we'd be playing stupid games like hopscotch, skipping rope, or gymnastics but I want a rough game so it's better when the boys play dodgeball and the games "Ranger Joe" and "Trees in the Forest".

Hilary is adamant about her separation from girls displaying more traditionally defined play activities. She also states that she admires Kelly and Tosha for their "roughness" in games. However, Tosha specifically states in her interview that "sometimes I would like having only girls play together in gym class because we're all so happy when we're on the same team."

This differs significantly from Hilary's view of her. Similarly, I have noted how active and confident Tosha was in her play behaviours, but would never categorize her as a "rough" player. Indeed, her display of fairness in the PE class sets her apart from the other students.

In a related manner, Kelly repeatedly mentions the rough play of the boys in her PE class. This is interesting once again as she is one of the strongest players in the class. However, her simple description of PE class reveals a great deal about her inability to accept rough play from the boys, but also her position on her own degree of assertiveness. When she is observed to be self-confident and demanding of herself, it raises interesting questions about how uncomfortable the less confident girls in the class must feel when Kelly or Tosha experience a difficult time in physical situations. Kelly states:

Gym class is about exercise and fun but I don't like to play some of the games because sometimes the boys are rough when we have to throw the ball around, they always jump on you to get the ball and sometimes they fall on you, hard...if it was a gym class with just girls in it would be a little boring because even though the boys are pushing a and making it a tough time, I still want that a bit."
**Boys' Participation Styles and Behaviour Patterns**

Although the girls were the primary focus of the observations in the gymnasium, it was necessary to record the behaviours of both sexes. When examining and documenting the girls' experiences it was observed that several of the boys' behaviours were directly impinging on the girls' full participation in an activity. It is necessary to qualify statements about "boys' behaviours" at this point. There were a number of boys who did not hinder the opportunities for girls but the general pattern of play illustrated that those boys who dominated the prime positions in dodgeball or directed the activities of small and large group play were creating an inequitable situation for the majority of the class, but primarily the girls. The boys' dominance of play in all activities, whether dodgeball, soccer or basketball and their comments regarding girls' their lack of skill exemplifies this theme. Further to this, the girls and less disruptive boys frequently were threatened with the cancellation of PE because of boys misbehaving. The final theme will address the predominance of winning among the boys.

**Boys Assuming Dominant Positions in Games**

The boys who assume leadership positions in PE activities demonstrate the negative effect on girls in the gym class. Many of these girls, and to a much lesser extent, boys, are forced into inferior play positions. As many as five to six boys dominate the play by ordering the girls to take certain positions or forfeit their throwing turn to a boy. In some cases the girls have no choice as the play occurs so quickly. At times it was difficult to record all the cases of dominant behaviour as the play passed very quickly. The high number of observations that were recorded is undoubtedly only a fraction of the total acts of dominance occurring.

Within small group activities the leadership and pace of the activity was often directed by a male player. Geoff directed one such group play in volleyball. His command of the ball was often unseen by the teacher as seven groups were stationed around the gymnasium. In
one instance, Geoff fooled around with the ball while the other three girls waited patiently for him to return to the skill; in this case the girls did not challenge his behaviour. In a soccer game variation, Geoff repeated his dominant style. In this case he ordered people to move in certain directions while he attempted to cover almost half of his team area. As the game unraveled it became very clear who was in charge of the team as both his actions and loud, demanding behaviour were discernible across the gym.

The excessive control as evidenced by some of the boys in the gymnasium moves outside the realm of leadership to a form of coercion. The game of dodgeball was replete with such behaviours. In one incident, Aidan ordered one girl to "Give the ball to someone else, Ivana don't throw it!" She did give the ball to another boy who was situated at the front or most prominent position in the game. Kelly, one of the most confident girls also "obeyed" Geoff's orders in the dodgeball game; "Kelly, here, give me the ball here!" Mark sought to drive up the intensity and seriousness of the game when he continuously pushed the team to "move it" and kept saying "come on " to two girls. The boys' claims for control in activities are further evidenced in the next section which will highlight the masculine values stated by Eyre (1991) and Bryson (1990), namely the emphasis on winning, competition, physical strength, and power.

Focus on Masculine Values

Because a select group of boys dominates and controls the play and organization of many activities, it is understandable that the overall atmosphere of the class is directed and driven by their values.

The inordinate amount of emphasis placed on winning by the group of domineering boys is illustrated in a number of cases. In a basketball drill, which the teacher has declared to be a practice for dribbling, the students are lined up in rows of four to five people. Geoff is on a team of three girls but is primarily concentrating on beating his best friend in the next row: "Hurry up, come on, he's beating us!" The girls in his group attempt to work on the skills they
have been practicing earlier in the class but the persistent calls by Geoff are inappropriate. The teacher makes an attempt to silence Geoff by yelling, "This is not a race Geoff". However, in reality, Geoff has already created and is promoting this competitive atmosphere.

The issue of power and physical strength arose from numerous cases involving Geoff and one or two other boys who frequently threw themselves against the padded gym wall. Often the gym activity at the time would involve an emphasis on winning and the mood would be exciting and energetic. However, these boys would repeatedly demonstrate their power by slamming into the wall, punching the wall with their fists and kicking with their legs. In addition to these displays of power, the boys would laugh and be pleased if they kicked, served, or threw the ball out of bounds in a skill session. Often their main concern was to demonstrate their power to their friends. This was in contrast to the strong girls and quieter boys who played with a practical blend of power and skill.

A final disturbing incident exemplified the influence of masculine values. In a game of dodgeball, Geoff was struck in the eye by Mark, one of his friends from the other team. The play was stopped as Geoff covered his eye and yelled at Mark, "I'm going to kill you!" At this point, Geoff struggled to hold back tears and displays of emotion (except yelling). The class was tense through the whole incident as Mark looked very scared and kept saying, "I'm sorry, it was an accident, really, I didn't mean it". As Geoff held back tears, the teacher ordered him to get a drink and "put water on his eye." At the end of PE class I heard the boys talk about the "plotting" and "revenge" that would take place. The boys were discussing which side to be on.

As an interesting comparison, Anne had been hit in a similar way during the same game and covered her face and cried. The other girls and two boys immediately asked how she was and the teacher suggested that she cool the injured spot with water. For Anne, there were no accusations or questions regarding the hit she received. For Geoff, his image of being the strongest and toughest player and athlete in the class had to be upheld, and any
challenges, either indirect or inadvertent, would be dealt with either in the playground or after school.

Teacher Effectiveness

The preceding sections have identified the various ways that the PE teacher curbs classroom disruptions or addresses issues of fairness and sportsmanship. This portion of the results will briefly present the major categories involved in the teaching practices of this specific setting. It is important to note that the teacher was not a PE specialist and was responsible for teaching the academic classroom and PE class. My goal is to highlight situations involving teaching practices that either directly or indirectly affect the degree and quality of girls' participation.

Encouragement to Girls

The teacher often provided support for the girls who were having difficulties in activities. For example, the teacher would ask a girl (and much less frequently, a boy), to "serve one more time" or "get a second chance" to hit the ball over the net in volleyball. Additionally, the teacher provided positive comments to girls who worked hard at their serve or dribbling skill and showed improvements.

In one situation Kelly was praised as the best in the class in dodgeball. During one game Kelly threw the ball very powerfully and directly at Geoff and she eliminated him. Geoff exclaimed, "Hey, it's like my throw!" and the teacher responded, "Kelly, throw lighter." Kelly gave the ball to another girl to throw and Geoff shouted from the sidelines, "get Mark out" but the teacher quickly responded, "Why Mark? Kelly's the best out there." Geoff retorted, "It was a fluke she got me out."

A further example of teacher encouragement was in response to the girls' emphasis on fair play and sportsmanship. Indeed, the teacher directly linked girls to being fair in their play and supporting other students: "I want to see more support for others out there, today the
boys were the poor sports and the girls were the good sports." This particular comment stemmed from a volleyball match in which the boys competed against the girls. The girls were more interested in working on their serve and keeping the game going for as long as possible whereas the boys, at least the more disruptive of the group, worked together on winning hits and questioning calls that were not in their favour. There is another side to this form of encouragement which is raised in the following section.

Inequity in the Gym

An important aspect of an equitable PE curriculum is the opportunity for full participation by all students and the teacher should assume responsibility for ensuring equal opportunity for all (Talbot, 1993). In this study the teacher's segregation of teams by sex and her differing assumptions and expectations of each gender in PE will be discussed.

For example, in the case cited earlier in which the teacher grouped "all boys" together as "poor sports," all the boys in the class suffered from the actions of a few who misbehaved. Some of these boys do encourage and compliment the girls on their sport skills but within such an assumption, the teacher has in effect downplayed a very important part of the PE curriculum, that of recognizing fair play and giving credit when it occurs. Similarly, when the teacher wanted to increase the intensity and assertiveness of the less hesitant girls in dodgeball, she stated: "Girls if you're going to throw the ball, don't throw it down or it's just as well as you passed it to the other team." The teacher was referring to the girls who threw the ball very lightly at the other team without the power and strength to effectively eliminate a player. Dodgeball is one of the key games in which the majority of the boys position themselves for optimum participation. In such a setup, the girls often do not have sufficient opportunities to throw the ball enough to improve their skills.

Within the grouping of a volleyball team the teacher overlooked the obvious discrepancy in team size when she assigned the boys against the girls. The boys had nine players and the girls had twenty-two players on their side. The rules allowed for six players at
one time on the floor. In this situation, three boys and sixteen girls waited on the sidelines. I was surprised that such a discrepancy would go unnoticed. The boys were provided numerous opportunities to improve their skills during the rotations whereas the girls patiently waited for their one or two chances to participate in the 30 minute class.

**PE as a Reinforcement Tool**

In this PE and academic setting, many threats were made by the teacher to cancel gym class. The students were under strict classroom "rules" *never* to ask about gym class. The PE class was not viewed as an integral aspect of the school curriculum. The teacher presented gym as the students' "fun" time and they were required to earn it. In such an environment, the girls and less disruptive boys often felt it was their responsibility to keep the misbehaving boys "in line" so that they would not all suffer the consequences. Martin repeated three times, "Be quiet or we won't have gym!"; one disruptive boy repeatedly asks the teacher about the game choice in gym and the rest of the class joins in together, "You're not supposed to ask!" The girls all reported that they enjoyed PE and would like to extend their time and frequency of classes. In many situations prior to PE class all the students would miss out as much as ten minutes from a thirty minute class while the teacher disciplined boys in the classroom or during PE class time. For example one girl scolded a boy for misbehaving in lineup to PE class: "Be quiet, or we'll never get to gym!"

The PE setting illustrates that girls enjoy time in the gymnasium but that an emphasis on having "fun" is paramount. The support for other girls was obvious through my observations and the reassurances usually were directed towards the less hesitant girls. The rough play that the girls referred to in their interviews met with many contradictions stemming from both my observations and comments from other girls. Within the PE class it was important to note the participation style of the boys as it impinged the learning and full participation of the girls. The emphasis by the boys on competition and winning was a major
theme which was not always curbed by the teacher. Thus, many inequities in the gym class stemmed from the teacher's inability to deal with the disruptive and dominating behaviours.

Summary of Results

The girls in this study experienced a wide range of physical activities both in and out of school. In most settings, dominant boys had a strong negative impact on girls' freedom to pursue the games and play activities of their choice. There was evidence, however, that girls (and some boys) challenged stereotyped behaviour and activities.
DISCUSSION

The major themes that emerged in the study will be discussed and analyzed. The theme of sport socialization will be presented as the first major finding through the influence of the family, siblings, and peers. The socializing situations that emerged from the data will include the respondents' varied levels of physical activity stemming from their neighbourhood setting, opportunities for formal or community-centered sport, and access to sport equipment.

The subsequent discussion and analysis involves an integration of the three settings observed in the school since the activities observed in the playground, the classroom, and the PE class are inextricably linked to one another. The initial breakdown of the three settings was necessary for a clearer depiction of the gender relations that exist in each field. It became evident during the coding and analysis phases that overlapping themes and categories were emerging in the distinctive areas. However, this intersection provides numerous examples to support the claim that the educational setting is an institution that transmits the dominant culture.

The findings of this study stemmed both from categories that were developed in the literature review and inductively from my data. The existing critiques in the literature review by several feminist researchers were confirmed by many observations in this study. In addition, the findings provided evidence of girls resisting and reworking prevailing definitions of femininity.

There were four major findings in this study:

1) Sport socialization differs from one female student to another depending on the interaction between varied socializing agents and situations

2) Gender relations emphasize the hegemonic masculinity that permeates all institutions. Educational institutions serve to transmit the dominant attitudes, values and beliefs of "aggressive heterosexual males" (Connell, 1987, p.120).
2) Hegemony theory can account for the girls and boys who actively resisted, negotiated, and challenged hegemonic masculinity.

3) The PE setting was fraught with equity problems which actively hindered the full participation of all the girls in the study. The positioning of PE as a non-integral activity within the formal core educational curriculum, hampers the emancipatory possibilities of challenging traditional male and female stereotypes in physical activity. Thus, the discussions locate the girls' experiences into the larger structures and patterns of power in society.

**Sport Socialization**

The interview stage of the research generated important information about the respondents' participation in physical activity outside the realm of the educational setting. The influential socializing agents of the family will be addressed. The parental and sibling influences are discussed in relation to the sex of the parent and sibling as well as the potential for these persons to be effective role models for the girls.

**Family Influence**

The majority of the girls in this study spoke of their active participation with their parents and siblings. The research supports this finding as the family is considered to be highly influential in supporting and promoting sport and physical activity in their children (Brustad, 1996; Greendorfer, 1977, 1994; Kimiecik et al., 1996)

**Parental Influence**

Within the sexual division of labour in the family, Hargreaves (1994) postulates that girls will learn "about the intense physicality and hypermasculinity of male sports and about the special importance of sports in men's lives" (p. 149). Hargreaves is also suggesting that
other socializing factors and repeated exposure to sexual differences in society become consolidated in the home. Thus, Hargreaves is pointing to the difficulties that exist in both the home but also the wider society. Parental influence can be analyzed to a limited extent but because of the fluid nature of socialization many factors are involved and interact with one another. Identifying the impact of parents on female participation recognizes an association between social experiences for girls and sport; however as Theberge (1994) notes this analysis neglects "to capture the dynamic aspect of sporting practice, the manner in which socialization into sport is less a process of taking on roles than of actively creating them, albeit within the limits and constraints of social practice" (p.188). This discussion section divides the socializing agents and situations into units of analysis with the assumption that social and cultural factors play an essential role in the dynamic of female sport socialization.

With respect to the limitations and constraints imposed by society, it is important to raise the issue of parental influence on female sport participation from the perspective of social class dynamics and the ability of parents to pay for sport clubs. The majority of respondents were from working to lower middle class backgrounds; however, from the sport activities that were described by some of the participants it was discerned that slightly higher income levels existed for at least two of the eleven participants. Linda's opportunities for horseback riding and Alice's participation in several activities exemplify the influence of income on female sport participation. Thus, income level has a direct influence on the sporting opportunities afforded to the girls in this study.

All of the fathers in the present study were active participants with the girls or role models for their present involvement. Sherri's father encourages her in all her pursuits but the lack of involvement by her mother is important. The girls in my study mentioned varying degrees of participation and involvement with their mothers. Sherri's depiction of her mother as inactive is similar to Alice and Tosha. All of these girls include their mother's household responsibilities during the course of their interviews. Lenskyj (1988) cites the responsibilities for domestic work and child care as posing a time problem for women: "The dominant
ideology that requires wives/mothers to be 'on call' around the clock...it becomes impossible for many women to schedule regular leisure activities" (p.233). Indeed, many of the girls did not mention why their mothers were not as active as their fathers but it is likely that domestic responsibility was a factor.

The importance of "significant others" for the degree and level of girls' sporting participation is relevant in this discussion as immediate female role models are important in the socializing role they perform (Lenskyj, 1994a). Thus, if mothers are busy with a double or triple workload, the chances of being actively involved in their daughter's formal and informal physical activity pursuits are decreased. Additionally, the mothers in this study may have experienced very few opportunities to be active when they were growing up. It is difficult to understand the influence of mothers in this particular context without a deeper understanding of their sporting background. It is possible that they themselves are victims and as agents of change are not confident in the sport domain to actively direct their daughter's activity levels and participation. Lenskyj (1993) does identify, however, the differing roles that mothers perform such as driving to games/events and volunteering for sporting events. Although the mothers are actively involved and exerting an influence in different ways than the fathers, the positive effects of their financial, emotional and physical support will undoubtedly be felt by the female participant.

Sibling Influence

In a further examination of socializing influences on the girls in this study, the role of siblings was addressed. All the girls were regularly active with their siblings. The girls who had no siblings were more active with their friends than the respondents who had brothers and sisters. It was observed, however, that the girls spent a significant amount of time active with their sisters, both older and younger in age. Lenskyj expands the combination of "significant others" to include the influence of female siblings.
The present study indicates that many of the respondents were positively influenced by their younger and older female siblings. For example, Tosha and Alice play with their female siblings and consequently reinforce each other in the sport realm. Tosha's admiration of her older sister's basketball ability reflects the role model literature in which positive examples exist in the everyday lives of female athletes (Lenskyj, 1994a).

The interaction of socializing influences is evident in the case of Anne. Within the family domain, this participant is not significantly influenced by her parents or her siblings. In this case, the combination of negative or non-existent sporting support can be seen in her less hesitant involvement in PE class and on the playground. Once again, the family interacts with wider societal forces but does suggest that in Anne's situation, her sport participation is not being supported in an active manner by her immediate family unit.

The issue of babysitting younger siblings is important to address. Although Anne did not specifically mention her duty of babysitting, she mentioned having three younger siblings. It is possible that even if such child care responsibilities do not exist at this point in Anne's life, there is a strong indication that she will be involved in such work. Anne's present role as a kindergarten helper is one indicator. Additionally, as noted earlier, three of the participants reported that they play with younger neighbourhood friends as well as younger siblings, and that this activity includes babysitting and helping with homework. Aligned with Little and Borowy's (1991) research on girls' sport participation in Toronto community centers, child care responsibilities, primarily of younger siblings, were reported as one of many barriers preventing the young women in that study from participating.

**Peer Group Influence**

The peer group has been recognized as an important aspect of female participation patterns (Dyer, 1983; Eder & Parker, 1987; Hasbrook, 1992; Lenskyj, 1993). All the respondents, except for Sherri, engage in primarily same-sex play groups outside the school setting. As stated earlier, the girls were strongly in support of fun and being in the company
of their friends compared to the more competitive side of sport and games. This social aspect of physical activity for girls is supported by Lenskyj (1993) when she stresses the importance placed on social interaction between girls. Indeed, many of the respondents mention that playing "rough" and "aggressive" is a positive play behavior but from my observations their definition differs considerably from the "malestream" definition that would border on violence and intent to harm. For these girls, many of their activities outside the school setting include primarily bike riding, ice skating, swimming lessons, simple ball games including basketball, soccer and handball, and tennis. Throughout the interviews, it was clear that their physical activities were an occasion to socialize and be active outdoors.

The influence of the peer group is evidenced in the groups of Polish girls who spend large amounts of time together in sporting activities. The bond between these girls may extend Aniko Varpalotai's research on peer subcultures (1987). Her research emphasized that the peer group was an avenue for the girls to be introduced to various team sports and activities. In my study, the Polish girls often organized after school swimming activities or met each other for tennis or bike rides.

Whereas Varpalotai (1987) emphasizes the positive and important influence of girls' links to one another, Sherri recalled incidents of negative influence by her male peers. On occasions such as basketball, Sherri feels that the boys keep stressing how "macho" they are. This is similarly expressed in research by Kunesh et al (1992) in which they demonstrate that boys will criticize girls' physical skills and present them as inferior to their own. These researchers assert that girls will often avoid the sport or activity that leads to such accusations. Sherri claims that she is confident in her play and game skills against the boys and through my observations I felt she did possess self-confidence whether in the academic class or her participation in the PE classes. However, in light of the research by Kunesh and colleagues, and Eder and Parker (1987), the prevailing view on the internalization of traditional masculine and feminine values suggests that Sherri and her female friends will probably face more pressures to act "feminine" as they enter adolescence.
Socialization Situations

Neighbourhood

No clear distinction could be made between girls who lived in apartment complexes or homes with regard to their degree of physical activity involvement. For example, over half of the respondents who lived in apartment buildings utilized the facilities that were available to them. These activities included tennis and swimming. Many of the Polish girls were neighbours in the same or nearby apartment. In addition, major parks within their vicinity supplemented their space for sport and game play. The ice rink and swimming pool were available for activities in the winter and summer months and many of the respondents specifically mentioned their usage of them. For those respondents who lived in quieter neighbourhoods, their access to facilities was similar to the apartment dwellers. There was smaller parks to play in as well as having access to their own gardens. In these cases they stressed the importance of staying close to home and often not beyond their home property. It is understandable that these girls must be "street smart" and that precautions must be taken; however, this raises questions about females venturing away from the home environment.

Research by Catherine Bray (1987) examines the role of psychoanalysis and movement. In utilizing Nancy Chodorow's psychoanalytic theory of early separation/individuation, she contends that the early differentiation of the boy from the mother is an actual physical and emotional distancing. For the female, her identity is symbolically tied to the mother's and thus, very little separation occurs. Bray asserts that the boy's greater motor skill acquisition evolves from this process and is supported through their childhood. The girl, however, is often the object of worry and concern to the mother and thus her movement skills are not encouraged and supported. From the perspective of the respondents, the emphasis on "staying close to home" or "not leaving the backyard" may be strands of Bray's analysis. In the case of Anne, who has been mentioned for her lack of family sporting influence, it is interesting to note that she was clear in her remarks of where she could play in
her neighbourhood: "My street isn't busy but I have to play in my garden. I play most of the time when I'm at school during recess." At least four of the respondents mentioned their free play limitations but the acceptance of such restrictions reinforces the limitations on girls' movement in their home and surrounding environment. Parent's fear of harassment and violence towards their young daughters could be a major factor in students such as Anne being spatially limited in their environment.

**Formal or Organized Sport**

The opportunity for involvement in formal sporting activities such as the community centers and school teams falls within the rubric of Butcher's (1983) description of the "opportunity set." For many of the respondents the community centers was their arena for formal sport involvement. Within the school and neighbourhood surroundings, the girls were exposed to various after school and weekend programs. The girls joined the swimming program and basketball activity evenings with some of their friends from school. The close proximity of the community centers to the girls homes and school afforded them many opportunities for some degree of involvement. In combination with the other socializing influences previously discussed, the girls could either rely on their school or neighbourhood friends to join a program with them or have close parental involvement.

In terms of formal sports outside the community center, Alice's situation illustrates the interaction between the various socializing agents. Her parents provide financial support for her swimming, life saving courses, tennis, and baseball activities. Alice exhibits a love for sport and talks excitedly about her participation. Other respondents who did not have the opportunities for formal club participation, were receptive to the community sport services offered. Thus, although Alice and Linda, for example, are active in more expensive programs, the varied opportunities offered in the community centers and the school can offset some of the socio-economic advantages. However, as discussed in relation to family influence, the
barriers such as child care for younger siblings or an after school job can also present difficulties for those girls who would otherwise be involved in the recreation centers.

For those respondents that are active in school team sports, the opportunity exists to dramatically improve their sport skills. The importance of school team sports provides an additional dimension to the sport socialization puzzle. For some of the respondents, the school acts as their sole means of sport support as the case of Kelly illustrates. Her immense sporting talent is not considered important in her home environment but within the school, her athletic abilities have been identified by several sport team coaches.

Availability of Equipment

For the majority of the respondents, their sports equipment consisted of a bicycle, simple ball, and skates. These activities were informally played in their neighbourhoods. Many girls had access to tennis equipment and used the tennis courts outside their apartment building. Thus, although the respondents did not speak of expensive equipment, they had access to basic balls, skates, and swimming attire. The acquisition of simple equipment such as a rubber ball illustrates that an opportunity to be active is present.

Thus, socialization into sport depends on the continued support from a variety of individuals and groups, and the opportunities available for participation. These influences interact differently depending on the individual and their particular position. Theberge (1994) describes sport socialization as an active process in which an individual creates their own role within sport from all the available resources. Tosha is a unique female student whose successful role in sport is the result of her sister's support as a role model, her strong peer influences, and her talent and hard work in making the school teams. However, as promising as her sport future appears, negative forces are also apparent; for example, she has mentioned her mother's stern warnings to complete household duties and responsibilities. In such a situation, the interaction between all these social and political forces must be taken into account rather than centering on a "primary" socializer.
Hegemonic Masculinity

This section will address the theme of male dominance in the school setting. Whereas the focus of this study is the female experience, it is necessary to examine the centrality of gender in all social processes. Through an examination of both masculinity and femininity from the perspective of Connell (1987, 1990), it is ascertained that there exist a wide range of genders, differing masculinities and femininities. For the purposes of this study, an exploration of the subordinate position that females occupy, especially in the PE setting, is examined within the notion of hegemonic masculinity.

Gender Ordering

"Gender is a set of cultural roles. It is a costume, a mask, a straight jacket in which men and women dance their unequal dance" (Lerner, 1979 cited in Vertinsky, 1994).

Within an examination of the role of educational institutions as agents in the equalization process, Samuel Bowles (1976) reports what is widely accepted; that schools perpetuate inequality based on class divisions. Indeed, the same can be revealed for gender inequality reproduction (Connell, 1987; Russell, 1987; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Scraton, 1992). The "gender order" is defined by Connell (1987) as "a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity" (p.99). Within this concept lies the notion of hegemonic masculinity in which essentially all males share in the domination of females in society (Connell, 1987; Gruneau, 1988; Scraton, 1992). It is important to note for the purposes of this research that the most pronounced and dominant example of hegemonic masculinity is the aggressive, tough, and physically strong boy. Those boys who do not conform to the dominant masculinity may suffer similar
stigmatization and subordination. This study shows the effect of those powerful boys' domination of other boys as well as girls. The less powerful boys who do not meet the hegemonic males' standards may face varying degrees of verbal and/or physical harassment. My study focused on the girls' experiences and I did not specifically investigate whether some of the boys who do not assume the powerful and aggressive stance are stigmatized. I briefly note the boys who are fearful of expressing emotion and the incident of one boy being called a "wimp" in the playground to illustrate that hegemonic masculinity is evident in this school. The competing masculinities illustrate the gender ordering of society with females primarily being targeted for exclusion.

Thus, the examination of female subordination in the school setting carefully addresses the concept of masculine hegemony as my results illustrated a pattern of aggression within a small group of boys that effectively controlled or at least dominated linguistic and physical space in all three settings. This use of dominant and subordinate bodies is closely linked to Hasbrook's (1995) research on childrens' construction of gender. She clearly states, similar to my examination, that through the study of feminine bodies it was necessary to examine the production of masculine bodies.

Physical Space Domination

The resultant theme of spatial domination by primarily a group of four to five boys emerged from the playground and academic settings. However, the most evident display of this domineering behaviour was in PE class. The category of boys' participation and behaviour patterns illustrated the impact of boys on all the girls in the gymnasium. I suggest that all girls were affected in a negative sense as even the most athletic and capable girls often lost opportunities for improving their skills as they chose to provide less assertive girls the chance to throw the ball. Indeed, the boys' control of the game play, especially dodgeball, supports the research by Smith et al. (1995) in which the girls expressed their disappointment in not being full and active participants in mixed PE class games. Their access to participation
was hindered by boys "hogging" the basketball and keeping the play isolated to males only.

Similarly, the work of Griffin (1985) reflects the varied participation styles of boys and girls. In relation to the current topic of boys dominating the physical space and game activities, Griffin identifies the "macho" boys as displaying "confrontive or abrasive" behaviour and assuming the prominent positions in the playing field (p.4). These boys clearly dominated the sports and were physically aggressive through pushing and shoving. Most importantly, the "macho" group teased the girls and complained about their lack of sporting ability. Griffin's perceptive view of the differing styles of play in the PE class, illustrates the varied masculinities that exist within Connell's (1987) hegemonic masculinity framework. This is an important point to raise as not all boys resorted to the disabling and negative treatment of the girls, yet the male students were denying both sexes an opportunity for full enjoyment and participation.

The literature further supports the physical and spatial dominance of boys in PE as shown by Snow (1995) when she describes her female students that effectively defer their opportunities for shooting baskets to the boys. Situations such as this one were most evident in my study when the less assertive girls "obeyed" the orders of the boys and forfeited their throwing opportunities to them. Stephen Richer (1990) argued that drawings by Polish and Canadian boys were focused on spatially dominating the environment. His study further illustrated that the boys drew themselves as the most prominent figure in the picture. For the girls in this study, there was attention to environmental detail in their drawings and they generally depicted themselves involved in non-competitive games such as skipping. Many of the drawings that Richer provided in his book illustrated strong links to Carol Gilligan's (1982) theory of connectedness. The girls' drawings focused on their play relationships with others as opposed to the male, competitive drawings that depicted "the self". In close relation to this study is the care that was reflected by the females towards their surrounding environment. Indeed, the girls focused on minute flower, sun, grass, and tree details.
Within the playground setting of this study, the theme of physical and spatial dominance by males was evident. The game invasions illustrate the varying degrees of harassment that Thorne (1994) alluded to in her work on playground activities. This harassment issue is important in identifying girls that have selected their own space on the playground but are viewed by the boys (and one girl) as unimportant in their chosen activities.

The theme of spatial dominance by the male students was not as evident in my study. This differs from the research of Janet Lever (1976) who observed 181 fifth-grade boys and girls during recess, PE classes, and after school. In relation to my findings, the playground offered both sexes the space and opportunity for movement and many of the girls utilized the vast space for ball games. Lever suggested that the boys in her particular study moved in larger and more open spaces than the girls. In addition, this researcher claims that girls were primarily interested in and tended to play more sedentary games and activities such as tag, hopscotch, and skipping. Several girls in my research engaged in tag and selective rope games, such as jumpsees; however, I never observed hopscotch during the five months I observed. Perhaps, as is discussed at a later point in the thesis, many of these girls have challenged many of the traditionally feminine games that prevailed during Lever's mid 1970's time frame; however, not all patterns of physical activity change in any substantial way. What has developed in relation to some of the girls' lengthy periods of time conversing with each other on the playground and viewed by Lever as deficient in comparison to the boys, is the interpersonal skills and sensitivity to others. Lever's assumption that female connectedness is not valuable in the organizational area is reflective of traditional play research that neglected to value girls connectedness and desire for conversation and planning of activities. Indeed, the girls in my study would use the playground time to catch up on events that happened in their lives or issues that were important to them. My view of the purpose of playtime or recess changed during the course of the study. From my perspective as a physical educator, it was important that girls use their time to be active and make gains physiologically; however, the importance that girls place on socializing during their free time must not be overlooked. In
fact, my perspective of play time placed more pressure on PE class to be more effective at achieving basic fitness levels.

**Linguistic Domination**

In a brief discussion of the linguistic space that Scraton (1992) refers to in the academic and PE settings, the category of verbal harassment and dominance is addressed. Within the academic classroom, the boys wielded their voices to overpower and dominate the teaching and conduct of the lessons: "We get glimpses of the extent of boys' disruption of the classroom: their noisiness, their sexual harassment of girls, their demands for attention and their need of disciplining and their attitudes to girls as the silent or the 'faceless' bunch. (Arnot, 1984, p.31 cited in Scraton, 1992, p.92). This excerpt by a British teacher portrays a disturbing pattern across many mixed-sex schools. My observations confirm these accounts of loud and attention seeking behaviours by the boys. As well, in certain cases, the teasing extended beyond a mutual form of fun and reflected a definitive form of verbal harassment. In the case of a boy pulling a girl's hair and poking a pen in her back, the unwanted attention and obvious invasion of the female students' space are forms of physical harassment. Incidents of sexual harassment were not evident in my study but the silence that Arnot refers to alerts me to the initial fieldnotes that I gathered.

I was often guided to the actions of Geoff and his friends who were unruly and verbally dominant during all aspects of a classroom lesson. The girls often sat quietly, followed the teacher's instructions, and completed their seatwork on time. I have recorded no evidence of the girls in this classroom speaking out in a rude or hostile manner. Indeed, it required a great deal of concentration to record the movement and speech patterns of the girls. From an observation position in the back of the classroom, my focus was primarily drawn to the boys who spoke out in class and moved more freely from their desks. On most occasions, the girls were passive and "faceless" in many ways; I knew the names of the five most disruptive boys prior to any of the girls' names. Thorne (1994) remarks on a similar
point when she states: "A skew toward the most visible and dominant-and a silencing and marginalization of the others-can be found in much of the research on gender relations among children and youth" (p.97).

The extension of the linguistic dominance from the academic classroom to the PE setting presents a new array of problems and concerns. The boys who "order" girls to assume peripheral positions in the gym session are essentially asserting a verbal dominance that often leads to verbal harassment. Kunesh et al. (1992) describe situations in which boys are verbally critical of girls' efforts in the PE class. One 11 year-old female respondent in this study stated: "The boys don't throw to the girls during flag football games unless they have to, or maybe if the girl is really good. Most times the girls just walk around" (p.391). The insults spoken to girls by the "macho" boys (Griffin, 1985) certainly borders on a form of harassment or what Lenskyj (1994a) refers to as the "chilly climate" for girls and women in the sport sphere. Indeed, I had the advantage of observing many of the actions and behaviours of the students, and the atmosphere of a climate of intimidation was evident. It would be absurd to believe that girls did not "feel" the cruelty and nastiness that prevails in the gymnasium on a regular basis. Members of the "macho" or more aggressive students in the classroom and PE setting lend credence to the concept of gender ordering in which members of this "type" of masculinity have power and privilege over all women (Messner, 1990).

**Cultural Exaltation of Masculinity**

In addition to the dominance that males exert physically and verbally in the educational setting, Connell (1990) specifies that the particular form of masculinity that is regarded as hegemonic must be "culturally exalted" (p.94). By this, the author insists that role models must exist that exemplify the "macho" image that Griffin (1985) typifies as a dominant influence in the PE class. Connell further explains that
exaltation stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole....some of the main patterns of contemporary hegemonic masculinity [include]: the subordination of women, the marginalization of gay men, and the connecting of masculinity to toughness and competitiveness (p.94).

These three main themes of hegemonic masculinity are evidenced throughout my study. The "exemplary model" of hegemonic masculinity in my study would unquestionably be Geoff: one of the main disrupters in the academic, PE and playground settings. In addition his tough, aggressive, and controlling behaviour was admired and held in high esteem by his male peers.

The boys' admiration of Geoff's fighting ability, football prowess and control of emotion (as shown in the PE "revenge" scene) reflect what Varda Burstyn (1996) views as "heroic masculinity" (p.219). This author cites sport as an exclusive male institution which fosters attitudes and beliefs in men and boys that they are superior in our present society. Lois Bryson (1990) refers to this superiority stemming from aggression and force as the road to "first-class citizenship" (p.179) Thorne (1994) cites numerous examples from her observations that are very similar to the present study. She recalls:

groups of boys in both schools [she focused on two schools in her research] talked at length about who had and could "beat up" whom. And when arguments erupted into serious fights, crowds gathered on the playground, and talk stretched out the event for hours (p.92)

This description echoed my description of Geoff threatening to "kill" his own friend. The entire PE class was delayed in fascination and tension while the events unfolded. The boys were still choosing their sides on the issue well into the afternoon.

The numerous game invasions in the playground and rough play in the mixed groupings supports Burstyn's (1996) male network and role models. Throughout my observations Geoff and his male friends exerted a leadership and influence that set the tone for most of the PE and playground settings, primarily a competitive, and win-at-all costs emphasis. Thus, sport in the school was a means for Geoff and his friends to exercise their physical superiority over many other boys and more importantly, for my purposes, girls.
Kindergarten Duty

A theme that requires further examination is kindergarten duty. Although some of these girls volunteered to help the kindergarten teacher with playground and classroom support, my interest was heightened through the conspicuous but not entirely surprising absence of male students. Reay (1990) illustrates the lack of commitment and at times, negative responses to boys who were involved in a school program designed to promote more co-operative and nurturing skills. The issue of child care is incorporated briefly into the evolving discussion and analysis.

Whereas the emphasis of this thesis is on the physical activity experiences of young females, there are connections that may be drawn regarding the perpetuation of "ideologies of gender defining girls and women in relation to femininity and incorporating expectations and assumptions about physical ability/capacity, motherhood/domesticity and sexuality" (Scraton, 1992, p.62). Indeed, aside from the girls in this study missing valuable classroom lessons, playground and PE times because of their kindergarten help, the primary concern is the continuance of traditional female stereotypes. The assumptions about femininity include being nurturant, weak, less powerful, empathetic and compliant (Connell, 1987; Scraton, 1992). As Scraton notes, these gender stereotypes are perceived as "natural" (p.113) or what is referred to as "biological determinism" (Lenskyj, 1986; Pronger, 1990). Within such powerful ideologies it is not surprising that the schools "accept and reinforce the 'motherhood' ... aspect" (Russell, 1987, p.344). Russell maintains, and is supported by similar theories of labour division by Scraton and Connell, that the educational process has as its focus "pressures to encourage [girls] to accept subordinate positions in both the labour force and the family" (p.343). For the girls in the study who continue to aid the kindergarten teacher, I am not suggesting that this is a backward step for females. Indeed the traits of caring and cooperative behaviour are being highly regarded in certain domains of society, (for example more progressive sport scholars such as Kidd, 1990 and Bryson, 1990). However when such acts are clearly demarcated along sexual lines and defined as suitable for primarily females, than the
issue becomes one of "perpetuation of a male-dominated capitalist society" (Russell, p.345). Within such an analysis, the learning that occurs in educational institutions is preparing females and males for differential roles in the labour force.

This examination of the perpetuation of female stereotypes is not complete without briefly mentioning the lack of opportunity for males to experience child care responsibilities. However, my illustrations and descriptions of the masculine tone of the school setting under study would invariably threaten males that perform such caring responsibilities. The risk of being labeled less than male or effeminate continues the cycle of sharp divisions between gender roles. As one boy in Reay's (1990) study stated: "I didn't like the nursery when we looked after them. I hated it because it was babyish" (p.44). The program that currently exists in the Toronto Board of Education elementary level is attempting to challenge traditional stereotypes with the "girls for wen-do" and "boys for babies" initiative. Programs such as these require proactive individual and groups. Fostering the development of programs that actively challenge the status quo are the first steps in resisting hegemonic masculinity. As I discuss in the following section, the affirmation of masculinity relies largely on separating one's behaviour from the "feminine".

**Gender as a Continuum of Behaviours**

The subheading "The case of Martin" illustrated one of the central patterns of contemporary hegemonic masculinity, that being the marginalization of gay men (Connell, 1990). The subordination of girls was one of the other main patterns of this masculinity concept. The gender ordering of society assumes inferior positions for gay men and females. As has been shown up to this point, hegemonic masculinity relegates any individuals or groups that do not display the tough and heterosexual aggressive nature as inferior. Martin's role as a kindergarten helper and a non-conformist to the competitive and abrasive sport style, link him closely with traditionally feminine behaviours. The link between the predominantly "feminine"
behaviour of Martin and the subordination of girls throughout the schooling process is examined.

The work of Nancy Chodorow (1978) highlights the differing personalities that males and females develop based on the woman's responsibility as the primary child rearer. This psychoanalytic theory posits that males are motivated by separation from the mother as they develop a sense of self that is opposed to the "feminine". Within such a framework, Chodorow surmises that males relegate female values as inferior and thus bond with other boys in the collective derogation of feminine "ways". The case of Martin may be interpreted by such an analysis as the dominant group of boys in the classroom collectively agree that his mannerisms are less than male, and more closely aligned with the feminine. This depreciatory tone has been fostered throughout the school, most noticeably through the Vice principal and staff who are attempting to understand his "strange" behaviour; included in this concern is his kindergarten duty and enjoying the company of primarily female classmates. Indeed, as Pronger (1990) notes, any individual, male or female who engages in "feminine" signs is "signifying deference to power and subordination" (p.221).

Within the context of the school sport and academic life, it becomes clear that a male student displaying characteristics more "feminine" in nature is in effect crossing the line that clearly demarcates males from females. Messner (1992) corroborates this discussion when he suggests that through sport, for example, a young boy "finds that he had better not become too close to girls; he must, of course, establish his masculine status by making (and laughing at) heterosexist jokes, but he 'must never let girls replace boys as the focus of his attention'" (p.36-37). Interestingly, the teacher in my classroom spoke about Martin's behaviour as a concern but I heard no attempts to change Geoff's ongoing aggressive behaviour in the playground, PE class and academic setting. Similarly, the boys involved in the "mock combat fighting" were "play fighting" despite the hole in the classroom wall. Barrie Thorne (1994) summarizes the role of adults in promoting differential sex roles:
Some adults excuse boys' displays of masculine superiority because they detect a defensive edge in the contempt for things feminine and because they figure it's just a stage, in spite of obvious links to adult male privilege and sexism. Adults may even feel quietly reassured that a boy who behaves in aggressively sexist ways is affirming 'normal' masculinity; after all, dominance and control, in less harassing and more modified forms, are valued by men. In contrast, parents of 'good,' quiet boys sometimes worry that their sons are too 'feminine' and will be taunted by other kids (p.168).

I have utilized the case of Martin to firstly emphasize the school's role in actively discussing the "problem" with a boy who partakes in feminine activities. Furthermore, this case illustrates the hierarchy present in the educational institutions that are geared towards the maintenance of patterns of competition and aggression (Thorne, 1994). For example, gender ordering affects all females and many males that would otherwise make excellent child care helpers.

For students such as Martin and the girls, their opportunity to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially are thwarted by the conditions shaped by the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Boys that have the potential to develop nurturing and caring personalities are missing out on an important aspect of being human. Progressive changes for a more lenient acceptance of the differing masculinities and femininities are very difficult in light of the research and my study findings. Stephen Richer (1990) succinctly pronounces the frustrations involved in changing the present state of relations between the sexes; "The ubiquity of patriarchy presents a difficult challenge to those disturbed by gender inequality" (p.107). However, Richer and other researchers such as Thorne (1994), Scraton (1992), Dewar (1987), and Varpalotai (1987) are offering ways to combat the subordination of women in society, and the institution of sport and physical activity in particular.
Challenging Gender Structures and Meanings

The previous section has highlighted the gender ordering of society in which those males possessing the hegemonically masculine traits such as avoidance of feminine activities and values, toughness and emotional self-control (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990, p.124) are translated into "men as holders of power" (Connell, 1987, p.85). It is necessary to extend the concept of hegemonic masculinity to the notions of agency, resistance, and struggle. These terms will be explored in relation to those girls in my study who actively challenged the dominant power and pressures to act stereotypically "feminine". Thus, although the previous section ended on a note of pessimism, the following themes will address the positive routes available to affect change in society.

Within the concept of hegemony lies the "persuasive" nature of control as opposed to a "coercive" one (Hargreaves, 1994, p.22). This suggests that people have the ability and opportunity to be active agents in social change. Indeed as Hargreaves further states:

Hegemony resists the idea that people are passive recipients of culture and keeps intact what is arguably the inherent humanism of Marxism. Hegemony embodies a sense of culture as a way of life imbued with systems of meanings and values which are actively created by individuals and groups in different social settings, such as families, schools, media, leisure contexts and sports (p.22).

The following section will identify the major themes that emerged in relation to girls and in select cases, boys, engaging in alternate or non-stereotypical behaviours in the three settings. The first theme will address the cases of female assertiveness and confidence in physical activity. A further theme to examine will be "gender crossing" (Thorne, 1994, p.111) as boys and girls actively engage in academic and physical activities together.

Female Students as Active Agents

Very few studies have addressed the role of agency and resistance by girls in the sport and physical activity realm (Varpalotai, 1987, 1995). Through my in-depth study I have
identified sites of struggle for females and how these acts challenge the dominant views of femininity.

As illustrated in the results, the theme of girls opposing traditional sex-differentiated behaviours in both the academic and physical settings highlighted the confidence of particular girls in the class. Many of the female students showed their quiet confidence in the playground and gymnasium. Mariah Burton Nelson (1994) says of such individuals, "Female athletes provide obvious, confrontational evidence-'in your face' evidence, some might say-of women's physical prowess, tangible examples of just what women can achieve" (p.27).

Kelly was one individual who was very proficient in all the sports I observed in the PE and playground settings. Her assertive attitude was pronounced when she stated: "Sometimes we choose to not play the game of "Keep Away" [always boys against the girls] because the boys are too rough and we tell them, 'we don't want you playing!', and they say, 'ahh, come on, we want to play', but we say 'definitely not!'" In a similar instance, Kelly uses the term, "let" in reference to the boys' participation in the playground. The word "let" implies permission or tolerance and in this situation Kelly is asserting control and authority over the males seeking access to the girls' game. When there is no direct teacher supervision in the playground she claims that the boys' roughness in dodgeball is too much for those girls that want to play a fun and fair game; "We used to let them play but now we don't anymore." In such an incident the girls are displaying a united front against the rough behaviour of the boys. If the boys do want to play with the girls they must do so on the girls' terms.

I chose to focus on the theme of girls resisting the dominance and control of boys in their games because it echoes similar research by Karen Bailey (1993) in which young girls are restricted in their participation by measures imposed by boys in their school. The preschool girls in this study repeatedly used the word "let" as they seek the permission of the boys who have the control of the games and equipment. The following question and answer samples between the preschoolers and the teacher/researcher illustrate this:
Thus, for girls such as Kelly, her unyielding and assertive behaviour will aid in her difficult journey through adolescence (Orenstein, 1994; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Indeed, a collective voice is needed for the girls in my study group to overcome the pressures to conform to the idealized view of femininity, or what Connell (1987) refers to as "emphasized femininity" (p.186).

Emphasized Femininity

The term "emphasized femininity" is defined in relation to hegemonic masculinity: "All forms of femininity in this society are constructed in the context of the overall subordination of women to men. For this reason there is no femininity that holds among women the position held by hegemonic masculinity among men" (Connell, 1987, p.186-187). The concern for appearance and possessing "attractive femininity" (Scraton, 1992, p.93) and "heterosexual market" potential (Thorne, 1994, p.170) places undue pressures on young women. The girls in this study have not yet demonstrated particular concerns for Scraton's femininity concept. However, perhaps Kelly and the girls that admire her "tough" stance against the boys in the class will form a cohesive group capable of supporting one another. Indeed Thorne mentions
a "solidarity" that formed with the older elementary girls that had felt the initial pressures of heterosexual femininity. She contends that if girls begin to bond with other females early in their schooling, then as women they will more likely have the potential to express "we" and understand and work towards equality in society.

In identifying agency and resistance in the school setting, Kelly and her friends have begun a solid support group for their inevitable struggles against rigid gender stereotypes and it is evidenced in part when she claims "we don't want them to play." However, without a collective resistance the few female individuals who challenge the dominant boys will have a difficult time making changes in physical activity spaces. From a more optimistic standpoint the girls are negotiating new femininities that will prevent future generations from being labeled and stereotyped based on their sex (Varpalotai, 1987).

**Boys and Girls Active Together**

The identification of incidents or patterns of behaviour that actively challenge hegemonic masculinity will be presented. The dominant theme of what Thorne calls "crossing the gender divide" (p.133) will illustrate the potentialities for physical activity when boys and girls come together. Messner (1992) claims that an individual's gender identity is not static but rather a process of construction that develops, comes into crisis, and changes as a person interacts with the (always changing) social world. It thus becomes possible to speak of 'gendering' identities, rather than 'masculinity' or 'femininity' as relatively fixed identities or social roles" (p.21).

This theme of varying masculinities and femininities coincides with Thorne's (1994) discussion of the fluid nature of relations between girls and boys. As my results indicated, there were many occasions in which the two sexes collaborated on academic projects in the classroom and shared touching and personal stories of their home life. It is situations such as these that express the contextual nature of gender relations. Thorne suggests that the dichotomous categories of "male" and "female" do not fully explain the varying times when girls and boys
actively come together and then choose to separate. For the purposes of my research I will focus on the positive activities that I observed in the playground and classroom demonstrating that the sexes could "act, resist, and rework" (Thorne, 1994, p.3) the dominant beliefs about activities, sports or games as restricted to one sex.

In the search for incidents in which girls and boys participated in "gender crossing" the best site was the playground. In such a setting the children were generally free to choose who to play with and what activity to engage in. Obviously this is a simplification of the situation as not all students were given the option to play with others or even had access to equipment, for example. However, within this environment, a few creative and somewhat alternative games and activities occurred. For the incidents in which boys and girls either danced together in a group or two boys engaged in their own dance routine, there was a vivid depiction of gender crossing in which the boys were stretching the confines of masculinity to include more expressive forms of dance. These incidents illustrate Thorne's (1994) concern for breaking down the "oppositional structure of gender arrangements" (p.133).

In another series of incidents, the girls in the playground extended their notion of femininity to include the more traditionally masculine game of football. In this case the girls were being taught by a very knowledgeable female classmate who often joined forces with the boys in football matches. This occasion and two others signified a stretching or reworking of gender stereotypes. This negotiation and challenge to dominant stereotypes is essential in eradicating subordinate groups, whether females or differing masculinities. Humberstone (1990) notes that programs can be geared to the eradication of strict gender stereotypes. Her ethnographic study of an alternative PE class involved an outdoor adventure project. Humberstone highlighted the following:

Boys' rethinking of gender was an unintentional consequence of the programme. PE experiences of these types could form a developmental basis for alternative masculine identities that neither celebrate the warrior ethos nor identify cooperative endeavour, caring, and emotional expression as 'wimpish weaknesses' (p.210).
Thorne (1994) implies that the optimum challenge to gender dichotomies should occur in those activities I have cited as gender crossing. She cautions that the separate boy/girl analysis will offer little for affecting change in institutions such as the school. She further states that there are assumptions that girls and boys sharply divide as two separate and unitary types of beings. But the social world is not that simple. There are many ways of being a boy or girl, some of them overlapping, some varying by context, some shifting along lines of race, ethnicity, class, and age (p. 158).

The acts of agency, resistance, and negotiation that Kelly and the "dancers" on the playground engaged in reflect the fluidity of situations. These gaps have the potential to transform existing gender relations. Some possible recommendations and suggestions for structural change will follow in the concluding chapter.

**Equity in Physical Education**

"If equality means an equal starting line, equity means that everyone gets to her or his chosen finish line" (Kidd, 1995, p. 7)

The most pervasive theme drawn from the 11 respondents in the interviews was their genuine love of being active, whether in the PE class, playground, or outside the school. This is an interesting finding in light of the many ways that the girls were *not* fully participating in the activities in the gymnasium, for example the peripheral positions occupied by many girls. For this section of the discussion I will focus on the arena of PE class. As I have commented earlier in this thesis, many of the more inactive and sedentary girls are generally hesitant in PE games and sports. As the socialization discussion illustrated, the PE class is only one of many opportunities for girls' participation in sport and games (school teams, clubs/community centers, and informal neighbourhood play are the other available sites). However, the skills
learned in the PE environment have the potential to create more assertive and confident females in other physical activity realms and indeed, their lives in general (Scraton, 1992). Thus, the emancipatory possibilities of PE to increase the girls' basic motor development and body awareness will only be realized in an equitable and favorable setting for all girls.

Equality of opportunity is often viewed as breaking down those barriers or structures that prevent individuals from participating in PE (Talbot, 1993). However, in light of Bruce Kidd's previous quotation, simply providing access to activities will not ensure full participation. Pat Griffin (1989) succinctly states the following in reference to equitable PE classes: "Each student, regardless of gender, race, or motor ability has the opportunity for successful and full participation and instruction in a variety of physical activities in a supportive environment" (p. 19). Further to this concept of equity, it is necessary to recognize that equal treatment for all individuals is impossible in practice and secondly is ignorant of the wide ranging abilities and experiences that individuals bring to the gymnasium (Talbot, 1989).

**Lesson Delivery**

Griffin (1989) cites the following points that teachers should attempt to address in their own teaching practices in the gymnasium:

1) An overemphasis on competition and competitive activities.
2) A majority of class time spent in non-instructional game play.
3) Inequitable and disrespectful interactions among students.
4) Inequitable participation among students.
5) Student ability is not taken into account in organizing instruction or game play. (p. 21).

The issue of disrespectful interactions was discussed within the verbal and physical harassment section. In addition, the identification and discussion/analysis of the cases of aggression and competitiveness were discussed within the concept of power relations in the school and on a larger scale in society. The remaining issues from Griffin will be examined within categories closely aligned with my study.
The category of lesson delivery will be developed through an examination of sex category membership, class organization and ability grouping, variety of activities offered, and consideration of outside program participation. These themes emerged from my observations in the PE setting but also from discussions and interviews with the girls.

**Sex Category Membership**

The teacher in the present study utilized what Margaret Talbot (1993) refers to as "sex category membership" (p.76). Using dodgeball as an example, the teacher would often dismiss the excellent shots that were thrown by the girls. Indeed, as my results illustrated, the PE teacher made dangerous assumptions about the ability level of all girls when she criticized them for not throwing accurately or with sufficient power. I would agree with the teacher's assessment that some of the girls lacked power and effort but the precision and skill of the more advanced girls was disregarded. The teacher's own beliefs and attitudes have been polarized along dichotomous lines, that of male and female ability. The perpetuation of differences between sexes as "natural" does not enable gender stereotypes to be dismantled.

A similar case identified in the results was the encouragement of all girls as fair play promoters. The gender divide was reinforced with the teacher stating that all the boys showed poor sportsmanlike behaviour. I had clearly identified boys who were careful in their throwing habits and apologized to other students who they inadvertently hit too hard. Griffin (1985) has identified these boys as "nice guys" based on her observations in PE classes. These boys in her study were very skilled but differed from the "machos" and "junior machos" in their treatment of girls as equal and full participants. The inclusion of boys into the "macho" category when they were clearly in the loose category of "nice guys" that Griffin (1985) produced, is creating an inequitable environment based on culturally constructed gender categories. The fair and positive behaviour of the boys in the "nice" group should be encouraged instead of ignored.
Class Organization and Ability Grouping

The organizational setup for PE classes varied for each activity. The grouping of students based on ability did not occur in any noticeably structured way. As was identified in the results, volleyball serve activities provided girls with extra opportunities to serve correctly. My results categorized these teacher encouragements as a positive sign of support for the girls. However within the context of promoting full participation by all the students without the threat of harassment or the "chilly climate" (Lenskyj, 1994a) this style of game setup should be reviewed. Many of the less skilled girls could loosely be categorized as "lost souls" (Griffin, 1985). She describes this type of female as low skilled, hesitant in play situations and generally remaining on the periphery of a game. In addition Griffin states that such girls "if they were forced to contact the ball, they looked panic stricken and then relieved if someone else made the play for them" (p.6). Indeed, in the case of volleyball, select girls resembling this described behaviour usually hit the ball as fast as possible, without concentrating on the details of the proper stance or fist position. When they hit the ball into the net or in some cases along the floor, the teacher would provide them a second chance. The words "panic stricken" succinctly describe the faces of these girls as they remained at the center of attention. This volleyball session was organized with one person at a time serving while the other students waited their turn. The whispers and sarcastic comments heard when such students "failed" in front of the class creates a cycle of fear and dread of such skills. In addition, the teacher provides only girls a "second" chance to serve and I feel that it is patronizing rather than helpful for the females.

In a truly equitable classroom, the setup would enable both males and females of lower skill levels more subtle opportunities for improving their skills such as in a small group organization. June LeDrew (1996) reflects on her observations of primary female PE teachers and notes that "regardless of the activity, maximum participation of all the children was evident in my observations. The teachers were very sensitive to children being left out due to
physical capability or rule games that eliminate players. Virtually all activities had all the children moving" (p.33).

A final examination of class organization involves volleyball game play. On one observed occasion the teacher divided the teams based on sex. As outlined in the results, the blatant disregard for opportunity of full participation was evident. The nine male players rotated around the six positions frequently whereas only six girls out of twenty-two female players could participate fully. Thus, the majority of the girls spent their PE class time passively watching the game. Helen Lenskyj (1995) aptly states that "physical illiteracy" can occur from girls' lack of opportunity. Furthermore, this PE class organization was based primarily on the "macho" boys demanding the teacher to organize a boys versus girls game. A rotational game based on the differing ability levels in the class may have lessened the inopportunities for a large number of students. The inequity was evident in this incident and reinforces the need to discard the dualistic separations that occur, especially to such an unfavourable degree.

Variety of Activities

In a discussion of the types of activities included in the PE class, it is important to note that there is no formal curriculum for this school. The teacher generally asked the students before class what activities they would like to do. For the most part the louder boys suggested football, volleyball, or dodgeball. Within this particular PE program it was evident there was no organized content or short/long term goals. The activities usually included volleyball, basketball, dodgeball, and less popular games such as "keep away", and "forest ranger". Griffin (1989) advises PE practitioners to choose a variety of sports and games to ensure a more equitable class. This researcher is suggesting that when games requiring minimal teacher instruction are included, the dominant individuals "flourish at the expense of their classmates" (p.20). The teacher in my study blended skill sessions with game play but the repetitiveness of the activities was a complaint of a few of the girls. Indeed, two of the
females in my interviews regarded dodgeball as "boring". From an observational standpoint, this boredom was attributed to a lack of participation as I have discussed in the physical dominance portion of this thesis.

Consideration of Outside Program Participation

This category of discussion can be linked to the ability grouping stated in this section. The respondents in the interviews mentioned their participation in community center activities such as basketball or school teams. These girls were more skilled in their designated sport as evidenced by Tosha, Kelly and Sherri in volleyball class. However, a combination of the organization and setup effectively inhibit their further development. Talbot (1989) addresses this issue in her discussion of equal outcomes. She suggests that such an interpretation of equality will render those students with potential to receive an "outcome of sameness" (p.14). Thus, a teacher would have to consider the background experiences of all students to ensure that each may reach "her or his chosen finish line" (Kidd, 1995).

The Status of Physical Education

Griffin (1989) cites student teacher ratio, equipment and facilities availability, and the amount of time scheduled for classes as important considerations to address in terms of teacher effectiveness. The lack of organization in PE class was a major problem identified in this study. However, the teacher must contend with issues of class size (31 students) in a gymnasium smaller than a single tennis court. In addition, the homeroom teacher is also the PE teacher. The issue of non-specialist teachers in PE was cited by Donnelly and Hay's (1983, 1996) research. Their work reiterates the concerns that I have included here, namely the organizational problems, lack of variety in activities, the lack of curriculum (not necessarily the teacher's responsibility), the indefinite time accorded for PE, etc. The teacher in this study appeared to be knowledgeable about the sports that were chosen, indeed she was very skillful in volleyball and skating. She is a regular player in a volleyball recreational
league. However, as was noted earlier in relation to the girls' mothers, it is difficult to assume that these female influences will always be positive in light of their own socialization. Thus, the problems that prevail in this school may be largely stemming from a larger social problem that has effectively socialized many women and girls into particular (subordinate) positions in the sporting sphere.

The utilization of PE as a reinforcement tool in the regular classroom emphasizes the insubstantial role that PE occupies in the formal curriculum. This is a concern for any individuals attempting to pursue changes in the way PE is structured and practiced. If PE, in this particular setting is not viewed as a "learning" environment but merely a "fun" and inconsequential arena for play, then the possibilities for challenging gender stereotypes are minimal. The recommendations and conclusions identify some key solutions suggested by researchers and practitioners in this area.

**Typicality of this Study**

As I noted in the Methodology chapter, this study is limited to one sample of girls' experiences in physical activity. I cannot claim the typicality of this study for other schools in Ontario; however, I have noted the evidence from the literature to support the findings of boys' dominance in the classroom, playground and PE settings (Griffin, 1985, 1989; Scraton, 1992; Smith et al., 1995; Thorne, 1994). Griffin (1985), for example, develops her typology from one sample of a mixed PE class that closely resembles many of the differing masculinities and femininities found in my study. Although my study cannot be clearly identified as "typical" or "atypical" for this gender and age group there is considerable related research evidence to suggest that some similar findings might be genderated in other Canadian urban schools.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study uncovered and described the physical activity experiences of girls in one school setting and the factors which determined that experience. Through their perspectives I came to a deeper understanding of the varied influences involved in sport socialization. Three of the respondents were not involved in formal physical activities and sport outside the school. One of these three girls used the school as her primary means for sport participation. She utilized all the available avenues for participation from active play at recess, leadership in PE class, and a member of two school teams. However, no definitive sport socialization pattern could be identified. This is evident in the sport socialization research which emphasizes the complexity and relations between a wide variety of socializing influences (Theberge, 1994).

For the majority of the respondents their sport participation was influenced by a family member and reinforced in the school PE class. However, many of the activities that the girls engaged in outside the school setting were unrelated to PE activities. Most of the girls had small, intimate groups of friends in their neighbourhood and they participated in activities conducive to this group size; bike riding, rollerblading, swimming, and ice skating. This point raises the issue of promoting sport for lifelong enjoyment. If the physical education movement is aiming to educate girls and young women about the physical, mental, and social benefits of physical activity it is necessary to listen to the girls' needs in this area. LeDrew (1996) emphasizes that young women opt out of PE at the first opportunity. She suggests that "our educational grass roots recognize the need to place at a premium the notion of positive attitudes that will foster lifelong physical activity participation" (p.33). These girls will require support from as many influential individuals and groups as possible to continue the activities they choose to do into their later years.

LeDrew (1996) has noted that girls and young women in PE perceive fun in PE as being active, successful, learning new activities, and associating with friends (p.33). Through cooperative and fair play promotion in the PE class (and regular class as well), girls will be
involved in an environment more conducive to their idea of "fun". Through the promotion of cooperative and non-competitive games and activities, the boys can also benefit. As was demonstrated earlier, the group of aggressive and dominant boys created an environment that was not conducive for all girls and the majority of boys to learn a "healthy" view of physical activity. If the perspectives of girls and boys who do not want to engage in such competitive and threatening sporting situations are taken into account, their motivation to continue in physical activity will increase.

The interviews illustrated the varying sport participation experiences of these students. At the present time the girls are viewing PE and sport in a positive light. In addition, three of the respondents stated a clear link between physical activity and health concerns. However, this study has clearly pointed to troubling situations in the playground, classroom, and PE setting. The identified pattern of dominant and aggressive boys who claim these settings as "their turf" has been addressed. This continual pattern of attention-seeking behaviour, physical and verbal dominance, and support for "toughness" and "power" will constrain the overall learning environment for girls. The silence of the girls has been taken for granted in the school system as a sign of obedience and "good behaviour"; however my observations fully support the literature that cite the education system as a reproducer of gender inequality.

In terms of the specificity of my research to physical activity, my study illustrated that girls are not taken seriously as full and equal participants in the PE class. When boys are chosen to demonstrate skills, assume dominant play positions, and control the behaviour of other skilled and less skilled girls, then the school is not promoting physical activity for girls. Many of these problems relate directly to ineffective teaching practices and the subordinate place of PE in the "regular" curriculum. The need for teachers to understand how equity is achieved in the school setting and for my purposes, the PE class, cannot be overemphasized. Pat Griffin's (1989) attempts to make equitable practices in the PE setting understandable is a solid effort and should be widely distributed and promoted.
An important factor for young women to continue in physical activity is the visibility of role models in their everyday lives. For the girls in this study, the emphasis placed on boys' achievement in the gymnasium effectively disregards the girls' successes. Girls who demonstrate precision in skill and key elements of fair play should be recognized for these acts. In this way all the girls can collectively feel that their way of being active is important and worthy of replication by boys and girls.

Although the existing environment effectively preserves the power bases of gender, the seeds of change were evident. Whether the girls collectively band against the "rough" boys in the playground and opt for "girls only" play, or simply choose to ignore the commands and orders of the boys in the formal PE class, "all girls do not accept passively the definitions of femininity which place them in a weaker and physically subordinate position" (Scranton, 1993, p.123). I would argue that the female homeroom/PE teacher also has the potential to challenge the boys' domineering practices. Her positive comments, albeit very infrequent, encourage the girls to "try harder". Although in many cases the problem exists outside the individual, and "trying harder" does not promote confident and assertive girls, some practices and organizational changes can be made to improve the situation. I agree with Scraton that the problem for girls in physical activity and specifically PE is the power and influence of hegemonic masculinity.

The literature points to the saturation of traditional masculine values in the school setting, particularly areas that involve intense physicality (for example the playground, PE class) (Humberstone, 1990; Scraton, 1993; Thorne, 1994). To enable individuals to resist and transform the current practices in PE and sport in the larger society, a combination of liberal and radical approaches will work, such as equitable PE classes. The ideal sporting world would involve the right of these girls to choose their own finish line, as Kidd (1995) indicates. Thus, those girls (or boys) who desire "fun" or "rougner" play styles can do so without being stigmatized or labeled according to their sex.
The final section of this paper provides recommendations for improving the quality of programs and to increase the opportunities available for young girls in sport and physical activity. The primary focus of these recommendations is in sport and physical activity within the confines of the PE class. However, the playground setting is addressed for making positive changes in the play environment. These recommendations are useful to teachers, parents, principals, school board members, curriculum advisors, and young women.

**Playground**

1. Increase supervision on the playground. A leadership program for the older students in the school would provide important skills for these students and lessen the demands of the teachers. Many fights took place and were never dealt with on a disciplinary basis. Aggressive behaviour is being reinforced through the invisibility of authority and the admiration of peers.

2. School staff should be encouraged to join the activities to promote fair and cooperative playing. My study illustrated the perpetuation of gender-typed activities as the male staff chose to play with the boys' football. As Thorne (1994) suggests, either staff or a student volunteer should introduce more games for mixed sex groupings to emphasize the theme of cooperation and fair play.

3. Increase the availability of equipment for the playground. The lack of equipment was a noticeable influence on the sedentary behaviour of the girls. When one of the girls brought her "all purpose" ball to the playground I observed them play several varieties of games. I suggest that the school should have simple equipment such as balls and skipping ropes available on a "sign out" basis. This may promote responsibility to other people's equipment as well.
Physical Education Setting

1. Despite the recent and ongoing budget cuts, hiring a full-time PE specialist to increase the importance of physical activity in the curriculum is necessary. PE has the potential for transforming gender relations and increasing girls' confidence; however, when it is used as a reinforcement tool, the hopes for change diminish. The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) draft document outlining the standards for active, healthy living in Ontario outlines the visions, strands, and exit outcomes for physical education. These are lofty goals in light of the current study. The key components from this study range from living skills, substance abuse and safety to issues of sexuality and daily physical activity. Within my study the potential is there for the homeroom teacher to deal with these issues as she is responsible for PE class; however, the image of PE as an important and integral aspect of the core curriculum must be addressed. The role of OPHEA will be to address the issue of specialist teachers and it will be a difficult but important route to take. Donnelly and Starkes' (1983) research on itinerant PE teachers emphasizes many of the concerns I have raised in this thesis. There is excellent primary PE curriculum available within some School Boards and it is necessary to spread this information widely.

2. Quality, Daily Physical Education (QDPE) should be mandated for all schools. In light of research showing the low levels of participation in the general population, it is important to note that all the respondents in this study enjoyed PE. Thus, these girls are ready for the QDPE program as all of them expressed the desire to increase PE time. In addition, three respondents mentioned the direct health benefits stemming from physical activity. The motivation is there for this important program.

3. The variety of PE activities offered should increase. Although the students in this study were given a choice between two or three games, the girls described some of these games as "boring". Closely aligned with this point is the desire by some of the participants to
4. Lifelong physical activities should be encouraged in the school. Knoppers (1988) proposes that lifetime fitness activities such as aerobics, cycling, and swimming be emphasized in PE programs. My study discovered that these activities are the most common and favorite activities for the girls. In addition my respondents included ice skating.

5. Enlist high school and university students as volunteers for physical activities such as those listed in (4), perhaps as part of their practicum courses. Bike riding tours, recreation swimming sessions, or ice skating excursions after school or on weekends should use young women as role models for the younger girls.

6. PE practitioners should participate with the students in appropriate activities. The teacher in this study played volleyball every week but never mentioned this to the class. A teacher can be a significant influence for girls who listen and model her actions and behaviours.

7. Girls should be used as demonstrators of skills during PE class. Numerous occasions in this study involved girls passively watching the boys "show off" their skills. A female role model in the class will illustrate to both female and male peers that girls can excel and be competent in physical activity.

8. Avoid categorizing "all boys" or "all girls" during a game or instructional session (Griffin, 1985). As my study identified, boys who displayed fair play and enthusiastic responses to their peers were wrongfully grouped with "all boys" are poor sports.

9. Support and encourage those students not conforming to traditional sex role behaviour (males and females) (Griffin, 1985).

10. Avoid the confusion of skill exercises with competitive activities and games. The focus inevitably becomes one of winning.

11. Avoid grouping students by gender for games. More cooperative ventures will increase the relations between boys and girls in PE. In addition, the unequal number of males and females creates severe equity problems as evidenced in the currents study. Teachers should observe the different styles of play to identify ability groupings.
12. Promote more equitable PE classes through an assessment utilizing Pat Griffin's (1989) *Adapted Equity Assessment Grid*. This grid identifies gender, race and ability as important measures in teacher/student interactions, policy initiatives, teaching practices, curriculum, and teacher role modeling. Through the use of this grid teachers can identify a wide range of situations ranging from discriminatory to affirmative and can examine the links between gender, race and ability.

**Classroom**

1. Promote cooperative behaviour through small group learning. The academic classroom can create an environment in which girls and boys can work together. The cooperative mixed-sex games in this study illustrates small steps to positive gender relations.

2. Post information on physical activity programs for girls to join. Fenton (1995) describes the *On the Move Program* which "encourages non-active teenage girls to participate in a fun-filled, supportive, low skill level, team recreational activity" (p. 113).

**Future Research**

1. Research the experiences of girls on a longitudinal basis as they move through the period of transition from pre-adolescence to the completion of high school.

2. Collaborate with other researchers in women's health towards a better understanding of the total well-being of all girls and women.

**Summary**

The girls in this school experience physical activity in varied and intricate ways. The socializing influences cannot be compartmentalized as the girls interact with their parents,
siblings, neighbourhood setting, and so forth in complex ways. My investigation of girls' socializing influences supported the sport socialization research. The most important conclusion is that girls must be encouraged to participate in the home, school, and community environments in an equitable and supportive manner.

The participant observations effectively demonstrated how girls' physical activity experiences are shaped by institutionalized gender relations, primarily hegemonic masculinity. My initial assumptions for this research project were to investigate the girls' experiences in physical activity; however, it became necessary to incorporate an analysis of masculinities and femininities. The presence of hegemonic masculinity was an integral concept to develop for a thorough understanding of girls' participation (or lack of). I found that within the confines of traditional masculine values, some girls challenged the prevailing sport practices. The girls that insisted on having fun and actively resisting the boys who wanted to play "rough" demonstrated a reworking of sport, play, and games.

Girls and boys are affected by the current saturation of traditional masculine values in the school. My study has added important findings in the area of girls' experiences in physical activity. This relational analysis adds important insights into the field of sport sociology and in particular the area of socialization and gendering practices in the educational sphere. This study has offered key areas for further exploration including a follow-up of girls as they enter puberty and beyond. In addition, the constraints imposed on boys and girls from stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity can be understood through more research of this nature.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES
Appendix A

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE SCIENCE RESEARCH

INVESTIGATOR (S): CORA McCLOY
DR. HELEN LENSKYJ (SUPERVISOR)

To parent or guardian of child:

I am a graduate student at the University of Toronto. The subject of my Master's thesis is *A Case Study Analysis of Girls' Physical Activity in One Educational Setting*. I have been granted permission by the principal and teacher to conduct formal observations and interviews within your school. The information that I gather poses no risk to your child but there are potential benefits in understanding the physical activity needs of this gender and age group.

I am currently recruiting students for the interview stage. I have become a familiar face within your child's classroom through formal observations in the classroom, gymnasium and the playground. These observations have included note taking on the activities of the girls in those settings. The interview process will consist of broad questions/topics such as the following:

- What types of physical activities, sports or games do you like to play? Why do you enjoy these?
- Where do you play these activities?
- Describe the neighborhood you live in.
- What activities does your family participate in?
- Do you enjoy physical education classes? Any dislikes?
- Is there anything you would change to make physical education classes better for you?

The information gathering sessions I conduct will occur during lunch hour and consist of one thirty minute interview focusing on the above topic areas. The interview transcripts will be kept in a locked file and coded to ensure full anonymity and confidentiality in your child's name, names of other children in the study, the teacher's name and the name of the school.

Your child may decline to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without any threat to their regular classroom or physical education instruction. Additionally, your child may decline to answer any questions during the course of the interview.

Your cooperation in this study will be greatly appreciated and help advance the goals of my research in the area of physical activity in the educational setting. All results will be available upon request at the completion of the study.

You have been provided with two copies of the consent form. Please complete one of these consent forms and return it to the teacher at your earliest convenience. You may keep the second copy for your own file.
Parental Consent Form

I (parent/guardian) ______________________ have read the description of the study and consent to (child's name) ______________________ participation in this research.

_________________________  ______________________
Parent/guardian (Print)      Parent/guardian (Sign)

_________________________
Signature of Child
Appendix B

Interview Guide Questions

(1) What types of physical activities, sports or games do you like to play?
   ♦ Why do you enjoy these?
   ♦ How long have you been playing them?

(2) Do you play these activities in physical education class, before or after school (i.e. recreation centers, sports clubs) or in the playground?

(3) What types of physical activities, sports, and games do your family members play, if any?
   ♦ Your parents: mother and father?
   ♦ Brothers and sisters?
   ♦ Who got you interested in sport and games?

(4) Describe the neighbourhood that you live in.
   ♦ Are their parks nearby?
   ♦ Community recreation centers
   ♦ Busy streets?

(5) Where do you play with your friends?
   ♦ Street?
   ♦ Home?
   ♦ Playground?

(6) Who do you play with in your neighbourhood?
Boys and girls?
What ages?

(7) Describe some of your closest friends.

(8) Describe your gym class.
- What types of activities do you play?
- Describe activities that you have found challenging or difficult.
- Describe activities that are really enjoyable and fun.
- Describe activities that you don't like—Why?
- Do you prefer winning or having fun in PE class?

(9) Is there anything you would change to make physical education classes better for you?
- Length of time in gym?
- Equipment?
- Outdoor activities?